

BEDFORD TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

CONSTITUTION and BY-LAWS

Adopted by the Membership:
June 1969

As amended:
September 1973
January 26, 1976
May 19, 1976
October 14, 1986
May 24, 2007

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this organization shall be: the Bedford Teachers' Association.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

Section 1: To promote professional autonomy; to promote teacher participation in school management; to aid in securing and maintaining adequate salaries, tenure, sound retirement systems, and such other improvements in conditions as will enable teachers to function properly as a vital factor in educational progress.

Section 2: To work for the welfare of school children, the advancement of education, and the improvement of instructional opportunities for all; to encourage active participation of all members of the profession in the solution of school problems; and to develop and promote the adoption of such ethical practices, personnel policies, and the standards of preparation as mark a profession.

Section 3: To enable members to speak with a common voice on matters pertaining to the teaching profession and to present their individual and common interests before the Board of Education and other legal authorities.

Section 4: To cooperate with Parent-Teacher and School Associations and other civic bodies having educational objectives and to aid in the 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 promote good fellowship and social life within the organization.

Section 7: To insure to all members representation, communication, and participation in all affairs affecting the Bedford Public Schools.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Active membership in the Association shall be open to all personnel employed in the Bedford Public School System who are defined as “classroom teachers and ancillary personnel” by the then current agreement between the Bedford Teachers Association and the Board of Education, Bedford Central School District, NYSUT and the AFT. Membership shall be continuous until the member leaves the school system, resigns from the Association, fails to pay membership dues, or is expelled for cause.

Section 2: Association membership shall be open to teaching assistants, registered nurses, occupational therapists, and other personnel as defined in Article One of the current agreement in the Bedford Central School District. Such members shall be entitled to full membership privileges.

Section 3: Retirees – Retiree membership in this organization shall be open to BTA members who have retired. Retirees holding special membership, shall be prohibited from voting on union or contract matters. They may not hold office in the BTA. Specific exceptions to this section made be made by a 2/3 vote of the Representative Assembly.

ARTICLE IV: THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND THE REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

Section 1: The membership of the Association shall elect a president, an executive vice-president, a recording secretary, and a treasurer. Association members in each school shall elect a vice-president from that school. These officers and the NYSUT Representatives shall constitute the Executive Board. The chairperson of the Membership, Grievance, and Negotiating Committees and the immediate past President shall serve on the Executive Board.

Section 2: There shall be a representative body with full governing powers to be known as the Representative Assembly, which shall consist of:

- A. Elected Representatives
- B. The Officers of the Bedford Teachers Association as defined by Article III of the By-Laws.

Section 3: The members in each school unit shall elect representatives on the basis of one representative for each ten (10) members in that school plus a representative for an additional major fraction thereof.

Section 4: The Association membership in each school shall determine the organization of its group or groups represented by its elected Representatives.

ARTICLE V: RULES FOR AMENDING

Section 1: An amendment to this Constitution may be introduced at any regular meeting of the Representative Assembly, to be acted upon at a subsequent regular meeting, but not later than two subsequent regular meetings.

Section 2: A copy of the proposed amendment, if recommended by majority vote of the Representative Assembly, shall be posted in each school building and/or distributed to each member at least ten (10) working days prior to the vote on the amendment by the entire membership. A two-thirds majority of those voting is required to adopt the proposed amendment. The Representative Assembly shall determine the method of balloting.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I: RULES OF ORDER

Robert's Rules of Order shall be the authority on all questions of procedure not specifically stated in this Constitution and By-Laws.

ARTICLE II: NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Section 1: The Representative Assembly will set a date for election of officers at their March meeting. The minutes for the March meeting will include a list of all officers, the current stipends, deadline date for submitting nominations, date for announcement of the slate, deadline for petitions to expand the slate, and date of election.

Section 2: Upon petition of at least ten members the names of additional candidates will be added to the ballot. Such petition must be presented at least five (5) days prior to the election date.

Section 3: Secret ballot elections for district-wide officers shall be held by the general membership. Provisions shall be made for write-in candidates for each office.

Section 4: The Vice-Presidents and Representatives shall be elected by the Association members in each school no earlier than June and no later than September 15.

Section 5: All district-wide officers, including Building Vice-Presidents are elected for a term of one (1) year ending June 30.

ARTICLE III: ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

Section 1: All officers shall be members of the Bedford Teachers Association. In case a vacancy occurs it shall be filled by the Representative Assembly, excepting:

- A. In the office of the President, the Executive Vice-President shall serve to the end of the unexpired term.
- B. In the office of the Executive Vice-President, a district-wide election shall be held.
- C. In the case of a Vice-President, the Association member of that school shall elect to serve to the end of the unexpired term.

