To: All New Haven Teachers

From: The Election Committee

Good afternoon all,

The collection and tally of ballots will begin on December 7, 2021, at 4:30 p.m. The Committee asks all members to mail their ballots no later than this Friday, December 4, 2021, to ensure delivery prior to December 7, 2021. The post office has made it clear that all deliveries may take a bit longer this year.

The ballot count will occur at the New Haven Federation of Teachers Union Hall 267 Chapel Street, New Haven, CT 06513. Due to the continued climate with COVID and its safety protocols, an increase in the number of COVID cases to near levels that moved the district to distance learning, the school district and union's continued use of distance meetings and calls for continued safety measures to be kept in place, attendance for the tally of ballots will be limited.

While the Committee acknowledges, respects, and appreciates the renewed commitment union members have in their union proceedings, safety is paramount. While some members want to attend, others do not have a choice and must attend, while still others will choose not to attend because of preexisting medical conditions, for the safety of their own families, or for other pertinent reasons. For these reasons, the safety of many must outweigh the safety of a few.
The Committee has allotted up to five slots for each of the two campaigns and independents (for a total of 15 spots) for in-person attendance. The Committee would like to stipulate that although five spots are being made available, we hope not all slots will be filled. To keep appropriate distancing, some who attend may have to fill into the hallways or side rooms. Attendees should also identify an alternate who will take their place in case an issue arises. The Committee also requests that those who attend stay for the entire proceeding. There will be no rotation of attendees during the process. The ballot tally should take a minimum of 4 hours (for reference, the last ballot tally for only two candidates lasted almost three hours).

The ballot tally will also be presented on zoom, similar to the nominations meeting. The significant difference will be the use of multiple cameras to cover the viewing angles of the entire room. The zoom presentation, and if attendees choose to live stream, will allow those unable to gather at the union hall to come together and experience the proceedings in other locales of their choice.

The Committee is requesting that all names of attendees and their alternates be forwarded by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, December 7, 2021. All attendees should have required documentation of a negative covid test within the past 48 hours or a COVID vaccination card to meet safety protocols. Masks will also be required to be worn throughout the entire proceeding. If anyone feels sick in any way on the day of the ballot tally, they should not attend and send their alternate instead.

Again, the Committee honors the renewed commitment of union membership but feels now is not the time to let down our guard. Yes, we must be in rooms with our students daily however, it allows us to be more prudent in every other situation, including the ballot tally.

A description of the collection and tally of ballots is presented below.

In Solidarity,

The Election Committee
Collection and Tally of Ballots

Precisely at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 7, 2021, the Local 933 Election Committee and Trustees, MK Elections representatives, and interested candidates or their observers will pick up the ballots from the Post Office at 50 Brewery Street, New Haven, CT. Postal authorities will be instructed that ballots are not to be released under any circumstances until the scheduled time. After picking up the ballots, MK Elections, under the supervision of the Election Committee and Trustees, will transport them to the tally site at the NHFT Local 933 union office conference room at 267 Chapel Street, New Haven, CT 06513. MK Elections will tally the ballots under the supervision of the Election Committee and NHFT Trustees. The counting process will continue non-stop until completion.

Before actually counting the ballots, MK Elections, in coordination with the Election Committee, will verify that all ballots are from eligible members, using an updated eligibility list. Each voter's name will be verified against the eligibility list to ensure that no member casts more than one ballot. After voter eligibility is checked, the outer envelope will be opened and the secret ballot envelopes removed. After mixing, the secret ballot envelopes will be opened and the ballots stacked for counting purposes. If a ballot is returned without a secrecy envelope but with information indicating that the ballot was cast from an eligible member, the Election Committee and Trustees will determine ballot handling procedures. These procedures will ensure ballot secrecy. Only MK Elections, the Election Committee, and OLMS representatives will physically handle the ballots during the counting of ballots. However, Trustees, candidates, or their observers will be permitted to watch the entire counting process. All ballots, counted and uncounted, will be kept in view of the observers at all times. Write-in votes are not permitted. The candidate who receives the greatest number (plurality) of votes cast will be declared elected. In case of a tie vote for any office, the election outcome will be determined by a coin toss (per the DOL) conducted by the election committee chair. Heads or tails will be decided by name drawn from a container by an election committee member, the same as drawn for ballot order. Heads will be the first name drawn; tails will be the second name drawn. After the names are drawn, the election committee chair will flip the coin. The selected candidate will be decided by an untouched coin flip to the ground.
Observers

Each campaign and independent observers are entitled to have up to five attendees be present or have a designated alternate observer present at the various stages of ballot mailing and tally. An observer must be a member of Local 933, and a candidate may act as his/her own observer. No ballot-related function will take place without Election Committee and Trustees present, and observers will be given notice and the opportunity to attend. Observers will be required to present identification and sign an observer register. Candidates should submit their names and the names of their alternate observers in writing to Election Chairperson Michael Pavano at pavanoassociates@aol.com by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, December 6, 2021.

Installation of Officers

Newly elected officers will be installed on January 1, 2022.

Preservation of Records

Local 933 will publish the results of the election in the same manner as the nomination notice and will preserve all election records for a period of one year.

Election Protests

In order to be acted upon, all protests concerning the conduct of the election must be in writing and received by the OLMS no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, December 17, 2021. In conclusion, it should be clearly understood that all phases of the nominations and elections of Local 933 officers are subject to NHFT Bylaws and the LMRDA. No aspect should be conducted without prior consultation with and approval by the NHFT Election Committee and Trustees. It should also be noted that the above rules and regulations are not all-inclusive. Additional election rules or clarifications may be promulgated by the Election Committee and Trustees as needed during the nomination and election period.