



Washington Teachers' Union

Fighting for the schools DC's community deserves

1239 Pennsylvania Ave SE • Washington, DC 20003 • 202.517.1477 • www.wtulocal6.net

Dear Candidate,

We invite you to complete the following questionnaire of the Washington Teachers' Union's Committee on Political Education (COPE). This will be used as the first step of our endorsement process which includes a candidate forum, recommendations by our COPE, and vote by our Representative and/or Membership Assembly for final approval.

This questionnaire is part of an expedited process that was approved by our WTU Representative Assembly for the DC Democratic Primary Ward 1 Council and Mayoral races exclusively. We will be engaging in our regularly timed endorsement process for all other races, likely in late January/early February.

Key Dates:

- **Questionnaire:** Send the completed questionnaire by close of business January 2nd, 2026 to lfuchs@wtulocal6.net
- **Forum:** Save the Date for our Candidate Forum for Mayor and Ward 1 DC Council which will be held either in person or virtually (dependent on approval of the Building Use Agreement with DCPS) on **Wednesday, January 7th at 6PM-8PM at Cardozo HS Auditorium**
- **WTU Representative Assembly:** Tuesday, January 13th at 4:30 PM for WTU Members only to vote on endorsement recommendations.

In solidarity,
Laura Fuchs
President, Washington Teachers' Union

Candidate Information:

Name: Gary Goodweather Position Sought: Mayor

Address: PO Box 15081, Washington, DC, 20003

Email: gary@goodweatherfordc.com

Phone: 202-427-2117

Are you using the public financing option? (**bold and underline** one) **Yes** / No

Notice:

1. The best way to complete this questionnaire:

- a. Fill it out in Microsoft Word/Google Docs
 - b. Bold and underline any yes or no questions
 - c. Type your responses into the boxes below the question (the space will expand as you proceed)
 - i. Please limit all responses to around 1000 characters
 - ii. Do not use AI or other forms of Chat GPT
 - d. Save it as a PDF with your name in the title.
2. Your questionnaire, in its entirety, will be published on the WTU website and the WTU reserves the right to use responses to any answer, in their entirety, in our campaign materials.
 3. Any statement made in this questionnaire that is later contradicted through action or association with “education reform” groups or groups that seek to privatize education such as ElectEd, Strong Schools Now, EdReform Now, and DC Charter School Alliance, will cause the WTU to revisit any endorsement offered and may result in the rescinding of our endorsement.

In your own words...

1. How have you interacted with public schools? Please include any experiences you have advocating for DC public schools, parents or students.

My wife and I have two children, both born and raised in DC. They are currently in college. They did not attend DCPS. At the time, almost 20 years ago, we did not believe DCPS could accommodate the long-term needs of our kids. Our daughter, following a neuropsychological exam, fortunately obtained a slot at The Lab School of Washington. Many DC families had to sue the city to either obtain services or require DC to pay for The Lab School. We were fortunate to afford the school and significant additional support for both our children. Due to our experience, I fundamentally believe we need to create an educational system in DC that can support each learner effectively and without the financial burden.

2. What is the top priority facing public education in the District of Columbia, and how will you address it if you are elected?

DC is spending one of the highest amounts per student in the country (operating and capital budget), with poor long-term outcomes. Funding is not being allocated in the most effective way. We will address this by creating a new funding model to ensure educators are able to allocate funds in the best way. We will expand after school and mentorship programs. Every stakeholder will be engaged and held accountable to achieve real life metrics for our students. In the first 100 days of our administration, we will establish the Capital Corp including the Education Branch. The Capital Corp is a service organization that provides education, training,

mentorship and teaches responsibility to our community to develop individuals for lifelong prosperity.

3. How have you worked with WTU in the past? How will you improve that in the future?

My professional life has not enabled me to work directly with WTU in the past. I believe teacher and educators are experts and I want to utilize their experience as practitioners to develop and implement solutions for our students that will improve our outcomes. In my first 100 days, I propose working with WTU to understand their priorities and align DCPS objectives accordingly. I will commit to quarterly meetings with WTU to hear their perspective on upcoming decisions and review current results. I will also seek their input during the budget process to ensure their expertise informs spending decisions with the goal of improved outcomes.

