Connecticut’s teacher evaluation system is ahead of its time with other states replicating it in large part as their model. Superior Judge Thomas Maukawsher’s decision claiming the system is “little more than cotton candy in a rainstorm” reveals an abhorrent lack of understanding of our teacher evaluation system and is tied to outdated and failed theories clinging to the notion that a standardized test score somehow measures overall student achievement and accurately judges a teacher’s performance.

Surveys overwhelmingly indicate that test scores aren’t the only, or even the most important, factor. Colleges want to see leadership skills and an ability to apply knowledge. Employers want prospective employees to be able to solve problems and think strategically. These skills are more important for measuring student success as are their scores on a test of basic skills. Schools need to help our kids develop into well-rounded, thinking individuals.

The evaluation systems in New Haven and throughout Connecticut continue to be analyzed each year and changes implemented to make them more effective. But to say the state’s teacher evaluation system is “not rational or substantial and doesn’t offer a verifiable link between teacher evaluations and student learning” is inaccurate to the point of being downright silly.

Additionally, Judge Maukawsher, like so many others outside their area of expertise, relies on a select handful of “experts”. New Haven has received both statewide and national acclaim for its innovative and rigorous teacher evaluation system. Our teacher evaluation system (TEVAL) was, and has been, replicated both statewide and nationally. Judge Maukawsher never once reached out to me (or anyone in New Haven). I could have shared with him the mechanisms for removing both tenured and non-tenured teachers who have been properly evaluated and supported yet...
Lesson Plans
Lesson planning is a fundamental and critical part of teaching. Each teacher determines the content and format of these plans. Please refer to the memo (included in this edition) which clearly articulates the NHPS district policy on lesson plans.

Sick Days, Personal Days
• Sick days: The appropriate use of sick days is in our contract. Teachers needing to access sick days create an absence in AESOP. No other notification or forms are necessary. Your administrator as well as central office has 24/7 access to ascertain building attendance each and every day.
• Personal days: Some confusion on personal days still persist. (Perhaps the name “personal day” suggests to some this may be a discretionary day. It, unfortunately, is not.) Our contract clearly states the use of personal days is for “bona fide personal needs, such as the performance of legal household, and other business which could not be legitimately performed during the teaching day.” It should be noted that abuse of personal days is subject to reprimand. Personal days are not subject to administrative approval nor are the old paper forms necessary. Absences for personal days are created in AESOP (same as sick days, bereavement days, jury duty etc.). For those teachers and administrators still requesting paper forms and 5am phone calls for illness, please join us in the 21st century 😊. All absences for all reasons are reported through our computerized AESOP program without exception.

Communications
The school system email is owned by the NHPS and they can monitor it accordingly. Do not use it for personal or private conversations. Additionally, all “union business” is to be conducted on our personal email accounts. Mine is nhftlocal933@gmail.com
It is on a private server and password protected. All emails go directly to me and only to me.

Union membership vs Service Fee (aka “fair share fee”)
Many teachers are confused by this, as all teachers pay a service fee to the union. The Payroll Dept. automatically deducts the union service fee and, therefore, most teachers believe they are “in the union” because they see a deduction of $61.75 on their pay stubs (coded “unsvef”). The service fee is for everyone to pay their “fair share”, as everyone receives union representation, contract negotiations, lobbying efforts both in Hartford and Washington DC, etc. Teachers cannot be compelled to join the union, nor can we (NHFT) solicit membership. We can only provide the information as to

October 22, 2015
To: All Administrators and Teachers
From: Garth Harries, Superintendent; David Cicarella, NHFT President; and Imma Canelli, Deputy Superintendent

The district’s policy on lesson plans is listed below. While the policy itself has not changed, we did update it a bit with a reference to TEVAL. Our policy on Goal Setting for TEVAL is included as well.

Lesson Plans
There have been questions concerning the district’s policy as to teachers’ responsibility in regards to lesson plans. Weekly lesson plans are due to administrators, upon request, by Monday morning (or the first school day of each week). The purpose of lesson planning is to ensure the delivery of high quality instruction to our students. Our TEVAL document identifies six (6) elements that are to be addressed in planning when preparing lesson plans. These are delineated in the Planning and Preparation domain of the Instructional Practice Performance Continuum.
In this context, our district does not specify a checklist of items to include, nor do we impose a...
benefits, costs, etc. and then the employee must initiate and ask for a membership card to join the union. The service fee is paid for 10 months, September-June, with no deduction taken in July and August. Full union membership is $65.75/month (coded “udues” on the pay stub). All service fee payees, as well as union members, are covered by every aspect of our contract. The additional privileges offered to union members are: Voting rights in all NHFT elections

Attorney privileges for:
• DCF hearings
• workman compensation cases
• teacher termination cases

Admittance to all union functions
• general membership meetings
• social functions such as our holiday and end of the year parties, etc. A
NHFT Local 933 End-of-Year
Party 2015-2016
Dear Colleagues,

As educators, we strive to empower our youth with the gift of a comprehensive education. Our work is to help develop informed, educated citizens, which strengthens the New Haven community. I would like you to join us in another way to make a difference in our students’ lives.

