

THE WHITE PLAINS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
White Plains, New York

ARTICLE I - Name

This association is known as the White Plains Teachers Association. (Hereinafter referred to as the Association.) This Constitution of the Association supersedes and replaces all previous constitutions and/or amendments heretofore adopted.

ARTICLE II - Purpose

This Association is established to promote the education of children and the professional welfare of teachers, to advance the standards of the teaching profession, to further the interests of public education, and to foster the good will of those upon whose support the professional excellence of the White Plains School System depends.

The Association shows no discrimination toward individuals on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, creed, color, race, national origin or political activities and beliefs.

ARTICLE III – Affiliation

This Association shall be affiliated with the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and its national affiliates.

ARTICLE IV - Membership

Section A – Classes

Membership in good standing of the Association consists of three classes: Active, Retired and Substitute.

Section B – Active Membership

An active member in good standing is a member who is currently teaching in the district and who does not owe any monies to the Association. All persons covered by the Agreement between the Association and the White Plains Board of Education (hereinafter referred to as the Agreement) may be active members of the Association. Membership begins upon the signing of the membership list. Active members enjoy the privilege of voting in meetings of the Association, the right to serve as a delegate, as an elected officer, as a member of the Executive Board, as a member of any committee or Representative Council of the Association, and all other rights and privileges of membership as provided in the Constitution and/or Bylaws. Teachers laid-off or on authorized leave may retain active membership but may not serve as elected officers or appointed chairpersons of standing committees or vote in Association elections or contract ratifications.

Section C – Retired Membership

All persons who have retired from a position covered by the Agreement may become retired members of the Association. A retired member enjoys the same rights and privileges as an active member but may not serve as an elected officer or appointed chairperson of a standing committee or vote in Association elections or contract ratifications.

Section D – Substitute Membership

All persons covered by the Agreement between the White Plains Substitute Association and the White Plains Board of Education may be affiliated members of the Association. A substitute member enjoys the same rights and privileges as an active member but may not serve as an elected officer or appointed chairperson of a standing committee or vote in Association elections or contract ratifications.

ARTICLE V - Officers and Chairpersons of Standing Committees

Section A – Titles of Officers

The elected officers of the Association are the president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer.

Section B – Titles of Chairpersons of Standing Committees

The parliamentarian, the board liaison and the following chairpersons of standing committees are appointed by the president with the consent of the Executive Cabinet: negotiations, health and safety, staff development, political action, grievances (elementary and secondary), outreach coordinator, at large trustee (SWSCHP and the Welfare Trust), internal organizing and Policy Board. The parliamentarian, the board liaison and chairpersons of standing committees shall serve at the discretion of the president.

Should there be inadequate elementary representation on the Executive Board (less than 40%); the president may appoint an elementary committee chairperson with the consent of the Representative Council.

Section C – Remuneration

1. The elected officers of the Association are paid a stipend as determined by the Representative Council.

2. The appointed chairpersons of the Association may be paid a stipend if the Executive Cabinet determines there has been worked to warrant such stipend in any given year.

3. The elected officers and chairpersons shall be paid at the following approved rate of pay:

- President 1/4 of BA step 1
- Treasurer 1/8 of BA step 1
- Vice President 1/8 of BA step 1
- Secretary 1/8 of BA step 1
- Grievance chairs 1/16 of BA step 1
- Other chairs/officers 1/32 of BA step 1

Section D – Duties of Officers

1. The President

- a) is the chief executive officer of the Association and provides for liaison of the Association with external groups, including but not limited to the superintendent of schools, the Board of Education, ED/AFL-CIO, White Plains CLC, the public, the media, and groups involved in political outreach.
- b) upholds the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association and carries out its policies as determined by the Representative Council.
- c) presides at all meetings of the Representative Council, The Executive Council, the Executive Board, and the entire membership.
- d) ensures that the treasurer's records are audited annually.
- e) serves as chief negotiator or appoints, with the consent of the Executive Cabinet, a chief negotiator who serves at his/her discretion.
- f) directs the work of all officers and chairpersons of the Association, who are responsible to him/her for the performance of their duties under this constitution and for such other duties as he/she shall assign.
- g) appoints the members of all committees of the Association, who serve at his/her discretion.
- h) shall be, ex officio, a member of all committees and a delegate to all conventions.

2. The Executive Vice-President

keeps informed of all Association and committee projects and acts as president when the president is absent or unable to perform the duties of his/her office

3. The Secretary

- a) acts as president when the president and the executive vice-president are absent or unable to perform the duties of their offices.
- b) takes minutes of all meetings of the entire membership and of the Representative Council and circulates them to building reps for distribution to the association.
- c) takes attendance at Representative Council meetings and lists absentees in the minutes of the meetings.

