

*Cincinnati Federation of Teachers President Julie Sellers' comments to the report:*

We educators come to our profession motivated by our caring for children. And we believe that the best way to help them succeed is to have an excellent teacher in every classroom. So we welcome anyone or group who share those core values, including The New Teacher Project. Their report will give the administration and us some additional valuable topics of discussion during our upcoming negotiations, which, of course, will be detailed and private. But I would like to make a few general comments that don't violate that spirit.

1) First, among these findings and recommendations are some wonderful ideas, probably too many to list here. Things like:

- The need to staff every classroom with an excellent teacher
- That we must draw our best teachers to the most challenging schools
- The importance of improving our professional development
- The advantages of staffing buildings based on the mutual consent of the teachers involved and the administration
- The view that practicing teachers are likely the true pedagogical experts

I could go on and on. There's much here that we agree with.

2) But I would be remiss if I didn't note several areas that actually surprised me, since I thought all of us, including The New Teacher Project, were guided by a common progressive spirit of school reform. Yet, every teacher I have spoken with who has seen or heard the findings has said that they seem to promote the old paradigm of administrators being the central authority and power. And we're not the only ones who spotted it. In today's morning newspaper, the writer refers to, and these are his words, "expanding principals' power over teachers." For years now, CFT and the administration have chartered a delicate course of collaboration and innovation, even pioneered some structures and practices that others have adopted, in which, to use the reporter's word, the "power" has been shared for the good of children and their achievement. Few would argue, for example, that doctors who currently practice medicine are experts in medical care. Teachers have earned similar respect here in Cincinnati based on the same model. So, no, we must not return to older paradigms that we know don't work. And dropping the lead teacher program, which you suggest on page 62, or totally revamping an evaluation system that is tied to research, would be naïve and backward. But as I said, full and specific discussions of such values and practices belong in the private setting of our talks.

3) But in closing, let me add that all serious ideas aimed at school reform, including ones in this report, deserve scrutiny and conversation. I'm glad that's happening today. The work of helping children, and especially those from urban areas like ours, deserves our best shot, probably even a heroic effort. We thank The New Teacher Project for this study.