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President, PHILIP RUMORE

December 13, 2016

MEMO TO: All Buffalo Teachers
FROM: Philip Rumore, President, BTF
RE: APPR – Tentative Agreement

We have reached a tentative APPR agreement with the District that under the new law must be in effect and approved by NYSED prior to January 2017 or the District will lose \$50,000,000 in State Aid.

While we have been in negotiations on this for months, some meetings were interrupted due to our contract negotiations.

The tentative agreement was presented to our twenty members of the teacher APPR review committee; however, since we wanted to receive input from the teachers, a finalized document was not presented.

After a complete and thorough explanation, the teachers supported the tentative agreement with some suggested clarifications which have been included.

While there are many documents, I will provide you with an explanation of the attached documents.

The tentative agreement will be voted on by the BTF Executive Committee and Council of Delegates on Thursday, December 15, 2016.

It is a good agreement that makes significant progress toward the fair evaluation of teachers. While we all realize that the APPR regulations and laws have nothing to do with student learning and teaching, they are the laws and regulations. We have made and will continue to make changes to these impediments to teaching and learning.

Q. Is there any change to the requirement to have an SLO for all students?

A. Yes, this is a major change. The regulations allow for a significant reduction in the number of teachers who have to do an individual student SLO.

As a result of the problems with many state examinations, a district-wide growth measure target can be used instead of an SLO for each student if less than fifty percent (50%) of students take a Regents examination.

Q. What is a District-wide target?

A. A District-wide target is one that is negotiated to provide all “non-Regent” teachers with the same growth score based on an agreed upon target.

Q. How was the target set?

A. We reviewed the percentage of students passing all Regents exams and the fourth (4th) and eighth (8th) grade science examination for the last three years ([see Document I](#)).

We then determined that a greater number of examinations will decrease the fluctuation of the average score. Therefore, all Regents plus the fourth (4th) and eighth (8th) grade science exams were used.

The HEDI points would vary as the percent passing varied. The three year variation is, as you can see, minimal. However, the large number of included examinations insulates against major variations.

Therefore, most teachers, as we continue to work to improve student performance, will no longer have to complete meaningless individual SLO’s to receive their rating on the student performance component.

Q. What are the rules for observations?

A. In short, ([see Document II *](#)) for teachers rated Highly Effective, Effective, or Developing, there will be one announced observation unless the teacher or administrator requests one additional announced observation. There will only be one unannounced observation. If more than one announced observation occurs, the scores will be averaged.

Observations will not occur during September, before or after a holiday or during the last three weeks of instruction in June.

Teachers will have the option of having the unannounced observation postponed once.

Under the laws/regulations, teachers receiving an Ineffective rating in the previous year must have an announced observation by an independent evaluator. We have negotiated that this must be a trained current Buffalo Administrator.

Observations for teachers rated Highly Effective, Effective and Developing will count 80% announced and 20% unannounced.

For teachers rated Ineffective observations will count 80% announced, 10% unannounced and

10% independent.

Announced observations will continue to require pre and post-conferences with the teacher and administrator and there must be a post-conference for the unannounced observation.

Q. How will the teacher evaluation and student performance score be combined for my composite score?

A. That must be done based on the State required matrix ([see Document III](#)).

Q. Can teachers who are still required to complete individual SLO's utilize poverty, students with disabilities, English language learners status, and prior academic history (NYSUT and BTF consider absenteeism to be part of "prior academic history").

A. Yes, these may be taken into consideration in developing a student's SLO in accordance with the law.

The above addresses the essential parts of the APPR agreement. As you can see, we have made substantial improvements to the APPR process based upon the new regulations.

We will continue to fight in Albany for an evaluation system that actually reflects teaching and learning. Not one that requires over testing, inappropriate testing, time consuming testing and test preparation and "indicators" that make no sense.

We are making some progress but we can't give up. Our students deserve better.

Note: We have included the complete NYSUT Rubric ([see Document IV](#)) and the eighteen (18) approved indicators from the NYSUT Rubric ([see Document V](#)).

* Attachment "B" referred to in Document II is the current APPR document updated to reflect the new APPR Laws/Regulations and our agreement. We will forward that to you tomorrow (Wednesday, November 14, 2016).

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