Funding Public Schools

4. Do you believe the current process for how schools funding decisions are made is working adequately?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- Please address the Student-Based versus Comprehensive Staffing funding models as well as the role of the Local School Advisory Team (LSAT).
- If you believe it is not adequate, what would you do differently if elected?

Each of the student-based and comprehensive staffing models have different advantages and disadvantages. Students learn best when teachers are supported, respected and resourced and funding models should reflect that. The model should include protected planning time coverage standards. This also includes minimum counselor-student ratios, guaranteed special educators and mental health staffing. LSATs need real authority and a comprehensive staffing model ensures adequate support staff. A hybrid model can be an effective approach. Funds should be allocated to ensure accountability with tangible results and assessed at every level. Our administration proposes working with WTU on a new results-oriented funding and compensation model. Funds should be focused on outcomes not on administrative churn.

Coverage standards

5. Do you believe DCPS is adequately following DC Council laws, directives, and transparency requirements when it comes to the funding of our public schools?

Yes / No

What is your philosophy around how schools should be funded to ensure funding equity across all 8 wards and ensure DCPS follows the laws?

It does not appear DCPS is following the laws, however, the laws do not address how to implement policy. Policies are siloed without a plan to execute initiatives including funding, training, staffing and reasonable timelines. A comprehensive, collaborative policy and funding model will be development simultaneously. Policies and funding will include performance metrics and accountability standards that can easily be enforced.

If elected, what will your role be and how will you ensure that all students, especially those with special needs and English Language Learners, are receiving the services they need to succeed academically and socially in school?

My role as mayor, the executive, is to set the vision, create policy with stakeholders, work collaboratively with council to pass legislation and ensure execution of the plan. As we develop policy and obtain funding, we will ensure the needs of all students are met including special needs and ELL. The goal of the policy created is to ensure it is executable. The ability to successfully achieve the intent must address the *how* and the funding mechanism.

6. Do you believe that DCPS has struck a good balance between spending on our schools versus spending on and through central office?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- Please include your thoughts on the role of DCPS central office including but not limited to its role in funding a DCPS technology plan and unfunded mandates.
- If you answered no, what would you do differently if elected?

Central office receives a disproportionate share of funding. As stated above, my philosophy is that all policy including mandates should be written with execution in mind, which includes funding. Funding a technology plan is essential to education. This plan will take into account equity across the city and implementation effective for all students.

7. Do you believe that DCPS is adequately supported to deal with the high rates of mid-year student mobility (where students enroll throughout the school year)?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- If you answered no, how would you suggest changing the funding structure to better support DCPS schools?

Our administration will track on a real time basis changes in student enrollment. Estimation is important for potential movement to ensure adequate funding in advance. ANCs are a good resource to help continually evaluate and forecast enrollment mobility. This will be included in the new first 100-day funding plan.

District Educators

8. Do you believe that DCPS has a problem with high teacher turnover?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- If you answered yes, what would you promote and do to reduce teacher turnover?
- If you answered no, what do you believe is keeping turnover at acceptable levels?

Yes, based upon the data we have evaluated. DC historically has approximately 25% annual teacher turnover (among highest nationally). Recent OSSE data shows improvement, with 79% DCPS same-school retention in 2024-25 academic year. However, 53% of first-year teachers (2019-2020) were no longer employed with DC public schools in the 2024-2025 school year. WTU surveys show 4 in 5 teachers unhappy with their jobs. Understanding through WTU the causes of teacher turnover will help us develop a solution. Teachers are mission driven and providing the resources and funding is a key element of the plan will we develop together. Establishing programs for teachers that want to live and work in the city to reduce their cost of living, including housing, is part of the funding plan. As stated previously, I am passionate about improving the quality of life for teachers.

9. Do you believe that DCPS has negotiated in good faith and secured strong contracts with WTU on the last four contracts under Mayoral Control?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- If you answered no, what would you do differently to ensure that they are stronger and negotiated in good faith moving forward?