4. The Treasurer

- a) transfers to the affiliates all dues collected by the Association for them.
- b) receives all monies paid into the Association and pays all items according to the budget which has been approved by Representative Council; keeps all vouchers and/or receipted bills, completes records of all monies received and paid, and deposits all funds of the Association promptly in an Association bank account. and submits monthly financial reports to the Representative Council.
- c) The Association provides a treasurer's position bond, and the treasurer executes the necessary documents in connection with such bond unless adequate bond is provided by an affiliate.
- d) The treasurer keeps accurate accounts of members' payments of dues.
- e) certifies as requested whether or not a member is in good standing. A member in good standing either owes the Association nothing or is making payments on any account due in the manner agreed to by the treasurer.
- f) The treasurer trains his/her successor, explains the operation of all Association accounts and Funds, and turns over to him/her all financial

records when the new treasurer is sworn in.

5. The Parliamentarian

- a) assist the president by providing procedural information related to the WPTA Constitution and Roberts Rules of Order
- b) assist with the installation of officer and new representatives to the council
- c) all other duties as designated by the president

Section E – Duties of the Chairpersons of Standing Committees

- a) Chairpersons of longstanding committees maintain their current job descriptions and carry out the duties in these descriptions.
- b) The board liaison or his/her designee attends the open meetings of the Board of Education, reports to the president and to Representative Council and facilitates presentations to the Board of Education.
- c) The elementary and secondary grievance chairs are responsible for overseeing non-tenured teacher's probation issues, TIPS, terminations, and grievances. They are the building rep first responders attend liaison meetings and connect with NYSUT and the Association lawyer. Meets with the assistant superintendent for human resources to resolve grievances. During times of need, such as but not limited to the COVID-19 pandemic, the health and safety chair may be elevated to a grievance level chair by the President with the consent of the executive cabinet. When functioning at a grievance level, the role of the health and safety chair will include Coordinate with F & O and the District Nurse Coordinator to address needs of the membership, investigate health and safety concerns which may include classroom visits, bring forward concerns to the building admin, F & O, and Ed House, attend district safety meetings, follow up with any concerns assigned by the President.
- d) The outreach coordinator presents outreach plans to executive board approval: the cancer walk, the coat drive, the food bank, Relay for Life, military support, and all other charitable functions as determined by the Representative Council.
- e) the PTA council rep attends the PTA council meetings and reports to the Association Representative Council.
- f) The at-large trustee for health benefits serves on the Welfare Trust board and is the benefits expert for the Association.
- g) The policy board chair meets with the assistant superintendent for PDP and helps develop and negotiate PDP with the district.
- h) The health & safety chair is the WPTA liaison with The District health and safety committee, is knowledgeable in state regulations, attends NYSUT trainings, and collects the health and safety concerns from the membership.

Section F – Duties of Representatives to Council

1. Contract Duties

- a) to serve at the building liaison monthly meeting and report to the Association office on the meeting;
- b) to review schedules for duty assignments, reporting grades, evening meetings, etc;
- c) to check on people split between schools to insure their day is not longer than others

and that their teaching and duty loads are the same as other teachers.
d) attend training as designated by the Executive Board.

2. Constitutional Duties

- a) attend Representative Council meetings as per schedule established in your building;
- b) to hold monthly meetings at a building level prior to Representative Council;
- c) to maintain an in-house communication system, to have regular time of availability, to
put notices in mailboxes, etc;
- d) to run elections or appoint someone to run them.

3. Building Responsibilities

- a) send list of building representatives to Association office every September;
- b) work with the principal and the SDT representative to select mentors for new teachers;
- c) promote union activities: citywide meetings, board meetings, cancer walk, and all other activities as determined by the Executive Board;
- d) study the contract.

ARTICLE VI – The Executive Board

Section A – Membership

The Executive Board of the Association consists of the elected officers of the Association, the chairpersons of standing committees, and any negotiators who are not elected officers or chairpersons.

Section B – Duties of the Executive Board

The Executive Board carries on the business of the Association between meetings of the Representative Council, of which they are members ex officio, and report to the Representative Council regularly upon the work of the various officers and standing committees.

The Executive Council acts as the president's cabinet.

The Executive Board convenes upon the call of the president or that of any three of their members. The business of the Executive Board shall be conducted at its meetings. Such meetings shall have a quorum requirement of two-thirds of its membership, and action may be taken by majority vote of the members present and voting, except as may be provided otherwise in this Constitution.

The Executive Board is responsible for carrying out the Constitution of the Association and the policies of the Representative Council determined pursuant to it.

The Executive Board members are voting members of the Representative Council.

Section C – Delineation of Union Leadership

- a) The Executive Cabinet shall consist of the president and elected officers.

b) The Executive Board shall consist of all named officers and chairs as identified in section and all appointed committee chairs.

