

# WASHINGTON TEACHER'S UNION

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**Brief Answers to WTU's Questions...straight and simple.**

**1. I fully support your policies:**

**a.** Provide for neighborhood schools, within walking distance, that are safe, welcoming places for teaching and learning.

**b.** Ensure that teachers are well prepared, supported and have manageable classroom size and have time to collaborate...

**c.** Make sure our children have engaging curriculum that include art, music and the sciences...

**d.** Ensure that children have access to wrap-around services to meet their social, emotion and health needs.

**EXPLAIN WHO YOU WOULD SUPPORT & ENSURE FUNDING**

1a. I would develop, with parents, teachers and the D.C. MPD, an Anti-Bully Policy unlike the current policy. I will ensure that MPD control the walking radius of several blocks of the school and will give added protection to those students who are immediately threatened to or from school.

School counselors (specializing in childhood behavioral programs) will be supplied to public schools where students are being bullied and threatened.

School modernization plans will be completed on time and as scheduled to open.

b. Teachers will be given study time and required to attend study sessions to become accredited within the required period.

**A Council mandate must be enacted that allows for manageable classroom size and requires that all public schools will include in their curriculums the Arts, The Performing Arts, “Instrumental” lessons and music reading and updated Science Laboratories**

## **ENSURE FUNDING**

I know Chairman Phil Mendelson, fairly well through the years, and would strongly encourage the Chairman to appoint me as the Chairman of the Education Committee on the D.C. Council. I do applaud former Chairman David Catania for his special attention (during the first year) as Chairman of the Education Committee to which the current Chairman (Grosso) is focused on other issues that does not involved public schools...e.g. allowing immigrants to vote in District of Columbia elections.

Additionally, should you remember the promise that Mayor Anthony Williams and the [then] D.C. Council reneged on that caused a shortage in D.C. Public School funding. Yes, years ago our residents were reluctant to allow Lottery Games to operate in the District of Columbia. Until, the City Council promised that a fraction of proceeds from D.C. Lottery revenues were to be given to our Public Schools...like most states promised to contribute to their public school system. **I will fight to have the Council and Mayor renew their promised - to “annually” donate to our public schools a fraction of proceeds from D.C. Lottery revenues.**

## **2. Measuring and Closing the Achievement GAP.**

a. Why do you believe there is an achievement GAP?

I am a Federal Government Auditor with 20 plus years of experience in waste, fraud and abuse audits and operational and financial auditing. My beliefs are not needed in the fully explained graphs which revealed students’ negative gains in reading and math at the moment the control of the D.C. School System was illegally handed over to the Mayor of the District of Columbia.

b. What policies would you support....?

I know that past mayors and the current Mayor has no academic Doctorate educational experience. However, the mayor has an enormous job to run a major city with 600,000 plus residents who are constantly under a crime wave, many residents are unemployed and market-rate rental housing averages \$1,500 to \$2,300.00 for an one-bedroom apartment. This is a strong class for the control of the D.C. Public School Systems (including Charter) to be managed under the former system of an elected School Board and a well documented School Superintendent.

c. Disadvantage and Advantage Students...closing the GAP.

To know and live your history of the District of Columbia is a very serious WEAK disadvantage that Ward 4 Leon Andrews currently has. I lived in the same neighborhood that the famous Mr. Julius Hobson campaign in to seek equal access for all District children to attend any school in their neighborhood- regardless of race or color; in addition to his War on Rats campaign during the early 1960's.

It is disturbing to see that resources are not appropriated equally and to the needed students in this current school administration. I will launch a campaign to give attention, the resources with dedicated teachers, who believe that all children can learn, to all schools who students fall behind.

