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**President PHILIP RUMORE**

April 27, 2016

**MEMO TO:** All Buffalo Teachers  
**FROM:** Philip Rumore, President, BTF  
**RE:** Op Ed Article

This was emailed to *The Buffalo News*. Let's see if it is printed or how it is "modified".

PR:su

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### **REAL REFORM VS. SHAM REFORM**

To continue to call the Buffalo School Board majority's actions part of a "reform agenda" is an insult to one's intelligence.

Definition: Reform – to make better or to behave better.

Not only has the Board majority not made the District better or have they behaved better, they have instead caused bitter divisions and made the District worse than when they were elected. They have accomplished nothing of benefit to our schools and students.

They advocate for charter schools that remove undesirable students and send them back to the district schools (usually around exam time). They have student populations with far fewer non-English speaking students and severely handicapped students. How does this improve our schools?

They blame the same teachers' contract that is in place at City Honors, Hutch Tech, Olmsted and other higher-performing schools for all the ills of the District.

This is the same teachers' contract that teachers fought and went on strike to secure smaller class sizes, Art, Music and PE, sufficient text books, support services, etc.

Yes, teachers and parents opposed the State tests. A task force, setup by the Governor and which included the Commissioner of Education, concluded that the tests were so flawed that they should not be used to evaluate students or teachers until 2019.

Opposing these invalid tests is not opposing “reform” which would make things better but rather embracing real reform that will ensure that our students are not subjected to inappropriate, invalid and meaningless tests - what some call institutionalized child abuse.

For the last thirty years, we have called for the following reform:

We must ensure that our students graduate from elementary school ready for high school. That means making sure that students go from kindergarten to first grade ready for first grade, first grade to second grade ready for second grade, etc.

We must provide small class sizes and all the support services necessary to ensure this happens.

Just as importantly, we must work with the families from the earliest grades. If there is a family in crisis that can be supported from the early grades, we have a chance. We will need the assistance of State, County and City support services to accomplish this; however, it must be done.

For Buffalo teachers, this is real reform. Reform that will really improve our students’ education not the so called reform of divisiveness and sham “reforms” advocated by the current board majority.

As for the Board majority’s actions meeting the “reform” definition “behave better”, that could only happen in a bizarre world where up means down, hot means cold and bad means good.