



California Federation of Teachers
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO
Berkeley Federation Of Teachers

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TEACHERS ORGANIZE A UNION AT REALM CHARTER SCHOOLS

Berkeley's Newest Charter Schools Join Berkeley Federation Of Teachers

Berkeley, CA – The teachers at Realm Middle and High Schools became the first charter schools in Berkeley to receive union recognition last week when they were informed by California's Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) that their request to join the Berkeley Federation of Teachers (BFT), an affiliate of the California Federation of Teachers, had been granted.

"We are thrilled!" said Hillary Walker, a sixth grade Humanities teacher at Realm. "Based on its history of advocacy, support and collective bargaining, we felt that the BFT could help us negotiate a strong contract, emphasizing democratic participation that would be a model for other charter schools."

Realm is a new charter school system that opened its doors in August 2011. Realm certificated staff sought out the BFT for union representation. Last summer the prospective teachers met with the BFT leadership and the California Federation of Teachers Organizing Department to answer questions and discuss options.

"We are proud to represent teachers at Berkeley's newest charter schools. We look forward to working together to negotiate a first contract that addresses charter teachers' unique concerns while also maintaining the best conditions our teachers enjoy in the Berkeley Unified School District," said Cathy Campbell, president of the Berkeley Federation of Teachers.

Josh Pechthalt, president of the California Federation of Teachers (CFT), which represents teachers and staff at several charter schools across the state said: "Forming a union is about democracy, being respected and having your voice heard. We believe charter school teachers deserve the same rights in school decision making as teachers in traditional public schools and we look forward to working with the Realm teachers to obtain good, solid contracts."

The CFT represents 120,000 education professionals working at every level of the education system from ECE to the University; while the AFT has more than 3,000 local affiliates nationwide, 43 state affiliates, and more than 1.4 million members.

The California Federation of Teachers is the statewide affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers. The CFT represents faculty and other school employees in public and private schools and colleges, from early childhood through higher education.

For more information please visit www.cft.org.