

ITHACA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

CONSTITUTION

MAY 30, 2006

CONSTITUTION

TABLE OF ORGANIZATION

ITA MEMBERS

elect Association Officers and
NYSUT NEA AFT Delegates (or Representatives)

BUILDING REPRESENTATIVES

*are elected in individual schools/departments
depending on numbers of teaching staff*

CABINET

(formerly referred to as Executive Cabinet)

Includes the following:

- Association Officers
- Chairs of Standing Committees (as appropriate)
- Immediate Past President (if available)

REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

(formerly referred to as Executive Board)

Includes the following:

- Association Officers
- Building Representatives
- Chairpersons of Standing Committees
- Immediate Past President

ITA CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization shall be “**Ithaca Teachers Association,**” also to be referred to as “**ITA**”.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSES

Section 1. To promote within the teaching group the highest type of professional practices; to encourage active participation of all teachers in the solution of school problems; to urge every member of the profession to be a progressive student of education; and to arouse allegiance to a genuine spirit of professional ethics.

Section 2. To aid in securing and maintaining professional salaries, tenure, a sound retirement system, and such other improvements in conditions as will enable teachers to function properly as a vital factor in educational progress.

Section 3. To promote and encourage cooperation with such organizations as the National Education Association (NEA) and the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and its national affiliates. The state association may also be publicly identified as NYSUT NEA AFT (American Federation of Teachers).

Section 4. To cooperate with PTAs and other civic bodies having educational objectives and to aid in interpreting to the public the problems, the functions, and the steady progress of the public schools.

Section 5. To encourage teachers to exercise their rights and privileges as citizens and to accept, willingly, leadership in civic affairs.

Section 6. To increase the concern of present teachers for the social welfare of retired teachers.

Section 7. To support social activities among members.

Section 8. To provide leadership and communication within and among the membership of the Association.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. All teachers within the Ithaca City School District (ICSD) of Ithaca, New York, upon payment of dues as herein provided, may become members of the Association. The term “teacher” shall be understood to mean all members who are professionally certificated by the Department of Education of the State of New York, or occupying positions for which such professional certification is normally required, except the Superintendent of Schools and his/her Central Office staff and administrators with no teaching responsibilities.

Section 2. Classifications: The membership of the Ithaca Teachers Association shall consist of three classes: Active, Half-Time, Honorary.

a) Active Members: Any teacher, as defined in Article III Section 1, shall, upon the payment of the membership fee as herein provided, become an active member with voting privileges.

b) Half-Time Membership: Any teacher whose professional teaching schedule is no more than one-half (1/2) time per week is assessed approximately one-half (1/2) of the dues for any given year. Such teachers will have voting privileges. These teachers will be .5 FTE or less for the school year.

c) Honorary Members: A teacher retired from the Ithaca City School District shall automatically become an honorary member of the Ithaca Teachers Association, without further payment of dues, provided he/she was an active member of the Association at the time of his/her retirement.

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS, REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL, CABINET

Section 1. The officers of the Association shall consist of a President, a First Vice-President, a Second Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.

Section 2. There shall be a Representative Council consisting of the Officers, the Immediate Past President, the elected Representatives, and the Chairpersons of Standing Committees.

Section 3. Officers shall be elected in May and shall assume office on July 1.

Section 4. There shall be a Cabinet consisting of the President, the First Vice President, the Second Vice President, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Immediate Past President (if available) and the Chairpersons of Standing Committees.

ARTICLE V - MEETINGS

Section 1. There shall be at least two meetings a year.

Section 2. Special meetings may be called by the President, the Representative Council, or upon written request of five percent (5%) of the regular membership.

Section 3. Resolutions to be voted on by the general membership or by the Representative Council must be submitted in writing to the membership of the appropriate body one week prior to a vote on the resolution.

ARTICLE VI — AMENDMENTS

The Constitution may be amended by a 2/3 vote of the membership of the Association present at an Association meeting provided that notice in writing of the proposed amendment shall have been filed with the Secretary and copies presented to each member of the Association, or posted appropriately at the workplace of the members, at least one week prior to the voting on the amendment.

