



**Membership Handbook
September 2013**

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About This Handbook

Teachers Unite members, board members and staff met in the summer of 2013 to think deeply about our vision for the organization. A series of conversations, and a great deal of work in between meetings, resulted in the production of this document with which we envision all our work to align.

The purpose of this handbook is to:

- guide members and staff as they make decisions for the organization
- clarify our organizational goals for prospective members
- clarify the roles and responsibilities of being a Teachers Unite member
- communicate our principles to allies and supporters
- exemplify, and possibly inspire, transparency, thoughtfulness, and principled organizing to our members, allies and supporters
- invite democratic decision-making and leadership development within our organization through the process of revising and approving the handbook yearly
- strengthen unity among members in our organization through shared understanding of our vision, mission and principles.

We thank Critical Resistance, Dignity in Schools Campaign, People Power Movement and Youth Justice Coalition who have served as just some of the inspiration and resources we have drawn from as we compiled this handbook. Their commitment to principled work, grassroots democratic organizing, and leadership from the ground is what we seek to emulate with this document.

Vision Statement

Teachers Unite is working to create a movement of educator-leaders who collaborate with parents and students to abolish mass incarceration as well as transform public schools into caring communities that empower students to develop their skills to their fullest potential. We envision a democratic teachers union that stands against racism and systems of oppression. We demand a public education system governed through popular control, where each school is grounded in the needs, values and collaborative decision-making within its community.

Mission Statement

Teachers Unite is an independent membership organization of public school educators in New York City collaborating with youth and parents to transform New York City and the nation's public schools. We resist institutions that segregate and criminalize Black and Latino/a youth, such as the school-to-prison pipeline, by organizing educators to work as allies in local and national campaigns for social and economic justice. We develop and share resources for restorative justice and chapter building that promote grassroots leadership in public education, and we conduct collaborative research on pressing educational issues. We believe that schools can only be transformed when educators work with and learn from parents and youth to achieve social and economic justice.

Principles of Unity

1. We believe in collaborative leadership and grassroots democracy. We build this democracy through the use of transformative practices in schools, which embodies and models this form of organizing.
2. We work in alliance with youth and parents to build this democracy in our schools. We strive to use transformative justice practices to build those alliances.
3. We are part of a movement to abolish the Prison Industrial Complex PIC and challenge “the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe.” (Critical Resistance) We resist the PIC by promoting belief in, and practice of, transformative justice as well as advocating for systemic change of how public schools contribute to the PIC.
4. We see structural racism and capitalism as the core of the problems in public education. Racism means that communities of color are systematically denied the human right to a decent education by denying them: a voice in the educational of their children, adequate funding, and a curriculum that addresses the cultural needs of children of color.
5. We recognize restorative justice as a historical tradition of resistance developed by communities of color – from undocumented immigrants to First Nations. We chose to use restorative justice to honor this tradition and build from this long-standing history.
6. We believe that the NYC public education system should be democratic and reflect the communities they serve. We see the NYC DOE, and the UFT as being the major systemic institutions at play in our education system.
7. We believe in popular control of schools. Because we believe that public schools should be funded entirely by the public, governed by the public and accountable to the public.

Membership Criteria

All members are required to:

1. Accept our principles of unity, mission, and vision.
2. Pay dues
 - a. UFT Members pay 50 dollars per year
 - b. Allies pay 40 dollars per year
3. Understand and follow member roles and responsibilities outlined in bylaws.

Theory of Social Change

In the past twenty years, New York City has changed dramatically. This change has been caused by the following large political, economic and social changes: the privatization of the public sector, the corporatization and gentrification of large swaths of the city, and an emergently enormous and powerful police presence that relates directly to the enormous prison population peppered throughout the state. While the lives of all New Yorkers have been impacted powerfully by this transformation, they have not been impacted in the same way. This unequal change has meant a dramatic restricting of equal access to what have at many

times in history considered to be public goods and resources. In this, poor communities of color have been hit hardest—that is to say, for poor black and brown people in NYC, it is increasingly difficult to locate and secure basic societal rights like: affordable public housing, health care and—of particular concern to us—public education.

