

# NEWARK TEACHERS UNION UPDATE

## January 7, 2022



**John M. Abeigon**

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I am trying to start this new year off with some positive energy. In Teacher Talk this week, we saw some big successes that have come from working with the district:

- Map testing will be pushed back until February
- Parent Teacher Conferences: Parent/Teacher Conferences will be held virtually from 1 pm – 7 pm. If some of you want to hold these meetings from another location other than your school, you will have one-hour travel time so your sessions will run from 2 pm – 8 pm. It is important to note that once all of your meetings are over, you are done, regardless of the end time

or location.

- School year will be reduced to state minimum of 180 student days without any loss of pay.
- District also spoke of the work we have been doing with Central Office on workload reduction. We continue this work and hope to see more changes beyond those already mentioned in this week's Teacher Talk.
  - o Slowing down pacing guides.
  - o Pulling back on Progressive Writing.
  - o Streamlining lesson plans.
  - o More focus on science, social studies, visual and performing arts, physical education, health, and world languages help.

There is still a long way to go, especially when it comes to communication and consistency. We have identified where these breakdowns are occurring and are working to close those gaps moving forward. Enjoy your snow day!

**In Solidarity,**

**John M. Abeigon**

**President/Director of Organization**

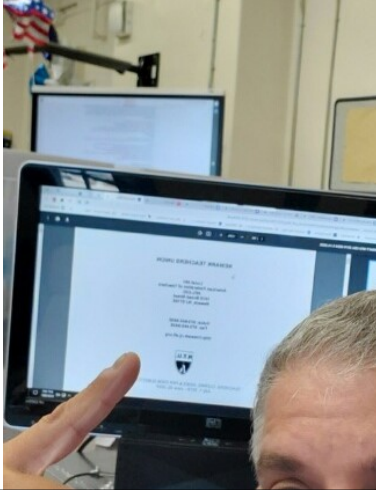
**Newark Teachers Union Local 481, AFT, AFL-CIO**

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### From the Desk of the Secretary Treasurer



Michael R. Iovino

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An observation, while required by state statutes, is meant to advise and inform you on how to improve your instructional practice. Feedback is a great and powerful tool in education.

However...we know that far too often, observations are weaponized by administrators who do not know how to coach. They only know how to hire and fire, not help.

If at any moment you feel your administrator is using this most critical tool of support to do damage, alert me immediately and we will alert our counsel and Labor Relations.

What do I mean?

1. Are you being observed way more than your peers?
2. Are you being observed immediately after you raised a voice about a concern or issue?
3. Are you being observed immediately after you returned from a leave?
4. Are you constantly being observed before a holiday or break?

These are just examples. You know when an observation feels wrong.

Also, these two weeks of virtual are to be a reset. Although we have not received any real guidance as to what that means, you shouldn't be observed formally in this time. It should be supportive check ins.

Let me know.

Be well.

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## Benefits Updates

Starting in January 2022, the district announced two changes to our benefits.

**Self-Insured:** As you may have noticed on your benefits cards, while the district will still be using Aetna to administer our health benefits, they have moved from a “Fully Insured” to a “Self-Insured” program. What does this mean exactly? With a fully-insured health plan, the employer pays a premium to a health insurance company. In return, the insurance company covers the costs of the employees’ healthcare. With a fully-insured plan, there is no additional risk to the employer. In a self-insured plan, the employer directly pays the health claims of the employees as they occur.

This change should not have any direct or noticeable impact on the members or their dependents, but as always, the NTU will be monitoring the situation.

**Express Scripts:** The district has also announced they will be moving their prescription plan from Aetna to Express Scripts. Our contract says that when a provider change is to occur, a joint committee is formed to review these changes and make recommendations. This did not happen, so we have already moved forward on a grievance challenging the legalities of this change.