Investing in the NHSF provides funding for our students’ college education. You are ensured that one hundred percent of every dollar you donate to NHSF helps a young person continue their education. This past June at the New Haven Scholarship Fund annual award ceremony 199 New Haven public school graduates received $281,000 in scholarships to help ease the financial burden of their first year in college. Additionally, 58 students were given continuing scholarships totaling $30,000.

Please take time to view our video of the June 2015 Award Ceremony on our Website www.Newhavenscholarshipfund.org. Hear what the NHSF scholarship has done to help support our students in their next steps. Share with a friend and encourage others to join us in our campaign. A donation through our payroll deduction system is available or a one-time donation can be done directly through NHSF.

If all the teachers in New Haven were to contribute a minimum of $5.00 every pay period, it would amount to over $100,000 for scholarships for our students, which would be enough money to support more than 100 scholarships every year!

Thank you in advance for your support,

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Alpert, President • Lynn Brantley, Vice President

Op-Ed article for October issue of CT Town and City...continued from page 1

failed to reach the standard of proficient (or higher). In New Haven, the difficult decision to separate over 120 teachers (almost half were tenured) the past 6 years is a testament to the seriousness we place on rigorous and effective instruction. The 98% rating of “effective” or higher is after separating those that have not “made the grade.” Of course, those remaining are “effective” or higher.

The judge’s criticism of PEAC is personal conjecture at best. I served on that committee and, again, never once did he reach out to me. Being that New Haven’s TEVAL was replicated in part at the state level (SEED), it would have made sense to contact one of us in New Haven.

Student learning growth does, in fact, comprise roughly half of a teacher’s evaluation. Determination of adequate student learning utilizes “multiple measures of assessment.” The system replaced the ridiculous use of a single standardized test score to determine everyone’s effectiveness: teachers, administrators, superintendents, and school districts. This includes standardized test scores, as well as district assessments, student portfolios, and other authentic measures. The use of “multiple measures of assessment” ensures that we are not relying on one test administered in the spring of each year to assess student learning growth and teacher effectiveness.

This attack on the teacher evaluation system is yet another example of not talking to teachers on issues that involve teaching. A

http://www.ccm-ct.org/pointcounterpoint
I am a science teacher in New Haven, CT and am thrilled to have an active role as a national delegate within our local union #933, the New Haven Federation of Teachers. Eric Maroney and I are first-time delegates, and our responsibilities include attending state and national conventions as the representative voices of our brothers and sisters in the New Haven Federation of Teachers. It has been a fascinating and energizing experience. I am going to share an update on what I learned this summer, and I challenge you to engage in the dialogue.

On Saturday May 21, 2016, AFT CT hosted the annual business convention at the Aqua Turf in Plantsville, CT. Our business involved recognizing affiliates who represented the approximately 30,000 AFT CT members in attendance, approving the minutes from the last convention, amending our constitution, and passing resolutions.

The theme “Reclaiming our Solidarity” rippled through the presentations and celebrations. AFL-CIO President Lori Pelletier spoke of how firefighters have aligned with paraprofessionals to strengthen local unions. I was inspired by the stories Lori told and began to think about ways in which our own union can partner with others in the New Haven community to benefit those we serve.

On a more sobering note, we were reminded to prepare for more legal cases targeting labor unions for elimination. A Supreme Court case from this past spring that many of our members may have heard about in the national press, Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association, would likely have been decided against unions had Justice Antonin Scalia not died unexpectedly. The case was decided 4-4. This means unions will be able to continue to automatically charge members the agency fees. These fees are essential for our union to function on our behalf. Without funding, our solidarity and strength are crippled.

With regard to issues specific to education, AFT National president Randi Weingarten celebrated the new federal education law, “Every Student Succeeds Act” (ESSA), and said it promises to decouple high stakes standardized tests from teacher evaluation. Ms. Weingarten encouraged us to get involved in the implementation of ESSA in CT. She said the “starve and privatize” strategy of 20 years ago is dead and we are now in a new era. She spoke of the power of community schools and the potential under ESSA to adopt the practices of the Performance Assessment Consortium of NYC. http://performanceassessment.org.