Today, New York City’s public schools, and particularly those in poor communities of color, are characterized by a of lack resources, an ever-increasing police presence, pedagogy that focuses on tests and results instead of growth and education, and barriers to family and community input in how and what happens in schools. It is important, from our perspective to highlight that there is not a lack of money or power in New York City’s educational system: there is a deep misallocation of both. This, in our understanding, is rooted in a racist capitalist system in which the political economy of the city is maintained through an unfair distribution of power in the form of money, political control and public policy. In this specific instance, this looks like a public policy that allows for things like mayoral control of public education, a ruthless attack on teachers rights as unionized workers, special bond incentivization for charter school financing and growth, and policies like stop-and-frisk inside of public schools. When money and power are distributed in this way, it means that there is not money or power allocated towards things that have been, and could, prioritized: well-funded facilities and classrooms, community control of public schools, and a pedagogical framework in which youth in schools are considered students not potential criminals.

Luckily, just as this change has been made, it can be unmade. We work in service of a vision in which all teachers and students have democratic political representation, either through a community school board, or a democratic teachers’ union that works for social justice. We seek to build school-wide communities in which teachers and other staff work in concert with students and their families. We want police, arrests and metal detectors out of schools, because we want schools that foster education and loving inclusivity, not punishment and fear. We want to help teachers and schools build a way of relating to students that focuses on teaching students how to relate to others even in times of fear, crisis or conflict, so that they are prepared to handle conflict and difficulty when they are adults.

We believe that if the city’s public schools system is transformed in this way, the changes will come in the way money and power are distributed in the city. Communities will be more involved in democracy, and New York City will be, de facto, a more democratic place. There will be space, school materials, and technological access for every student in New York, and each of her teachers as well. Families will understand school as a place where children they can be students: young people learning intellectually, emotionally and politically. This analysis leads us to grounding our work in transformative justice.

Transformative Justice is Democratic Collective Action

The act of growing Transformative Justice schools **is** the act of building power at the school site (i.e. “chapter” building).

What is the role of a TU member in building power at school sites?

TU members provide peer-to-peer professional coaching on how to build a positive school culture that embodies transformative justice through its practice (circles, alternatives to suspensions, etc.) and its principles:

- collaborative leadership
- collective action
- community accountability
- resistance to unjust institutions
- democracy
- respect for all voices
- valued relationships
- transformation through struggle

What does it mean to be Organizing (versus *solely* being activists or providing service)?

Organizing means people are building organizational power to fight powerful institutions that directly impact them. Organizing is long-term relationship building, wherein a group of people see themselves as an interconnected collective – a family of sorts. Organizers do this by connecting events and people who share the same values and language. In addition, organizing is based on structures and systems that include roles for different people. These structures, systems, and roles work together to ensure that we are fighting institutions. Organizers think about the long term and the root causes of an issue. Teachers Unite believes that we should engage in organizing.

Activists hold conferences and individual actions about issues that do not necessarily impact them directly. Activism tends to have less structure, systems, and roles for different people. Activism can play a role in changing the discussion, and even bringing people into a movement. However, it is not the primary strategy that Teachers Unite wants to employ.

Service providers train and meet on-the-spot needs of impacted people. For example, if you see a hungry person, a service provider provides food. If you see an underfunded school, then a service provider may give money and resources to the school. Again, like activism, this is clearly an important role, it is not a role that Teachers Unite seeks to fill.

We **build TU power to move the UFT** to be a democratic union responding to the demands of our members. We want a UFT that fights for more than bread and butter issues. We want a UFT that recognizes that, for instance, in school closures, as UFT members lose their jobs, students and families in those same schools are being criminalized. We want a union that will stand with us to fight this oppression with the families and communities we serve.

This means our strategy is to work with schools, activate them in these fights toward a grand vision of what public education should be. This means **we support**

schools by providing them with training on restorative practices, and tools to shift their school culture toward one that is transformative. These are the systems and structures we use to organize schools. Once schools know how to use these systems and structures, then these school communities can then self-organize.

Schools who align with our vision through the process of building a transformative school culture with Teachers Unite are Teachers Unite chapters. This maybe a Uft Chapter, but it may not. School communities may wish to build chapters separate from the UFT chapter. These are also schools where a number of educators have joined Teachers Unite in a common commitment to fight oppression.

When we organize, we increase our base, participants and leaders. We increase our power as an organization, and the ability to move the UFT as allies to NYC communities in the fight against racist oppression and privatization. We envision a new UFT that that embraces our principles of unity.

We **build Teachers Unite to impact and strengthen the fight against the prison industrial complex, school-to-prison pipeline, over-emphasis on data and testing, criminalization and pushout.** The site where we exercise this advocacy is in coalition with youth and parent members in the Dignity in Schools Campaign.

