



American Federation
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

AFT Teachers
AFT PSRP
AFT Higher Education
AFT Public Employees
AFT Healthcare

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January 20, 2010

Mr. Michael Casserly
Executive Director
Council of the Great City Schools
Suite 702
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mike:

As you may know, I presented proposals last week for a new path forward for our nation's public schools and for our children. I outlined a comprehensive plan for transforming schools, developing and supporting great teachers and great teaching, and raising student achievement. Our proposals include new approaches for creating a teacher development and evaluation system, developing a fair and efficient due process system to deal with teacher misconduct cases, providing the resources and support teachers and their students need to succeed in the classroom, and creating effective labor-management partnerships. Details about our proposals can be found on our Web site at www.AFT.org.

For the most part, we have received overwhelmingly positive feedback on our proposals from educators, members of the press and elected officials. Unfortunately, our position on the role of student performance data in teacher evaluations has been inaccurately portrayed in a few press reports—and misconstrued by some superintendents—as calling for the evaluation of teachers based solely on student test scores. This is not, and has never been, our position.

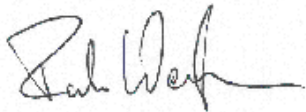
The AFT does recognize that the use of student outcomes, based on multiple measures, can be an important and valuable component of overall teacher development and evaluation systems. However, test scores should be only one factor among many others in a system that is based on clearly stated professional standards, and that provides teachers and students with the resources and supports they need to succeed in the classroom. Other factors should include measures of students' real growth, self-evaluations, classroom observations, portfolio and lesson plan reviews, and consideration of students' written work and other projects. In order to inform teaching and learning, we need a full picture—not a snapshot—of what is working and should be replicated, as well as what isn't working and should be abandoned. Basing evaluations on one measure, no matter what the measure, will not provide that full picture.

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The AFT has long been in the forefront of advocating for real improvements in education. But we recognize we can't do it alone. In school districts throughout the country, our members have forged partnerships with administrators, parents and elected officials to focus on our shared goals of improving the quality of education for all children.

The AFT stands ready to partner with anyone who is committed to the shared goal of advancing what's good for kids and fair to teachers. I believe that together we can build an education system that prepares our children to thrive in the classroom and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randi Weingarten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Randi Weingarten
President

RW : ac opeiu#2 afl-cio