

**CONSTITUTION  
of The  
CINCINNATI FEDERATION OF TEACHERS**

As Amended through May 2018

**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, office personnel and other employees of the Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) into relations of mutual assistance and cooperation.
- Section 2. To promote and protect the rights of all teachers, office personnel and other employees of CPS.
- 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, office personnel and other 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, school social workers, 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 who are members of the Cincinnati Federation of Office Professionals (CFOP)/CFT bargaining unit employed by or on lay-off from the Cincinnati Public Schools, and all CFT staff are eligible for membership. Teachers on disability shall remain eligible for membership for five (5) years. Supervisory and administrative personnel are not eligible for membership.
- Section 2. Teachers and office personnel 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 two delegates shall be members of the CFOP bargaining unit. 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 two delegates shall be members of the CFOP bargaining unit.
  - 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 be a member of the CFOP bargaining unit.
  - 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 CFOP bargaining unit.
  - e. OFT Executive Council--delegates shall be elected at the regular biennial election of officers. At least one delegate shall be a member of the CFOP bargaining unit.
- 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, the CFT vice president elected from among members of the CFOP bargaining unit and any CFT member who is a committee chair for a state or national affiliate 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. Executive Vice-President
  - c. Vice-President for Organizing
  - d. Vice-President for Community Engagement
  - e. Treasurer
  - f. Secretary
  - g. Chief Labor Delegate to the Greater Cincinnati Central Labor Council
  - h. Cincinnati Central Labor Council
  - i. CFOP Vice President (elected only by members of the CFOP bargaining unit, also serving as CFOP President).
- 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. CFT members who are members of the CFOP bargaining unit shall elect a CFT Vice President designated as the "CFOP Vice President".
- 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 ground rules 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. The president shall be an ex-officio member of all committees except the Audit Committee. The president shall sign all necessary papers and documents and represent the local when and where necessary. The president 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. Executive Vice-President--The Executive vice-president shall chair the Executive Council, coordinate committees, and act for the president in the absence of that officer.
- Section 3. Vice-President for Organizing--The vice-president for Organizing 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 Executive 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. Vice-President for Community Engagement--The vice-president for Community Engagement shall represent CFT to community organizations and assist the president in the performance of his/her duties.
- Section 5. The CFOP Vice President – The CFOP Vice President shall represent CFOP members on the Executive Committee and co-ordinate collective bargaining and grievance processing for members of the CFOP bargaining unit in cooperation with other CFT officers and the CFT staff. (The duly elected President of CFOP shall serve as CFT’s CFOP Vice President).
- 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;
- 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 consultation with the president and shall employ all other staff. CFT staff salaries shall be tied to the CPS teacher or staff compensation schedule. CFT staff shall receive all appropriate increments according to the corresponding CPS teacher or staff salary schedule while serving on CFT staff. Staff shall perform their duties under a contract approved by the Executive Council and under the direction and supervision of the CFT President.
- Section 6. The Executive Council shall report its activities at each regular membership meeting through reports provided by the Executive 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 a member of CFT and the CFOP bargaining unit shall be elected biennially by CFT members who are members of the CFOP bargaining unit. Nine area coordinators shall be elected biennially by CFT members who are not members of the CFOP bargaining unit, and who are not daily rate (other than long term substitutes), substitute teachers. One area coordinator who is a daily rate substitute shall be elected biennially by those CFT members who serve as daily rate 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:
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|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. Budget (Treasurer will chair)    | f. Social Activities/Member Services |
| b. Legislation and Political Action | g. Labor and Community Relations     |
| c. _____                            | Collective Bargaining                |
| (Chief Labor Delegate will chair)   |                                      |
| d. Grievance                        | h. Community Outreach                |
| e. Educational Policies             | i. Human Rights                      |
|                                     | j. Retirement                        |
- Section 2. The following special committees shall be active in this Federation:
- |                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Audit Committee | b. Election Committee |
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**ARTICLE X** \_\_\_\_\_ **MEETINGS**

- Section 1. CFT Chapter 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 BARGAINING UNIT**

- Section 1. CFT members that are included in the bargaining unit represented by the Cincinnati Federation of Office Professionals (CFOP) are entitled to all the rights of CFT membership and are subject to all of the obligations of CFT membership. Members of CFT, who are members of the CFOP bargaining unit, may also elect the "CFOP Vice President" and a CFOP area coordinator as referenced above.

**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 Executive 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 ground rules 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 for conducting the election 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 2018

#### ARTICLE I

#### DUES

- Section 1: Annual dues for members on full-time teacher contracts shall be 1.30% 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 .0065 of a starting teacher's salary plus per capita payments to affiliated organizations (1/2 of 1.30%). 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 .000325 of a beginning teachers salary plus per capita payments to affiliated organizations (1/4 of 1.30%).
- Section 3: Annual dues for members in the CFOP bargaining unit shall be 1.30% of a beginning support specialist salary plus per capita payments to affiliated organizations. Annual dues for part-time employees in the CFOP bargaining unit shall be .0065 of a beginning support specialist salary plus per capita payments to affiliated organizations (5/10 of 1.30%).
- 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 and CFOP negotiations teams, consisting of no more than nine (9) members each, 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 CFOP negotiating team will be selected according to the guidelines in the CFOP Constitution in Article 8. The negotiations teams shall negotiate contract proposals with the Board of Education.
- Section 2. Proposed collective bargaining contracts shall be presented at CFT and/or CFOP Membership meetings announced at least 24 hours in advance. Collective bargaining contracts shall be ratified by a majority of members in the respective CFT and CFOP bargaining units voting by secret ballot at their schools, designated work sites or at the CFT office. Separate ratification votes shall be conducted for the CFT and CFOP bargaining units. Only members in good standing may cast ratification ballots. Proposed contracts 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 or other designated union members under procedures approved by the Executive Council. This ratification procedure shall also apply to any agreements negotiated pursuant to reopeners 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, that are entered into during the term of a collective bargaining contract shall be ratified by a majority vote of the members covered by the proposed amendments at a general membership meeting, provided the proposed amendments 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 membership meeting announced at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance.



**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. At the discretion of the Treasurer and President a portion of the amount budgeted for legal services may be used to pay the compensation of any Attorney on the CFT staff. 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: Elected CFT and CFOP officers and CFT staff shall maintain no business or financial interests which conflict with their fiduciary obligations to CFT, CFOP and their members.
- Section 5: The president, executive vice-president, the CFOP vice president, and any CFT member, who is a committee chair for state or national affiliate, shall be delegates to all affiliate meetings.
- Section 6. The CFT shall indemnify and pay the costs of defense, through counsel selected 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. The Executive Council will consider and respond to any demand for indemnification.
- Section 7. Any proposed exception to or waiver of any provision of a collective bargaining contract shall be reviewed by the Executive Council prior to a membership meeting. Any exception or waiver to a provision in any collective bargaining contract 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. Only CFT members who are included in the bargaining unit subject to the proposed exception or waiver may vote on a proposed exception or waiver.

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 at the subject school or site according to procedures established by the Executive Council.

Signed

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President

Cincinnati Federation of Teachers, Local 1520

As Amended by vote at CFT Membership Meeting on May 9, 2018 (First reading on April 11, 2018; second reading on May 9, 2018.)