Music must be incorporated into each students learning and class schedule. It was reported by a professional organization that a student's IQ level increases by 5 to 7 percentage points when they learn to read music in playing a musical instrument. **I Strongly believe this.**

#### **d. Title One & At-Risk Funding**

**If I am not appointed (by Chairman of the Council) to be Chairman of the Education Committee on the City Council...I will request for a membership position on this committee. I will conduct an oversight review (cursory audit review) which requires staff, agencies and school officials to deliver quarterly their expense report and annual goal projections for the academic school year.**

**I will enforce administration cost spending (in the two programs) down to the acceptable level of 23% of the total budget.**

#### **DCPS Contract with Capitol Bike Shares Company**

**Recently, there has been misspending of vital funds and favoritism by the Mayor in the District's contract with the Capitol Bike Share Company. Bikes costing the city approximately \$4,000 each were aimed to be used to teach D.CPS elementary students how to ride a bicycle.**

**In my humble opinion, the approximately \$1.2 million dollar contract should have been used to purchase musical instruments for students since it is reported that reading music increases a child's IQ by at least 5 to 7 percentage points. School officials then scheduled schools where students' parents who can afford bicycles to "first" participate in the bike learning program. Students who attend school in low-income areas of the city will have to wait their turn to participate in the Capitol Bike Share learn-to-ride-a-bike program.**

### **3. IMPLEMENTING THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS**

A. How would you ensure proper implementation of Common Core State Standards before sanctions...?

**I would legislate that Common Core State Standards be implemented in all public schools.**

b. How would you advocate for and actively support the explicit teaching of functional reading skills from early childhood years, kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

**D.C. Public Schools will implement reading in its Head Start Programs for our early young students.**

**No student will be passed onto the next grade without reading proficiently at the current grade level.**

#### Part II 3. **IMPLEMENTING THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS**

**Teachers will be required to report reading deficiencies of any student to the school counselor to receive additional resources and special attention.**

c. How would you support students who are behind in Math [to catch up to their peers] and graduate with their required credits.

**All students must receive their required credits at a least a 2.0 grade level. Students who are behind in Math will be identified immediately and will be given special teaching, counseling and if needed (one on one) special lessons.**

**Most importantly, with the blessings and the approval from the Washington Teacher's Union, the Council and parents need discipline rules will be introduced and implemented at all public schools.**

#### **It is my wish:**

- a. **The Plead of Allegiance to the Flag will be introduced to all classrooms.**
- b. **Students will address their teachers and school officials with a title prefixing their names with Mr. , Ms and/or Mrs.**
- c. **Students will be required to speak in full sentences and have face contact, eye to eye, with their fellow students, teachers and school official. This important cultural experience should be immediately taught and continually required at the early school levels.**

## **4. TESTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

### No Child Left Behind

a. What do I believe what is the primary purpose of Standardized Testing?

**From what I have experienced and learned about Standardized Testing:**

**1. Teachers teach to the test...teach topics and answers to questions that will appear on test**

**2. all students don't have funds for special class study or costly test books**

**3. the test has its cultural challenges**

**I am more interest in student's evolution and progression in analytical ability, reasoning skills and ability to think in an organized manner to problem solve.**

**Standardized test has its place and can be used for its limited benefits.**

B. Rating Schools and Teachers based upon average-years-of academic-growth model, rather than proficiency levels?

**I would prefer to use both academic growth model and proficiency levels and assess the combined results as to rating schools and teachers.**

c. Common Core-aligned adaptive tests over non-adaptive tests?

Adaptive tests have its benefits (which is given to the student tester) than fixed tests. Not being an educator I would first use both in which to the student and make a further assessment from the findings. Perhaps, students' achievement level or enthusiasm can increase during the adaptive testing [questions become easier after a failed answer]. However, fixed testing will bring the student into reality to consequences and what is needed and what areas are to be furthered studied....to improve in the future.

## **5. Cultivating Labor-Management Collaboration**

What would I change in my leadership to include WTA in the decision making process,...school budget, professional development...?

a. I am a former Shop Steward with American Federal of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 640 Department of Homeland Security – Federal Emergency Management Agency. I have experience in dealing and negotiating with management and high officials when it comes to labor contracts.

b. I believe that School officials, Teachers (WTU) and Parents should have a 33% stake into the school budget, school decisions, professional development, curricula and the evaluation system. There is some history to the workings of this ratio in the past D.C. School System, but I haven't the chance to remember or research.

