

**CONSTITUTION  
of The  
CINCINNATI FEDERATION OF TEACHERS**

As Amended through May, 2005

**ARTICLE I** **NAME**

This organization shall be known as the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers (CFT), American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Local Number 1520, AFL-CIO.

**ARTICLE II** **OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this organization shall be:

- Section 1. To bring groups of teachers into relations of mutual assistance and cooperation.
- Section 2. To promote and protect the rights of teachers and other educational employees.
- Section 3. To raise the standards of the teaching profession by securing the conditions essential to the best professional service, and by upgrading professional certification requirements.
- Section 4. To promote the democratic process in the schools so as to enable them better to equip their pupils to take their place in the economic, social, and political life of the community.
- Section 5. To promote full and equal educational opportunities for all.
- Section 6. To elect political candidates who best represent education and labor.
- Section 7. To affect alliances with organizations having concern for and interest in education.
- Section 8. To advance the economic securities and professional interests of teachers and other educational employees, and to secure their active participation in the formation and administration of educational policies.

**ARTICLE III** **MEMBERSHIP**

- Section 1. All teachers, including substitute teachers, counselors, librarians, speech therapists, psychologists, visiting teachers, teacher-librarians, learning disability tutors, pre-school instructors, consulting teachers, and graduate student interns employed by or on lay-off from the Cincinnati Public Schools; all clerical and office personnel represented by the Association of Cincinnati Public Schools Office Personnel/CFT employed by or on lay-off from the Cincinnati Public Schools, and CFT staff shall be eligible for membership. Teachers on STRS disability retirement shall remain eligible for membership for five (5) years. Supervisory and administrative personnel are not eligible for membership.
- Section 2. Teachers in public or private institutions outside the jurisdiction of this local may be admitted into membership until such time as a local is chartered in their jurisdiction.
- Section 3. No discrimination shall ever be shown toward individual members or applicants for membership because of race, creed, gender, social, political or economic status, national origin or sexual orientation.
- Section 4. Any member may be expelled for an act detrimental to the CFT upon presentation of written charges signed by one-fourth (1/4) of the total membership and approved by at least three-fourths (3/4) of the Executive Council. The member shall have the right to appeal the decision to the membership at the following membership meeting and shall be reinstated with full rights if a majority of the members present vote to reinstate.
- Section 5. Any member who fails to pay dues upon their expiration shall be placed in inactive status with a grace period of thirty (30) days and deleted from the national records within a period of two months.

**ARTICLE IV** **AFFILIATIONS**

- Section 1. The CFT shall maintain affiliation with, and, whenever possible, send delegates to the following organizations;
  - a. The American Federation of Teachers--all delegates and alternates to the national convention of the AFT shall be elected by majority vote no later than the March membership meeting. At least three delegates shall be members of the office employees chapter (ACPSOP). Notice of the election shall be made at least ten (10) days prior to the election. The president and secretary shall certify the election and forward the credentials of all elected delegates and alternates to the national convention. The delegates shall confer with the treasurer to make sure per capita payments for June

have been sent to the national office in time for CFT delegates to be seated at the national convention.

- b. The Ohio Federation of Teachers--delegates shall be elected no later than one month before the state convention at a regular membership meeting. At least three delegates shall be members of the office employees chapter (ACPSOP).
- c. Greater Cincinnati Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO,--The Chief delegate shall be elected at the regular biennial election of officers. Other delegates shall be appointed by the president and confirmed at any regular membership meeting. At least one delegate shall represent the office employees chapter (ACPSOP).
- d. The Ohio AFL-CIO--delegates shall be elected one month before the state labor convention at a regular membership meeting. At least one delegate shall represent the office employees chapter (ACPSOP).
- e. OFT Executive Council--delegates shall be elected at the regular biennial election of officers, except that one delegate shall be elected by members of ACPSOP.

