



Washington Teachers' Union

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Extending the school year must be a collaboration involving teachers, other stakeholders

Union opposes any changes that violates collective bargaining agreement

This morning Mayor Muriel Bowser and School Chancellor Kaya Henderson announced that D.C. Public Schools will extend the school year for ten schools in the 2016-2017 school year.

However, members of the Washington Teachers' Union continue to ask, "Are we talking about an extended year or extended learning?"

"Teachers are not against extended learning opportunities for our students. In fact, we think it is a good idea," says WTU President Elizabeth Davis. "Extended learning makes sense for many of our students, but just doing more of the same is not going to work."

"This should not be a debate over more versus less time. It should be a collaboration focused on how we reinvent the current school day and year."

The WTU and teachers are ready and willing for that discussion. However, the union and its members are vehemently opposed to any extended year plan that is unilaterally imposed by DCPS, which is a violation of the collective bargaining agreement between the union and the school district.

"D.C. schools must reinvent the way it works with its teachers, principals, parents and the community," says Davis. "They need to start seeing these critical partners as crucial, irreplaceable parts of the system."

The decision to incorporate extended learning into D.C. schools must be accompanied by a commitment to develop the current instructional staff. This is the only way extended learning makes any sense. Teachers need support and resources to grow and improve. We must look at the school day and year holistically and educationally, instead of simply about time and money.

"The research on extended learning is pretty thin and very mixed. If our students are going to



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benefit from extended learning, we have to do it in a way that makes sense,” Davis says.

We see this discussion on extended learning as an opportunity to change the way D.C. Public Schools does business. The Washington Teachers' Union has put workable, research-focused, timely proposals on the table to address low performing schools and the achievement gap. DCPS must work with WTU and other stakeholders to reform schools and improve teaching and learning.

The Washington Teachers' Union is the bargaining agent for the 4,500 educators who teach in the District of Columbia Public Schools.