



Washington Teachers' Union

President Elizabeth A. Davis STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

September 22, 2015

General Membership Meeting
McKinley Technology High School

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS SET TO MOVE FORWARD

Contract negotiations continue to be the WTU's top priority. As a result of my outreach to Chancellor Henderson at the start of the school year, the WTU and DCPS have agreed to move negotiations forward with the help of a mediator.

A key component of the Representative Assembly and General Membership meetings throughout the 2014-15 school year were small group sessions where WTU members had an opportunity to discuss and contribute to contract proposals. These "contract action" sessions covered a range of issues, including planning periods, supplies and technology and special education.

There were also contract sessions specifically geared to school librarians, bilingual and ELL teachers, foreign language teachers and related service providers. The WTU bargaining team also met with athletic trainers, counselors, social workers, early childhood educators and National Board Certified Teachers to vet new proposed contract language related to those areas.

Contract action sessions directly involved hundreds of members. The feedback from these sessions was instrumental in the development of the more than 10 articles and draft proposals which are currently under review by Chancellor Henderson.

The union is planning to establish contract action teams at every school so that members can weigh-in on contract proposals.

The union's goal is simple: we want a final, ratified agreement that is first fair and in the best interest of our members but also good for students.

MEMBER RECRUITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT PAYS OFF



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A concerted effort to sign up full dues paying members has paid off for the WTU. The union picked up over 2,500 new members during my administration. For the first time ever, the Washington Teachers' Union was singled out by AFT, our national affiliate, for its highly successful member recruitment and engagement program.

The recruitment campaign was particularly intense during Mobilization May, a month long effort to reclaim members that featured various incentives and contests for both members and potential members.

In August 2015, when some 750 new DCPS teachers showed up at the Columbia Heights Education Campus for New Teacher Orientation they were greeted by WTU leaders and members, who were there to make the new teachers aware of the services and benefits available to them through the union. The new teachers obviously took note because more than 700 of them took advantage of the opportunity to sign on as full dues paying members of the WTU.

Last summer, the AFT passed a member engagement resolution that calls on the WTU and other local unions to dramatically increase the number of member activists and members who engage in union activities. The WTU intends to heed that call by reaching out to and speaking with more members and potential full members than ever before. Our goal is 100% full dues members by the end of school year 2017.

LOCAL SCHOOL UNION LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND REPRESENTATION

Leadership training is one of the WTU's core missions and this past year the union ramped up its training of building reps and local school leadership teams with quarterly Union Leadership Institutes (ULI). These well-attended trainings have covered such topics as the role and responsibilities of local school union leaders, top contractual issues, IMPACT, school-based collaboration, high stakes testing and the DCPS FY-2016 budget.

ULIs have also included sessions on bullying prevention, managing anti-social behavior and reducing discipline disparities.

The Back to School Union Leadership Institute held at Gallaudet University in August featured presentations on organizing and member engagement, the role of local school union leaders in school reform, and research-based instructional strategies.

The WTU now has union representation at 80% of D.C. schools, up from 30% when I took office in August 2013. In addition, the union has instituted a new incentive program for



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building representatives where they can earn back 50% of their dues for the year by exhibiting exemplary local union leadership skills and outcomes.

TAKING THE INITIATIVE ON IMPACT

The WTU continues to receive hundreds of complaints about the IMPACT teacher evaluation system and its failure to accurately and fairly measure the work that our members do in the classroom. In early September, the union filed a class action grievance on behalf of more than 200 teachers who received less than Effective ratings under the IMPACT. (Grievances were also filed on behalf of individual WTU members.) The grievances charge that the educators' evaluations "had violations, misinterpretation, and misapplication of policy and provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement and procedural violations of the IMPACT process during the 2014-15 school year."

For the 2013-2014 school year, WTU filed a collective action grievance citing over 30 violations for close to 135 members. WTU is currently working with DCPS general counsel to begin scheduling IMPACT Step II hearings in November.