ARTICLE VII – The Negotiating Team

Section A – Membership

The Negotiating Team of the Association consists of the president and other members appointed by the president with the consent of the Representative Council. If a vacancy occurs, the president may appoint members to serve until the consent of the Representative Council can be considered when the Representative Council reconvenes.

Section B – Reimbursement of Expenses

When the Negotiating Team meets, expenses such as meals and incidentals are paid with the approval of the treasurer and the president.

Section C – Remuneration

Negotiators are paid a stipend as determined by the Representative Council.

Section D – Term of Office

The Negotiating Team continues in office until a new team is appointed.

ARTICLE VIII – Ratification

Collective Bargaining Agreements shall be submitted to the membership for a ratification vote upon at least three school days' notice to the membership. The vote will take place only between the months of September and June on a regular school day and shall be effective upon majority vote of the membership voting.

ARTICLE IX – Elections

Section A – Board of Elections

The Board of Elections of the Association consists of three members of the Association who are not officers, chairpersons of standing committees, members of the Representative Council, members of the Negotiating Team, or representatives or delegates to affiliates. They are appointed by the president with the consent of the Representative Council not later than December 1, 1978 and serve until replaced.

Section B – Election of Officers

Members in good standing who wish to run for election to any office of the Association submit to the Board of Elections a petition signed by (25) twenty-five members in good standing not later than April 15 of every odd year. A member's signature is invalid if it appears on more than one petition for the same office.

The Board of Elections will have posted in each building a list of the certified candidates not later than May 1.

The officers are elected by secret ballot between May 15 and May 25 in accordance with such fair and reasonable procedures as the Board of Elections prescribes.

Section C – Vacancies

If the office of the President becomes vacant, the Executive Vice President shall assume the office of President.

If any other office becomes vacant, it shall be filled by appointment of the Executive Board until the next election is held by the general membership.

Section D – Election of Representatives to the Council

Members in good standing who wish to run for election to the Representative Council of the Association submit their names to the board of Elections or its designee by May 1, 1979, and every odd year thereafter.

There is one representative for each fifteen members of the Association in each school and one additional representative for each major fraction thereof. Past presidents of the Association may serve as emeritus (non-voting) members of district Representative Council. There is one representative for each fifteen members not represented from any school and one additional representative for each major fraction thereof. The Board of Elections determines whether the members not attached to a school are represented in a block or by departments. Staff in small programs, such as, but not limited to, Pre-K, TSAP and Newcomers Center, will be counted in the total faculty in the school buildings where they teach, and the number of representatives will be adjusted accordingly. This staff will receive the same services from its representatives as the rest of the faculties.

The representatives are elected by secret ballot between May 15 and May 25 in accordance with such fair and reasonable procedures as the Board of Elections prescribes.

In the event that a position on the Representative Council becomes vacant, the President shall appoint, with the consent of the Representative Council, a replacement for the unexpired term of office.

Section E – Election of Representatives and Delegates to Affiliates

The Board of Elections conducts these elections as follows:

Representatives and/or alternates to the Representative Assembly of the New York State United Teachers are chosen according to the Constitution of the New York State United Teachers, Article VIII, Representation, pp. 7-8 and such amendments as may hereafter be passed.

Delegates and/or alternates to the Convention of the American Federation of Teachers are chosen according to the Constitution of the American Federation of Teachers, Article VIII, Representation, Sections 1a and 1b, pp. 12-13 and such amendments as may hereafter be passed.

Delegates and/or alternates to the Legislative Convention of the New York State AFL-CIO are chosen according to the Constitution of the New York State AFL-CIO, Article V and such amendments as may hereafter be passed.

ARTICLE X – Impeachment of Officers and Representatives

Section A

An elected officer may be removed for misconduct.

Section B

An elected officer of the organization may be removed from office only after written specific charges have been presented by a Representative Council member to the Executive Board. If the Executive Board finds these charges groundless, the matter will be dropped. If the Executive Board determines that there is probable cause to the charges, the officer in question will be served with written specific charges and given a reasonable time to prepare a defense and afforded a full and fair hearing before the Executive Board. Promptly thereafter, the Executive Board shall render its written determination. An elected officer may be impeached only upon two-thirds vote of the Executive Board present and voting at a duly called meeting convened for that purpose. An elected officer charged with misconduct shall not be entitled to vote on his/her impeachment.

Section C

The officer charged shall be suspended from office with pay upon the Executive Board's determination that there is probable cause to the charges. The Executive Board shall appoint a person pro tem to perform the duties of the suspended officer.

Section D

In the event that the decision of the Executive Board is for the removal of the officer, the Executive Board shall appoint a person pro tem to serve the unexpired term of said officer.

