



Washington Teachers' Union

Contract Negotiations Frequently Asked Questions

1. When will we get a contract? Why is it taking so long?

You can have a contract tomorrow if you are willing to give up job security, a 7 ½ hour school day and a 10 month school year. DCPS's priorities for the new contract include an extended school day and school year. Much of the language proposed by DCPS will diminish teachers' voice and participation in local school decision-making. The WTU negotiation team is offering alternatives that would build better collaboration between teachers and local school administration and the WTU and central administration. Additionally, our proposals are to strengthen the 7 ½ hour school day we already have and provide teachers with the trust, support and time they need to do their jobs.

2. We are working under an expired contract, is this legal?

The current WTU contract/collective bargaining agreement (CBA) shall remain in effect during the period of any negotiation in accordance with Article 42 of our CBA. This was done to ensure teachers' working rights are protected, even during the negotiation of a new contract.

3. Why should I care about the contract?

The contract;

- Provides a working environment that allows you to do your job with dignity and respect and one that makes the teaching profession relevant.
- Provides members opportunities to participate in local school decision-making related to teaching and learning
- Provides protection from workplace abuse, harassment and bullying
- Secures attractive and competitive compensation and benefits

4. If we don't have a new contract by the end of SY 2015-16, would teachers who retire on June 30th, 2015, receive the benefits of the compensation package?

The WTU negotiation team will seek benefits in the compensation package for all teachers that were employed by DCPS for the years the new contract will retroactively cover.



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5. How can I be sure this contract meets my specific needs?

Throughout the negotiation process, the WTU team has invited members to meet with them to strengthen specific language related to their areas of certification and professional standards. This has never been done in previous years.

6. How can this contract support me in my job?

Our proposals guarantee relevant professional development, integrated curriculum, technology and adequate supplies. For example we are asking that each teacher receive a \$250 card each quarter to purchase educational materials for their classroom.

7. Can we get rid of IMPACT?

Yes, but not through the contract. This doesn't mean we can't do anything about it. The campaigns that we launch citywide will help us to get rid of IMPACT because it will get us the support of the community at large, to put pressure on the school district, to consider a more supportive evaluation system that allows teachers to grow professionally.

8. How are you going to remove the barriers to finishing the contract?

We are trying to get a contract ratified by the end of the school year. We are using every available avenue to apply pressure to get the contract completed, including a citywide rally of parents, teachers, and community stakeholders. **Four thousand plus teachers speaking in one voice will send a clear message we want to chart a new direction for public education in the District of Columbia.**

9. Why can't teachers have a full retirement plan like police and fire fighters?

Educators with 20 years of service are most likely at the top of the pay scale. For the same salary the district is able to hire 2 teachers on the lower end of the pay scale. Thus, it would be a win-win situation for the district to allow teachers to retire with 20 years of service at age 50 or older. Teachers with 20 years of service at the age of 50 and above should also have the option of purchasing up to 10 years of service to get 30 years of service for retirement with no interest.

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