

MAYORAL REPORT CARD

Mayor Bill de Blasio	ASSIGNMENT: Negotiate a teachers' contract that is good for NYC students
----------------------	--

ELEVATING TEACHER QUALITY

Rewards the best teachers	Maybe
Keeps ineffective Absent Teacher Reserve teachers out of the classroom	No
Provides good teachers with career growth that keeps them in the classroom	Maybe
Improves teacher quality in underserved communities	Maybe
Ensures kids are not taught by teachers who engaged in misconduct	No

IMPROVING SCHOOL QUALITY

Provides more learning time for students	No
Provides families with innovative school options	Maybe
Encourages greater parent engagement	Yes

FINAL GRADE:

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

Learn more:

StudentsFirstNY.org/reportcard

ELEVATING TEACHER QUALITY

Rewards the best teachers: Maybe

The new teachers' contract provides teachers generous and much deserved across-the-board raises. It also provides certain opportunities for effective teachers to receive additional compensation. However, Mayor de Blasio could have taken this a step further by eliminating automatic step and lane raises. Teachers who get extra education degrees, which research shows has no impact on student outcomes, will continue to receive automatic salary increases. Teachers will also receive additional automatic raises based on time served regardless of their performance on the job. This money could be better spent rewarding and retaining the teachers who do the best job educating children, not collecting extra degrees.

Keeps ineffective Absent Teacher Reserve teachers out of the classroom: No

Mayor de Blasio leaves it up to an arbitrator to decide if a teacher will be terminated based on two write-ups from a principal. This could represent an improvement if there was an arbitrator who wanted to remove low performing teachers. If the arbitrator does not want to remove low performing teachers - as has historically been the case - then this represents no real change. Absent a tangible push to change the City's arbitrators, there is no reason to expect any change in the way the ATR pool actually operates.

The law right now sets a high standard of misconduct for a teacher to be terminated -- is the City going to change that standard in the law, or will this collective bargaining agreement over-ride the law? It's hard to believe that two days of observations could lead to the termination of a tenured teacher. This is another example where the reality of the contract is far less appealing than the rhetoric in the press release.

Provides good teachers with career growth that keeps them in the classroom: Maybe

The career ladder opportunities created by Mayor de Blasio should help keep some effective teachers in the classroom by providing them with additional compensation for taking on added responsibilities. Unfortunately, Mayor de Blasio passed up the opportunity to move to a more performance-based compensation model (see "Rewards Best Teachers" above).

Improves teacher quality in underserved communities: Maybe

Mayor de Blasio is offering teachers in "hard to staff" schools a \$5,000 bonus even if they are not effective. Unfortunately this incentivizes all of those teachers -- regardless of their effectiveness -- to remain. Presumably a school that is "hard to staff" is also low-performing. That means that you're incentivizing an ineffective team to remain stable - a practice that may be good for the teachers in the school but is not good for the children who rely on that school to get an education.

Only teachers rated effective or highly effective should qualify for this bonus. If the children continue to perform poorly these bonuses should not continue. If that is not the case, then these bonuses are just a giveaway to the adults and will not produce results for children.

Ensures kids are not taught by teachers who engaged in misconduct: No

By adding additional criteria, Mayor de Blasio is not actually making it easier to terminate teachers who've engaged in misconduct. Teachers who have engaged in misconduct, according to the current criteria, are not able to be removed easily. Adding more criteria will not change this process.

IMPROVING SCHOOL QUALITY

Provides more learning time for students: No

Mayor de Blasio is actually reducing instructional time by 2.5 hours per week for children. The trend nationally has been to extend instructional time, not reduce it. This begs the question: How will the Mayor de Blasio ensure that struggling students get additional support? With graduation rates at 60.9%, we fail to understand how teaching children less helps them learn.

Provides families with innovative school options: Maybe

It is encouraging that Mayor de Blasio wants to emulate the innovative practices of charter schools through the creation of 200 Progressive Redesign Opportunity Schools for Excellence (PROSE) schools. It remains to be seen just how much autonomy these schools will have and just what provisions of the teachers contract and chancellor regulations the school can be freed up from. For example, we don't know if a school can choose to increase class size as a way to afford art class.

Encourages greater parent engagement: Yes

Mayor de Blasio does encourage greater parent engagement by setting aside time for teachers to communicate with parents and increases the length and number of parent-teacher conferences. However, it is concerning that this time comes at the cost of reduced instructional time.

OVERALL COMMENT

The stark differences between the flowery rhetoric of the press conference announcing the new contract and the actual substance of the deal raise real questions about Mayor de Blasio's intentions. The city gave considerable raises without getting much in return. This contract is a lost opportunity that fails New York City students. It's disappointing that a mayor who has spent so much time talking about fighting inequality would agree to a contract that delivers so little for the children he swore to represent.

Learn more:

StudentsFirstNY.org/reportcard