Section E

A building representative may be removed from their position after specific charges for ineffective service or failure to perform their duties as set out in the Constitution are presented to the Executive Board. If the Executive Board finds these charges groundless, the matter will be dropped. If the Executive Board determines that there is probable cause to the charges, the representative in question will be served with written specific charges and given a reasonable time to prepare a defense and afforded a full and fair hearing before the Executive Board. Promptly thereafter, the Executive Board shall render its written determination. A representative may be impeached only upon two-thirds vote of the Executive Board present and voting at a duly called meeting convened for that purpose.

ARTICLE XI – Legislative Authority

Section A – Meetings of the Representative Council

Meetings of the Representative Council may be called by order of the president, or by ten percent of the members, provided they put their request in writing to the secretary.

Section B – Meetings of the Entire Membership

Meetings of the entire membership may be called by order of the president, or by ten percent of the members, provided they put their request in writing to the secretary, or by a two-thirds vote of the Representative Council members attending. Meetings of the entire membership act only on matters announced in an agenda or notice distributed to each school building by the secretary prior to the meetings or sent to members when school is not in session. Decisions of meetings of the entire membership or of votes of the entire membership are determined by a majority of those attending or of those voting respectively. The members attending constitute a quorum.

Section C – Meetings of Members in Individual Schools

Building representatives to the Representative Council may call and conduct meetings of the members in individual schools.

Section D – Authority of the Representative Council

Legislative authority of the Association resides in the Representative Council subject to the Constitution, the Agreement, and decisions of the entire membership. The policy of the Association and all other decisions of the Representative Council are determined by a majority of those attending. The members attending constitute a quorum. Procedures follow Robert's Rules of Order.

Section E – Transfer of Power

The president calls a meeting of the incoming and outgoing Representative Councils during the second week of June, at which time the treasurer's report for the year is presented. The secretary announces the names of the new officers and certifies their qualification for installation into their respective offices. The incoming president is installed and, in turn, installs the other incoming officers and Representative Council members. The new officers and the new Representative Council assume their duties immediately except for members of the Negotiating Team and chairpersons of standing committees, who assume their duties when their appointments are confirmed.

ARTICLE XII – Beverly Bailey Welfare Committee

Section A – Membership

The Beverly Bailey Welfare Committee consists of the President, the Treasurer, and the Vice President and grievance chairs.

Section B – Purpose

The Beverly Bailey Welfare Committee administers a fund to provide compassionate financial assistance to members.

Section C – Procedures

The Beverly Bailey Welfare Committee establishes uniform procedures for investigating situations of apparent need for compassionate financial assistance. These procedures include provision for non-financial assistance where that would help and for advice to those whose needs might be met by improved financial management or by fuller recourse to existing private and/or public agencies prerequisite to the use of direct assistance from this fund.

Section D – Terms of Assistance

All disbursements from this fund shall be in the form of interest-free loans to be repaid at such times and under such terms as the Beverly Bailey Welfare Committee decides.

Section E – Confidentiality

The proceedings of the Beverly Bailey Welfare Committee are as confidential as possible, consistent with any member’s right to review the financial record of the Association.

ARTICLE XIII – Welfare Trust Fund

Section A – Purpose

The principal purpose of the Welfare Trust Fund is to administer dental, vision, and other insurance benefits to the teachers and other employees of the City of White Plains School District included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Association and the District.

Section B – Administration

A Board of Trustees approved by Representative Council oversees the fund. This board includes the President of the Association, or his/her designee, and four other members.

ARTICLE XIV – Amendments and Revisions

Section A – Amendments

Proposed amendments to this Constitution may be submitted to the secretary and read before a meeting of the Representative Council. The secretary distributes notices of the proposal to the schools. Amendments may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the members voting provided the notice of the amendments shall have been posted on the Association’s bulletin boards at the schools for at least five days prior to voting.

Section B – Revision

This Constitution may be superseded by a revised constitution by a two-thirds vote of the members voting provided the proposed revision shall have been submitted to the secretary and distributed to the membership at least five school days prior to voting.

At least once every six years (with the next revision scheduled for 2028) following the adoption of this Constitution and the Bylaws and Standing Rules adopted herewith, a Constitutional Revision Committee shall be appointed by the president with the approval of the Council.

The Constitutional Revision Committee may propose a revision as provided above, or it may submit individual amendments as provided in Section A above or it may report to the president a finding that the existing Constitution should stand unchanged.

This Constitution was ratified by the members of the White Plains Teachers Association on May 13, 2022.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the president and the secretary of the White Plains Teachers Association have hereunto set their hands and seals this 13th day of May.

Kara McCormick-Lyons
President

John Hughs
Secretary

2021-2022 Constitutional Revision Committee:

Melissa Staar
Caryn Friedman
Angela Williams
Jillian Nahoum
Dave Acevedo,
Rhoda Havis