

Webster Teachers Association Constitution

Adopted: 3/31/94

Amended: 10/17/94

Amended: 12/19/11

1. Name

1.1. The name of this organization shall be the Webster Teachers Association.

2. Purpose

2.1. To work for advancement of education and the improvement of instructional opportunities for all.

2.2. To develop and promote the adoption of such ethical practices, personnel policies, and standards of preparation and participation as mark an association member.

2.3. To secure the conditions necessary to provide the greatest rewards for its members in their work environment and to promote the participation of its members in the operational decisions affecting their employment.

2.4. 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.

2.5. To hold property and funds and to employ a staff for the attainment of the above purposes.

2.6. To expose and fight all forms of racism and discrimination.

3. Affiliations

3.1. This organization shall affiliate with the New York State United Teachers and its national affiliates.

4. Membership

4.1. Active membership in the Association shall be open to all professional personnel employed in the schools of the WCS District who are members of the teaching unit as defined in the Contract between the Superintendent and the Association.

4.2. Only active members, not fee payers, shall have the right to vote, to hold office, or to represent the Association.

5. Dues

5.1. Local dues for active members and members on paid leave shall be determined by Representative Council upon adoption of the annual Association budget plus current NYSUT and national affiliate dues.

6. Officers

6.1. The Officers of the Association shall consist of a President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer.

- a. A maximum of two (2) people may share the office of President. The intention of two (2) candidates to share this position must be announced before the closing of the nomination period. All other officer positions may only be held by a single individual.

6.2. President

a. Duties

1. To be the Executive Officer of the Association
2. To preside over meetings of the Executive Board and General Membership Meetings
3. To appoint the Chairs and members of the standing committees with approval of the Representative Council. A maximum of two (2) people may be appointed to share a single Committee Chair. The president may delegate the authority to appoint committee members to the Committee Chair, subject to approval of the Representative Council.
4. To appoint special committees.
5. To represent the Association before the Public either personally or through delegates
6. To perform all other functions usually attributed to this office, those duties being prescribed by this document and those duties prescribed by the parliamentary authority of the Association.
7. To be an ex-officio member of Association committees excepting the Nomination/Election Committee.
8. Be responsible for and supervise the preparation of the agenda for meetings of the Executive Board, Representative Council, and General Membership Meetings.
9. To manage the Association's VOTE-COPE account, and keep accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements, following the same rules of reporting and transparency as stipulated in section 6.6 for management of the general Association funds.
10. Obtain the signature of the Treasurer or First Vice-President as a second signature on any VOTE-COPE disbursement check greater than \$500.00
11. Provide orientation and transition procedures for the successor to this office

b. Qualifications

1. Any person running for election to this office shall be an Association member.

6.3. First Vice-President

a. Duties

1. To become the President if the incumbent President is incapacitated, resigns or is removed from office.
2. To assist the President as needed at the President's discretion.
3. To chair all regular and special meetings of the Representative Council.
4. To organize and conduct membership campaigns.
5. To chair a committee consisting of the Senior Building Representatives. This committee shall organize and conduct the annual membership campaign and maintain complete and current membership records.
6. To be responsible for compiling a roster of the membership.
7. To inform members of the policies, programs and accomplishments of any affiliates.
8. To be an Ex-Officio member of Association committees.
9. Provide orientation and transition procedures for the successor to this office.

b. Qualifications

1. Any person running for election to this office shall be an Association member.

6.4. Second Vice-President

a. Duties

1. To work closely with one or more standing and/or special committees as the President may designate.
2. To supervise the coordination of the standing committees of the Association with respect to the objectives, operating procedures, program and reports which are subject to review by the Representative Council and Cabinet.
3. To organize and execute the annual VOTE-COPE campaign supporting NYSUT's political action. To this end, the Second Vice-President shall coordinate efforts with the First Vice-President, Political Action Chair, and Senior Building Representatives.
4. Provide orientation and transition procedures for the successor to this office.

b. Qualifications:

1. Any person running for election to this office shall be an Association member.

6.5. Recording Secretary

a. Duties

1. To keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the Executive Board, the Representative Council and General Membership meeting.
2. To prepare and distribute said minutes as directed by the Executive Board and Representative Council.
3. To maintain official Association files for Executive Board, Representative Council, and the General Membership meetings.
4. Provide orientation and transition procedures for the successor to this office.