- Section 2. The ranking delegate or another delegate chosen by the delegation shall report on the convention or meeting.
- Section 3. CFT, to the best of its ability, shall be active in the affairs of affiliated organizations.
- Section 4. Delegates to affiliated organizations shall meet the same requirements as officers of this local.
- Section 5. The president, first vice-president, and the president of the office employees chapter (ACPSOP) shall be delegates to all affiliate meetings.
- Section 6. Nominations for delegates to affiliate conventions must be submitted in writing to the Recording Secretary at the CFT office by 4:00 p.m. of the day prior to the membership meeting at which delegates are to be elected. Delegates shall complete and sign a form pledging to attend convention sessions and fulfill the duties of a delegate. Expense reimbursement may be withheld from a delegate who does not fulfill those duties.

## **ARTICLE V**

## **OFFICERS**

- Section 1. The following officers shall be elected biennially by this union:
  - a. President
  - b. First Vice-President
  - c. Second Vice-President
  - d. Third Vice-President
  - e. Treasurer
  - f. Secretary
  - g. Chief Labor Delegate to the Greater Cincinnati Central Labor Council
- Section 2. Officers shall be elected by a secret referendum ballot preceding the April membership meeting. A plurality of all votes cast shall be necessary for election.
- Section 3. Officers shall be installed in May either at the regular membership meeting or at a special meeting or banquet held for this purpose.
- Section 4. Vacancies in any office shall be filled by the Executive Council until a special election can be held within the next sixty (60) days except when the balance of the term is one year or less, in which case the replacement shall serve the balance of the term. Special elections shall be conducted following procedures set forth in Article XVI except that timelines shall be modified as stipulated in groundrules for each special election which shall be recommended by the Election Chair and approved at a membership meeting prior to the close of nominations.
- Section 5. Any officer who fails to perform the duties of the office or follow the constitution can be removed from office by two-thirds (2/3) recommendation of the Executive Council and a two-thirds (2/3) referendum vote of the membership.
- Section 6. The Executive Council shall accept reports of the committee heads, and may act upon them as deemed best through Executive Council majority vote.

## **ARTICLE VI**

## **DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS**

- Section 1. President--The president shall preside at all CFT meetings. He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees except the Audit Committee. He shall sign all necessary papers and documents, and represent the local when and where necessary. He shall make a report to the membership at least once each year summarizing CFT accomplishments and outlining plans for the next year. The Presidency shall be a paid full-time position. The president shall appoint all members of joint CFT/Board of Education committees that have been provided for in collective bargaining agreements and these appointees shall serve at the discretion of the president. The president shall coordinate legal aid with the AFT and OFT Defense Fund Committees.
- Section 2. First Vice-President--The first vice-president shall chair the Executive Council, coordinate committees, and act for the president in the absence of that officer.
- Section 3. Second Vice-President--The second vice-president shall coordinate areas, oversee election of and communication with Building Reps, plan membership drives with staff and area coordinators, preside at

- Executive Council meetings in the absence of the first vice-president, maintain membership records, assist committee heads in meeting their responsibilities, aid the president generally in organizing and mobilizing members to implement policy and directives from Executive Council and membership meetings and serve as liaison to the Retiree Chapter..
- Section 4. Third Vice-President--The third vice-president shall represent CFT to community organizations and assist the president in the performance of his/her duties.
- Section 5. Treasurer--The duties of the treasurer shall be:
- a. To receive, record, and deposit in the name of CFT all money from dues and other sources;
  - b. To see that all per capita dues and current membership lists are forwarded to the national office of the AFT and to other affiliated organizations to keep in good standing at all times. Special care shall be taken to see that per capita tax through June 30 is sent to the national office in time for delegates to be seated at the national convention to make sure delegates from the CFT may be seated;
  - c. To keep adequate records available at all times for the Executive Council and the Audit Committee;
  - d. To pay all bills authorized by the budget, retaining voucher or invoice for same. Expenditures of money greater than one hundred ten percent (110%) of budgeted amounts for major budget categories shall be approved by the membership. Non-budgeted legal and arbitration expenses, however, may be paid out of the Legal Assistance Contingency Fund (AKA Albert Mann Defense Fund) without prior membership approval.
  - e. Upon written request by any member, the treasurer shall make available within a reasonable amount of time the financial records requested for review by the member.
- Section 6. Secretary--The secretary shall record minutes of the general membership and Executive Council meetings and file them in the CFT office within one week after the meetings.
- Section 7. Chief Labor Delegate--The central labor council chief delegate shall chair the labor council delegates, attend all central labor council meetings, serve as liaison to all other unions, marshal CFT support in the central labor council, and cooperate and affiliate with community organizations and/or arrange for CFT to keep them informed.