History of TU

In 2002, Sally Lee found out about a group of teachers meeting to act on political issues (motivated by Iraq War protests) and went to their first open meeting. She joined the group and after some initial work, the group named itself NYCoRE (New York Collective of Radical Educators). Sally and fellow NYCoRE member Herm Jerome eventually initiated a study group and work group around issues of criminalization of youth.

After leaving teaching in 2003, Sally continued to work with NYCoRE and started planning Teachers Unite to marry the world of teachers for social justice to the world of union opposition activists, and to build a center for social justice teacher organizing. Herm Jerome was a founding board member. After getting involved with the Student Safety Act Campaign, Teachers Unite partnered with [NESRI](#) and in 2008 published [*Teachers Talk: School Culture, Safety and Human Rights*](#).

In 2011, through collaboration with NESRI and [Dignity in Schools Campaign](#) member organizations, TU received enough funding to hire a community organizer. TU's work building Restorative Practices and contributing to the Dignity in Schools Campaign was able to deepen and expand. During this time, Teachers Unite members had a discussion about getting a NYC DOE vendor number to provide Restorative Justice trainings. Ultimately, during this time, Teachers Unite chose not to get a vendor number because Teachers Unite members and staff agreed that they did not want to be a service organization. We wanted to be an organizing group that uses restorative and transformative practices to build chapters.

In 2012 Teachers Unite embarked on the Growing Fairness project, which led to the formation of a cadre of lead members building transformative justice resources

with an eye toward leadership development, school organizing, and movement building.

Structure and Bylaws

Organizing Council

Teachers Unite's Organizing Council is made-up of UFT members who make decisions about Teachers Unite's strategy and work, determine and evaluate Teachers Unite staff goals and outcomes, and work to build power of the organization. Teachers Unite believes that a strong teacher organization, that has authentic alliances with parents and youth, will transform our unjust school system and society by building power at school sites with shared goals of defending public education governed through popular control and rooted in communities, promoting workers' rights, and resisting all systems that oppress and imprison our students and their communities. The Council ensures that all activities model the form of teachers union they want to belong to.

The Council's goals are to:

- Build diverse Teachers Unite membership as defined by race, ethnicity, religion, ability, gender identification, and sexual orientation as well as economic, geographic and educational background.
- Build diverse Teachers Unite leadership as defined by race, ethnicity, religion, ability, gender identification, and sexual orientation as well as economic, geographic and educational background.
- Grow the number of schools that resist oppression and the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) through their efforts to transform their school culture as well as activities to advocate for system change.
- Grow the capacity of Teachers Unite
- Build and strengthen alliances with parent and youth organizations
- Develop and disseminate political analysis

The Council will organize by:

- Developing school based Teachers Unite Chapters. Teachers Unite chapters are school-site based groups of people that can include UFT and Non-UFT members who align themselves with Teachers Unite mission, vision, and principles of unity. They may be UFT Chapters that also identify as Teachers Unite Chapters. (However, it would be possible for a school to have a UFT Chapter and a TU chapter.) To be considered a Teachers Unite Chapter, a school must be using transformative justice practices as a means to build power in the school.
 - Benefits for TU Chapters
 - School organizing support from TU staff and members
 - Potential grant access for pilot school development
- Assessing and strategizing the growth of collaborative leadership in school chapters (either TU Chapters, or UFT Chapters that align with TU – by using transformative justice as a means to build power of teachers in a chapter) as a result of building relationships with staff, parents and young people at those chapters
- Recruiting new members through their own chapter building work and relationship-building with educators at other chapters in their borough

- Determining the programs and work of the organization (particularly its organizing strategy) and determines if the work is aligned to our mission and points of unity
- Convening skill shares to develop new TU and chapter leaders. TU chapter leaders can be from the school community. They are not necessarily just UFT chapter leaders.
- Developing, leading and fine tuning workshops that build collaborative leadership in schools with the goal of promoting transformative justice, grassroots democracy and community responsiveness and resisting oppression.
- Turning out educators for DSC-NY events and representing TU membership in both DSC-NY and DSC national activities.

