



Washington Teachers' Union
FULFILLING THE COMMITMENT TO BUILD GREAT MINDS

News Release

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WTU Responds to 'Inadequate' DCPS Evaluation System Fixes

WASHINGTON—The Washington Teachers' Union today called the District of Columbia Public School's solutions to fix the IMPACT evaluation system 'monumentally weak' and unresponsive to the numerous flaws raised by teachers and an [American University report](#) on the system.

DCPS sent a letter directly to educators that outlined its analysis of surveys of teachers and school leaders and the AU report on the IMPACT system.

In the union's response to members, WTU President Jacqueline Pogue Lyons said: "We believe that the DCPS document distorts the data collected from teachers and school leaders and glosses over what the American University research actually found—that IMPACT is not working, is stressing teachers out and is punitive rather than helpful to improve performance." She also called out DCPS's "evolutions," which apparently are solutions, saying they are "monumentally weak and do not adequately respond to the finding."

Pogue Lyons said: "It's stunning that DCPS clings to a fatally flawed, unfair evaluation system when there are so many effective models that we could adapt that actually help teachers and students and aren't punitive or cause anxiety." AU's summary of findings included:

- "Overall perceptions of IMPACT were more negative than positive, but with a great deal of variation in perspectives across teachers as well as school leaders."

- “Many teachers and school leaders perceived that IMPACT created an unhealthy environment of distrust, fear and competitiveness in schools that trickles down into the classroom.”
- “Subjectivity, bias and gaming the system were all cited as threats to validity in teacher interviews, in school leader focus groups, and in the school leader survey.”
- And it found that “teachers perceived that the high-stakes and anxiety-producing environment may cause them (or others) to leave DCPS.”

Pogue Lyons said DCPS does not adequately address these issues. WTU has been fighting for years to either comprehensively revise IMPACT or throw it out and start from scratch, with WTU as a full partner in the creation of a new teacher development and evaluation system.

“We need a dynamic teacher development and evaluation system that focuses on continuous improvement of instruction and learning in all classrooms, not a small portion,” Pogue Lyon’s letter to members said. “We need a system that provides ongoing supports dedicated not only to improving academics and instruction but also to lifting up each student.”

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