BYLAWS

BYLAW 1 - RULES OF ORDER

Robert's Rules of Order shall be the authority of questions of procedure not specifically stated in this Constitution.

BYLAW 2 - AFFILIATION

Section 1. The Ithaca Teachers Association will maintain Charter Affiliation with the National Education Association and the New York State United Teachers (also known as NYSUT NEA AFT) so that to have membership in the Ithaca Teachers Association, the respective member must also join NEA and NYSUT.

BYLAW 3 - DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. All officers shall take office on July 1. In case a vacancy in an office other than that of President occurs, it shall be filled by the Cabinet and the person so chosen shall serve only until the end of the unexpired term.

Section 2. The President shall serve a two-year term and shall be elected in even-numbered years. He/she shall preside at all meetings of the Association and of the Cabinet. Unless otherwise provided, he/she shall appoint all committees subject to the approval of the Cabinet and shall be an *ex officio* member of all committees. He/she shall prepare an annual report on the work of the Association. He/she shall issue the call for all regular and special meetings of the Association. The President may appoint a Parliamentarian.

The President shall represent the Association before the public either personally or through delegates and shall perform all other functions usually attributed to his/her office. The President shall delegate responsibilities for research and implementation of those policies established by the Cabinet. The President shall be a delegate to the NEA Representative Assembly and the NYSUT Representative Assembly.

Section 3. The 1st Vice President shall be elected for a two-year term to run concurrently with that of the President. His/her duties shall be assigned by the President. He/she shall assume all the duties of the President in case of absence or resignation of the President. He/she shall work closely with any committees as the President may suggest. He/she shall be the alternate of the President to the NEA Representative Assembly and the NYSUT Representative Assembly.

Section 4. The **2nd Vice President** shall be elected in the odd numbered years for a two-year term. His/her duties shall be assigned by the President. He/she shall work closely with such standing committees as the President may suggest.

Section 5. The Secretary shall be elected in the odd numbered years for a two-year term. The Secretary shall be responsible for sending copies of the record of the meetings to each school, one or two to be posted, the others to be filed with each Representative in the building. He/she shall prepare and keep on file a correct list of the names of all the members and of the Cabinet. He/she shall file with NYSUT NEA AFT headquarters the names of the new officers and of the Cabinet . He/she shall assist the President with the Association correspondence and recording of meeting minutes.

Any of the present duties of the Secretary involving the actual correspondence, compiling lists of names, etc., may be delegated to the Administrative Assistant in the employ of the Association.

Section 6. The Treasurer shall be elected in odd numbered years for a two-year term. With the assistance of the Cabinet, s/he shall prepare a proposed budget for the coming year.

Any of the present duties of the Treasurer regarding the financial accounts of the Association and its bookkeeping may be delegated to the Administrative Assistant in the employ of the Association.

Section 7. The Immediate Past President shall advise the Cabinet and assist the President at the latter's request. He/she shall serve in this capacity for at least two years.

Section 8. In the event of the resignation of the President, the 1st Vice President shall assume the office and duties of the President. Should the 1st Vice President refuse, a special election as determined by the Cabinet will be held. In the event of a resignation of any other officer, the President shall appoint a replacement, subject to the approval of the Cabinet, to fill out that term of office.

BYLAW 4 – REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Section 1. The Representative Council shall consist of the following members, each with at least two years experience in the Ithaca school system, wherever possible.

a) Building Representatives (voting members) - Each building in the Ithaca City School District shall have a minimum of one representative. Additional representation will be determined for each building on a ratio of one (1) representative for each ten (10) staff members:

15 and under	one (1)
16 to 25 members	two (2)
26 to 35 members	three (3), etc.

The actual number of members for each building will be determined by the Treasurer, and a correct list will be filed with the Secretary.

If a representative cannot attend a meeting, s/he may send an alternate from those s/he represents; this alternate would have all the rights and privileges of that representative.

b) Special Representatives (voting members) —Representation will be determined for each group on a ratio of one (1) representative for each ten (10) staff members, etc., as above.

1. Pupil Personnel Services (Psychologists, Social Workers, Support Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Reading Teachers, Music/Art Teachers, Physical Education Teachers, Speech and Language Therapists, Guidance Counselors, etc.)
2. Directors (with teaching assignments), Supervisors/Coordinators, and Department Heads
3. Other groups desiring representation should make a written request to the Cabinet.

c) Officers (voting members — President votes only in case of a tie.)