Council meetings will proceed as follows:

- 4-hour Monthly council meetings offer childcare to members who Request it in advance and include:
 - Internal business portion 1 hour and 45 minutes (open to all members, but only council members decide on items)
 - Assessing member recruitment progress
 - Identifying potential new leaders met during school visits and workshops
 - Assessing the growth of TU chapters through evaluation of TU workshops
 - Provide feedback to TU staff about work plans and activities
 - Planning work on TU projects (Growing Fairness workshops, toolkit, screenings; SLT workshops; website; blogs, articles; conferences; DSC, DSC-NY)
 - Responding to DSC needs and informing DSC work and analysis with educator insight
- Refreshing break 15 minutes
 - Public portion (open to all and planned by staff unless Council or lead members have capacity to lead)
 - Community building activity/discussion
 - Skill share
 - Guest speaker(s)
 - Report on TU work and ways to get involved

Bronx Organizing Council

The Bronx Organizing Council is lead by TU members in the Bronx who are working to bring Restorative Justice into the Bronx Schools. The Bronx Councils goals and organizing strategy are similar to those of the Teachers Unite organizing council, but they are localized in the Bronx.

The Bronx Organizing Council structures its meetings as follows:

- Are held at Bronx school sites.
- Utilize the circle process – including the use of a talking piece, opening and closing for all meetings.
- Help school communities answer the following questions:
 - What is going well at your school site?
 - What is not going well at your school site?

- How can we help this school site meet it's goals?

Brooklyn Organizing Council

To be developed.

Manhattan Organizing Council

To be developed.

Queens Organizing Council

To be developed.

Staten Island Organizing Council

To be developed.

Membership Structure

Council Members* - Dues \$50

Council Member Definition	Council Member Responsibility	Council Member Benefits	Council Member Decision Making
UFT member Join council through commitment* ** process in September or January Agree to mission, vision, and points of unity Must attend 9 of 12 monthly meetings, will plan and facilitate 1 or 2 meeting Attend at least 2 DSC events a year	Publicly communicate good understanding of Teachers Unite mission, vision, and strategy Contribute annual dues Plan turnkey/shareout event with TU member following any training conferences, etc. Participate regularly in calls, activities, and meetings that advance Teachers Unites work. Represent Teachers Unite at meetings, events, through writing	Given priority opportunity to lead paid workshops (per session or grant funded stipend) workshop facilitation Given priority opportunity to receive financial support to attend conferences, workshops, etc. Staff support for organizing, Pilot School development, publishing op-eds and articles Free tee shirt and buttons	Responsible for deciding on messaging around related campaign or issue Responsible for approving TU goals, budget and work plan Responsible for support with hiring new staff Responsible for reviewing, informing, updating and approving internal governance protocols Accountable to fellow lead members when deciding on tactic or event that demands staff time or funding Accountable to fellow lead members when representing TU at meeting with allies,

	<p>and/or to the press</p> <p>Respond to staff requests and proposals that further Teachers Unite work</p> <p>Respond to staff requests and proposals that further TU work</p> <p>Possible personnel supervision and evaluation</p>		<p>targets or when publishing writing or speaking to media</p> <p>Responsible for fundraising help to support approved budget and workplan</p> <p>Consulted by staff for time-sensitive decisions about tactics, fundraising or spending</p> <p>Consulted with for endorsing/supporting action, event or letter from other organization</p> <p>Personnel, supervision and evaluation policies are developed and monitored by a Staff Committee made up of at least 2 Council/Lead members and 1 Board Member</p>
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Lead Member* - Dues \$50 - UFT; \$40 - Non-UFT

Lead Member Definition	Lead Member Responsibility	Lead Member Benefits	Lead Member Decision Making
<p>UFT member or Non- UFT member</p> <p>Agree to mission, vision, and points of unity</p> <p>Must attend 4 of 12 monthly meetings, will plan and facilitate 1 or 2 meeting</p>	<p>Publicly communicate good understanding of Teachers Unite mission, vision, and strategy</p> <p>Contribute annual dues</p> <p>Plan turnkey/shareout event with TU member</p>	<p>Staff support for organizing, Pilot School development, publishing op-eds and articles</p> <p>Opportunities for stipends as research assistants and/or trainers</p> <p>opportunity to</p>	<p>Responsible for deciding on messaging around related campaign or issue</p> <p>Consulted about developing TU goals, budget, workplan</p> <p>Responsible for reviewing, informing, updating and approving internal</p>