REPRESENTING MEMBERS ON THE LEGAL FRONT

One of the chief responsibilities of the WTU is to represent members whose legal and/or contractual rights have been violated by DCPS. After a highly successful win to lead the Washington Teachers' Union, I inherited a large number of unfinished cases from the previous WTU administration, which were affirmatively not processed.

The WTU and its attorneys are currently litigating a number of class action and individual arbitration cases on behalf of members. We are reclaiming all of the pending cases from the former WTU presidents and are moving forward in our effort to obtain positive results in all cases.

A HIGHLY REGARDED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

One of the widely recognized strengths of the WTU is its professional development program. Teachers, as well as DCPS officials, have roundly praised the WTU's Teacher Center professional development offerings. The WTU professional development program is designed to equip members with the skills they need to better serve and educate students. During my term, over 400 members have enrolled in the WTU year-round professional development program and courses.

Courses have been offered in Beginning Reading Instruction, Foundations of Effective Teaching, Instructional Strategies that Work, Managing Antisocial Behavior, Strategies for Student Success, Thinking Mathematics, Legal Issues in Education, new Common Core Resource classes, and many, many other topics.



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WTU also provided new IMPACT T-3 training, which was designed to raise awareness of research that supports differentiation and to teach the basic components of differentiation, and IMPACT T-7 training, where participants learned how to use research to inform their questioning practices and craft better questions.

WTU offers new learning scholarships for all new teacher members as well as teachers receiving Developing on the IMPACT assessment. Those who take WTU PD courses earn up to 45 PLUs towards recertification and graduate credit for most WTU courses, which are accredited by Trinity University.

The union's fall PD courses kicked-off on September 14 and there is still time to register for classes which begin in October.

TEACHERS TAKING THE LEAD

The WTU launched its Teacher Leaders program last school year—and we're continuing it for the 2015-16 school year. An initiative of the union's national affiliate, the AFT, Teacher Leaders are full-time classroom teachers selected to join a nationwide network.

Members of the WTU Teacher Leaders cadre received training designed to help them take an active role in influencing policy in a number of areas, including teacher leadership in school change, teacher preparation, professional development, the role of high stakes testing, and teacher evaluation.

The cadre participated in discussions with elected leaders, journalists and leading policy experts. Teacher Leaders also served as workshop presenters and WTU spokespersons at local and national conferences.

The union is seeking teachers interested in joining our 2015-2016 Teacher Leaders cohort to collaborate with colleagues across the city and nation.

Visit www.wtulocal6.org for more on the Teacher Leaders program and an application. The application deadline is October 1, 2015.

AN IMPROVED FINANCIAL SITUATION

The Washington Teachers' Union's financial situation has improved dramatically during my administration. In a comparative overview of the audits performed in the fiscal years ending in 2013 and 2014, the union has experienced an increase in cash flow, revenue and assets—and an impressive decrease in expenses.

The audited financial statement as of the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2014 showed an increase in assets of \$2,048,164 compared to the total assets shown in the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2013. The acquisition of the new union headquarters brings the building



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and improvements fixed assets to a total of \$ 5,125,356. The total assets for 2013 to 2014 were \$4,371,623 and 6,419,787 respectively.

In addition, income from membership dues increased by \$76,342 from the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2013 to June 30, 2014.

Total expenses also saw a positive change, decreasing by a total of \$24,794. This decrease was mainly in program services expenses, such as advertising, utilities, salaries and legal fees.

Cash flow for the union has also increased, with the net cash at the end of fiscal year increasing from \$62,598 as of June 30, 2013 to \$234,956 as of June 30, 2014.

With further changes made during fiscal year 2015, which ended June 30, 2015, it is expected that the financial state of the Washington Teachers Union will continue to improve under my leadership. Thank you and the 4500 members of the WTU for your continued support and advocacy. Your voice plus the WTU equals power.