## **ARTICLE VII**

## **THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (EC)**

- Section 1. The Executive Council shall consist of the following:
- a. All elected officers;
  - b. All elected chairpersons of standing committees;
  - c. All elected Area Coordinators;
  - d. The president of the office personnel chapter of the CFT.
- Section 2. The EC shall administer CFT policy as set by the membership at regular meetings. It shall have the power to act for the good of the CFT in situations where policy cannot be set by the membership, i.e. during the summer months and holidays.
- Section 3. The first vice-president shall chair all EC meetings.
- Section 4. The Executive Council shall meet monthly throughout the school year. Other meetings may be scheduled by the Executive Council. Special meetings of the Executive Council may be called by the president. Any member may attend as a spectator except during sessions declared sensitive by EC majority vote or personal by a member appearing before the Executive Council.
- Section 5. The Executive Council shall determine staffing needs in addition to the president and shall employ all other staff. Staff salaries shall be tied to the teacher salary schedule. CFT staff shall receive all appropriate increments according to the teacher salary schedule while on CFT staff. Staff shall perform their duties under a contract approved by the Executive Council.
- Section 6. The Executive Council shall report its activities at each regular membership meeting through the first vice-president or the secretary.
- Section 7. A quorum of the Executive Council shall consist of at least fifty percent (50%) of the current Executive Council membership.
- Section 8. The Executive Council shall approve all procedures regarding the payment of stipends or expense reimbursements to any member.
- Section 9. One area coordinator who is an ACPSOP member shall be elected biennially by those members of the office personnel chapter of the CFT. Nine area coordinators shall be elected biennially by those members who are not members of the office personnel chapter of the CFT and who are not daily rate (other than long term substitutes), substitute teachers. One area coordinator who is a daily rate shall be elected biennially by those members who are daily rate (other than long term substitute) substitute teachers.
- Section 10. Vacancies of any area coordinator or standing committee chairperson position that arises after a regular biennial election shall be filled by a majority vote of the Executive Council.

**ARTICLE VIII**

**COMMITTEES**

- Section 1. The following standing committees shall be active in this Federation:
- a. Budget (Treasurer will chair)
  - b. Legislation and Political Action
  - c. Collective Bargaining
  - d. Grievance
  - e. Educational Policies
  - f. Social Activities
  - g. Labor and Community Relations (Chief Labor Delegate will chair)
  - h. Member Services
  - i. Human Rights
  - j. Retirement
- Section 2. The following special committees shall be active in this Federation:
- a. Audit Committee
  - b. Election Committee
- Section 3. The chairpersons of the following standing committees shall be elected biennially commencing in March of 1987:
- A. Legislation and Political Action;
  - B. Collective Bargaining;
  - C. Grievance;
  - D. Educational Policies;
  - E. Social Activities;
  - F. Member Services;
  - G. Human Rights;
  - H. Retirement.
- Section 4. The members of each committee shall be appointed by the chairperson with the consent of the Executive Council.
- Section 5. The Audit Committee shall consist of five members elected by the membership at the May meeting. The chairperson of this committee shall be elected from and by the members of the audit committee. The audit committee shall audit the treasurer's books and present an annual report to the membership. The audit committee shall be empowered to request that funds be made available for the services of a professional auditor and shall hire such an auditor if the committee determines this to be necessary.
- Section 6. The President shall nominate the chairperson of the election committee at the January membership meeting. The membership shall confirm this nomination. If the membership does not confirm the President's nominee, additional nominations shall be taken from the floor, and the membership shall elect the chair at that meeting. The chair of the election committee shall select the members of the election committee who shall be approved at the February membership meeting. No individual who is running for an office may serve on the election committee

