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President, PHILIP RUMORE

January 12, 2018

MEMO TO: Buffalo Teachers  
FROM: Philip Rumore, President, BTF  
RE: Parent Comment Against City Honors Teachers

We have received requests that the BTF withdraw its support for the Buffalo Parent Teacher Organization (B.P.T.O.) based upon the negative comments relating to teachers at City Honors, who teachers believe is a member and/or officer of the BPTO, which is not the case.

The statement “The grievance was ridiculous to begin with, but I hope they settle soon. This is so upsetting for our students. They’re already hearing about losing their best and favorite teachers. It’s just a small group instigating the trouble, but they just need to get over themselves and do their duty!” (emphasis added).

The comment was made by Ms. Wendy Mistretta, a parent from City Honors, in the “Add a comment” section at the end of the article in The Buffalo News.

We have checked with Larry Scott from the BPTO who advised us that Ms. Mistretta is not a member or officer of the BPTO. She, however, is pictured on the District Parent Coordinating Committee (DPCC) website with Sam Radford, President of the District Parent Coordinating Committee, as a “Team Leader”. We are advised that she is also Vice President of the DPCC not the BPTO.

There are those in the District and the community that will do whatever they can to set teachers against teachers. They have not and will never succeed.

The Principals and District had established a long-standing practice of eliminating many non-teaching duties at City Honors.

When, after many years, they unilaterally decided to change the past practice, we grieved the change (in 2010). Attempts were made to reach a compromise both before and after the arbitration. The District refused. “We will beat you and win” was their answer. Well, they lost the arbitration and their challenge to the decision in our favor in court.

Prior to this grievance, a grievance on the same issue was filed in 1995 by the Building Committee at City Honors.

That grievance was settled and a Settlement Agreement was signed by then Superintendent James Harris on 1/20/99. It states “That non-teaching duties will be filled in accordance with the contract and consistent with the way they have been filled in the 1996, 1997 and 1998 school years”.

So much for signed settlement agreements.

The District is now threatening to cut 5 – 6 teachers at the school to pay for what they had been funding for many years.

This is an obvious reprisal for filing and winning the grievance. The District has a billion-dollar budget. What about some cuts at City Hall, extraneous and useless administrators, travel, etc.?

Just as the BTF will fight for you and your school, we will fight for our colleagues at City Honors. Despite all of this, the teachers at City Honors are seeking a solution to the issue.

Oh, and by the way, one would think the issue of non-teaching duties would be an issue for parents and the District. Shouldn’t we be helping our students, not monitoring the halls, doing lunch duty, etc.? Many parents I have spoken with agree. Some, however, would rather toss rocks and insults.

Thank you, in advance, for your refusal to be set against each other and your continued solidarity. You are the best .... No, the very best.

PR:ls