



News Release

For Immediate Release
December 14, 2020

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Washington Teachers' Union, UNITE HERE Local 25 Partner to Provide Tutoring to Students of Workers

Pilot Program Is an Educational Lifeline for Laid-Off Hotel, Restaurant Workers

WASHINGTON—The Washington Teachers' Union is partnering with UNITE HERE Local 25 in a pilot program to provide English and math tutoring to Washington, D.C.-area UNITE HERE workers' elementary school children who are struggling with schoolwork and remote learning.

Current and retired District of Columbia Public Schools teacher volunteers will provide one 50-minute block of one-on-one tutoring in English and/or math each week to children in grades 1-5. The pilot program will launch on Feb. 1. The virtual tutoring will take place after the regular school day is finished.

“The transition to remote learning has been harder for some and brought renewed attention to the gaps that plague our city. Until we can safely return to school—and even after—our teachers are committed to doing everything they can to help students from falling further behind,” said WTU President Elizabeth Davis.

Elementary school children of UNITE HERE Local 25 members who live in Washington, D.C.—most of whom are laid off from hotel and restaurant jobs—can take advantage of the tutoring program.

“This will be an educational lifeline for so many of our members,” said John Boardman, executive secretary-treasurer of UNITE HERE Local 25. “As many as 90 percent of our members are out of work, and this will help ensure educational equity for their kids during a period of crushing unemployment.”

American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten said educators, school staff and students want nothing more than to get back into schools.

“While COVID-19 cases and deaths are surging, there are no good choices. We know remote learning has had its limitations, so working union to union, we have designed a way to make it as successful as possible and do our best to meet our students’ social, emotional and academic needs. This is the type of problem solving our bosses should be doing with us,” Weingarten said.

“While the AFT is providing the seed money for this pilot, it will require resources. Let’s be clear though. Teachers are working around the clock, in ways that are really unsustainable, and programs like this show their willingness to do what their students need and go the extra mile, on their own time, to make this difficult time just a little bit better,” she said.

UNITE HERE International President D. Taylor said: “With so many hospitality workers and their families struggling amid the pandemic, we’re thrilled to participate in this groundbreaking pilot program. This partnership with WTU and AFT will be indispensable in making sure our members’ children don’t get left behind.”

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The AFT represents 1.7 million pre-K through 12th-grade teachers; paraprofessionals and other school-related personnel; higher education faculty and professional staff; federal, state and local government employees; nurses and healthcare workers; and early childhood educators.