b. Qualifications

1. Any person running for election to this office shall be an Association member.

6.6. Treasurer

a. Duties

1. To hold the funds of the Association and disburse them with review by the Executive Board.
2. To collect monies and transmit the amounts.
3. To keep accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements and report same to each meeting of the Representative Council and the Executive Board.
4. To prepare an annual financial statement for publication to members.
5. To keep the President and Executive Board informed of the financial conditions of the Association.
6. To present the books (including the VOTE-COPE books) for audit by October 15 of each year.
7. To assist the President in the initial drafting of the annual budget.
8. Provide orientation and transition procedures for the successor to this office.
9. Obtain the signature of the President or First Vice-President as a second signature on any Association check greater than \$500.00
10. Disburse Association funds only by check.

b. Qualifications

1. Any person running for election to this office shall be an Association member.

7. Elections of Officers

- 7.1. Elections for Association officers shall be held during the first two weeks of May on even numbered years. All officers shall serve a two-year term. The number of consecutive terms may be unlimited. The installation of officers will take place during the June Representative Council Meeting and duties are assumed during this meeting.
- 7.2. Each election year the Representative Council shall appoint the following special committee: Nomination/Election, consisting of one member from each school, appointed by the Representative Council, to draw up a slate of officers.
 - a. This committee will solicit the names of those willing to run.
 - b. Individuals wishing to run will submit their name(s) to the committee by the March Representative Council meeting where the committee will report submitted names to Representative Council. Nominations from the floor shall be in order at this meeting.
 - c. A general Association meeting will be held in conjunction with the April Representative Council meeting for the presentation of the candidates and their platforms. Additionally, each candidate may submit a brief biography (300 words or less) for publication in the Association newsletter: *WTA Voice*.
 - d. Officers shall be elected by plurality.
- 7.3. Procedures:
 - a. Elections of Officers will be by secret ballot using the three-envelope system.
 - b. Ballots prepared by the Election committee will be in the mailboxes of members by May 1 of the election year. Ballots shall be returned to the committee's designated mail drop by interschool or U.S. Mail by the date specified by the committee (in any event, not less than ten working days nor later than the May Representative Council meeting).
 - c. Each candidate will be allowed a ballot counting observer designated prior to the election to witness the committee tally of ballots.

8. Removal of an Officer from office

- 8.1. Any officer shall be subject to removal from office if she/he shall conduct the duties of the office in such a manner as to be harmful and/or detrimental to the welfare of this Association.
- 8.2. An officer who has been named in a petition from fifty (50) percent of the membership and filed with the Representative Council shall be given options of
 - a. Resigning the office; or
 - b. Answering the specified charges before a general hearing of the Association Membership. The Membership, by a secret ballot, shall determine the issue. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of those Association members voting must be in favor of removal for Representative Council to act under Article 10.8 – h (vacant office).

9. Executive Board

- 9.1. The Executive Board shall consist of:
 - a. the Officers of the Association
 - b. the Chairs of the Standing Committees
 - c. the Liaisons to other organizations as approved by the Representative Council
 - d. one (1) elementary, one (1) middle school, one (1) high school, and one (1) special area liaison selected by the Representative Council.

- 9.2. All members of the Executive Board as defined in #9.1 above shall be voting members.
 - a. Each elected office or Standing Committee chair holds only one (1) vote. If both parties of a shared position are present, only one may vote.
 - b. Members must be present to vote.
- 9.3. The Executive Board shall act in an advisory capacity to the President and the Representative Council.
- 9.4. The Executive Board shall also:
 - a. Make decisions about proceeding to arbitration.
 - b. Under personnel policies adopted by the Representative Council and within the Annual budget, have authority to employ staff for the efficient management of the Association.
 - c. Review budget expenditures.
 - d. Carry out policies established by the Representative Council at the direction of the President.
 - e. Report its transactions to the Representative Council.
 - f. Suggest policies for consideration by the Representative Council.
 - g. Sponsor workshops and training conferences for all Representatives, Committees and Officers as it deems necessary.
 - h. Represent the Association in carrying out the policies as determined by the Representative Council and at the direction of the President.
 - i. Carry out other responsibilities as directed by the President.
 - j. Move Memoranda of Agreement or Understanding, with recommendations, to the Representative Council for their determination.

