



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**WASHINGTON TEACHERS' UNION
PRESIDENT NATHAN SAUNDERS
MEDIA STATEMENT
INCIDENT AT THOMSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

The Washington Teachers' Union (WTU) was extremely concerned about the incident at Thomson Elementary School (ES) last week. Several elementary school students ingested drugs brought to school by one student. Our DC Public School teachers continue to respond well under circumstances beyond their control.

No drug awareness and prevention programs were available this year at Thomson ES and in many DC public schools. The fiscal year 2012 school budget requires cuts to school counselor, social worker and instructional coordinator positions without disclosing central office reductions. Thomson events indicate why teachers and students need more support and not less. Issues from the community, neighborhoods and families continue to find their way into the classroom. Clearly, poverty, health and family dysfunction play a role in day-to-day education.

We all know that school counselors and social workers are vital to effectively dealing with community and family issues. Proposed budget cuts to these positions and limited awareness programs will have a dramatic effect on school climate, student achievement and the overall community.

The WTU will continue to advocate for school counselors, social workers and school-based programs sorely needed at not only Thomson, but in all DC public schools.

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