No, based upon the information we have seen. The appearance of the negotiations is more adversarial than collaborative. Our administration reemphasizes our pillars: Creativity, Collaboration, Empathy and Execution. We propose quarterly meetings with WTU to ensure alignment of objectives and ensure better collaboration. I firmly believe that bringing the people closest to the work into the decision-making process, leads to better policies, stronger execution, and more effective use of resources.

10. Do you believe that the WTU should be able to negotiate our evaluation system and will you agree to do everything in your power to repeal DC Code 1-617.18 so that we can?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

Yes (Preliminarily). Solutions are developed best by collaboration, including evaluation systems. From our understanding, IMPACT was passed without teacher input. We request a better understanding of the law and its effect before fully committing to a repeal. We can commit to a repeal if a more fair and effective system is developed and implemented. At a minimum, we will work with WTU and teachers to design a system that serves the best interests of both teachers and students.

11. Do you believe that DCPS has an adequate teacher pipeline?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- Please address the following:
 - paraprofessional to teacher pipelines,
 - international educator work visas,
 - and teacher mentorship programs (or lack thereof).
- If you answered no, what do you believe should be different and how would you help the WTU win those changes?

We need to create a greater pipeline of teachers in DC. The Capital Corp is one program that is intended to provide career pathways and funding to develop more teachers through its tuition reimbursement for service. This is a great opportunity to formalize the paraprofessional teacher pipeline. I am a firm believer in mentorship for everyone, at all stages of life and that includes teachers. We will establish a formal mentorship program to give experienced teachers the opportunity to use their intellectual capital for the benefit of the

next generation of educators. Addressing the teacher pipeline problem, also means addressing the cost of living in DC. We want teachers to be able to afford to live in our city, if they choose, and be engaged in our neighborhoods.

12. DCPS has possibly over 300 educators working on an H1B visa and would likely be forced to leave the country upon their expiration after a maximum of 6 years. Do you support DCPS continuing a program to provide an opportunity for H1B Visa Holders to get an employer sponsored Green Card through DCPS?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- If you answered yes, how will you help the WTU win back this program?

These educators chose our city to live and teach. They built relationships, served our community and deserve our support. Our administration supports reinstatement of the H1-B program. The new HR-1 proclamation effective September 21, 2025, requires a \$100,000 fee for each application. This makes the program more restrictive and onerous. I will commit to work with the administration to obtain an exemption for teachers.

Working and Learning Conditions

13. Do you believe that DCPS is fully enforcing the WTU Collective Bargaining Agreement?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- Please address issues that you believe are most important to ensure are enforced in the WTU CBA such as planning time, class sizes and school culture and climate.
- If you answered no, what will you propose and do to ensure that this is improved for our educators in all 8 wards of DC?

No, based upon the best of our understanding. Our administration commits to a program that allows teachers to anonymously report noncompliance, monthly review of these reports, random audits and swift response to violations. Violations will be tracked, and administrative consequences will apply once a defined threshold is exceeded.

14. Do you believe that our schools are being adequately *and equitably* modernized and maintained?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- Please address DGS role in this process and your role in ensuring they are doing their job in a high quality, timely and transparent manner.
- If you answered no, what will you propose and do to ensure that this is improved for school communities in all 8 wards of DC?

No, based upon information we have obtained and personal conversations I have had. There appears to be a disparate amount of funding geographically. Even newer schools do not appear to have adequate funding nor enough experienced professionals to maintain the facilities on an ongoing basis. Several months ago, I attended the opening of the new wing at Stoddert Elementary. Old systems are connected to new systems and require additional maintenance and repair. A comment was made by an elected official that “Principals are property managers”. In my experience in real estate and operations, that takes away from the principal’s core mission. DGS is a service provider and part of the city government family. Like every department in our administration, DGS employees will be highly trained, supported and the department operated effectively to support their clients.

15. Do you believe that all students are able to safely and quickly get to school?

Yes / **No**

Explain your rationale.

- Please address:
 - OSSE DOT,
 - Safe Passage,
 - increased Federal Presence,
 - and public transportation options.
- If you answered no, what will you propose and do to ensure that this is improved for school communities in all 8 wards of DC and for our immigrant students in particular?

