

July 16, 2014

Richard Briffault, Chair
New York City Conflicts of Interest Board
2 Lafayette Street, Suite 1010
New York, New York, 10007

Dear Mr. Briffault:

An item posted on the *Crain's* Insider blog last night ("Before contract, teachers gave to de Blasio charity") raises disturbing questions about a potential conflict of interest during the recently completed teachers' contract negotiations.

According to the *Crain's* report:

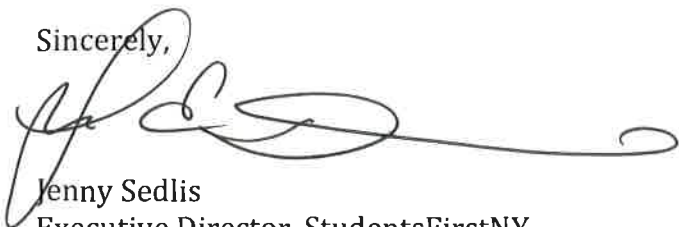
"Less than a month before Mayor Bill de Blasio struck a major contract agreement with the United Federation of Teachers, its parent union, the American Federation of Teachers, gave \$350,000 to a nonprofit run by de Blasio advisors, which lobbies on behalf of the mayor's priorities, newly released records show."

Serious questions have been raised about the teachers' contract agreed to in May, in which the City gave considerable raises without getting much in return. Increasing teacher pay is worthwhile, but a nine-year deal with pay hikes totaling 19 percent should come with union concessions that improve the quality of classroom instruction and help turn around failing schools. The City entered the talks with a strong bargaining position yet it wound up paying significantly more while giving teachers the right to work less—the contract reduces instructional time for children by 2½ hours per week.

The timing of such a large union contribution to the Mayor's Super PAC for his most dear political cause at a critical juncture in the contract negotiations is troubling. What are the rules for government officials accepting Super PAC contributions from unions with whom they are negotiating a contract?

I urge the board to immediately look into these questions. New Yorkers deserve to know whether it is a conflict of interest for Mayor de Blasio to take large Super PAC contributions from a union with whom he is negotiating a new contract.

Sincerely,



Jenny Sedlis
Executive Director, StudentsFirstNY