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President, PHILIP RUMORE

July 18, 2017

MEMO TO: Dr. Kriner Cash, Superintendent, BPS

Darren Brown, Chief of Staff, BPS

FROM: Philip Rumore, President, BTF

RE: More False and Misleading Statements by Darren Brown

Apparently, you and your City Hall Administrators are committed to violating agreements, spreading false and misleading information and turning teachers against you and the District.

Darren Brown, Chief of Staff, distributed a correspondence reputedly to answer questions ([attached](#)). Below is the BTF response to Mr. Brown's correspondence as his correspondence contains what we consider false and misleading statements.

1) Why aren't late schools starting at 8:25?

BPS/Darren Brown's Answer: The collective bargaining agreement between the District and the BTF ratified on October 17, 2016 specifically added the additional time to the end of the day.

BTF Response: Purposely Misleading – While the contract states “the additional twenty-five (25) minutes will be added to the end of the day” (emphasis added), you have conveniently forgotten that the BTF was working with the District to determine whether we could allow some schools to break up the twenty-five minutes, e.g. ten (10) minutes before and fifteen (15) minutes at the end of the school day – until the District broke off discussions and unilaterally and illegally imposed schedule changes at three (3) schools using its alleged receivership powers.

2) Why did the District decide start and end times when the Union and District agreed that principals would determine it?

BPS/Darren Brown's Answer: This is inaccurate. The BTF and District never agreed that Principals would determine start and end times.

BTF Response: Purposely Misleading – While the BTF did not agree to allow the “principals” to determine the starting and ending times, we have always allowed schools to change schedules based upon a consensus between the teachers and administrators in a building. Article VIII A (1).

3) Why aren't teachers allowed to vote on start and end times?

BPS/Darren Brown's Answer: The ratified contract agreed that the additional time would be added to the end of the day (A), in addition, the teacher workday would be 7 hours 15 minutes (B).

BTF Response (A): Purposely Misleading – See BTF Response to #2. In addition the BTF met several times at the District's request to see if schedules could be modified – See BTF response to #1.

BTF Response (B): False – The new language states, “Article VIII A (1) line 33, change six (6) hours and fifty (50) minutes to seven (7) hours and fifteen (15) minutes. The twenty-five (25) additional minutes will be added to the end of the day.

The contract will then read on lines 32-33 “the hours of service will not exceed seven (7) hours and fifteen (15) minutes for each school day” (emphasis added).

Twenty-five (25) minutes was added not thirty-five (35) minutes for schools where teachers were working less than six (6) hours and fifty (50) members, e.g. if you were working six (6) hours and forty (40) minutes and you add twenty-five (25) minutes, your new work day should be seven (7) hours and five (5) minutes, not seven (7) hours and fifteen (15) minutes. **Have you no shame? Perhaps one of our elementary teachers can help you with your math skills.**

4) Why has it now been changed to 25 minutes “with students”?

BPS/Darren Brown's Answer: This is not a change; the intention was to increase instructional time – with students.

BTF Response: False – The discussions at the negotiating table with the District, when we were discussing allowing schools to modify the schedules, and a subsequent conversation I had with the Superintendent, were that we would allow the teachers and administrators at the schools to decide how to use the additional time. They know how to best utilize time to improve the education of our students.

5) Why were the teachers notified of the time change June 21st when the District said we were to be made aware April 8th?

BPS/Darren Brown's Answer: An April 8th decision was for changing a school from early to late. In addition, teachers were aware of the additional time via the ratification meeting held at Kleinhans Music Hall.

BTF Response: Answer makes no sense.

6) Why weren't we notified of schedule changes before the transfer deadline?

BPS/Darren Brown's Answer: Schools that moved from early to late were given time to submit voluntary transfer requests.

BTF Response: We know of no such notification to teachers. The portal closed on May 8, 2017, schools visits /open houses were held from April 24 to June 2, 2017; therefore, it was short notice – and at receivership schools some were denied the opportunity to leave.

7) What happens when teachers need to get to City Hall before offices close?

BPS/Darren Brown's Answer: There are many days that schools are closed and central office is open, those days will need to be utilized.

BTF Response: Question not clear – Answer absurd and insufficient.

8) What substitutes will want to work in this district with longer, later hours and the same pay? We already have a shortage of subs as it is.

BPS/Darren Brown's Answer: The Human Resource department is working to increase the substitute teacher pool. Please know that substitute teachers in other districts work similar or longer days, and for less pay.

BTF Response: A slap in the face to substitute teachers. Substitute teachers in the “other districts” have far better working conditions.

9) If administrators and aides can leave at 3:35, who is running the building until 4:05? Teachers? Subs? Nobody?

BPS/Darren Brown's Answer: The District would not leave buildings without proper staffing.