There are many factors keeping our students from being safe getting to and from school. Unfortunately, there has been a need for Safe Passage Programs, which is underfunded. The presence of federal troops has exasperated the problem, with many immigrant families concerned for their safety and deportation. This has also led to lower attendance. Effectively addressing the individuals and groups that are making the movement to school unsafe is an important aspect of creating long term safety. Transportation has become a barrier to efficient mobility to school. Our administration’s infrastructure plan addresses access for all students. OSSE DOT will acquire additional mobility vehicles and staff for students to access the best mode of transportation. Additionally, ensuring there are outstanding schools in every neighborhood in the city reduces transportation time and help builds

each community to be safer and more prosperous.

16. Do you believe that DCPS has adequate access to school nurses in all our schools?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- If you answered no, what will you propose and do to ensure that this is improved for school communities in all 8 wards of DC?

Every school needs to have dedicated medical professionals including nurses. Ensuring the health of students is critical. I want to also state that mental health is health. Our administration will ensure every student and every family has access to mental health professionals. The Capital Corps – Health Services Branch will create a pipeline of nurses and medical health practitioners that serve our city including in our schools. Tuition reimbursement as part of service to the Capital Corp is contemplated. We will partner with local universities to create a pipeline of nurses. Like teachers, nurses are mission driven. Establishing programs for nurses that want to live and work in the city to reduce their cost of living, including housing, is part of the funding plan.

Governance

17. Do you believe DC’s current system of Mayoral Control of DCPS is adequately and equitably serving all our students?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- Please address the governance of OSSE and the oversight and selection of the Chancellor of DCPS.
- If you answered no, what will you propose and how will you advocate to change it?

Our administration commits to a transparent chancellor selection process. A selection committee will be formed, and we will consider WTU as a member of the committee. I am not a professional educator and rely on my team and organizations like WTU to hire a world class chancellor. After selection, it is my job to ensure the chancellor performs to the highest standards and serves for the benefit of all our teachers and students. A key component of my administration will be key performance indicators. We need to be more proactive in ensuring that programs and funding within the OSSE is obtaining the intended outcomes.

18. Do you believe that the Public Charter School Board (PCSB) is adequately overseeing and ensuring transparency for DC Public Charter Schools?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- Please address the appointment of PCSB members and the parity between what DCPS and DC Public Charter Schools have to report, including FOIA, and the policies they have to follow.
- If you answered no, what will you propose and how will you fight to change it?

No. There have been numerous examples of funding issues and inconsistent processes for reviews and renewals. Our administration will work to get educated on the issues and reasoning behind the lack of consistency and parity. Overall DCPS and DC Public Charter Schools have the same objectives, serving DC students, and they should have the same policies. We commit to transparency in the appointment of PCSB members and alignment on policies for all schools.

19. Do you believe that DC has an adequate plan for public education that ensures a strong neighborhood public school system for all eight wards?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

- Please address your thoughts and philosophy on what a “strong” school is, and decisions around opening and closing schools in both DCPS and DCPCS, including a moratorium on charter openings.
- Include a description of what the process would look like.

We have fundamentals of a plan, however, we continue to learn and develop the execution of our plan - Our plan creates outstanding schools in every neighborhood by executing on creation of a pipeline of educators through the Capital Corps and partnerships with local universities. The program expands after school programs, reallocates funds to schools and increases collaboration to develop measurable outcomes, invests in technology as a tool for teachers and students (in every part of the city), and builds a transportation network that connects instead of acts as a barrier. Our plan also lowers the cost to live and work in DC for all educators. A strong school is one that is supported by the entirety community and develops a student with lifelong academic and societal skills. We will commit to a thoughtful and engaged review of every opening and/or closing of schools.

20. Will you support an update to the 2007 PERRA and 2010 Local Hatch Act that allows individuals employed by DC Public Schools to run for partisan public offices (including DC

Council, Mayor and Attorney General)?

Yes / No

Explain your rationale.

We absolutely want to encourage educators and practitioners to run to serve in public office. DCPS employees deserve the rights of every other citizen. The perspectives of DCPS employees at every skill level are essential to developing the next generation of thoughtful, empathetic leaders.