



Washington Teachers' Union
FULFILLING THE COMMITMENT TO BUILD GREAT MINDS

News Release

For Immediate Release
October 13, 2021

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WTU's Frustrations Boil Over with No-Confidence Resolution

Membership Upset Over School Reopening Concerns, Protracted Contract Negotiations, No Action on IMPACT Evaluation Changes

WASHINGTON—Frustration with District of Columbia leadership over school building safety, protracted contract negotiations and inaction on IMPACT evaluation changes boiled over this week with Washington Teachers' Union members voting that they have no confidence in city leaders.

"This is what happens when teachers raise legitimate concerns that affect students and teachers, but then time passes and nothing gets done. We need a relationship with city and school district leaders built on respect and mutual trust, and that means addressing problems together in a timely way," said WTU President Jacqueline Pogue Lyons.

At a meeting Tuesday evening, WTU delegates passed a resolution of no confidence in city and school leadership, primarily calling them out for reopening schools that were not fully safe. These include reopening schools without fully functional HVAC systems and inadequate filters where students are regularly present, failing to recognize the need for a virtual option despite accommodations made for charter schools, and underfunding mental health and social and emotional support for students and staff dealing with trauma related to the pandemic and record-setting shootings in the city.

Pogue Lyons also said teachers are exacerbated by protracted negotiations over a contract that expired in September 2019 and inaction on changing the flawed IMPACT evaluation system, which research has shown is not helpful, actually hurts teachers' well-being and is racial biased.

"Our teachers went above and beyond during the height of the pandemic to make sure their students got a quality education. They were excited to go back to school in person this fall despite their concerns regarding the continued spread of the virus, and yet the district is slow-walking negotiations. Teachers feel terribly disrespected and have had it with district leadership. This resolution reflects their deep frustration," Pogue Lyons said.

She also said that the city is failing to work to resolve a serious teacher shortage and retention problem. "If the city refuses to recognize the problem and work with the WTU to improve it, the situation could turn into a major crisis. This is bad for students and bad for our schools and community."

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