



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**STATEMENT FROM GEORGE PARKER, PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON TEACHERS' UNION ON THE RECENT INCIDENCES OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE WITHIN
DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The Washington Teachers' Union (WTU) shares the concerns of the teachers, students, parents and the DC community over the recent violent incidents at several DC public schools (DCPS). These events have created a sense of urgency that must be immediately addressed by the WTU, DCPS, parents, administrators, police and the DC community at-large. The entire community must come together to work on solutions to this problem.

The WTU calls on DCPS Chancellor Rhee to immediately implement short-term strategies that will provide increased safety and discipline in our schools. This includes immediate implementation of a joint committee to ensure that all schools develop a safety and discipline plan. Each school, especially junior and senior high schools, should also create in-house alternative placement programs so that students with disruptive behavior can be immediately removed from the classroom where their behavior impedes a teacher's ability to provide quality instruction for all students. The WTU believes that all students are entitled to an education; however, disruptive students should not be allowed to prevent other students from learning.

It is paramount that the Chancellor immediately reduce over-sized classes to alleviate student frustrations and classroom conditions that lead to violence. In addition, it is critical that all teacher and instructional aid vacancies within DCPS be filled immediately so that students can receive the quality of instruction they deserve from qualified classroom teachers and not substitutes.

The WTU firmly believes that teachers have the right to perform their instructional responsibilities in a safe workplace where their authority is recognized and respected. Parents need to be able to trust that schools are places where discipline is an essential component for establishing a quality teaching and learning environment. Safe and orderly schools are critical components of academic improvement and successful school reform. There is a direct link between student achievement and a safe and orderly environment, and we must achieve this in our schools if teachers and students are to be successful.

The WTU is committed to supporting our teachers, parents, students and the community in a joint effort to ensure that we have safe and orderly schools that will result in high-quality teaching and learning and sustained improvement throughout DCPS.

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