

For Immediate Release
December 17, 2010

Contact:
Julie Sellers
513-961-2272
jsellers@cft-aft.org



Cincinnati Teachers and Office Staff Ratify New Contracts With Public Schools

CINCINNATI—The Cincinnati Federation of Teachers announced tonight that teachers and support staff voted to ratify new contracts with the Cincinnati Public Schools. The agreement with teachers includes an increased focus on high-needs schools and a commitment to co-design a revamped teacher development and evaluation process.

“This contract was successfully accomplished because both sides rolled up their sleeves and remained tenacious and persistent in working collaboratively to reach an agreement that’s good for kids and fair to teachers,” said Julie Sellers, president of the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers. “It’s important that the new reforms and policies intended to improve teaching and learning are part of a collective bargaining agreement. They were developed with input from all parties and will now be implemented in the same collaborative manner.”

Sellers noted that this continues CFT’s national reputation for achieving smart reforms through labor-management cooperation to advance the professionalism of teaching and to bolster student achievement.

Members of the CFT-affiliated Association of Cincinnati Public Schools Office Personnel, which represents support staff within CPS, also voted to ratify their contract with CPS.

The agreement, reached last week by negotiators for the CFT and the Cincinnati Board of Education, will take effect Jan. 1 and run through the end of 2013. Teachers and support staff have worked throughout 2010 under the terms of the contract that expired at the end of 2009.

Some of the teachers’ contract’s key provisions include:

- An increased focus on high-needs schools through policies designed to place highly effective teachers in those schools.
- Schools will be organized around teams. At the elementary level, teams with at least one teacher from each grade and one intervention specialist will have responsibility for students for a minimum of two years. This will establish a better alignment of curriculum and assessments, and a more consistent overall approach to instruction.

- The agreement renews the commitment to labor-management collaboration by strengthening the structures that have provided the framework for reform for many years. At the individual school level, there will be more autonomy and joint decision-making between teachers and principals aimed at creating better learning environments.
- The district and CFT will work together to co-design and implement an innovative Teacher Development and Evaluation System (TDES) that builds on the progressive evaluation program that already exists in Cincinnati. The new system will include rigorous reviews by trained evaluators. Teacher performance will be measured by several factors, including professional standards, the application of best practices, and the use of multiple measures of student achievement. Evaluations and support to improve instruction will be provided on a continuous basis, and Cincinnati's successful Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program will be enhanced—to help teachers improve, enable good teachers to become great, provide professional support for struggling teachers, and facilitate alternatives for those who should not remain in the profession.

Sellers noted that the talks leading to the new contract stretched over nearly a year and took place amid severe economic challenges. “Under this agreement, teachers and school staff have stepped up and shared the pocketbook sacrifices that this bad economy has forced on the school system,” she said. The union and the school district have agreed that salaries and benefits can be reconsidered in January 2012, when the economic recovery may have gained ground.

A formal signing of the new contract will be scheduled during the next two weeks.

###