

*Position  
Paper:*

## Rank-and-File Communications and Empowerment

**M**any PFT members feel disconnected from each other, and especially from PFT leadership. The PFT is the largest union in the city of Philadelphia, yet the true power of our 11,000 members has been locked away for too long. Why is this? Our Caucus has heard too many stories of PFT members misinformed or uninformed about campaigns, policies, and their own leaders; of poorly-attended events; of statements to membership with unclear calls to action (or none at all); and, of long periods of radio silence on topics important to teachers and the communities we serve.

**The Caucus believes that member education and empowerment must be restored as core principles of our union's leadership.** The Executive Board works at the pleasure of, and for the benefit of, the rank and file. If members don't feel they are adequately informed, then it is not membership's fault that they are disengaged from the union's actions—it is leadership's responsibility to provide a better, more engaging system.

### What WE propose:

- Make sure that members are educated about important PFT issues, and invited to help plan actions and activities based on them.
- Create venues for PFT members to quickly and easily understand, decide on, and participate in union affairs. This includes expanded use

of digital and social media communications, as well as new and more inclusive PFT organizational structures.

- Revamp the PFT website to make it more useful and user-friendly, including more frequent content updates, elimination of errors and bugs, and improved information architecture.
- Update PFT policies to make our operations more modern, transparent, and responsive. Such changes may address union meetings and their content, elected leaders' teaching responsibilities, consistent election procedures, and training opportunities for future leaders.

Information provided by the  
**Caucus of Working Educators**  
of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers  
for our fellow PFT members  
during the 2016 union election

<http://workingeducators.org>  
<http://pftelection.org>

