To: All New Haven Teachers  
From: David Cicarella, President and Pat DeLucia, Vice President  

May 7, 2021

I. Calendar Vote SY 2021-2022

The calendar committee has met several times throughout April. The four drafts have been sent to the superintendent for central office review. The vote will be conducted as last year electronically. This expedites the process and ensures every voting member receives a ballot. We expect to start and finish the vote next week. Teachers are reminded that voting privileges are reserved for union members only. If you have a question about your union membership status simply check your pay stub. Union dues are deducted once per month during the school year. (no deductions in July or August).

We both served on the Calendar Committee along with Joe Gonzalez (Wilbur Cross), Jennifer Wells-Jackson (King/Robinson), Iris Festa (Conte/West Hills), and Assistant Superintendent Ivelise Velazquez.

II. Teacher Survey

We encourage all teachers to complete the surveys. All questions have been vetted by the NHFT, and we have worked to ensure teacher anonymity as to our individual responses.
III. NHFT End of Year Party

The End of Year party was discussed at Tuesday’s (May 4th) Executive Board meeting. We reluctantly agreed that we still cannot put 600 – 800 teachers in the same space. Covid has wreaked havoc on so many families, so please recognize while we lament the loss of these special events (holiday party, EOY party, new teacher orientation dinner, etc.) we do hold it in proper perspective. It is another disappointment on top of so many others, many more significant, from the pandemic. But disappointing nonetheless.

Budget Implications from COVID

Each year the Executive Board approves a budget. Some items are easy to budget (copier rental, office staff salaries) as these are fixed costs. Other budget items are our “best estimates”. Legal fees, for example, will depend on uncertain events such as teacher terminations. When we defend an NHFT member in a termination case, legal fees can often run into thousands and thousands of dollars. If we face two terminations in a given school year, then the unbudgeted cost skyrockets.

The union parties have been budgeted and the postponements have afforded us a substantial savings which has in part been used to offset the following unforeseen, unbudgeted items.

Building Repair – We co-own the union office building with the Central Labor Council. OSHA required extensive mold remediation due to multiple roof leaks. It is an aging building with a flat roof. This type of roof is more susceptible to leaks and damage. The mold remediation, roof repairs, carpentry to replace damaged drywall, re-painting of the interior and exterior of the building, ceiling tiles, etc. will cost the NHFT over $15,000 when completed as our share. While this is an unbudgeted expense, we fortunately have funds available due to not using funds budgeted for the NHFT parties.

Additionally, our four (4) office computers had Windows 7 and needed replacement at a cost of $5000. We had hoped to squeeze out another year or two from our existing computers but one completely failed and a second was failing more and more frequently. Again, funds were not budgeted, but available.

The savings from the party also allowed the NHFT to increase our philanthropic donations to organizers such as the CT Food Bank. With so many people suffering, the Executive Board voted to redirect available funds to assist those in dire need of food and other necessities. NHFT scholarships to NHPS high school students were increased as well.

Our union dues have not been increased in over seven years. Despite rising costs, we continue to absorb increases from the AFT-National and AFT-CT. They do great work on our behalf, and the AFT constitution calls for a “passthrough” of our union dues on to the members. The monthly dues increases per member are modest ($0.50, $0.25, $0.30,
and some years no increase). Specifically, last year's monthly increases of $0.30 AFT-National and this year's monthly increase of $0.50 AFT-CT have totaled almost $15,000 which have not been passed on to teachers. Despite absorbing dues increases and paying for significant unexpected expenses we have built up a cash reserve to buffer us from further unexpected expenditures and unbudgeted items.

If COVID has taught us anything, it is that we never know what tomorrow will bring. The unexpected strengthening of our financial status is perhaps the one benefit of a terrible situation.

Lets conclude on a positive and optimistic note. If we recall, just this past fall we were not certain when a vaccination would be available. Projections back then were hopefully this summer or later. But here we are in May and vaccinations are in full swing with supply and appointments readily available. Businesses and recreational venues are reopening and rehiring.

Let's look to keep safe and healthy as we close this school year and look forward to a much-needed summer vacation.