For now, you can access your ID Cards through the Express Scripts website <https://www.express-scripts.com/> or the Express Scripts App. Because of HIPAA rules, you and each adult dependent on your benefits will have to create their own log in to access their order history. We posted more information on our website: <http://newark.nj.aft.org/express-scripts>

During this time of transition, if you have any issues with your benefits, reach out to the NBOE Benefits office at 973-733-7336 or email at [benefits@nps.k12.nj.us](mailto:benefits@nps.k12.nj.us)

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## FSA UPDATE

Staff who have enrolled in Flexible Spending Accounts for 2022 have reached out to us asking about their new FSA cards. This was the response we got from Benefits:

*While your account for 2022 has been established and is active for use, there has been a delay in the mailing of the debit cards due to a COVID outbreak. We expect the cards to go out in the next couple days.*

*If you have a claim in the meantime, please log into [www.NBOEbenefits.com](http://www.NBOEbenefits.com) and click on the View button on the top right hand corner of the as screen to review your account(s) details, and review the reimbursement process when you cannot use your debit card.*

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### IMPORTANT SNOW DAY REMINDER!

*As per NTU Contract, if you are scheduled to take an absence, and school ends up closing for the day (as it did for a snow day on January 7, 2022), you will get that day back. Check your KRONOS reports and if there is a problem, reach out to your school clerk.*

***NTU Contract: Article X, Section 1, G. ABSENCES DURING SCHOOL CLOSURE When a school or the schools are closed due to emergencies (inclement weather, etc.) any employee who was previously scheduled to be absent that day for sick, personal, or intermittent FLA or FMLA leave will not be charged with a day of absence.***



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**SAVE THE DATE**

- Monday, January 17—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday , School Closed
- Tuesday, January 25—NTU Executive Board Meeting, 3:45 PM
- Tuesday, January 25—NBOE Business Meeting, 6:00 PM
- Thursday, January 27—NBOE Regular Meeting, 6:00 PM

*Please note that January 14 and January 18 are the work days before or after a holiday, respectively. To ensure that you get paid for the holiday weekend, you must take a personal day if you are going to be absent on any of those days.*

*You can take a sick day on those days as long as it is part of an approved medical leave. Unless it is part of an extended FMLA, you must submit a medical certificate to NBOE Office of Administrative Services within 3 days of your return to work.*

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## MEMBER SERVICES

NTU Members should never hesitate to communicate with us by phone, email, etc regarding any of the issues we handle at the Newark Teachers Union.

- Planning for Retirement
- Pension & Buy Back Issues
- ER+D Staff Development
- Health and Supplemental Benefits
- AFT Membership Benefits
- FMLA and other leaves of absence
- Assistance with Evaluations and Observations
- Disciplinary Hearings
- Labor Relations & Payroll
- Legal Representation
- Workers Comp
- Tuition Reimbursement

**Under the current situation, it is vital to stay informed! If you have changed your address, phone number, or location, please reach out to [sscreven@newarkteachersunion.com](mailto:sscreven@newarkteachersunion.com) to let us know.**

**Also, if you don't get our weekly updates, send an email to [mmaillaro@newarkteachersunion.com](mailto:mmaillaro@newarkteachersunion.com) to make sure you are on our mailing list.**

**Don't forget to follow us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/NewarkTeachersUnion481/>) and Instagram ([https://www.instagram.com/newark\\_teachers\\_union/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/newark_teachers_union/?hl=en))**

**If you are not an NTU member, make sure you fill out a membership application on our website!**

# NEWARK TEACHERS UNION

## Staff

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and Communication**

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**Marivelle Ocasio**

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**Part-Time Staff Reps**

**Robert Palumbo**

**John Alvino**

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**Security/Maintenance**

**James Santiago**

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**Office Staff**

**Wendy Huang**

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## Executive Board

**John M. Abeigon, President/Director of Organization**

**Michael Iovino, Secretary/Treasurer**

## Vice Presidents

**Victor Afonso**

**Yvette Jordan**

**Noor Alam**

**Kathleen Murphy-Butler**

**Cristina Balboa-**

**Silvia Pereira**

**Camacho**

**Justin Petino**

**Chris Canik**

**Jennifer Ramos**

**Ronnie D. Carney**

**Marisa Rodriguez**

**Timothy Carr**

**Ryan Sandor**

**Cassandra Chapman-**

**Larry Sullivan**

**Talmadge**

**Janae Taylor**

**Donna Charles**

**Tennille Wasek**

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**Carmen Lopez Wolf**

**Mark Donetz**

**Josephine Donnellan**

**Kristyn Faison**

**Joicki Floyd**

**Love Gaillard**

**Francisco Garcia**

**Nancy Gianni**