1. President
2. 1st Vice President
3. 2nd Vice President
4. Secretary
5. Treasurer

d) Committee Chairpersons (voting members)

1. Legislative
2. Professional Practices, Rights, and Responsibilities (Grievances)
3. Teacher Education and Professional Standards
4. Public Relations
5. Elections
6. Negotiations
7. Educational Policies
8. Health and Safety

e) Immediate Past President (voting member)

Section 2. Each member of the Representative Council shall be appointed for a two-year term, except where the individual is completing someone's term of office.

a) Building Representatives shall be elected by all the ITA members who are not under Special Representatives category. (See Bylaw 4, Section 1. b.)

b) Special Representatives may be elected by ITA members in each of the two (2) areas of specialization.

c) The elected members of the Representative Council may be re-elected.

Section 3. Elections for ITA Building Representatives shall be held in the spring or whenever a vacancy occurs. The election will be conducted by a current Building Representative or a member of the ITA Elections Committee.

Section 4. Duties and Powers

a) Establishes policies for the Association and shall approve implementation of said policies.

b) Meets monthly to attend to the business of the Association, and shall communicate said business to the members of the Association whom they represent.

c) By two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Representative Council, authorizes the spending of money received from dues or contributions not previously authorized by the membership.

d) Meetings of the Representative Council may be called by the President or by a majority of the Representative Council.

e) The Representative Council shall fill all vacancies between annual elections.

Section 5. All members of the Representative Council shall be active members of the Ithaca Teachers Association, the National Education Association (NEA), and the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT NEA AFT).

Section 6. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the membership of the Representative Council.

Section 7. In the event that any member of the Representative Council does not fulfill his/her duties and the responsibilities of his/her position, he/she may be removed from office, subject to the following procedures:

a) Officers:

1) The complaint and all pertinent evidence shall be presented to the Professional Practices, Rights, and Responsibilities Committee. The Committee shall review the evidence and by a two-thirds (2/3) vote decide whether or not the problem should be presented to the Cabinet.

2) The Cabinet shall review all evidence and decide by a two-thirds (2/3) vote whether or not to bring the problem to the full membership.

3) By a majority vote of the membership present at an official meeting of the Ithaca Teachers Association, the officer in question may be removed from office.

b) Building Representatives:

1) The officers of the ITA and/or the unit being represented shall initiate action concerning removal of that representative by directly reporting to the Cabinet.

2) In a meeting conducted by action of the Cabinet, the unit represented shall, by a majority vote of the members of that unit, remove and replace the representative in question.

c) Committee Chairpersons and Chief Negotiator:

1) The person in question may be removed and replaced by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Cabinet.

BYLAW 5 - CABINET

Section 1.

The Cabinet (formerly referred to as the “Executive Cabinet”) shall consist of the following members:

a) Officers:

- 1) President
- 2) 1st Vice President
- 3) 2nd Vice President
- 4) Secretary
- 5) Treasurer

b) Committee Chairpersons of active committees including, but not limited to:

- 1) Legislative
- 2) Professional Practices, Rights, and Responsibilities (Grievances)
- 3) Teacher Education and Professional Standards
- 4) Public Relations
- 5) Elections
- 6) Negotiations
- 7) Educational Policies
- 8) Health and Safety

c) Immediate Past President (if available).

Section 2.

Duties and Powers:

- a) Advises the President as to established policies for the Association and shall submit these policies to the Representative Council for approval.
- b) Meets prior to the Representative Council to prepare an agenda of the business of the Association to submit to the Representative Council subject to call by the President.
- c) A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the membership of the Cabinet.

BYLAW 6 - STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1. Standing Committees

- a) Legislative
- b) Professional Practices, Rights, and Responsibilities (Grievances)
- c) Teacher Education and Professional Standards
- d) Public Relations
- e) Elections
- f) Negotiations
- g) Educational Policies
- h) Health & Safety

Section 2. Method of Selection:

a) The Standing Committees, except as herein noted, shall be appointed by the President of the ITA with the approval of the Cabinet on or before September 30. In an election year, this shall be the responsibility of the incoming President.

b) Membership on committees shall reflect a balance of elementary and secondary representation.

c) All Standing Committee members shall be active members of the Ithaca Teachers Association, National Education Association, and NYSUT NEA AFT.

