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Report Offers Lessons for U.S. Professional Development

Reprinted from the AFT LeaderNet News - February 4, 2009

A new report by the National Staff Development Council finds that the United States provides teachers too little professional development, and that what little is provided often lacks key elements proven to raise student achievement. AFT president Randi Weingarten says the report, "Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the United States and Abroad," offers a blueprint for better professional development for teachers and, ultimately, better student achievement.

"Those who look to international comparisons of student achievement also should study the results of this report, which provides a likely explanation for why some countries perform better than the United States," Weingarten says.

"The report highlights the desperate need for more and better support for teachers in order to foster teamwork among teachers, give them a voice in school decision-making, and tightly focus professional development on their academic subjects. Each of these is a critical, research-based measure that would improve teacher quality and student learning. One finding highlights the gap between where we are and where we need to go: Research shows that 50 hours per year of professional development is needed to improve student achievement, yet most teachers in this country receive no more than 16 hours.

"Recently, some policymakers have proposed so-called teacher quality reforms that, perversely, would make the teaching profession less attractive, undermine teacher morale and collaboration, and do nothing to help teachers teach and students learn. This report points to a better way forward, and we hope

policymakers embrace the research-based measures described in this report, which have proven successful in other nations.

"The AFT is strongly committed to improving teacher quality. In addition to working to change state laws and collective bargaining agreements to promote better professional development, the AFT has its own research-based professional development programs, works with school districts to establish peer assistance and review programs that improve teacher evaluation and support, and even provides training for America's teachers in 'lesson study,' a form of professional development that is popular in Japan and featured in this report."



Feb. 10

Unite to

Fight

for America's Future

Join the fight to get America's economy moving again.

On Feb. 10, wear blue to work in support of our effort to pass the national economic recovery plan.



What's at stake?

Our schools and colleges, our healthcare and public safety systems, and essential services are facing draconian cuts due to the economic crisis. The AFT strongly supports efforts like the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan and is actively challenging proposed cuts to vital services.

- A child is 5 only once; she doesn't get a second chance at her education.
- When a patient needs healthcare, he can't wait for a better economic climate.
- Government services are necessities the public requires now—from clean water to the highways that keep our economy moving.

On **Feb. 10, wear blue to work**. Let's send a clear message: that strengthening education, healthcare and public services is crucial in order to restore and preserve opportunity in this country.

Join the fight for America's future! Go to **www.aft.org/fight4america**.

Send a picture of you and your colleagues wearing blue on Feb. 10 to aftphotos@gmail.com, and it will be posted on the Fight for America's Future Web site.

**A limited quantity of WCT shirts are still available for sale at the WCT Office. Sizes, styles, and prices are posted on the WCT web site.*

Tuesday,
February 10,
2009

Wear your WCT
shirt or anything
blue!

White House Launches New Task Force on Middle Class

Reprinted from *Inside AFT* E-newsletter from February 2, 2009

The AFT applauded President Obama and Vice President Biden for the actions announced on Jan. 30 that reaffirm the administration's commitment to revitalizing and expanding America's middle class. The launch of the White House Task Force on Middle Class Working Families—chaired by the Vice President—and the President's signing of three executive orders are important first steps in helping restore the balance between employer and employee necessary to a well-functioning and fair economy, says AFT president Randi Weingarten, who attended the White House event marking the launch of the task force.

“The goals of the task force dovetail perfectly with what we know are key components of strengthening and growing the middle class: expanding education and training opportunities, balancing work and family, raising labor standards, protecting middle class incomes and assuring retirement security—in other words, enabling the American Dream,” Weingarten says.

“Taken together, the task force and the worker-oriented executive orders demonstrate the depth of the Obama administration's commitment to the concerns of working people and their families. The AFT looks forward to continuing to work with government at all levels to recognize and support the significant contribution America's working families make to our nation's well-being.”

The task force Web site (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/strongmiddleclass/>) includes a video from Biden, an op-ed he wrote for *USA Today*, information about the task force members and meetings, and more. Members of the public also can submit their own ideas to the task force. [AFT press release - January 30, 2009]



Union Dues for the 2008 Fiscal Year

**Jan-Jun is $12 \times 34.10 =$
\$409.20**

**Sept-Dec is $8 \times 35.52 =$
\$284.16**

Total for year is \$693.36

Summer Opportunities

Even though it's winter, now is a good time for educators to start thinking about summer opportunities. The **Tools for Teachers** (<http://www.aft.org/tools4teachers/summer-studies.htm>) section of the AFT Web site includes information on a wide variety of summer studies and exchange programs.



TAKE ACTION!



Worried about proposed cuts to school aid and higher education and the elimination of teacher centers? Take just a couple of minutes to

Raise Your VOICE and be heard!

NYSUT makes it easy for you to join thousands of grassroots activists by sending a free fax to your state and federal representatives. Go to the bright orange “Take Action” box in the top right corner of the union’s Web site, *www.nysut.org*. There, you’ll see a variety of letters on important issues of the day — such as continued funding for essential programs or opposition to dangerous proposals.

It’s fast, it’s effective — and it’s free. Just follow these five simple steps to contact your state and federal elected officials.

How to send:

1. Select up to three letters to fax from the listings of letters for state officials, federal representatives and the governor. (Your selected faxes will appear in the right column. You may add and remove letters at any time.)
2. Click “Send Faxes.” (You’ll have a chance to preview before they’re officially delivered.)
3. Determine your elected officials by ZIP code or by district.
4. Enter your personal information.
5. Click “Send Faxes.”

Spread the word!

We encourage you to ask family and friends to contact their legislators. They can use this Web service, as well.



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**We're on the Web!
see us at:**

WCTeachers.org

FOR RENT: 1 bedroom apartment in Hopewell Junction. Beautiful, quiet neighborhood, close to many district schools. Large closets, great outside deck, pool. \$900 a month includes everything. Contact Carrie -505-7444. Available January.

FOR RENT: Eastham Cape Cod, 4 bedroom, 2 bath, minutes from National Seashore, bike trails, more. \$1500/week – July/August. Call 297-1837.

FOR RENT: LAKEFRONT RENTAL: Lake Wallenpaupack, PA. 1.5 hrs from Fishkill. Swim, fish, motorboat. House on level lot sleeps 8. BBQ, bicycles, HDTV, A/C & new EZ dock \$1,200/wk. For photos & details call Gary 845-462-4686.

FOR RENT: Large Studio Apartment. \$750/month. Well maintained New Windsor complex, pool, parking, separate entrance. Call 914-489-4794.

THINK SUMMER!

FOR RENT: 2 BR, 2 BA Condo in OCEAN CITY, MARYLAND. Bayside, beautiful sunsets, fishing. Right next to the pool. Centrally located, close to all the amenities. Just cross the street to the ocean. Call Sandy at 896-1678 for more information or to reserve a week.

Board of Education Meetings Schedule

(meetings are held at the District Offices at 8:15 PM)

- February 9, 2009 - Evans, Myers, Van Wyck
- February 23, 2009 - Brinckerhoff, John Jay, Orchard View
- March 9, 2009 - Gayhead, Sheafe, Vassar
- March 23, 2009 - Ketcham, Kinry, Oak Grove
- April 6, 2009 - Evans, Fishkill, Wappingers
- April 26, 2009 (TUESDAY) - Fishkill Plains, Myers, Van Wyck
- May 4, 2009 - Brinckerhoff, John Jay, Vassar
- May 18, 2009 - Gayhead, Orchard View, Sheafe
- June 8, 2009 - Ketcham, Wappingers