**ARTICLE IX**

**DUTIES OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

- Section 1. The Budget Committee consisting of the president, treasurer, and three other Executive Council members, shall prepare the yearly budget. The Executive Council shall approve the budget, for the fiscal year of July 1 through June 30, in April for recommendation to the membership at the May meeting.
- Section 2. The Legislation and Political Action Committee shall screen and initiate resolutions for consideration by the AFT, OFT and the local pertaining to all levels of government. It shall present the record of government officials, influence legislative bills, and screen political candidates.
- Section 3. The Collective Bargaining Committee shall prepare and substantiate contract proposals. Prior to the commencement of negotiations, it shall present these proposals for approval of the members.
- Section 4. The Grievance Committee, consisting of the chairperson and up to seven other members shall monitor the processing of teacher complaints and grievances; shall make the initial determination--subject to appeal--in regard to level three grievance appeals (arbitration); shall recommend to the membership policy on grievance-related issues.
- Section 5. The Educational Policies Committee shall develop and propose resolutions and positions on curriculum, teaching methods, and related issues.
- Section 6. The Social Activities Committee shall be responsible for the annual cocktail party for all members and implement any other social activities approved by the Executive Council or general membership.
- Section 7. The Labor and Community Relations Committee, chaired by the chief labor delegate to the central labor council shall represent CFT at functions of other unions and coordinate activities to promote the involvement of other unions.
- Section 8. The Member Services Committee shall seek the cooperation of assorted businesses and monitor their services.
- Section 9. The Human Rights Committee shall recommend policy regarding racial, philosophical, gender, and ethnic identity.

**ARTICLE X****MEETINGS**

- Section 1. Meetings shall be held once monthly during the school year except for December and June, unless called.
- Section 2. The Executive Council shall determine the time and place of membership meetings. Those dates and times shall be announced no later than one week prior to the first membership meeting of the school year.
- Section 3. A quorum shall consist of three percent (3%) of the total paid membership.
- Section 4. Special meetings of the membership may be called by the Executive Council if the members are notified twenty-four (24) hours prior to the meeting. Special meetings may also be called by petition of three percent (3%) of the total membership.

**ARTICLE XI****RULES OF ORDER**

- Section 1. The President shall appoint a parliamentarian and an alternate, and may appoint sergeants-at-arms.
- Section 2. Roberts' Rules of Order, newly revised, shall govern in all cases not covered by this constitution or the by-laws of the local.

**ARTICLE XII****FINANCE**

- Section 1. Regular dues shall be set by majority vote at any regular meeting, providing it has been announced at the previous monthly meeting.

**ARTICLE XIII****AMENDMENT**

- Section 1. This constitution may be amended as follows: The proposed amendment shall be submitted at any regular meeting and read or distributed to the assembled members. A three-fourths (3/4) vote at the following meeting shall be sufficient to adopt the amendment.

**XIV****AVAILABILITY OF CONSTITUTION**

- Section 1. Three copies of the constitution and all future amendments shall be submitted to the AFT national office.
- Section 2. Copies shall be made available to other affiliated organizations upon request.
- Section 3. Copies shall be available for CFT members upon request to the Secretary.

**ARTICLE XV****OFFICE PERSONNEL CHAPTER**

- Section 1. The Association of Cincinnati Public School Office Personnel (ACPSOP), a chapter of CFT, shall represent the interests and concerns of office personnel within CFT. Its members shall establish a constitution providing for chapter officers and meetings, which shall, in all respects, be in accordance with the constitutions of CFT, OFT, AFT, and the AFL-CIO. The presiding officer of ACPSOP shall sit on the Executive Council.

