



A Union of Professionals

The Washington
Teachers' Union

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Statement by George Parker, President, Washington Teachers' Union, and Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers, On Certification Status of Tentative Agreement

D.C. Chief Financial Officer Natwar Gandhi said today at a D.C. city council hearing that the District of Columbia's budget is insufficient to fund the tentative agreement between D.C. Public Schools and the Washington Teachers' Union.

WASHINGTON—The WTU and the American Federation of Teachers negotiated with DCPS in good faith and, after three long years, reached a tentative contract agreement that would help improve teaching and learning in D.C.'s public schools. It provides the tools that teachers need to help every child get a great education. At our insistence, the District's chief financial officer must certify financial sufficiency to fund the agreement before WTU members can vote on its ratification. As of today, regrettably, that certification has not occurred.

The competency of the city's administration is in question—and for good reason. For the past year, the negotiation process has been marred by the unwillingness of Mayor Fenty, Chancellor Rhee and Chief Financial Officer Gandhi to be fully transparent about our school system's financial condition, and by their failure to be better partners with one another. The fiscal and managerial dysfunction is holding up the promise of a solid educational plan with improvements for our schools, and is causing serious morale problems.

We are ready to put the contract up for ratification—and have been ready for some time. It is time for the city to work out its problems quickly, so that the contract can be approved and we can provide our children the enriching educational experience they deserve.

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