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President, PHILIP RUMORE

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MEMO TO: All Buffalo Teachers
FROM: Philip Rumore, President, BTF
RE: District Attempts to Divide and Conquer

The District is once again intent on setting teacher against teacher, parents against teachers and parents against parents.

Whether it's district-wide or in each school, divide and conquer is their objective.

City Honors, for instance, is being used to set teacher against teacher, parents against teachers, parents against parents, and other teachers against the teachers at City Honors.

They just love it when teachers are opposing other teachers and parents are attacking teachers and other parents. Every time they see this it makes them smile and provides encouragement.

Let's look at the issues at City Honors.

First, you should know that the teachers at City Honors, and some parents I have spoken with, don't think any teacher should have non-teaching duties.

When City Honors was founded, the District, for various reasons, decided that the teachers at City Honors should not have non-teaching duties. Aides were hired for many years to perform those duties.

In 1995, the District decided to assign non-teaching duties to the faculty at City Honors.

In 1999, the District signed a settlement agreement removing the non-teaching duties. The funding for the aides continued.

In 2010, in violation of the 1999 signed settlement agreement and in violation of the many years of "past practice", the District again assigned non-teaching duties.

Attempts were made to settle. The District refused.

The grievance went through the grievance procedure.

The arbitrator found against the District. Non-teaching duties were to cease and the teachers should be compensated.

The Court ruled against the District's attempt to overturn the arbitration decision and ordered that it be followed.

Since the District did not follow the order of the court, contempt proceedings were initiated. During all this time, teacher assignments to non-teaching duties continued.

Some of the duties assigned:

- Supply/Copy Machine Duty - During their 45-minute duty, teachers are to use the forty-five minutes to fill supply orders and replenish the supply of copy machine paper. Previously performed by one teacher aide. Now assigned to three teachers.
- Bathroom Sweep - During their 45-minute duty, teachers are assigned to enter and patrol student lavatories during this 45-minute assignment. Newly created by the Principal.
- Physical Education Locker Room Duty - During their 45-minute duty, each period, a teacher is assigned to sit in front of the locker room. Newly created by the Principal.
- Recycling Duty - During each 45-minute duty, a teacher is assigned to collect cans and bottles for recycling. Newly created by the Principal.
- Hall Sweeps - During their 45-minute duty, teachers are assigned to monitor each floor.

Note: There are security cameras on each floor that are monitored by the security office and Main office. Newly created by the Principal.

- Professional Growth System (PGS) - During their 45-minute duty, assigned teachers are required to input other teachers' credit bearing time into the PGS. Newly created by the Principal.
- Master Calendar Duty - During their 45-minute duty, assigned teachers are required to update the school website. Newly created by the Principal.
- Attendance Duty - Call guardian and/or write letters for students who are frequently absent and/or tardy. This is an attendance teacher's assignment. Newly created by the Principal.
- Recess Duty - For twenty minutes, teachers are required to take students outside and then have lunch duty for the remaining twenty-five minutes. Newly created by the Principal.
- Front Desk Duty - Two teachers are assigned to a desk at the front door to have visitors sign in and direct them to the office. This is newly created by the Principal. Previously performed by a teacher aide.
- Main Locker Room Duty - Teachers required to monitor students at their locker - Security office is directly in front of the desk. Previously performed by an Administrator.

We, as you can see from my last email, tried to settle this by having a mediator assigned. The District has still not responded.

The District's plan – to render the settlement agreement, arbitration award and court order null and void, to get their way, and to spread dissent and anger – was to vindictively punish the teachers and students at City Honors by cutting teachers, cutting programs, increasing class loads, etc.

The District had funded the aides, has a billion dollar budget, and if really necessary, could make cuts elsewhere (some administrators, etc.)

Cutting the teachers at City Honors was obviously a vindictive act of reprisal against the teachers for filing the grievance.

Allowing the District to violate a signed settlement agreement, a court ordered arbitration decision, our contract and past practice would undermine our ability to enforce settlement agreements, arbitration

decisions, past practice and will send the message to the District that they can continue to ignore our contract, arbitration decisions, past practice and settlement agreements.

The District would then believe that it could succeed in getting its way by dividing and conquering.

It would also undermine our ability to use past practice in all schools where non-teacher duties are now limited.

We can not play their game of setting teacher against teacher, parents against teacher and parents against parents.

The District can not be allowed to prevail in its misguided belief that all they (the District) have to do to get their way is find a way to punish the teachers, set teachers against teachers, parents against teachers and parents against parents.

That is exactly what they want so that they are in control.

We must also continue to fight to remove absurd non-teaching duties in every school. We must not, as the District would like us to do, say “we don’t have what they have so they shouldn’t either”. Rather we should be saying, “We want what they have”.

DIVIDE AND CONQUER - NEVER