Ms. Weingarten spoke of the pain caused by the job-killing 2016 CT state budget.

There are over $830 million dollars in cuts: Education Cost Sharing was cut by 34 million (5.7% cut); $7 million was cut from the Technical High School System; higher education and Medicare are also facing deep cuts.

She suggested we turn our legitimate anger against Governor Dannel Malloy to action. She suggested we “fight the really bad things and fight harder for the good things.” Specifically, she suggested we call out the legislators who voted for Malloy’s harmful budget. To that end, AFT CT is interviewing politicians before giving endorsements for the fall. Visit http://aftct.org for opportunities to get involved.

As AFT CT delegates, we passed very powerful, worker-centered resolutions on climate change, community engagement, member engagement, teacher leadership, and teacher diversity. This year, we plan to focus on supporting these resolutions and making them come alive in New Haven. Our first event will be joining AFT CT on Thursday, October 6 for school “Walk Ins” as part of our Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (AROS). http://www.reclaimourschools.org

The last exciting news at the AFT CT meeting was seeing NHFT leadership learn about the powerful online “Toolkit” for membership and training. These web tools are available on mobile devices and will allow our local to more efficiently communicate and organize!

The AFT National Convention was held in Minneapolis from July 18-21, 2016 and was a HUGE event! Eric and I knew it was going to be big, but we were blown away by the amazing diversity and the passion that members brought to the presentations and debates. There were 2,600 delegates representing 1.6 million teachers and healthcare workers.

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We had the opportunity to hear from giants of union activism such as Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farmworkers, as well as Presidential Candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton! Each day, the convention center was filled with passionate workers from all over our country, and most notably the red-shirt wearing Chicago Teachers Union delegates! CTU represented unified teacher resistance in action. Next time, we will have NHFT tee shirts!

I chose to serve on the Labor and the Economy Committee. At the convention, we moved three resolutions: Attacking Income Inequality, Opposing the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and Achieving Tax Fairness by Cracking Down on Offshore Tax Havens. My fellow first-time delegate, Eric Maroney, served on the Organizing and Collective Bargaining Committee. All passed resolutions are at http://www.aft.org/about/resolutions. We will be following the legislative and organizing actions AFT takes to advance these critical issues. Before the next convention in 2018 in Pittsburgh, we will have the opportunity to propose new action resolutions.

When I first arrived at the convention, I was thrilled to see a table announcing the formation of a new caucus. Our AFT-BATs caucus will collaborate to advance our work as pro-public education teacher activists.

At the convention, Badass Teacher leaders, Marla Kilfoyle and Jamy Brice-Hyde, shared the results of this year’s BATS/AFT Quality-of Worklife survey of 30,000 educators http://www.aft.org/news/survey-shows-need-national-focus-workplace-stress. These distressing survey results are a powerful reminder that a teacher’s work environment is also our students’ learning environment. We need to be kind and take care of one another – all our school colleagues and students!

Please contact me or any other member of the NHFT Community Action Now committee. NHFT CAN is excited for the Thursday, October 6 “Walk Ins”.

I look forward to continuing to serve as a delegate. I’m closing with another quote from the AFT CT Resolution on Member Engagement:

“Our soul, our heart, our courage and our power lie with our members and our communities, and always have.”

I believe our solidarity with one another and our New Haven community is more important in these uncertain times. There are powerful forces jockeying for influence and money. We must support one another and be supported, so we can continue to provide direct support to our students.

Lesson Plans Policy Update...continued from page 2

particular format. Evidence of proper planning and preparation will be observable when supervisors visit classrooms. To that end, teachers will construct lesson plans including pertinent information that will enable them to effectively deliver instruction consistent with our TEVAL document. For example P2, “Establishes clearly defined student learning goals and objectives for all students.” It should be evident when your lesson is observed that teachers have clear goals and objectives for the lesson being delivered, whether the teacher has chosen to explicitly write it into their lesson plan or not.

Administrators may share suggested templates for lesson plans, but teachers should utilize a format in which they are most familiar and comfortable, leading to the ultimate goal of delivering high quality instruction. (Note: in some Turnaround schools, lesson plan templates were discussed with staff and agreed to as part of the election to work)

Goal Setting

Goal setting is a vital component of the TEVAL process. It is intended to be and, in large part, has been a cooperative, collaborative process whereby teachers and their Instructional Managers (IM) examine data and mutually establish student learning goals. Neither the teacher, nor IM, can or should attempt to unilaterally impose the learning goals. However, there are situations whereby, despite the best efforts of both the teacher and IM, mutual goals cannot be established. In these situations, contact Michele Sherban and David Cicarella and a meeting will be arranged to assist in facilitating the mutual goal setting.