

# Memorandum Of Understanding

## Alexandria City Public Schools/Tenants and Workers United Partnership

### Prologue from Tenants and Workers United

Over the last six months Tenants and Workers United (TWU) has been very pleased with changes within the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). TWU has worked for many years to achieve equity for Latinos and other students of color. ACPS and TWU now appear to have a shared analysis of the challenges facing the ACPS and shared commitment to addressing the opportunity and achievement gaps. With the arrival of Dr. Sherman, we have seen an institutional commitment to change and an openness to discuss and address problems within the ACPS in an inclusive way. Without dwelling on the past, this reflects a very positive direction. To memorialize and clarify our newly emerging relationship we propose the following framework with the goal of formally establishing a partnership between the Alexandria Public Schools and the Tenants and Workers United.

### Prologue from Alexandria City Public Schools

We believe that the following agreement marks a true turning of the page in the relationship between Tenants and Workers United and Alexandria City Public Schools. As both of our organizations exist for and commit to academic achievement for all students, we now commit to a deeper partnership as we work together toward that goal. We believe that our Latino students are capable of achieving higher achievement and of working toward higher goals than they have demonstrated in the past. We join together to commit to a renewed respect for the abilities of all students.

### The Agreement

In our joint efforts to achieve academic excellence for all, the Alexandria City Public Schools and Tenants and Workers United agree to the following:

#### **Improved Cultural Competency**

1. TWU and the ACPS agree to organize two community walks per year to deepen ACPS personnel's understanding of the social conditions in which many Latino residents live. These community walks will include an overview of the neighborhood followed by visits to area homes in Arlandria and / or the West End. One walk will be geared to central administrative staff and the other will be for teachers and administrators from schools who receive students from the Arlandria and / or West End areas of the City.
2. TWU supports the ACPS goal to recruit a diverse teaching and administrative staff. TWU will assist ACPS efforts by providing advertising ideas to communities of color about ACPS job opportunities. TWU agrees to assist (as appropriate) with the development and implementation of outreach plans and distribution of recruitment literature.
3. TWU staff and members will assist with other ACPS efforts to improve staff cultural competency as appropriate. This may include organizing workshops that will cover a wide range of topics from typical life in various countries of origin (food, religious and cultural traditions, etc.)

#### **Mutual support for the development and implementation of individualized Student Education Plans at the secondary level.**

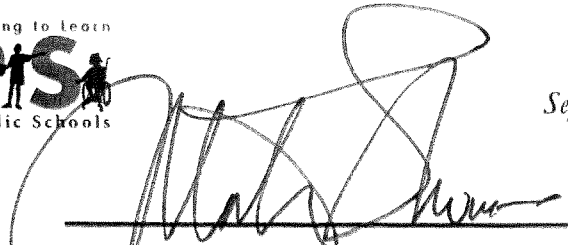
4. Both the ACPS and TWU view the creation and implementation of plans that provide individualized roadmaps for success for all students in grades six through 12 as critical to addressing the gap that exists between a student's potential and his or her present level of performance. TWU (staff, parents, students) and its partner Advancement Project agree to meet quarterly with appropriate ACPS staff in order to discuss the implementation of the Student Education Plans project.
5. In particular, TWU seeks to work with the ACPS to develop appropriate training for 'significant others' so that they will best be able to: support learners; consult on the expansion or phasing in of the Student Education Plan so that it covers all students and all subjects, and collaborate on the development of a longitudinal, qualitative and quantitative evaluation plan. Additionally we will discuss the effectiveness and offer suggestions regarding Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), to provide specialized support for advanced classes).

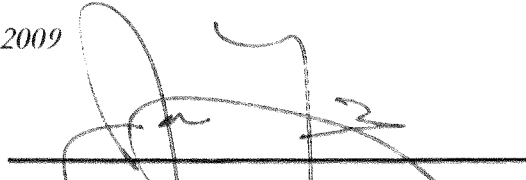
#### **Foster a culture of parent and youth involvement**

6. TWU will organize and work to develop the leadership of parents and youth of color in order to encourage their participation in meetings and other ACPS activities.
7. Both TWU and the ACPS understand that improving achievement for students of color is a complex process. It is understood that additional programs and policies will arise that will provide more opportunities for collaboration in the future. This may include efforts to reduce dropout rates, reduce suspensions and expulsions, provide enhanced curriculum, and learn from best practices in other school districts.
8. ACPS agrees to work with the TWU to increase tutoring support for ACPS students through the operation of tutoring centers in secondary schools during the school day; the expansion of student participation in existing community tutoring programs such as Building Better Futures, LYFE, and Community Lodgings; and the exploration of the possibility for jointly providing tutoring with the TWU at the TWU's offices. The use of stimulus funds and/or the assignment of school personnel for this function will be considered.
9. Upon agreement to this memo of understanding, TWU and ACPS would jointly organize a bilingual press conference to celebrate and publicize our partnership.



September 23, 2009

  
Morton Sherman, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Alexandria City Public Schools

  
Jon Liss, Executive Director  
Tenants and Workers United  
Inquilinos y Trabajadores Unidos

