



A Union of Professionals

## AFT News Release

For Immediate Release  
April 12, 2011

Contact:  
George Jackson  
202/494-8178  
gjackson@aft.org  
[www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org)

### **Statement by Randi Weingarten in Support of American Optometric Association's School Readiness Summit**

*The American Federation of Teachers has joined several national organizations in signing on to a statement urging a national commitment to eliminating untreated and undiagnosed vision problems from America's schools. The statement was shared today at the American Optometric Association's School Readiness Summit.*

**WASHINGTON**—The American Federation of Teachers is proud to join with the American Optometric Association and other groups in a commitment to ensure that America's schoolchildren have access to diagnosis and treatment for vision problems. Even the most gifted students will struggle academically if they have trouble seeing the blackboard or focusing on a book. A tremendous amount of learning happens visually, so proper vision care is crucial to helping students reach their full potential.

As with many other health concerns, access to vision care is even more critical for economically disadvantaged students. At a time when states and communities are facing draconian budget cuts, many communities will be relying especially heavily on our public schools to provide more than academics for our children. In challenging economic situations, community schools—where children can receive a range of health and other wraparound services—play a vital role in children's achievement and well-being.

Every one of us has a role to play in providing our children with the best education possible. By signing on to the A.O.A's statement, the AFT and other organizations are demonstrating that we understand and embrace the concept of shared accountability to our schools and students.

**To learn more about the AFT's commitment to student health, visit:  
[www.aft.org/issues/childhealth](http://www.aft.org/issues/childhealth).**

###

The AFT represents 1.5 million pre-K through 12th-grade teachers; paraprofessionals and other school-related personnel; higher education faculty and professional staff; federal, state and local government employees; nurses and healthcare workers; and early childhood educators.

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT • 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W. • Washington, DC 20001 • T: 202/879-4458 • F: 202/879-4456 • [www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org)

AFT Teachers • AFT PSRP • AFT Higher Education • AFT Public Employees • AFT Healthcare