Section 3. Each Standing Committee shall make regular reports and recommendations to the Representative Council.

Section 4. The **Legislative Committee**, whose chairperson shall be an experienced NYSUT or New York NEA Delegate, shall study local, state, and federal legislation affecting public education and the profession, and shall bring to the attention of the Cabinet (or Representative Council) any legislative matters on which it feels local action is desirable. In addition, this Committee shall study the ITA Constitution and recommend amendments if and when they seem desirable. Membership on the Committee shall consist of NEA and NYSUT NEA AFT Delegates and Alternates and other persons so appointed by the Legislative Committee Chairperson.

Section 5. The **Professional Practices, Rights, and Responsibilities Committee** shall administer action programs for securing satisfactory personnel policies and procedures for the redress of grievances as defined in the contractual grievance procedures. It shall advise the Cabinet and Representative Council on procedures for the implementation of the Code of Ethics. This Committee shall advise the officers in situations of censure, suspension, or expulsion of members. It shall develop a program of orientation to the Code of Ethics for all members of the Association.

Section 6. The **Teacher Education and Professional Standards Committee** shall explore and develop action programs to raise and maintain standards for certification, employment, and assignment; to improve opportunities for pre-service education; to create and maintain rapport between the Association and neighboring or closely-related institutions of higher education. It shall develop and foster local chapters of Future Teachers of America and other such groups, and exercise professional concern in programs involving Student Teachers or relating to the concept of professional autonomy.

Section 7. The **Committee on Public Relations** shall seek to develop public understanding of the purposes and programs of the Association, the values and importance of education, and, in cooperation with the Administration, the educational philosophy and programs of the schools. It shall develop procedures by which the Association can work cooperatively with parents and the public in civic, fraternal, and social organizations, and through all available channels of communication. Any communication with the public through the various mass media by an ITA committee, except the Negotiations Committee and Negotiations Team, shall be implemented by the Public Relations Committee with the approval of the President. Use of mass media by the Negotiations Committee and Team shall be directly approved by the President.

Section 8. The **Elections Committee** shall seek out the names of interested candidates for the elective officers and present the list to the Cabinet and Representative Council at the March meeting. The Elections Committee shall administer these elections. The above mentioned procedures shall be defined by Bylaw 7.

Section 9. Negotiations Committee

a) Powers - The Negotiations Committee and Team are responsible under New York State Law to prepare for and carry out negotiations with the Board of Education on behalf of the Association in all matters concerning salary, wages, hours, and terms and conditions of employment. Within policies established by the Cabinet and/or Representative Council, it may make decisions which, with the approval of the general membership, shall be binding upon the Association in these matters.

b) Structure of the Negotiations Committee

The following numbers of members shall serve on this Committee:

- Elementary - 6
- Middle School - 3
- High School - 3

- 1) The Chairperson of the Negotiations Committee shall be elected by and from the membership of the Negotiations Committee;
- 2) Newly-elected members of the Negotiations Committee shall be elected for a two (2) year term.
- 3) A member of the Cabinet who is elected as a member of the Negotiations Committee will serve his full term on the Negotiations Committee unless s/he is removed from the Negotiations Committee during his/her term of office by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Representative Council.

c) Procedure for choosing the Negotiations Team, which shall consist of:

ITA President
ITA 1st Vice President
Negotiations Committee - up to 3 persons
Others (optional) - up to 2 persons

- 1) Members of the Negotiations Team shall have at least three (3) full years of experience in the Ithaca City School District.
- 2) The Negotiations Committee will recommend up to three (3) of its members for a two-thirds (2/3) vote of approval from the voting members of the Cabinet.
- 3) The President may appoint two (2) additional members with a two-thirds (2/3) vote of approval from the voting members of the Cabinet.
- 4) The President shall have full authority to appoint the Chief Negotiator with a two-thirds (2/3) vote of approval from the voting members of the Cabinet.
- 5) Once established, the Negotiations Team shall include among its five (5) to seven (7) members the following:

Chief Negotiator
Chief Negotiator's Understudy
Secretary

- 6) If the need arises, the President may request authority from the Cabinet to employ professional counsel.