Section 2: The President shall preside at all meetings of the Association and of the Representative Assembly. He/she shall be an ex-officio member of all Association committees. He/she shall be a member of the Negotiating Team and participate in the negotiations process. With the Treasurer, he/she shall sign all checks and be bonded. He/she shall hold Executive Board meetings at his/her discretion. He/she shall prepare, with the assistance of the Treasurer, a budget for the consideration of the Representative Assembly in September. He/she may, at the end of his/her term of office, collect the report from each committee chairperson and turn these, along with all the other Association records, over to the new President.

Section 3: The Executive Vice-President shall assume all duties of the President in case of absence or resignation of the President and shall be responsible for such activities as assigned by the President and the Representative Assembly.

Section 4: Each Building Vice-President shall represent his/her school on the Executive Board and the Representative Assembly. He/she shall chair all necessary meeting of the Association members of his/her school. He/she shall solicit, from his/her building, members for all committees. He/she (or his/her designee) shall assist members in his/her building in the initial stages of a grievance.

Section 5: The Secretary shall keep a record of all meetings of the Association and the Representative Assembly and have them available at each subsequent meeting. Following each Representative Assembly meeting he/she will distribute a copy of the minutes to each member. He/she shall, at the end of his/her term of office, turn over all minutes to the new Secretary.

Section 6: The Secretary may also handle all necessary correspondence of the Association and the Representative Assembly. He/she shall keep lists of the Association membership and the Representative Assembly and shall record the attendance at the Representative Assembly meetings. He/she shall notify the Building Vice-President of a particular school when a Representative has been absent from three (3) successive Representative Assembly meetings.

Section 7: The Treasurer shall keep an accurate account of all receipts and expenditures of the Association. He/she shall prepare, with the assistance of the President, a budget for the consideration of the Representative Assembly in September. He/she shall disburse funds only by check and upon co-signature by the President. At each regular meeting of the Association and the Representative Assembly he/she shall make reports on the receipts, disbursements, and the current financial status of the Association. At the end of his/her term of office he/she shall prepare the books for audit and deliver to the new Treasurer all financial records and other materials of the Association.

ARTICLE IV: THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The members of the Executive Board shall implement policies established by the membership and the Representative Assembly. Reports on its meetings will be made to the Representative Assembly.

ARTICLE V: THE FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES

Section 1: I each school, the members-in-good-standing of this Association shall elect for a term of two (2) years one Faculty Representative to the Representative Assembly for each ten (10) members or major fraction thereof. There shall be at least one (1) Representative from each school. When more than one (1) such Representative is elected, the terms shall be staggered.

Section 2: Representatives shall attend all meetings of the Representative Assembly. They shall inform their constituents of all proceedings of the Assembly and shall be spokespersons to the Assembly for their constituents.

Section 3: When a Representative misses three (3) successive meetings of the Assembly his/her ability to serve shall be reviewed with the Building Vice-President.

Section 4: Each school shall elect one alternative Representative for every two (2) Faculty Representatives. In the event of an absence by a Faculty Representative, the alternate from that school shall take his/her place and shall have full voting rights.

ARTICLE VI: THE REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

Section 1: The Representative Assembly shall approve the budget, recommend the dues for the Association, authorize payment of expenses of Officers and other members who render service to the Organization, create such committees as it deems desirable, elect members to all committees mandated by the Professional Negotiations Agreement, act on reports of committees, approve resolutions and other policy statements, authorize the President to sign Memoranda of Agreement and Side Letters of Agreement, and shall adopt procedures for implementing the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession and those to be followed in censuring, suspending, and expelling members for cause or for reinstating members.

Section 2: The Representative Assembly shall meet once per month during the school year. Date, time and place shall be determined by the Assembly. Additional meetings of the Representative Assembly may be held at the call of the President, or upon written request to the President from five (5) Faculty Representatives. A meeting may be cancelled at the discretion of the President, in cases of emergency.

Section 3: Any member of the Association who is not a member of the Representative Assembly may attend its meetings, and may receive permission to speak, but may not vote.

Section 4: This body is based upon representative rather than direct delegated votes. The Representative's role is identical to that of any representative in public office in the United States:

- A. The Representative shall keep the teachers whom he/she represents informed about matters concerning all teachers in the district. He/she shall elicit and be responsive to their opinions of events which have occurred, are occurring or may occur.
- B. The Representatives shall speak and vote for what he considers to be in the best interests of the teachers he/she represents. The election of a Representative empowers him/her to make whatever judgments are deemed appropriate to the situation.

ARTICLE VII: COMMITTEES

Section 1: There shall be the following standing committees:

- A. Professional Negotiations Committee

This committee shall be composed of members elected by the Association membership of each school as follows: two (2) from each elementary school, four (4) from the Middle School and five (5) from the High School.

Elections for the Professional Negotiations Committee shall be held each negotiating year. The Association President shall call the first meeting of the committee in October, at which time the committee will elect its chairperson.

The function of the Professional Negotiations Committee shall be:

1. To solicit from the general membership suggestions on items to be negotiated.
2. To draw up a package of proposals for distribution to the Representatives (and, at the discretion of the committee, to the entire membership) at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the Representative Assembly meeting at which they shall be acted upon.