10. Representative Council

- 10.1. The legislative and policy forming body of the Association shall be the Representative Council.
- 10.2. The Representative Council shall consist of the officers of the Association, one or more representatives from each school building, state/national affiliation delegates, liaisons and the chairs of each standing committee.
- 10.3. All members of the Representative Council as defined in #2 above shall be voting members. All members of the Council will have only one (1) vote. Representatives or their elected Alternates must be present to vote. If the Presidency or a Standing Committee chair is shared by two people, only one may vote.
- 10.4. Any member of the Association who is not a member of the Representative Council may attend its meetings and be privileged to speak but shall sit apart from the voting body.
- 10.5. Attendance and speaking privileges may also be extended to invited guests at the discretion of the President or by majority of the Representative Council.
- 10.6. In each Webster Central School District building, members in good standing of the Association shall elect for a term of two (2) years one (1) Building Representative and one (1) alternate to the Representative Council for each twenty (20) members or major fraction thereof. There shall be at least one (1) Representative from each building. Building is interpreted as the educational unit to which members are responsible. Where two such

Representatives are elected, one shall be designated as the Senior Building Representative and that role shall be transferred to the other Representative after one year. Buildings with more than two Representatives shall have the elected Representatives designate a new Senior Building Representative each year in June. The Representatives shall take their seats (offices) at the June meeting of the Representative Council.

- a. Elections for Building Representatives shall be by secret paper ballot during the month of May each year.
- b. Ballots shall be held by the Building Representatives for one year after the elections as prescribed by the Landrum-Griffin Act.

10.7. Building Representatives or their Alternates shall attend the regular meetings of the Representative Council unless they are excused by the President. After two (2) consecutive, unexcused absences of the Representative and upon written receipt of a written complaint of non-representation by a building member, the President may declare the seat vacant and call for a building election to fill out the term. The President may designate a member in good standing to organize this special election.

10.8. The Representative Council shall:

- a. Approve the budget and set the dues for the Association.
- b. Act on reports of committees.
- c. Initiate and/or approve resolutions and policy statements.
- d. Allocate funds for non-budgeted items.
- e. Adopt procedures to be followed in censuring, suspending, and expelling members for just cause.
- f. Adopt procedures for reinstating members.
- g. Adopt such rules governing the employment of Association staff, the conduct of the Association and the conduct of meetings as are consistent with this Constitution.
- h. Fill in an elected office that has been declared vacant in accordance with this Constitution.
- i. Confirm the appointment of Committee Chairs and Liaisons to other organizations by a simple majority of ballots cast in a roll-call vote.
- j. Approve legal actions as circumstances dictate.
- k. Be the final judge of the qualifications and elections of officers and Building Representatives.
- l. Make the final determination on the approval of Memoranda of Agreement and Understanding.

11. Building Representative Duties

11.1. As a leader:

- a. Shall call Building meetings of members to discuss and act upon business in accordance with policies established by Representative Council.
- b. Shall appoint Building committees as the Association may require.
- c. Shall keep the Association's leadership informed as to problems and/or accomplishments at the school level.
- d. Shall assist the Teaching Unit members with problems or concerns affecting their professional life.
- e. Shall represent the membership at Association meetings.
- f. Shall be available to members to answer questions and/or discuss issues.

11.2. As an organizer:

- a. Shall organize the members in the school, recruiting and retaining membership in the Association.
- b. Shall keep the Association's actions, programs, and available services visible and accessible to members in the building.
- c. Shall communicate information to the members through meetings, personal contact, memos, e-mails, and telephone networks.
- d. Shall organize and oversee subsequent elections of Building Representative.

11.3. As a grievance representative:

- a. Shall discuss with members how problems can best be handled – as complaints or grievances.
- b. Shall communicate the details of all concerns to the President of the Association in a timely fashion.
- c. Shall accompany, upon request, any member/fee payer to any meeting.
- d. Shall assist the Grievance Chairperson in the preparation of grievances for presentation to the principal (or immediate supervisor).
- e. Shall assist, upon request, in the presentation of any grievances and shall be present at other steps in the grievance procedure as required.
- f. Shall preserve confidentiality of grievances.
- g. Shall assist in creating and maintaining records of grievances originating in the building.

11.4. Election Process: Building Representatives

- a. Nominations will take place in each building during the month of April.
- b. Members of the Association shall vote by secret ballot in their building in the month of May.
- c. The candidate(s) receiving the greatest number of votes shall be elected.
- d. The Committee on Nominations and Elections shall arbitrate any dispute arising out of a building election.
- e. Newly elected Building Representatives shall begin their terms of service at the June Representative Council Meeting.

12. Meetings

12.1. Executive Board

- a. The Executive Board shall meet once each school month, at the call of the President, or at the request of three (3) members of the Executive Board.

