



A Union of Professionals

CONNECTICUT

PARENTS UNION

Power Through The Collective Voice of Parents



October 3, 2011

A Joint Statement from Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers, and Gwen Samuel, President, Connecticut Parents Union

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Parents and teachers share an important common aspiration: the success and well-being of children. Teachers will tell you that parental support is a very important part of our children's success in school.

That's why it is crucial for teachers and parents to work together to provide children the very best education we possibly can. That can happen only when there is a relationship of mutual trust and respect.

Our relationship was tested this summer after parents took issue with a badly worded presentation that was given at an AFT conference. The presentation, about a Connecticut law designed to empower parents to improve their children's schools, was created and delivered by an AFT staffer from the union's Connecticut affiliate.

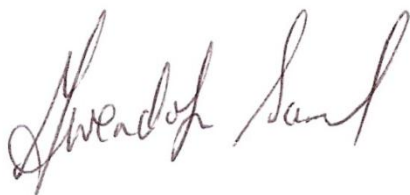
Parents had the right to be upset. The presentation did not reflect the views of AFT leaders, who immediately apologized for it and removed it from the union's website. And it is important to remember that at the same conference, the AFT released its "Quality Agenda," a document that very clearly promotes the fundamental belief that parents deserve great schools for their children and the

only way to make that happen is for parents, teachers, school administrators and the community to work together.

It was in this spirit that the leadership of the American Federation of Teachers, AFT Connecticut and the Connecticut Parents Union, and representatives from other parent groups, met in Hartford on Sept. 1. The 20 of us who attended the meeting spoke candidly about our differences. More important, we spoke of our common desire and commitment to continue to improve our schools, provide our children the great education they deserve, and ensure that both parents' and teachers' voices are heard, as they know best what is needed to help our children.

Our initial meeting was extremely productive. As a follow-up, we are now planning to expand that conversation into a round-table discussion.

We all have a stake in public education. Those who would divide us do a disservice to children.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Sant". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Wolf". The signature is bold and stylized, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.