



A Union of Professionals

## AFT News Release

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### AFT on PISA 2015 International Survey Results

**WASHINGTON**—Statement by Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, on the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) 2015 survey of a half million students representing 15 year-olds in about 70 countries to gauge their knowledge and skills in math, reading and science:

“The latest U.S. PISA achievement results are disappointing but not surprising. They were predictable given the impact of the last 15 years of U.S. education policies combined with continuing state disinvestment following the 2008 recession. Thirty one states still spend less per pupil than before the recession.

“Last year, many people on both sides of the aisle worked hard to change federal education policy. ESSA (the Every Student Succeeds Act) strengthens public education by increasing equity for disadvantaged children, providing more state and local control and holding charter schools more accountable. We can see the footprints of those strategies for student success in the new PISA findings. Importantly, public school systems worldwide outperform charter and private schools, underlining the need to support and invest in our public schools with policies and programs that work.

“While the United States has made some progress on providing a more equitable public education system, we still have a long way to go. Equity is a key building block to excellence. The PISA report encourages United States policymakers to study countries like Germany, Canada, Hong Kong and Estonia to see how a high level of equity, use of tests for diagnostic (not punishment) purposes, and respect for teachers’ professional knowledge and judgment yield improved student performance. On the flip side, Finland—with a government that is investing less on public education and moving away from its student- and teacher-centered strategies—appears to have lost ground in the past few years. Policymakers in the United States and around the world should look more closely at that cautionary tale.

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

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The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of 1.6 million professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

Randi Weingarten  
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