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President PHILIP RUMORE

April 13, 2016

MEMO TO: All Buffalo Teachers
FROM: Philip Rumore, President, BTF
RE: *The Buffalo News* Article

In case you missed this article in *The Buffalo News*:

Monday, April 11, 2016
The Buffalo News.com
City & Region

Buffalo school funding advocates taking it to the streets
BY: Tiffany Lankes

Updated: April 11, 2016, 07:07 PM
Even as the state promises more money for public schools, educators and advocates say the bump fails to make up for billions of dollars New York owes some of its highest-poverty school systems.

It also fails to cover the cost of things such as lower class sizes and more support services for students, things teachers say are essential for children to succeed academically.

So advocates are going public.

“Teachers across the city feel that no one is paying attention to what they really need for our kids,” said Buffalo Teachers Federation President Philip Rumore. “This is about teachers saying ‘I’m tired of this. We need more for our kids.’ ”

That is the message Buffalo educators, parents and advocates hope to convey during a week of rallies, forums and walk-ins to raise awareness about the importance of things such as lower class sizes and enhanced support services, including counselors, social workers and psychologists.

Rumore said the union will compile a report on the need for these things and present it to lawmakers in Albany.

They will also call upon city and county leaders for help directing social services to children and their families. Rumore said that the county has done a good job with that in partnership with Say Yes Buffalo, and would like to see those efforts expanded. Say Yes, in partnership with Erie County, the district and other community agencies, operates 42 mental health clinics in Buffalo schools.

The rallies, which began Monday, come even as the state pledges a record amount of school aid – \$24.8 billion. That includes \$175 million earmarked for poor districts to create and expand community schools, which offer wraparound services to students and their families. Buffalo will get \$12.5 million of that.

The Alliance for Quality Education has been fighting for \$4.4 billion owed to schools – 77 percent of which should go to high-needs districts – because of a court ruling that New York State does not provide many poor students with their constitutional right to a basic education. The group, which often finds itself allied with teachers unions when it comes to school funding, formed in the wake of a successful 1993 lawsuit by New York City parents and advocates that directed the state to provide a good education to all students as called for in the state constitution.

In 2007, the state came up with a new formula to comply with the court ruling and did so for two years. But then it stopped making payments during the recession. During that fiscal crisis, many schools also sustained dramatic cuts that essentially reversed the effects of the payout from the lawsuit.

“This budget fails to address fundamental educational inequality based on both race and income,” Billy Easton, executive director for the Alliance for Quality Education, said in a statement about the budget. “The Foundation Aid increase simply does not come close to meeting the needs for the one out of two students living in poverty or to reversing the racial inequities that are entrenched in our educational system.”

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Tiffany Lankes

Great Job!

The battle continues.

PR:su