**ARTICLE XVI****ELECTIONS**

- Section 1. Elections shall be held in the spring of odd-numbered years.
- Section 2. Elections shall be conducted by the Election Committee.
- Section 3. The Election Committee, with the assistance of the Second Vice-President shall compile a list of those eligible to vote. Only members in good standing prior to the March membership meeting shall be eligible to vote.
- Section 4. Nominations for each office shall be reported by the Election Committee Chair at the March membership meeting. Nominations may be accepted from the floor and nominations shall then be closed.
- Section 5. Ground rules for the election are to be approved by a majority vote at the March membership meeting.
- Section 6. The Biennial general election ballots shall be prepared by a union printer and mailed to each member in good standing following the March membership meeting. The ballots shall be returned to a United States Mail post office box. The specific time period for mailing and return of ballots shall be included in the election groundrules recommended by the Election Committee and approved by the membership. If none of the offices have more than one candidate other provisions may be adopted by the membership at the March membership meeting.
- Section 7. The Election Committee Chair shall report the results of the election at the April membership meeting. The candidate receiving the plurality of votes for each office shall be declared elected.

- Section 8. Upon a reasonable request of any nominee for office following the March membership meeting, and with reasonable notice, the Treasurer and Second Vice-President shall make available the membership list prior to the election.
- Section 9. The Election Committee Chairperson shall retain copies of the nominations, ballots, tally sheets, and such other records including the election rules as shall relate to the conduct of the election. All copies and records shall be retained for one year.
- Section 10. The Election Committee Chairperson shall rule on complaints regarding alleged violations of ground rules, constitutional provisions related to elections, or any challenged ballots. Any such ruling may be appealed at the April membership meeting. Approval of the Election Committee's report shall be considered final.
- Section 11. Only members in good standing for at least one year prior to the March membership meeting in the election year shall be eligible to run for or serve on the CFT or OFT Executive Council.
- Section 12. The Election Committee may provide a stipend, set by the election ground rules to members who prepare the ballots for mailing, or may engage a mailing service.

## BY-LAWS

### CINCINNATI FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

As Amended through  
May 12, 2004

#### ARTICLE I

#### DUES

- Section 1: Annual dues for members on full-time teacher contracts shall be 1.10% of a starting teacher's salary plus all per capita payments to affiliated organizations.
- Section 2: Annual dues for members who are part-time teachers (less than .6), learning disability tutors, and teachers on leave and teachers on disability retirement shall be .0055 of a starting teacher's salary plus per capita payments to affiliated organizations (1/2 of 1.10%). Annual dues for members who are daily rate substitutes (other than long term substitutes) shall be \$2.00 for each day or part of a day worked each year. Dues for Graduate Student Interns shall be .00275 of a beginning teachers salary plus per capita payments to affiliated organizations (1/4 of 1.10%).
- Section 3: Annual dues for members who are represented by the Association of Cincinnati Public School Office Personnel/CFT shall be 1.10% of a beginning support specialist salary plus per capita payments to affiliated organizations. Annual dues for part-time employees represented by Association of Cincinnati Public School Office Personnel shall be .0055 of a beginning support specialist salary plus per capita payments to affiliated organizations (5/10 of 1.10%).
- Section 4: Annual dues for teachers and office employees who are laid-off shall be set at the amount of per capita payments payable on such members for the year.
- Section 5: The dues year shall be from September through August.
- Section 6: Dues shall be paid in accordance with policies established by the treasurer.