## **6. Ending Neighborhood School Closures**

### **1. Under what circumstance would you authorize a traditional school closure...?**

Your inquiry failed to give or involved the motive(s) behind the many school closings in the District of Columbia. Without this important involvement we are failing to face the fear, the truth and the force behind school closings. We have knowledge of schools suffering financially and are allowed to decay causing many students to abandon their neighborhood school and make a commute to a school across the city. This should stop. However, there is a force behind this manipulation.

#### **A Little Story...close to home.**

Currently, I live just one block from Calvin Coolidge High School (in Takoma, D.C.) which has been passed over more than three times to receive the appropriations that were budgeted to renovate this historic school. Dunbar HS has been rebuilt three times (within 20 years), H.D. Woodson has been renovated twice and Ballou H.S. received the Coolidge HS appropriated funding to be renovated.

No cry from former Ward 4 Council woman or the current one (Brandon Todd). The roof has leaked in Coolidge HS for the last 10 years causing their third floor to be closed off to students and classes.

I am a graduate of Eastern High School; I brought the dreaded attention to all in Ward 4 when Ward 6 Tommy Wells came into our Ward(4) and took our D.C. Youth Orchestra out of Coolidge to be relocated at Eastern H.S. No fight from our Ward 4 Council woman. At least the Council woman should have made the agreement - that when Coolidge High School was fully renovated that Eastern HS. would return our D.C. Youth Orchestra to its original home in Ward4.

I have lived among those Capitol Hill residents, full of Congressional staff, aides and employees, who demand attention from our Council and are allowed to create their own curriculums for their Capitol Hill Cluster School System. This custom-made Capitol Hill Cluster School System's curriculum was blessed and approved by the current School Superintendant Ms. Henderson.

However, Eastern HS, upon completion of its renovation, was allowed to open with only one specific group of students; 9<sup>th</sup> graders who were to occupy the entire newly renovated school during the academic year. This was the hope that this entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade group of students will be their first graduating class of the newly renovated school - Eastern. But, the current Central Office has closed many D.C. Public Schools with the same amount of students being enroll as the ninth grade enrollment number at Eastern HS.

I don't believe that any city should be governed by two mayors or a city should have two school systems. But, what can you do? However, both systems should be able to operate without hurting or harming each other.

## 2. If elected, would you support a moratorium on school closure?

Under the current Superintendent, I would support a Moratorium on school closing.

## **7. Serving Students with Special Needs**

What plans and structures do you have to ensure students with special needs are receiving the services they need...?

Firstly, as the Ward 4 Councilman, I will ensure funding necessary to give full financial support to all special need students.

I believe the special need facility that was built, with D.C. taxpayers' money (St. Colletta), during the Anthony Williams administration should provide resources and availability to the increasing number of special needs students in the District.

## 8. Holding Charter Schools Accountable

### A. What are the roles of Charter Schools...?

**From your number 6.**

**“... Your inquiry failed to give or involved the motive(s) behind the many school closings in the District of Columbia. Without this important involvement we are failing to face the fear, the truth and the force behind school closings. We have knowledge of schools suffering financially and are allowed to decay causing many students to abandon their neighborhood school and make a commute to a school across the city. This should stop.**

**“...I don't believe that any city should be governed by two mayors or a city should have two school systems. But, what can you do? However, both systems should be able to operate without hurting or harming each other...”**

**Since the U.S. Congress and another group of individuals have dictated the existence and role of D.C. Charter Schools then our concerns and issues have to be addressed and resolved with them allowing discussion with an equitable agreement.**

**I do agree many scandals (Ms. Jaycee Hayworth – Channel 9) involving theft and mismanagement needs to address by the City Council. As well, as the Charter School Superintendent not being accountable to the D.C. Council as to its annual school budget must be studied, reviewed and amended.**

b. Do you Support requiring Charter Schools to meet the same requirements as traditional schools, ...as it relates to access for all students...?

