Established as a partnership between the City University of New York (CUNY) and NYC labor unions, the Joseph S. Murphy Institute serves working adults seeking to improve their professional skills, upgrade their qualifications, advance their careers, and deepen their understanding of the world.

The Institute provides a gateway to the University for union members, assistance with admissions applications, academic counseling, and selection of the right CUNY campus and program to meet students’ needs. It provides administrative and academic support along the way to help students achieve their educational and career goals. The Institute helps students prepare for the challenges of college work and overall skills in order to succeed and earn degrees. All services are free to union members.

About the Murphy Institute

Leap to Teacher Program (LTT)

A special program for UFT members (with a focus on paraprofessionals) in New York City Public Schools.

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The Murphy Institute
Education That Works As Hard As You Do®

CUNY School of Professional Studies
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Leap to Teacher is properly designed to assist students, especially those with limited financial aid, to navigate the complex process through college through academic support, counseling, and a friendly and welcoming environment.

– Edison Burgos, 2011 Graduate

The Program:

- Helps paraprofessionals and other UFT members prepare for and enter college
- Offers free preparation for the CUNY/ACT exam
- Provides pre-application and application assistance
- Assists with financial aid, special grant opportunities, and DOE voucher processing
- Provides academic advising from admission to graduation
- Offers tutoring, writing support, and additional workshops
- Provides information about NYS requirements for teacher certification
- Administrates free NYS teacher certification examination preparation workshops
- Offers career advancement
- Offers professional development opportunities

It [The LTT program] helped me accomplish my goals of becoming an educator. It provided me with resources that allowed me to finish and pass all my teacher exams on time. I am so pleased with this program that I am constantly advocating for it. I encourage my peers in the field to apply for this program.

– Yudelka Nivar, 2013 Graduate

Earn a Bachelor’s Degree

Students pursuing a Bachelor’s Degree must complete a minimum of 120 credits, distributed among liberal arts and professional courses. Required liberal arts courses improve writing and analytical skills necessary for the teaching profession and a variety of other fields.

- A variety of majors in education and other fields are available at participating colleges.
- Paraprofessionals who wish to remain Paraprofessionals can take classes for personal, professional, and economic advancement.

Earn a Master’s Degree

Leap to Teacher students can enroll in Master’s Degree or Advanced Certificate programs in Education and other fields of study. Availability of programs depend on the choice of your college.

We have many opportunities as a Paraprofessional with the Union to get help from the Murphy Institute.

– Violeta Werder, 2015 Graduate

Earn a Teaching Degree

Earn a Bachelor’s or Master’s Degree and become a certified teacher.

- Help shape our future by educating tomorrow’s leaders
- Help alleviate the teacher shortage in math, science, bilingual education, special education, foreign language, and reading specialist
- Make a contribution to New York City’s public schools and to your community
- Build on the knowledge and experience you acquired in the classroom
- Improve your salary, benefits, and job security
- Enjoy a rewarding career

Possible fields of study include, but are not limited to:

- Early Childhood Education (Grades B-2)
- Childhood Education (Grades 1-6)
- Secondary Education (Middle School or High Schools)
- Special Education
- Bilingual Education
- Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
- Dual Certification Master’s Programs (varies by campus)

Earn a Degree for Non-Teaching Professional Careers in Schools

The Leap to Teacher program provides services for UFT members interested in working within a school, but not as a teacher. Earn a degree in school as a non-teaching professional in roles such as:

- Special Education Specialist
- Audiologist and Speech Pathologist
- Business Manager
- Curriculum Supervisor
- Guidance Counselor
- Library Information Services
- Occupational and Physical Therapist
- School Psychologist
- School Social Worker

** Note: Some programs are day only classes and some programs require a full semester internship.