12.2. Representative Council

- a. The Representative Council shall meet once each school month.

12.3. Special Meetings

- a. Special Meetings of the Representative Council may be held at the call of the President or upon written request to the Executive Board from ten (10) Building Representatives. Business to come before Special Meetings must be stated in the call that shall be sent in writing to each member of the Representative Council.

12.4. General Membership Meetings

- a. The Executive Board may arrange at least one (1) meeting of the members each year for discussion of professional issues.

13. Quorum

13.1. A quorum of the Executive Board and Committees shall consist of a majority of their members. If two people share the presidency or a committee chair, they count as only one (1) member for with regard to establishing a quorum (and voting) at Executive Board. A quorum of the Representative Council shall consist of a majority of the Building Representatives and elected officers.

14. Standing Committees

14.1. Structure

- a. There shall be the following committees carrying out the specific functions outlined below. The members selected shall be representative of the membership and appointed for a term of one year. Each committee may, with the approval of the Executive Board, organize subcommittees and task forces for specific activities for the membership of the Association. Each committee is responsible for recruiting replacements to fill vacancies on the committee and making those recommendations to the President.

14.2. Meetings

- a. Each standing committee shall meet as often as necessary to fulfill its responsibilities. Each committee may adopt its own rules and procedures consistent with this constitution.

14.3. Reports

- a. Each committee shall keep a continuing record of activities. Chairs shall report items of action to the Representative Council, Executive Board and to the Committee on Public Relations, and shall prepare an annual written report summarizing committee activities which shall become a part of the continuing committee record in the Association files.

14.4. Relationship to State and National Association

- a. The standing committees shall seek to understand and relate to the objectives and programs of corresponding units of state and national associations and shall counsel with them.

14.5. Titles and Duties

a. Committee on Professional Growth

1. This committee shall explore and develop action programs to raise and maintain standards for certification, employment and assignment, to improve opportunities for pre-service, continuing and in-service professional education, and to create and maintain rapport between the Association and neighboring or closely related institutions of higher education.

b. Committee on Association Events & Public Relations

1. This committee shall work to further internal cohesiveness, and develop and maintain positive relations with administrative representatives and the Webster community by organizing special events and soliciting member participation in appropriate activities.
2. Upon direction of the Representative Council, this committee shall organize a "Benefits Fair" to provide information and facilitate the availability of benefits and services for members.
3. This committee shall organize a WTA table for the annual district Community Arts Day.

4. This committee will work closely with the Committee on Association Publications to ensure the timely reporting of relevant information.
- c. Committee on Association Publications & Public Relations
 1. This committee shall develop internal and external communications, report and clarify to the membership the policies and actions of the Representative Council and the Executive Board, develop cohesiveness among the members by insuring two-way communications, inform the public of educational issues which are of mutual interest, maintain liaison with the Committee on Political Action and promote its aims and strategies.
 2. This committee shall be responsible for maintaining the Association's internet website, and producing periodic editions of the Association newsletter, the *WTA Voice*.
 - d. Committee on Legislation (Political Action)
 1. This committee shall have the broad concern for local, state and national legislation affecting the interests of the Association and the exercise of civic responsibilities by members. The committee shall work cooperatively with other appropriate committees to inform members about newly enacted legislation and shall make the recommendations to the Representative Council regarding support of legislation and/or political candidates.
 - e. Committee on Member Services
 1. This committee shall develop a listing of those businesses and services within the area that will provide special rates to teachers on purchases and services rendered.
 2. This committee shall establish an annual retirement dinner in honor of all Association members who are retiring from the profession of Teaching.
 3. This committee shall address other member services as may be appropriate to the purpose and function of the committee.
 - f. Committee on Health and Safety
 1. This committee shall have broad concern for local, state and national matters affecting the health and safety of District students and Bargaining Unit Members.
 2. This committee shall keep apprised of current health and safety concerns among members of the Association, consulting with the Association President and Grievance Representative regarding said concerns.
 3. Regular reports to Representative Council of pertinent information would be a part of the Representative Council Minutes or as articles in the *WTA Voice*.
 4. The Committee Chair may request, on a case-by-case basis, further funding and Association Days for the purpose of attending conferences, workshops, etc., that benefit the Association and its members as cited in #s 1 & 2 above.
 5. This Committee will research Health and Safety issues for contract negotiations and work closely with the Negotiations Committee to develop contract proposals for Bargaining.
 - g. Central Grievance Committee
 1. This committee shall assist and counsel members of the Association.
 2. This committee shall be responsible for the processing of all complaints and grievances which are brought to the attention of the Association and all other duties to enforce the Contract.

