



A Union of Professionals

## AFT News Release

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### AFT Provides Grants to Houston Educators, Union to Assist New Teachers

WASHINGTON—The American Federation of Teachers has provided more than \$100,000 in grants to Houston educators and the local union representing them to help ease the teaching shortage and assist new teachers, the AFT announced today.

A \$97,000 AFT Innovation Fund grant to the Houston Federation of Teachers will expand an educator apprenticeship and training program to help classified staff and paraprofessionals earn a teaching certification and transition into the teaching profession. The AFT also provided the HFT with a \$10,000 back-to-school grant to offer events to help orient new educators about the profession and the union. Combined, the funding represents a significant investment in on-the-ground solutions for local educators to get the resources and training they need to help students overcome learning loss and do well academically, socially and emotionally.

This is very much needed given the poisonous environment that state-appointed Superintendent Mike Miles has instilled since the state takeover of the district, said AFT President Randi Weingarten, who visited with hundreds of Houston educators on Saturday.

“I heard first hand from Houston educators about the toxic school and work environment Miles has created in just the few months he has been in Houston. You can’t help children succeed in an environment of fear and hostility, but educators are trying their best,” she said.

“While discouraging and denigrating teachers is his norm, the AFT is trying to support and nurture educators, both to recruit and retain them and to help them do their jobs well and help kids and families succeed. The AFT Innovation Fund grant is designed to encourage paraprofessionals and others who would like to move up the ladder to get the training they need and become great teachers,” Weingarten said, noting it also would help improve the ongoing teacher shortage.

“Right now in Houston, teaching is a challenge, to say the least, given the takeover, but our kids will always need top-notch teachers who are motivated and want to help them access knowledge, develop problem-solving skills and become engaged citizens. These resources are part of our Real Solutions campaign to strengthen public education and promote scalable, sustainable solutions that address literacy, loneliness and learning loss and to help our young people thrive.

“While the new superintendent appears to want to make people miserable, the AFT will always be there to help Houston educators and make sure Houston schools are those that kids deserve,” she said.

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