



A Union of Professionals

## AFT News Release

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### Newark, N.J., Teachers Ratify Contract

AFT's Weingarten: *"This agreement ensures that teacher voice, quality and experience are aligned with increased professionalism and better compensation."*

**WASHINGTON**—By a healthy margin, members of the Newark (N.J.) Teachers Union tonight ratified a tentative agreement with the Newark Public Schools that recognizes the importance of teacher voice, experience and the professional work teachers do.

The ratification vote was originally scheduled for Oct. 29 but delayed due to Superstorm Sandy. "After what we were hearing in schools after they opened, we realized that people understood the contract and that is reflected in this vote," said Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, the NTU's national affiliate.

"The devastating fury of the storm affected nearly every family and school in Newark and throughout New Jersey. Much work remains to be done as communities attempt to put order back in their lives. I commend all who are working toward that goal, and in particular the teachers, school staff and administrators for their herculean efforts to help get schools open so quickly," she said.

Of the contract, Weingarten said, "This agreement ensures that teacher voice, quality and experience are aligned with increased professionalism and better compensation. The contract integrates what teachers do, where they teach, and the experience they've gained in the classroom."

The agreement both values experience and changes the way Newark teachers will be compensated. Educators will earn more money earlier in their careers, adding an important component to the pieces that promote recruitment and retention, and can earn more for teaching in low-performing schools and hard-to-staff subjects, and for completing an approved advanced degree. And recognizing that teachers know best what they and their students need to succeed, the contract gives teachers more voice in school decisions than they've ever had.

"This contract demonstrates the willingness of Newark's teachers and the school district to find innovative ways to ensure that quality and experience are recognized and rewarded, making it a full, professional compensation system," Weingarten said.

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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In addition, the contract provides teachers with avenues for continuous instructional improvement, including through a new peer review and assistance program in which teachers will coach and mentor each other and will monitor the evaluation system. The agreement also gives teachers a say in decisions affecting teaching and learning in their schools.

“When you put all this together, you come out with a unique, innovative plan that will help boost teaching and learning and will strengthen the teaching profession. Newark can now be added to the growing list of districts nationwide that are using collective bargaining as vehicles for education reform,” she said, noting those districts include ABC Unified School District (in Los Angeles County); Baltimore; Boston; Cincinnati; Cleveland; Hillsborough County, Fla.; and New Haven, Conn.

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Follow AFT President Randi Weingarten: <http://twitter.com/rweingarten>

The AFT represents 1.5 million pre-K through 12th-grade teachers; paraprofessionals and other school-related personnel; higher education faculty and professional staff; federal, state and local government employees; nurses and healthcare workers; and early childhood educators.