	<p>community following any training conferences, etc.</p> <p>Participate regularly in calls, activities, and meetings that advance Teachers Unite’s work</p> <p>Represent Teachers Unite at meetings, events, through writing and/or to the press</p> <p>Respond to staff requests and proposals that further Teachers Unite work</p> <p>Possible personnel supervision and evaluation</p>	<p>receive financial support to attend conferences, workshops, etc.</p> <p>Free tee shirt and button</p>	<p>governance protocols</p> <p>Accountable to fellow lead members when deciding on tactic or event that demands staff time or funding</p> <p>Accountable to fellow lead members when deciding on tactic or event that demands staff time or funding</p> <p>Responsible for fundraising help to support approved budget and workplan</p> <p>Consulted with for endorsing/supporting action, event or letter from other organization</p> <p>Accountable to fellow lead members when representing TU at meeting with allies, targets or when publishing writing or speaking to media</p>
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* Council and Lead members may be asked to do more specific work related to the Dignity in Schools campaign. Please see the TU programs section of this handbook for more information.

**The first printing of this handbook said “application process in September or January” instead of “3-month commitment process.” This was a typo. Please excuse this. Subsequent printings say “3-month commitment process.”

General Member - Dues \$50 - UFT; \$40 - Non-UFT

General Member Definition	General Member Responsibility	General Member Benefits	General Member Decision Making
UFT member or Non-UFT member Agree to mission, vision, and points of unity	Publicly communicate good understanding of Teachers Unite mission Contribute annual dues	Free tee shirt and button	Informed of updates to internal governance protocols Informed of general activities

Board Member - Dues \$50 - UFT; \$40 - Non-UFT

Board Member Definition	Board Member Responsibility	Board Member Benefits	Board Member Decision Making

<p>UFT member or Non-UFT member</p> <p>Agree to mission, vision, and points of unity</p>	<p>Publicly communicate good understanding of Teachers Unite mission, vision, and strategy</p> <p>Contribute annual dues</p> <p>Represent Teachers Unite at meetings, events, through writing and/or to the press</p> <p>Respond to staff requests and proposals that further Teachers Unite work</p> <p>Possible personnel supervision and evaluation</p> <p>4 meetings per year</p> <p>Contribute to building capacity of TU</p> <p>Provide financial oversight</p>	<p>Free tee shirt and button</p>	<p>Responsible for reviewing, informing, updating and approving internal governance protocols</p> <p>Accountable to fellow lead members when representing TU at meeting with allies, targets or when publishing writing or speaking to media</p> <p>Responsible for fundraising help to support approved budget and workplan</p> <p>Informed of TU goals and workplan</p> <p>Responsible for approving budget</p>
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TU Programs

Organizing Workshops (Project 1)

Goals

- Build collaborative leadership in schools. We assess collaborative leadership by using a rubric based on these questions:
 - How involved are parents in decision-making?
 - How involved are students in decision-making?
 - How involved are teachers of color in decision-making?
 - How involved are non-teacher UFT members - specifically paras, secretaries etc in decision-making?
 - How involved are non-UFT member school staff in decision-making?
 - Please note that at the writing of this document in Summer 2013 we discussed creating a rubric for assessing a TU

chapters' work in these areas. It is our intent to create one and add it as a reference piece to this handbook.

- Recruit diverse TU members as council, leaders or general members. Diversity is defined by race, ethnicity, religion, ability, gender, age, identification, and sexual orientation as well as economic, geographic and educational background.
- Build understanding and language around the connections between our in-school practice and the larger political context for purpose of personal transformation, engagement in political advocacy to transform institutions, and sustainability.

Workshop Operations and Operating principles:

- Workshops are only given to 1) unionized schools where at least 2-5 educators are participating, and/or 2) in the case of Growing Fairness workshos: groups of educators, parents, and/or young people from public school communities actively working to resist PIC, the school-to-prison pipeline and oppression
- Participating schools must commit to follow-up meeting, DSC action participation or other relevant activity
- Workshops must be led by 2 facilitators (at least one must be a UFT member)
- Workshops must model transformative practices, regardless of content
- Workshops must have ground rules related to respect, listening, and other process-related guidelines.
- Workshops must include component on chapter building/multi-stakeholder organizing/shared leadership/collaborative decision-making
- Workshops must include component that describes TU organizing and membership opportunities
- Growing Fairness workshops must include political context component of the school-to-prison pipeline or PIC
- Growing Fairness workshops must include information about DSC and efforts to stop student pushout

Workshop Fee Scale

- Unless public school has supplementary funds, they only pay facilitators' per diem.
 - Whenever possible, facilitators are compensated for their time, either through per diem, or via Teachers Unite stipend at end of fiscal year.
- Scholarships are available for dues-paying members.
- Sliding scale ensures that organizations with working budgets and schools with relevant funding enable TU to offer workshops to schools and groups unable to pay TU.

