

SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

ADOPTION OF AFT’S TEACHER AND SCHOOL STAFF SHORTAGE TASK FORCE REPORT

1 WHEREAS, our teacher and PSRP members must deal with stagnant
2 wages that fail to match their similarly educated peers, endless budget
3 austerity, crippling student loan debt, increased class size and workloads,
4 expanding class coverage and administrative responsibilities, insufficient
5 time for preparation and collaboration, meaningless paperwork, and an
6 erosion of work/life balance; and

7 WHEREAS, schools should be the safest places in our communities
8 but are subjected to unconscionable loss of life, injury and trauma by gun
9 violence and the unwillingness of many political leaders to enact
10 reasonable and effective gun safety laws that are supported by a large
11 majority of the public; and

12 WHEREAS, the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; political
13 brawling over the teaching of honest history; book banning; malicious
14 efforts to marginalize LGBTQIA+ kids, students of color and immigrant
15 students; and zealots who want to demonize certain groups have created
16 an environment that is damaging to students’ and employees’ well-being;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, research shows the shortage of teachers is not a result of
19 the reluctance to teach and work with students, but the unsustainable
20 teaching and learning conditions in our schools combined with an
21 appalling lack of educator voice in the decisions that affect their
22 professional and personal lives; and

23 WHEREAS, while schools have experienced shortages of teachers
24 and school staff for decades, especially for employees of color, and
25 teacher turnover rates were nearly double those of other occupations even
26 before the pandemic, our schools are now experiencing an even greater,
27 unprecedented shortage of teachers and staff; and

28 WHEREAS, for the first time ever, after almost 50 years, a recent poll
29 showed that a majority of Americans opposed their own children becoming
30 public school teachers, hoping they would select a profession with more
31 respect, higher pay, better working conditions and more opportunities for
32 career advancement; and

33 WHEREAS, public schools and the people who work in them have
34 endured attacks for decades from self-serving political agendas and profit-
35 seeking opportunists who want to convert the right to a free public
36 education into a private, for-profit commodity; and

37 WHEREAS, numerous federal and state initiatives over the past
38 several decades have reduced the craft and joy of teaching and learning
39 to data-obsessed accountability compliance models promoted by “A

40 Nation at Risk” in 1983, the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, and Race to
41 the Top in 2009, along with numerous wrong-headed state efforts; and

42 WHEREAS, in sum, teachers and school staff who have dedicated
43 their professional lives to America’s public school students do not have the
44 climate, culture, conditions and compensation to do their jobs; and

45 WHEREAS, public education systems exist to support and serve all
46 children, regardless of circumstance or background, and educators not
47 only help students learn facts and critical-thinking skills, but also help mold
48 and shape them as they prepare to take their place in their communities
49 and our country; and

50 WHEREAS, all of these factors and countless others have made
51 working in public schools more stressful than ever and have fueled a
52 shortage of teachers and school staff, imperiling the future of
53 neighborhood public schools, the institution of public education and the
54 fundamental principles of a free democratic society; and

55 WHEREAS, the AFT Teacher and School Staff Shortage Task Force
56 was appointed in December 2021 to address these pressing issues:

57 **RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers will adopt**
58 **the Teacher and School Staff Shortage Task Force report (completed**
59 **July 2022). It represents the voice of our preK-12 members**
60 **addressing one of the largest challenges facing American public**
61 **schools. It is the culmination of in-depth member surveys, multiple**
62 **listening sessions, numerous virtual and in-person task force**
63 **meetings, input from top researchers, the hard work of the AFT**
64 **elected leaders and staff, and the guidance of AFT national officers;**
65 **and**

66 **RESOLVED, that the AFT and our affiliates will use the report to**
67 **advocate for policies, resources, practices and supports, and to**
68 **promote the implementation of recommendations that will address**
69 **the climate, culture, conditions and compensation needed to make**
70 **all education professions attractive and sustainable and in doing so**
71 **serve and preserve our public schools.**