Section 10. The Educational Policies Committee Representative (the President of the Association) shall meet with the Superintendent at least once a month during each school year to review and discuss current school problems and practices, common goals and problems, long-term plans, strategy, and philosophy of education, and the administration of the Agreement between the Association and the Board of Education. Such discussion shall include all matters of professional concern conducted in a free and open manner so as to maintain active communication between the Association and the Board of Education. The chairperson of this committee shall be the President of the Association. The discussions of this committee shall be reported to the Cabinet and Negotiations Committee of the Association by means of committee minutes and recommendations.

The deliberations of this committee can in no way be interpreted to imply approval by the Association or by any of its committees. The committee may invite persons to attend its meetings provided that the chairperson is informed and the majority of the committee members approve.

BYLAW 7 — SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Section 1. Special Committees

- a) With the exception of the Audit Committee, special committees of the ITA may include, but not be limited to:
 - Social
 - Membership
 - Orientation
 - Sick Bank
 - American Education Week
 - Bertha M. Bartholomew Scholarship Fund
 - Audit (permanent)
- b) The Bertha H. Bartholomew Scholarship Committee shall consist of two (2) ITA members to be appointed by the President. Applications should be issued in February so that the Cabinet may act on nominations in March.
- c) The Audit Committee will audit the books of the Association at least once during the year. The Audit Committee will not contain any officer of the Association. This Audit may be outsourced to a professional accountant.

BYLAW 8 — NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Section 1. Duties of Elections Committee

- a) Nominations - During February, the Elections Committee will contact all buildings to solicit names for the committee to consider in preparing a slate of nominations for new terms of ITA Officers. The committee will contact prospective candidates. Such candidates must consent to having their names placed on the slate.
- b) The Chairperson of the committee shall report all nominations to the Representative Council at the March meeting.
- c) The Elections Committee shall publish for the members brief information on each candidate.
- d) At the April meeting of the Representative Council, additional nominations may be made from the floor. At the same meeting or at a special meeting, all such candidates may speak to the membership and answer questions. Time limit for the individual speeches shall be determined at the meeting.

Section 2. Balloting

- a) At least two weeks shall be allowed between final nominations (April meeting), and Election Day, which shall be within the first two weeks in May.
- b) Members shall vote by ballot in accordance with the procedure developed by the Elections Committee. The Elections Committee shall report results to the President, who shall cause them to be published.
- c) A candidate who received more than fifty percent (50%) of the vote shall be considered to have been elected. In the event that a candidate does not receive more than fifty percent (50%), a second balloting between the two candidates with the highest votes will be held within five (5) school days.

BYLAW 9 — QUORUM

A quorum for all general meetings of the Association shall consist of fifty (50) active members. A quorum at Cabinet meetings shall be four (4) active members.

BYLAW 10 — DUES

The dues shall be determined by the budget adopted by the Association.

BYLAW 11 - AMENDMENTS

The Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present at any general meeting, provided notice of a proposed amendment has been given to each Association member at least **one** week prior to the meeting at which the issue is to be voted. The voting method will be determined by a majority vote of the Representative Council.

BYLAW 12 - COMMITTEE EXPENSES

All committee expenses must have written approval by the chairperson of the committee and approved by the Cabinet before purchases are made.

POLICY ON VOTES AND POLLS

Adopted by the ITA - May 30, 2006

Section 1. Polls are votes of the membership in which each member is sent a ballot to return to the ITA Office for tabulation.

Section 2. Votes taken at Representative Council meetings on ITA policy positions shall be taken by roll call vote. These votes are based on each Building Representative's representation of his constituency and are not weighted.

Section 3. It shall be the policy of the Association that polls of the membership or votes at Representative Council meetings in which at least 2 out of 3 (66.67%) of the members voting are in agreement shall be reported as the position of the Association.

Section 4. Vote tabulations in which there is less than 66.67% agreement shall be reported only as a percentage of those voting.