3. To receive all proposed amendments to the original package. These amendments shall be submitted in writing at least two (2) days prior to the Representative Assembly meeting.
4. To elect from among its members a team of four (4) negotiators, in addition to the President. The Negotiating Team will serve until a new team is elected. The Negotiating Team will designate its chairperson. The Negotiating Team shall have the responsibility of drawing up a professional negotiations agreement with the Board of Education and presenting that agreement for the approval of the general membership. Negotiators and the President shall receive honoraria, the sum for each succeeding year to be set by the Representative Assembly.
5. To continue to function, at the discretion of the Negotiating Team, as an advisory and /or a research group throughout the negotiations process. The chairperson of the Professional Negotiating Committee and/or the Negotiating Team will attend each Representative Assembly meeting and will report to the Assembly on the progress of the committee and/or the Negotiating Team.
6. These procedures may be modified in unique circumstances with the approval of the Representative Assembly.

B. Membership Committee

This committee shall organize and conduct a membership enrollment drive among non-members and shall inform members of the policies, programs, and accomplishments of all associations.

The chairperson shall provide a current membership list to the Recording Secretary. The chairperson of this Committee shall be chosen by the President from the members of the Representative Assembly.

C. Grievance Committee

D. Public Relations Committee

This committee 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 school district. It shall develop procedures by which the Association can work cooperatively with parents and public in civic, fraternal, and social organizations, and through all available channels of communication.

E. Political Action Committee

This committee shall have broad concern for local, state and national legislation affecting the interests of the Association and for exercise of civic responsibility by members. The committee shall be diligent to inform members about pending and newly enacted legislation. It shall study pending legislation and promote activities leading to the passage of desirable legislation for schools.

F. Stipend Committee

This committee shall be composed of members of the Representative Assembly, one from each building, who are not paid officers of the Association. The committee will review annually the stipends of the paid officers and recommend stipend revisions to the Representative Assembly at the March meeting. This committee shall be formed in January.

G. Leave Committee

Teacher members of this Board-Association committee shall be nominated by the Representative assembly in accordance with the provisions of the contract. They shall, in their policies and deliberations, be mindful of the relevant provisions of the contract negotiated by the Association.

1. The Leave Committee shall be composed of tenured teachers elected for two-year terms by the Representative Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the contract. Half of the teacher members will be elected each year.
2. To insure adequate information necessary for teachers to prepare proposals, the teacher members of the Leave Committee shall publish and distribute to the membership the rules and procedures adopted for carrying out the responsibilities of the committee.
3. Upon notification of the committee's action to the applicant and the Superintendent, the teacher members shall report in writing to the President the names of people recommended for leave and a brief description of their proposals.

Section 2: With the exception of the Profession Negotiations Committee, the President shall appoint chairpersons of all Association committees as needed, subject to the approval of the Representative Assembly. Each committee shall keep a continuing record of the activities. Chairpersons shall report as necessary to the Representative Assembly.

Section 3: All members of the committees shall be members of the Bedford Teachers Association.

ARTICLE VIII: PROFESSIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

Section 1: The Bedford Teachers Association shall be the exclusive employee organization to represent its membership in negotiating terms and conditions of employment and in the administration of grievances arising thereunder.

Section 2: Negotiations shall be conducted under the procedures outline in Article III, Section IA, above.

Section 3: The Representative Assembly, if it so desires, may engage professional negotiators to represent the Association.

ARTICLE IX: MEETINGS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Section 1: the order of business shall be as follows, unless changed by a vote of those present:

- A. Opening Remarks by the President
- B. Secretary's Report and Adoption of the Minutes
- C. Treasurer's Report
- D. Reports of Committees
- E. Unfinished Business
- F. New Business

Section 2: Only active members of the Bedford Teachers Association may vote in Association meetings.

ARTICLE X: DUES

The annual dues shall be recommended by the Representative Assembly when the budget is approved and shall be payable to the Treasurer of the Association by November 15th of each school year, or through payroll deduction plan adopted by the Association. Provisions will be made by the Representative Assembly for part-time employees and those who become eligible for membership after the beginning of the school year.

ARTICLE XI: QUORUM

A quorum for all meetings of the Association shall consist of twenty (20) per cent of the members.

ARTICLE XII: NYSUT AND AFT DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES

Section 1: Representation

The Association may elect as many delegates as the membership warrants to NYSUT, AFT, and NEA.

Section 2: Duties and Delegates

- A. NYSUT and AFT – to attend annual conventions of these bodies to which they are accredited.
- B. Delegates will attend all NYSUT Election District meetings and other regional organization meetings.
- C. Delegates shall be the Liaison Representatives linking the State Association and the Local Association in all matters pertaining to education and teachers' welfare.
- D. All delegates will attend the Bedford Teachers Association Representative Assembly meetings.

ARTICLE XIII: AFFILIATIONS

This organization shall be affiliated with the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and its national affiliates.