	Workshop Fee	Includes
Organizations with budgets over \$500,000	\$3,000 plus any travel costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-assessment • Customized workshops • Access to online toolkit resource • Follow-up assessment and support
Orgs with budgets	\$2,000 plus travel	Same as above

between \$200,000 and \$499,999		
Orgs with budgets between \$20,000-\$199,99	\$600 plus travel	Same as above

Workshop Facilitator (Organizer) roles

- 1:1 relationship building as follow-up
- collecting assessments and reporting back to council for purposes of fine tuning workshops and mapping TU chapters using the rubric (TBD)
- Request staff assistance as needed

Dignity in Schools Campaign (Project 2)

Teachers Unite is a member of the Coordinating Committee of the **Dignity in Schools Campaign (DSC)**. The DSC challenges the systemic problem of pushout in our nation's schools and advocates for the human right of every young person to a quality education and to be treated with dignity. The DSC unites parents, youth, advocates and educators to support alternatives to a culture of zero-tolerance, punishment and removal in our schools.

The DSC has now grown into a multi-stakeholder coalition made up of youth, parents, educators, grassroots groups, and policy and legal advocacy groups, which strives to ensure that those most affected by the education system and school pushout are at the center of our work and leadership structures. DSC's Membership is structured to create a space for all to both contribute to the work and to benefit from the collective advancements of the coalition and local successes of its members.

The National Dignity in Schools Campaign:

-advocates for federal policy change to promote alternatives to zero-tolerance discipline through the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, aka No Child Left Behind) and other federal initiatives.

- Support state and local campaigns by member groups to end pushout and implement positive approaches to school climate and discipline, such as positive behavior supports, restorative practices, conflict resolution and mediation programs.

- Develop model school policies for school districts and legislators that guarantee fundamental human rights standards for quality education, participation, dignity and freedom from discrimination.

- Share information on solutions to pushout and strategies for change through our website, tele-conferences, webinars, and national meetings.

Teachers Unite is on the Steering Committee of **the New York Chapter of the Dignity in Schools Campaign (DSC-NY)**. **DSC-NY** is a citywide coalition of students, parents, advocates, educators and lawyers calling for positive, school-wide approaches to discipline that improve the school environment, reduce conflict, and increase learning. We work to reduce suspensions and other harsh policies that violate students' human right to education and to be treated with dignity. Students, parents and educators have a right to participate in decision-making related to discipline policies in schools.

DSC-NY:

DSC-NY develops policy recommendations and organizes testimony before the Department of Education to change New York City's school discipline policies, and holds workshops and teach-ins to engage students, parents and educators in our work.

Operations and Operating Principles

- Teachers Unite is the only educator organization in the national and local DSC. We participate in the youth-led coalition space with the utmost thoughtfulness and attention to our role as allies with relative privilege.
- When TU members cannot be consulted around campaign decisions (due to time constraints), TU members representing the organization in campaign activities are empowered to vote on the TU's behalf provided that decisions are made based on our Principles of Unity.
- TU members are expected to privilege the voices of low-income communities of color as well as other marginalized groups such as young people before speaking in the campaign space. Members are expected to monitor their "air-time" in meetings.
- TU members have valuable knowledge and analysis to share regarding public education, schools operations, pedagogy and teacher unions. Our contribution to the coalition centers on this knowledge and understanding as well as our commitment to our principles.

Possible Commitments for Lead Members and Council Members:

- Represent TU at the **DSC-NY Steering Committee**, a monthly meeting where lead organizations make decisions about the campaign's strategy & internal structure and check in about the progress of the campaign's working groups.

Responsibilities: Report-back, liaison and consult with TU staff, Lead and Council Members at monthly TU membership meeting.

Time commitment: 2 hours/month

- Represent TU at monthly **DSC-NY Campaign Meeting**. This is a space for all coalition organizations to build community among our membership and make decisions about campaign strategy and tactics. Teachers Unite members in this space come together as allies to youth and parents, participate in campaign activities and decision-making, and check in with one another and the TU organizer

after the meeting about campaign work & goals and our ally role in the space.

Responsibilities: Report-back, liaison and consult with TU staff, Lead and Council Members at monthly TU membership meeting.