BTF Response: Good Question – Answer Avoided. Also, District has a history of leaving buildings/students without proper staffing.

10) How is having Elementary students arriving home so late at night beneficial to improving their education?

BPS/Darren Brown's Answer: Additional, quality instructional time is beneficial to improving education for our students.

BTF Response: Good Question – Answer Avoided.

11) What time will students get home during the winter months when it snows? 7:00?/ 8:00?

BPS/Darren Brown's Answer: The District will make every effort to get students home safely at a reasonable time. This is always the case.

BTF Response: Good Question – Not answered

12) If research shows that Elementary students are more cognizant in the morning then why are minutes being added to the end of the day?

BPS/Darren Brown's Answer: This question was answered - please see questions #1 and #4.

BTF Response: False – Question #1 and #4 do not answer this question. The research does show that Elementary Students benefit from an earlier start.

13) Does the District realize that added minutes to the end of the day will increase suspensions when students are tired and exhausted?

BPS/Darren Brown's Answer: This is a negative assumption and there is no research to support this opinion.

BTF Response: Show us the research that supports the District's position.

14) What is being taught these extra 25 minutes?

BPS/Darren Brown's Answer: A memo has been distributed to Principals outlining the expectations and opportunities for schools with the additional 25 minutes of instructional time.

BTF Response: See #4 above.

15) Why does Buffalo continue to step on and bully its teachers without any praise, positivity, or rewards for working as hard as we do for longer hours and much less pay than surrounding districts?

BPS/Darren Brown's Answer: I'm sorry that any teacher would feel this way. With the New Education Bargain, one cornerstone is a new relationship with our teachers. A new contract has been settled with a total package far better than any teacher in surrounding districts.

Dr. Cash, senior staff, and administrators constantly acknowledge the hard work of our teachers.

BTF Response: False – Who are you kidding? See my letters to the Superintendent relating to the Superintendent and District’s attacks on teachers (June 21, 2017, June 22, 2017 and July 11, 2017). We should also add this District correspondence – see first two (2) paragraphs of this correspondence.

16) Does the District realize that it will lose a lot of teachers because of this? Does it even care?

BPS/Darren Brown’s Answer: Having a quality teaching force is necessary to increase student achievement. We hope that the attractive compensation we provide to our teachers along with additional benefits outlined in the recently ratified collective bargaining agreement, will help retain them. In addition, districts in the surrounding region actually have a similar or longer workday than BPS.

BTF Response: You need to go back to the class room – First the salaries, while improved, will never compensate Buffalo teachers for their dedication to our students under some of the most difficult conditions and the way they have been and are again being mistreated by the District.

17) Can teachers get a hardship transfer to another building if family obligations prevent them from staying until 4:05?

BPS/Darren Brown’s Answer: Teachers can apply for a hardship transfer at any time.

BTF Response: Half truth – Yes, teachers can apply but they are seldom granted.

18) Can certain staff at late schools that have family obligations come in at 8:25 and leave at 3:35 if it can be worked out with administrators?

BPS/Darren Brown’s Answer: Administrators at individual schools will not be negotiating with teachers.

BTF Response: Typical – my way or the highway mentality.

19) What time will busses be arriving?

BPS/Darren Brown’s Answer: A memo has been sent to Principals explaining the bus arrival time for dismissal. Please be reminded that morning arrival time has not changed - except for schools #3 and #89.

BTF Response: We will see you in court.

20) Are teachers being paid for the additional time?

BPS/Darren Brown’s Answer: The additional time was negotiated in the October 17, 2016 ratified contract. The pay raises and yearly increases for teachers in that contract account for the additional time.

BTF Response: See #16

21) Who will notify parents, and when, of the time change?

BPS/Darren Brown's Answer: School building administrators will notify their school families based on the information that will be sent by their Associate Superintendents. Letters to families can go out as soon as the Principals have developed their letters.

BTF Response: Not answered

22) Teachers are stating they are being told by BTF to work to rule. When buses are late, as often happens in winter and for many other reasons, will staff that stay get paid to supervise children?

BPS/Darren Brown's Answer: Busses must leave schools in enough time to have proper supervision. This has been built into the bus arrival and leave time for each elementary school. In addition, it's unfortunate that the BTF would tell teachers to "work to rule" when we just settled a contract and are attempting to develop a better relationship with teachers.

BTF Response: **This is a lie** - The BTF has never told teachers to "work to rule" as that can be considered a strike. Also see BTF answer to #15. Before you repeat and answer such a bold face lie, you should check your sources.

23) How does this affect start and ending times for after school programs?

BPS/Darren Brown's Answer: The ELT department will be sending communication regarding the after school programming.

BTF Response: **Good Question** – Not answered.

PR:su