



A Union of Professionals

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Teachers' Union

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Washington Teachers' Union and DC Public Schools Reach Tentative Agreement on a New Teacher Contract

WASHINGTON—After two and a half years of negotiations, and despite one of the most challenging economic environments in generations, the Washington Teachers' Union (WTU) and the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) have reached a tentative agreement for a contract that invests in teachers' professional growth, creates conditions for success for students, and boosts teacher pay in the District to a level that is competitive with surrounding school systems. The agreement, negotiated by the WTU and DCPS with assistance from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and mediator Kurt Schmoke, was announced today.

“This agreement provides teachers with the supports they need to facilitate quality teaching and learning,” said WTU President George Parker. “We negotiated key professional issues that will help teachers provide their students with the excellent education they deserve, which is what teachers, parents and the community rightly demand and expect.”

The tentative agreement provides increased professional support for teachers that will improve teaching and learning, as well as new incentives for educators. Additionally, it includes a significant increase in base salaries, maintains tenure, and preserves due process for teachers and school employees. The agreement also includes new checks and balances related to excessing and reduction in force.

“No one—not parents and not teachers—wants the status quo. This agreement used collective bargaining as a vehicle for change, to create a path to school improvement and student success,” said AFT President Randi Weingarten. “It is tailored to the specific and unique circumstances in Washington, D.C. At a time when some school systems are mired in conflict—as reflected in these contentious negotiations—and many of the worst effects of the recession are being played out in our public schools, the WTU and DCPS worked through their differences at the negotiating table and reached an agreement that will be good for kids and fair to teachers.”

The major provisions of the agreement include:

- **Improving teaching and learning**, including greatly expanded professional development for teachers focused on priority areas identified by educators, the establishment of teacher centers, joint development of school improvement plans and a mentoring/teacher induction program;
- **School improvement models**, allowing for the transparency, stakeholder involvement, flexibility and focus to improve struggling schools;
- **Safe and orderly environments for teaching and learning**, building on the revised Chapter 25 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations on student discipline and requiring each school to develop a comprehensive plan for student conduct and safety; and
- **Salaries and benefits**, including competitive base salary increases, a voluntary individual performance-pay plan, schoolwide performance-based pay and increased DCPS contribution to teacher benefits.

Other key provisions include increased teacher voice in staffing decisions, a better-defined system of due process for disciplinary procedures and an expedited grievance process to resolve teacher complaints.

The tentative agreement marks the end of nearly three years of negotiations and lays the foundation for an education plan that, if properly implemented, will improve academic performance in D.C.'s public schools.

For more information and contract highlights, visit www.unitedfordckids.org.

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