#### ARTICLE II

#### STRIKE AUTHORIZATION

- Section 1. The CFT negotiations team, consisting of no more than nine (9) members, shall be appointed by the president and approved by the membership at any regular meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose. The negotiations team shall negotiate contract proposals with the Board of Education.
- Section 2. Proposed collective bargaining contracts shall be presented at a CFT Membership meeting announced at least 24 hours in advance and ratified by a majority of CFT members voting by secret ballot at their schools, designated work sites or at the CFT office. The proposed contract shall be distributed to members at least 48 hours prior to presentation at a membership meeting, unless such requirement is modified by the Executive Council. The date(s) that voting will be conducted shall be announced in advance and shall be conducted by CFT Building Representatives under procedures approved by the Executive Council. This ratification procedure shall also apply to any agreement negotiated pursuant to a reopener provided for in a regular collective bargaining contract. Proposed agreements shall be reviewed by the Executive Council prior to being presented to the membership.

Other proposed amendments, temporary or permanent, during the term of a collective bargaining contract shall be ratified by a majority vote of CFT members at a general membership meeting, provided the proposed amendment and the meeting have been announced to the membership in writing at least seven days in advance or read at the previous membership meeting.

CFT members shall vote to grant strike authorization to the Executive Council or to end a strike at a general meeting announced at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance.

#### ARTICLE III

#### CONTINGENCY FUNDS ACCOUNT

- Section 1. CFT shall maintain a Strike Contingency Fund consisting of funds previously deposited, along with any interest, dividends and capital gains earned by the account, donations to the fund and any additional funds that the membership may direct be deposited to the account. The Strike Contingency Fund shall be used only for financial assistance to Cincinnati Public School employees participating in a CFT strike action. A policy governing the use of the fund shall be recommended by the Executive Council and approved by the membership at a regular membership meeting.**

Section 2. The CFT shall budget a minimum of \$30,000 a year for legal services and a minimum of \$10,000 a year for arbitration fees and expenses. Amounts equal to the final year-end balances, if any, in these line items shall be deposited into a reserve savings account - Albert Mann Legal Defense Account. Such funds may be used for legal or arbitration expenses incurred by CFT in defense of individual teachers or office personnel or in enforcing the collective bargaining contract.

#### **ARTICLE IV OTHER**

Section 1: Delegates shall be reimbursed for mileage to OFT Executive Council meetings.

Section 2: Expenses of delegates to meetings and conventions of affiliate organizations shall be paid as provided in the annual budget. A vote of the membership at any regular meeting shall determine the rate of reimbursement and the number of delegates to be reimbursed.

Section 3: The president and the treasurer may be authorized to borrow funds by the Executive Council. The EC may also authorize loans to union members who are suspended without pay by the Board of Education pending arbitration of a termination appeal. No loans shall be made to CFT officers or staff except on the same terms available to all members.

Section 4: CFT officers and staff shall maintain no business or financial interests which conflict with their fiduciary obligations.

Section 5: If requested by the State Employee Relations Board, the president, first vice-president, and treasurer shall be bonded by the union with the amount, scope, and form of the bond determined by the State Employee Relations Board.

Section 6. The CFT shall indemnify and pay the costs of defense, through counsel by CFT, in any lawsuit or other proceeding brought against its officers, employees, executive council members, building representatives or other volunteers, arising from actions undertaken as part of their employment or volunteer service to CFT. The above sentence notwithstanding, CFT shall have no such obligation to indemnify or defend where the claim asserted is for the improper distribution or use of CFT assets, or where the action giving rise to the suit or claim was taken with a deliberate intent to cause injury to the CFT, or with a reckless disregard for the CFT's best interest.

Section 7. An exception or waiver to a collective bargaining contract which is currently in force shall be reviewed by the Executive Council prior to a membership meeting. An exception or waiver to a collective bargaining contract currently in force must be approved by a two thirds vote at regular or special membership meeting provided the request for a waiver or exception is announced at least one week in advance or read at the previous membership meeting.

If the exception or waiver is requested by a single school or site and applies only to that site, it will be considered by the Executive Council and membership if the request has been approved by a vote of 75% of the CFT members at the building or site. Such votes shall be conducted according to procedures established by the Executive Council.

Signed

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President

Cincinnati Federation of Teachers

1520