3. Retain all records of past and present grievances and maintain the appropriate level of confidentiality of those records.
 4. Assist in educating the membership of the Association in Contract awareness and enforcement.
 5. File all grievances with the signature(s) of the President and/or the Grievance Chair, in any event, the President of the Association will be informed of all grievances before filing. Any disagreement between the President and the Grievance Chair regarding such grievance and their filing, shall be arbitrated by the Executive Board, convened in meeting, within five (5) school days of notification of said disagreement.
 6. Assist and facilitate local, state and national legal representatives in the processing grievances and arbitrations.
- h. Committee on Scholarship
1. This committee shall provide educational opportunities through a scholarship program which is designed to further the education and training of graduating high school seniors.
 2. The selection process for the awarding of the scholarships shall be determined and administered by the Committee on Scholarship.
 3. The committee shall report its procedures and findings to the Representative Council.
- i. Other Standing Committees as may be necessary.
1. The creation of other standing committees is contingent upon approval of the Representative Council.
 2. Reauthorization of these other standing committees is on an annual basis, contingent upon presidential appointment of a committee chair and ratification of that appointment by Representative Council.

14.6. Relationship to the Executive Board and Representative Council

- a. The Committee Chair shall assist the President in appointing members of the standing committees at the regular meeting in June and to fill unexpired terms as vacancies occur, and each may plan for an organizational committee conference each year. The Executive Board shall require and assist committees to define their immediate and long-range objectives. The Executive Board shall decide any jurisdictional argument between committees. Standing Committee Chairs shall be voting members of the Executive Board.

15. Special Committees and Councils

15.1. Delegates

- a. Delegates of the Association shall be elected as per the guidelines and procedures established by the Representative Council.
- b. By virtue of election to the office, the President of the Association shall be the ranking delegate to all local, state and national affiliates' conferences and conventions. All other delegates shall be elected to local, state and national affiliates according to the guidelines of the affiliates. Money will be budgeted each year for attendance at local, state and national conferences.
- c. All other delegates shall be elected for a two (2) year term. Delegates may succeed themselves.
- d. Qualifications: Any person running for election to this office shall be an Association member.

15.2. Committee on Budget and Finance

- a. The Executive Board shall serve as the Committee on Budget and Finance.
- b. The committee shall:
 1. Appoint an independent outside auditor for the purpose of conducting the annual audit of the Association's financial records and procedures.
 2. Annually recommend a proposed budget to the Representative Council for its action.

15.3. Committee on Negotiations

- a. This committee shall assist the Negotiations team by acquiring research and data concerning instructional programs, salaries, terms, conditions of employment and matters related thereto, for the Negotiation Team's use.

15.4. Negotiating Team

- a. Composition of the Negotiating Team shall be determined as appropriate to the type of negotiations to be undertaken.
- b. Appointments to the Negotiating Team and the appointment of Chief Negotiator shall be by the recommendation of the President to the Executive Board which in turn shall pass their recommendation to the Representative Council which shall give final approval to the composition of the Negotiating Team.
- c. The Negotiating Team is charged with the direct negotiations with representatives of the Webster Central School District.
- d. Procedure for Membership Ratification
 1. The procedure for membership ratification of the negotiation agreements shall be developed by the Executive Board and recommended to the Representative Council for adoption.

15.5. Other Such Committees As May Be Necessary

16. Referenda

- 16.1. The Executive Board by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, or the Representative Council, at a regular meeting, by a simple majority vote, or by a petition addressed to the Cabinet signed by a minimum of twenty percent (20%) of the membership of the Association as of the date of the petition, may request that any item be voted upon by all members using a secret ballot.
- 16.2. The Executive Board's sole responsibility upon receiving the petition shall be to authenticate the signatures.
- 16.3. Such balloting shall take place within ten (10) school days after notice of such issue is posted in each school and sent to each member.
- 16.4. Matters not subject to referenda are powers specifically assigned to other bodies by this constitution.

17. Authority

- 17.1. Robert's Rules of Order Revised shall be the parliamentary authority for the Association on all questions not covered by the Constitution and such standing rules as the Representative Council may adopt.

18. Amendment

18.1. This Constitution may be amended by majority vote at any regular meeting of the Representative Council provided that proposed amendments have been previously studied by the Executive Board and that copies have been sent to Building Representatives for distribution to each member two (2) weeks in advance of the meeting.