

President PHILIP RUMORE



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BUFFALO TEACHERS
FEDERATION, INC

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MEMO TO: All Buffalo Teachers
FROM: Buffalo Teachers Federation
RE: Buffalo News Series on Students

Sandy Tan has indicated that she is interested in doing a series about students. If you would like to contact her, the details are below.

PR:su

With the summer break almost upon us, I'm interested in pitching a series of stories to editors here at The Buffalo News that would refocus the public's attention on the district's many high-needs students. Given the many issues the district is facing, News education reporters spend much of the year consumed with keeping up with covering the high-level district landscape, including many policy, systems, school board and leadership issues.

But I'd like to propose a series of summer stories devoted to in-depth student profiles that highlight the challenges students and teachers face at the ground level. The Buffalo school district, more than any other area district, deals with high numbers of high-needs students. To bring attention to the breadth and depth of the diverse student population, and the challenges faced with educating them, I'm hoping that you could help spread the word to teachers and student-support staffers who know of students whose stories and struggles deserve to be told.

I'm looking for a diverse cross section of students, of varying ages, grades, academic levels and schools who could be featured and photographed for an in-depth human interest story.

I believe teachers would know best which students might be best suited to this series. But by way of example, below are some student categories that have frequently been raised as challenges for the district:

- Overage students
- Students with disabilities
- Students with behavioral/anger-control issues
- English language learners
- Students from single-parent or impoverished homes
- Students who have been neglected or traumatized
- Homeless students
- Adult/non-traditional students

I am certainly open to considering other students who fall into another category I may have overlooked. In general, I want to provide a voice to those who rarely have one and introduce the public to the diversity of needs and challenges facing Buffalo schools. I am primarily interested in honest stories that reveal fundamental truths about how things are for students living in the City of Buffalo.

The ability to pursue this series of stories will depend heavily on the responses I receive from teachers and parents, who I am also reaching out to. Though there may be a few exceptions, in general, whatever student I profile would consent to having their names used and photos taken. In the case of younger students, I would need to speak with an adult who could consent on their behalf. If possible, I'd also like to speak with the student's teacher or other advocate who can offer a third-party perspective on the child. These students must be currently enrolled in BPS, and ideally, be enrolled next school year also. Other than that, what I'm most interested in is the compelling nature of the student's/student family's personal story.

I would encourage anyone with a suggestion to email me at stan@buffnews.com with as many details as possible about the student, and follow-up contact information including a good daytime phone number.

Sandra Tan
Reporter
The Buffalo News