**Yes, I do – particularly when it comes to our special needs students.**

b. Do you Support requiring Charter Schools...con't

**Additionally, if a student is expelled (from a Charter School) during the school year and enrolled into a public school...that student's funding should followed him to the receiving public school.**

**Since Public Schools are the dumping grounds for Charter Schools to dispose of their problem or low-performing students then I will enact legislation that will appropriate more funding and resources to those public schools.**

## **9. Improving Early Childhood Education**

a. How would I ensure that all young learners (especially low income/impooverished) have access **and is required and will be assisted by D.C. Government to attend** high-quality early childhood programs with appropriate funding all parts of the city- **and especially Wards 5,6,7and 8.**

I know Chairman Phil Mendelson, fairly well through the years, and would strongly encourage the Chairman to appoint me as the Chairman of the Education Committee on the D.C.

Council. I do applaud former Chairman David Catania for his special attention (during the first year) as Chairman of the Education Committee to which the current Chairman (Grosso) is focused on other issues that does not involved public schools...e.g. allowing immigrants to vote in District of Columbia elections.

Additionally, should you remember the promise that Mayor Anthony Williams and the [then] D.C. Council reneged on that caused a shortage in D.C. Public School funding. Yes, years ago our residents were reluctant to allow Lottery Games to operate in the District of Columbia. Until, the City Council promised that a fraction of proceeds from D.C. Lottery revenues were to be given to our Public Schools...like most states promised to contribute to their public school system. **I will fight to have the Council and Mayor renew their promised - to "annually" donate to our public schools a fraction of proceeds from D.C. Lottery revenues.**

**Most importantly, parents will be required by law to enroll their pre-K aged children into DC early childhood education programs.**

## **10. Implementing Supportive Teachers Development and Evaluation Systems.**

**a. How would your office work to retain and respect the current population of DCPS Teachers?**

I have Ms. Wilma Faulkner and daughter (former teachers) as neighbors who live across the street from me. We talked about school issues, concerns and the history of the D.CPS.

During my political years talking amongst the residents I have had heavy discussion with retired, fired, **burn-out and “have-had enough of the system”** teachers. Many teachers have informed me about the nepotism that is practiced by many school principals and for those who just do their jobs (without rubbing up to the principal) are somehow dismissed.

I do understand what is currently going on with the school administration, Central Office, teachers and the WTU. I will do my best to bring equity, fairness and hard-work that is rewarded to all discussions, legislation and agreements with the D.C. P.S., our fine, dedicated teachers and the WTU.

## **11. SUMMARY**

a. What does the school system do well that you would continue to support..?

**I. I will support and campaign as a Councilmember to increase Vocational Training for all students at many high-risk areas in the city. Our children need another option to expand their talents and skills in the apprenticeships in auto mechanics, electrician, plumbers, carpenters, hospitality Services, barbering and nursing.**

**II. I will expand the Performing Arts, Arts, Music [instrumental] programs in all DCPS and introduce tailoring-fashion and style for our children to express their creativeness with areas school fashion shows.**

**Several of our schools will have music recording studios – as an effort to increase enrollment in areas school by offering free recording time based upon attendance and grades.**

**I am a huge fan of Marching Bands and Band Competition to be prevalent throughout the public schools system. I will commit to fund as many D.C PS marching bands, including drill instructors, music teachers with uniforms...this may require me to solicit private funding.**

**I will envision auto mechanic competitions between D.C. Vocational Schools who operate auto mechanics into their curriculum. Each school will be given an automobile to repair and reconstruct to a high performing machine. I will seek private funding to have this plan become reality.**

b. If we endorse you and support your election, how would you work with us in the future?

**I will request that the WTU provide a special board seat for me (as the newly elected Councilmember) to occupy to attend your meetings of strategy, school problems and concerns and issues that will go forth to the D.C. Council, Mayor , U.S. Department of Education or the U.S. Congress.**

And, as a former Shop Steward with AFGE, I would like to remind you that,  
“...once an Union man [member] –always an Union man...”

Calvin H. Gurley – Ward 4 City Council

Calvin H. Gurley

Let's "All" live well and enjoy our City - together.