Time commitment: 2.5 hours/month

- Represent TU at monthly **DSC-NY Pilot Schools Working Group** meeting. TU is the co-chair of this group that coordinates support of pilot Restorative Justice programs in schools across the city—collecting data and best practices, connecting schools to funding and resources, writing case study reports, and developing & promoting DSC-NY's Pilot School Platform—a set of demands on the DOE to fund and implement Restorative Justice at 10 schools.

Responsibilities: Report-back, liaison and consult with TU staff, Lead and Council Members at monthly TU membership meeting.

Time commitment: 3 hours/month (1 1-hour call and 2 hours of independent or sub-committee work)

- Represent TU at **DSC-NY planning retreats** (twice a year). This is a time for the full campaign to come together for a more intensive strategy planning session, usually held on a Saturday or vacation day so students and educators can participate.

Responsibilities: Report-back, liaison and consult with TU staff, Lead and Council Members at monthly TU membership meeting.

Time commitment: One 7-hour day

- Represent TU at annual **DSC (National) Member Meeting**, hosted in a different city each year. This is an opportunity to build community with our national partners, learn about local campaigns happening across the country, and make decisions in person about national campaign goals and strategy.

Responsibilities: Report-back, liaison and consult with TU staff, Lead and Council Members at monthly TU membership meeting.

Time commitment: One long weekend

- Represent TU on **monthly DSC (national) Membership Meeting calls**.

Responsibilities: Report-back, liaison and consult with TU staff, Lead and Council Members at monthly TU membership meeting.

Time commitment: 1 hour/month

Additional Responsibilities of TU Members:

- Represent TU in DSC and DSC-NY actions, press conferences, webinars, lobbying visits, conferences, and workshops.
- Turnout colleagues to DSC and DSC-NY actions and events.

Resource Development (Project 3)

Publications and Productions

Completed:

- *Teachers Talk: School Culture, Safety and Human Rights*
- *Your Schools, Your Voice: The Impact of Mayoral Control on Community Participation in Schools*
- *Growing Fairness* documentary
- *Growing Fairness Resource hub*

In Production (as of 8/23/13):

- *Schools Are Us*
- *Disappearing Black and Latino Teachers Research*
- *Growing Fairness toolkit (available for workshop participants only)*

Operating Principles:

- Starting August 2013 any proposal to produce a TU resource must:
 - Be approved by the Organizing Council
 - Contribute in a measurable way to the sustainability of TU program goals
 - Explore the possibility of contributing to TU fundraising/organizational capacity
 - Adhere to TU Principles of Unity

Teachers Unite Guide for Researchers

The following excerpts are from Youth Justice Coalition's RealSearch project. We use this as a guiding reference for our agreement with any researcher interested in studying and documenting any aspect of Teachers Unite work:

**RealSearch is a project of the Youth Justice Coalition @ *Chuco's Justice Center*:
1137 E. Redondo Blvd., on the border between South Central L.A. and
Inglewood, 90302. Mail: PO Box 73688, L.A., CA 90003. 323-235-4243 / Fax:
323-846-9472 / freelanow@yahoo.com / <http://www.youth4justice.org>**

Most research is conducted from the protection and isolation of a university tower, science laboratory, or corporate boardroom. Real Search takes those of us in the community out from under the microscope. Beyond the role of storyteller, we are claiming our rights as researchers, analysts, problem solvers, and the architects of programs and public policy.

Specifically, Real-Search aims to give youth and communities opportunities to search for and distribute the truth about our lives, with our analysis and our solutions. We are answering questions that are important to us, will benefit us, and will be an accurate reflection of our worlds.

Why RealSearch is Needed

Traditional research generally reflects the perceptions of white, middle and upper class people "exploring" low income communities and communities of color, taking our knowledge, experiences, and solutions, and publishing it for their own benefit and profit. At times, the work also benefits the researched community. But, more often, research spreads misinformation, flawed analysis and failed solutions leading to our further oppression.

The most serious harm includes:

(1) Dusty Shelf Research - "Research" that only uncovers what the community has always known. In other words re-searching the same conditions over and over again only to arrive at the same conclusions. The result of such studies is not to implement solutions, but to postpone or prevent action. The solutions that are so desperately needed to alleviate real suffering are proposed - but never enacted - for decades. Such studies not only replace the real need for policy change, but also weaken the community's ability to hold governments or corporations accountable. How many times have we heard policy makers hide behind the claim that they have ordered "a study of the issue," "an investigation the facts," "the input of key stakeholders," or "the gathering of more data."

