

Teacher's union leader praises Cincinnati elementary school

[Byron McCauley](#), Cincinnati Enquirer Published 10:33 p.m. ET Oct. 29, 2018



(Photo: Byron McCauley)

The head of the nation's second-largest teacher's union on Monday said America can learn from the diversity and teamwork she saw at a Cincinnati elementary school against the backdrop of this weekend's Pittsburgh massacre and the mailing of pipe bombs to officeholders and former presidents.

Randi Weingarten, president of the 1.7 million American Federation of Teachers, visited the Academy of World Languages Elementary School in Evanston. The school has students representing more than 35 nationalities and languages. It features a community learning center, which has become a staple of many Cincinnati public schools in under-served communities.

During an interview outside the school after her tour, Weingarten said that what she saw in the school is "what America should be. It is what America can be. It is what Ohio always has been."

Weingarten noted an uptick in American disunity, referring to Saturday's shooting at a Pittsburgh synagogue in which a gunman killed 11 people, and in Florida, where officials arrested a man suspected of mailing the pipe bombs.

"What is happening right now — and you can see it from the last week — is that hate and division that is exploiting the legitimate frustration that people have is overtaking the country that we know and love," Weingarten said. "And so when you go to a school like the Academy of World Languages, and you see the melting pot, you see the kids of different backgrounds and speaking different languages, all being together taught by teachers, having wrap-around services in Cincinnati right now. This is not just aspirational. This is what our country can be. This is what our country ought to be."

The Academy of World Languages last week unveiled extensive renovations that include the addition of a new dentist's office and optical center. A dentist, a dental hygienist and two assistants will staff the office and provide full-service treatment for students and community members. Students will be able to get eye examinations and free glasses.

Darlene Kamine, executive director of the Community Learning Center Institute, said 400 children in Cincinnati are on a medical waiting list in need of a full dental work up. The new dental care center is one of five inside Cincinnati Public Schools that can help reduce the waiting list.

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