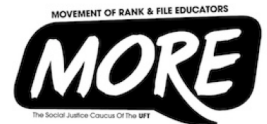


MORE Issues

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Movement of Rank & File Educators

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Vol. II, No. 1, Sept/Oct 2014



Teachers, Parents and Students Stand Strong for Tenure

Tenure gives teachers the right to stand up for their students' best interests, even in the face of poor leadership or poor policy. It accords those who spend the most time with students the respect and responsibility of making best decisions on their students' behalf. Thus, recent attacks on tenure have nothing to do with improving teaching and learning. They are designed to undermine teacher's unions and silence educators' voices.

Critics who claim, 'tenure is a job for life' or 'tenure protects incompetent teachers' are misrepresenting the facts. It takes several years to earn tenure in New York State, and in reality, tenure is nothing more than due process. It provides only two job protections: 1) a school district must have cause for terminating a teacher and 2) an independent agent ultimately decides whether or not the teacher is fired.

Attacks on tenure are cloaked in civil rights language and claim to defend children from incompetent educators. In reality, there is no evidence showing that tenure harms children. In fact, states that afford teachers tenure, like Massachusetts, consistently show higher student achievement levels than states like Mississippi, where teachers do not have tenure. (According to nationwide NAEP scores.)

Tenure allows educators to blow the whistle on violations that harm our children. This can include advocating for students with special needs who have been deprived of proper services.

Karen Sprowal, public school parent:

"The argument is always about the "bad apples" when speaking about teacher tenure. As a parent of an often under-served special needs child, for the sake of "budget cuts" all of the most fierce student advocate teachers were always tenured. The teachers that weren't tenured remain silent for fear of being fired or removed if they spoke out about inequities. In fact it got so bad at my son's school that we couldn't even get non-tenured teachers to participate on School Leadership Team because of the principal's mere presence."

(Continued next page)



Increase Teacher Diversity in NYC

Since the 2001-2002 academic year, there has been a 57.4% decrease in the number of Black teachers hired by the New York City Department of Education. A petition is being circulated in schools and communities around the city and will be presented to the PEP in December 2014. Please download and share among your co-workers. Return to MORE or to TDC PO box listed on petition.

Read and sign the petition to be delivered to Carmen Fariña: tinyurl.com/MORETeacherDiversity

Join the Teacher Diversity Committee:
teacherdiversity@gmail.com

The Untenured Teacher: The Discontinued

Principals have the power to end an untenured teacher's career with the stroke of a pen. Often the license is lifted and the teacher is blackballed from the system even if another principal wants to hire them. The issue of discontinued teachers is a disgrace of the highest order and one that makes a mockery—and an extraordinarily painful and costly mockery—of simply human decency, never mind unionism. To unfairly strip a person who has labored for years in preparation of their right to make a living is an attack on social justice, no less, in essence, than the unfair and rigged closing of a school. I have had the painful and unsettling experience of watching helplessly as some of my colleagues were cast away like trash by a psychotic principal via the process of discontinuance and four years later all four continue to struggle to find work and feed their families.

—Patrick Walsh, Chapter Leader, PS 149M

Tenure (continued)

Primi Akhtar (2014 graduate of Queens Metropolitan High School, valedictorian), NY Student Union:

“By eliminating teacher tenure, we risk further disconnecting students and teachers, and make it harder for them to have transformational dialogue about what actually needs to be done in our classrooms to further the growth of students. Both students and teachers are being exploited by a system at large. Our energies are used to profit large corporations that dictate our education—both students and teachers deserve rights that will not put them at risk of being removed, silenced, or further marginalized. Our energies and resources ought to be used to grow our educational communities, not put towards extra policing efforts.”

Jia Lee, parent, teacher, and conscientious-objector to this year’s standardized testing regime:

“Tenure is a threat to those who stand to gain from privatizing public education. Tenure allows educators to establish democratic practices in our schools, such as consultation committees, without worrying about being targeted for bringing up issues that directly impact the well-being of our students. When we recognize that the market based reforms of Common Core Standards and high stakes testing place a stranglehold on our ability to provide our students with what they need, we should not be fearful of speaking out. Advocacy for students’ needs begins with a teacher’s ability to teach without fear.”...

At the heart of the attacks on tenure is an attempt to silence educators from speaking out against “reform” policies that privilege data and profits rather than children. Far too many public education decisions are made in corporate boardrooms and political back-rooms, without the input of the real stakeholders, parents and educators. The educators of MORE-UFT have worked to expose and change these policies. Any erosion of tenure will silence a great many of our voices. This will surely quicken the damage that is being done to our public schools.

In 1964, tenure allowed eight city teachers, including Sandra Adickles, to ride south on a voluntary transfer and teach at a ‘freedom school’ during the Civil Rights Movement. Ms. Adickles’ bravery later led to a US Supreme Court decision making it more difficult for southerners to deny rights under the Equal Protection Clause of the US Constitution. Teachers like Jia Lee, and Sandra Adickles help make our country stronger and more equitable, and tenure makes their brave actions possible.

See our full statement “In Support Of Tenure”: tinyurl.com/MORESupportsTenure.

Also: *NYT* - “Nearly half NYC teachers denied tenure in 2012”: tinyurl.com/NYTHalfDeniedTenure

On Having A Tumor Without Tenure

“I have seen school leaders move to get rid of teachers for something like missing work in order to address needed health issues before.” - NYCUrbanEdBlog tinyurl.com/MORETumorWithoutTenure

Why MORE?

MORE, founded in 2012, is a caucus (political party) offering UFT members an alternative to the ruling party, Unity Caucus, headed by UFT President Michael Mulgrew. We, the UFT members, in alliance with parents, students, and communities, can build a more democratic UFT that will defend tenure, replace the draconian evaluation system imposed on us, reverse the spread of testing, create alternatives to common core, defend our rights in each school, educate each other about union matters, win better union contracts, improve our working conditions and our students learning conditions.

UFT MEMBERS HAVE A CHOICE	
MORE	UNITY
Mobilizes against Common Core and the whole corporate-funded “education reform” agenda	Threatens to punch in the face and push in the dirt anyone who opposes Common Core
Insists on a contract that is fair for educators, students, and schools	After 5+ years without a contract, accepts a deal other city unions considered insulting
Opposes charter schools, co-location, and the Advance evaluation system	Runs co-located charter schools and calls Advance a victory
Supports parents and teachers who refuse to subject students to high stakes testing	Raises the stakes of state tests by backing teachers being judged on student scores
Advocates for schools controlled by educators, parents, and the community	Signed off on mayoral control of NYC schools... TWICE!

Movement of Rank and File Educators
The Social Justice Caucus of the UFT

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MORE is a Work in Progress – Help Us Build and Grow

MORE members do a lot of work in MORE committees and school district level support groups, in addition to monthly meetings. We’d love to have you work with us.

- MORE Testing Committee
- MORE New Teacher Support Group
- MORE Chapter Leader/Delegates
- MORE Local Educator Support

Meet MORE after work in your school neighborhood - to set up a local meeting in your neighborhood and/or district: contact more@morecaucusnyc.org

**First MORE Monthly Meeting of the School Year
Saturday, September 13th from 12:00-3:00pm.**

Yaya: 224 West 29th St., 7th & 8th Ave NYC, 14th Flr

UFT members and Chapter Leaders in need of support contact MORE – more@morecaucusnyc.org – *we will set up a local meeting with one of our experienced CLs.*