(2) Research that is not part of a larger movement-building effort - When research is not accountable to, and conducted in consultation with community leaders, it doesn't have the people power needed to push for the implementation of proposed solutions. In other words, once the research is published and privatized, there is no follow-up organizing pressure put on the authorized government or corporate leaders.

(3) Research that Causes Irreparable Harm, Damage or Death - The majority of

traditional academic, government, and private foundation researchers construct theories that serve to maintain or broaden inequalities in society. In fact, the idea that research is unbiased and ethical has been disproven over and over again throughout history - (eugenics, the syphilis experiments at Tuskegee and in Guatemala, and widespread experimentation on human subjects in Nazi Germany to name a few examples.) After all, research is a human creation, impacted by all the prejudices and hidden agendas that we carry as humans. When the means of funding and promoting research is almost entirely in the hands of people with more class, race, political and educational privileges, the results rarely challenge existing power dynamics, and lead to years - even decades - of harm. (Think Dilulio's predictions of a generation of youth super-predators, or Wilson and Kelling's theory of broken windows policing, and the impact both these theories have had on the massive incarceration rates of youth of color.)

Yet, the myth that research results in unbiased truth remains a core part of society's beliefs. Policy makers regularly site biased and failed research in their implementation of harmful policies. Mainstream media quotes study after study without any real investigation or counter-analysis. To add salt to the wound, the fame and financial fortunes collected are not shared with the people who have lived the studied experiences or who suffer the results of biased analysis.

TU Contract for Guest Researchers
Adapted from Youth Justice Coalition

Anyone wishing to do research at Teachers Unite meetings must:

- Sign a confidentiality statement stating that they will not share comments people make without express written consent of the person making the statement.
- Disclose in writing to TU the nature of the research being done
- All members in meetings should be made aware of this research at each meeting where a research is in attendance

It is a privilege to do research in collaboration with communities and community spaces. Please initial on the line at the end of each section and sign at the end of the document in agreement with the following points.

Confidentiality

All names and other identifying information must remain confidential at all times. TU may also request anonymity, in which case all information must be de-identified and the identifying information destroyed.

Alternately, if people interviewed or surveyed wish to claim their words and analysis, the guest researcher must include their names.

Compensation

Research participants must be adequately compensated.

Specify type and amount of compensation:

Any person that conducts interviews, focus groups, or surveys, transcribes interviews, enters survey results, writes reports, contributes analysis, or produces art for the research must be adequately compensated.

Specify type and amount of compensation:

Participation

The guest researcher will make clear to participants that their participation is completely voluntary and they may withdraw from the research at any time.

The guest researcher will establish a process whereby prospective participants have an equal opportunity to participate in the study.

Authorship

For some projects, co-authorship with TU may be mandatory, for written products and oral presentations. TU may request that the organization, "Teachers Unite" is listed as the co-author or that every person that made a contribution to the production and dissemination of the research is listed by name. For all cases, credit for those that conducted, participated in, and contributed to the research is mandatory.

TU retains the right to access and analyze original data at any point during and after the research process. TU may publish, disseminate results, and put forward policy suggestions independent of the guest researcher's report.

Analysis

The guest researcher must collaborate with research participants and TU researchers in the analysis of the data.

Ethics

The researcher must conduct all aspects of the research in the spirit of the TU's mission, values, and ethics. All research must be carried out in a manner that seeks to reduce harm and increase justice to participants, members of TU, and the larger community.

Participants will neither be referred to nor treated as "data" or "research objects/subjects" to be used and studied. The researcher will work in respectful collaboration with people.

I agree to abide by the above guidelines.

Name

Signature

Date

Revision and Amendments

This document will be reviewed and revised annually at a TU retreat. All TU members will be able to provide input. However, final decisions will be made by a majority vote of the Organizing Council members. Any ties can be broken by a secondary vote of the lead membership.

Future Work

As with most grand undertakings, like transforming the world into a more caring and democratic place, there is always work. At this point, we anticipate that we will need to complete the following items to more fully develop this handbook:

- Finalize Research Section to address educators, and the relationship between academia, educators and Teachers Unite as an organization
- A list of concrete items that we fight for and/or against.
- Fundraising and participatory budgeting.
- Conflict of interest section.
- Listserve promotional use
- Decision making procedure
- Presentation Guidelines
- Disclosure Protocol