

President PHILIP RUMORE



August 6, 2015

BUFFALO TEACHERS
FEDERATION, INC

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MEMO TO: All Buffalo Teachers
FROM: Philip Rumore, President, BTF
RE: Receivership

While we have had meetings with the schools identified as being in Receivership, briefed the Council of Delegates (see [June 2015 Council of Delegates Agenda](#)) and posted and emailed information relating to Receivership on the BTF website (see [June 4, 2015 Receivership Memo](#) and [June 16, 2015 Receivership Memo](#)), questions and issues still remain and are being clarified by NYSED & NYSUT daily. We will, of course, be having additional meetings once the regulations are finalized.

As BTF president, I attended a NYSED meeting along with the interim Superintendent, other members of the District and representatives from the other "receivership" districts.

NYSED presented an overview almost identical to the one you received from the BTF (see above links).

NYSED attempted to answer and clarify issues relating the new regulations as well as explain how "Demonstrable Improvement" (DI) will be measured. The BTF raised several critical concerns relating to the proposed DI matrix that we hope will be addressed.

Since the regulations were passed as an emergency response to the absurdly short timeline established by the legislature, they are not final until September after the required public comment period that ends on or about August 24th. We, as well as NYSUT and others are submitting comments. We encourage you to make any comments prior to that date at regcomments@nysed.gov.

We are also seeking clarification from the District on its plans for implementation.

For example, there must be 90 school days notice prior to the implementation of any teacher, reapplication process or teacher transfers; therefore the earliest the District could implement said teacher reapplications and transfers at their schools, and teacher transfers is January 2016.

Such a disruption would cause chaos and unacceptable damage to our students' education.

In addition, the District had determined that the school Site Based Management Team will be the team (Community Engagement Team) that develops and recommends the school plan.

We have advised the district that the BTF must agree to the teacher membership on the CET.

Our position is that the teacher members should be the building committee and only, if the building committee and teachers at the school agree, which we assume they will, the duly-elected teachers on the SBMT can be included.

As per our emails to teachers (above), briefing to the Council and meetings with the teachers at the affected schools, and my [June 4, 2015 Receivership Memo](#), we want teachers to submit a list, in writing, of everything you believe your school should have to increase student performance, e.g. smaller class size.

"We are advising that the staff include everything that your students need to succeed, regardless of cost, such as small class sizes, increased teachers in various tenure areas, increased support services (Attendance teachers, School Social Workers, Psychologists, School Counselors, ESL teachers, reading and math teachers, etc.) supplies, technology, equipment, special programs, ways to improve school climate, i.e. everything you and your students need.

If for some reason the Community Engagement Committee does not concur with what you know is needed, teachers should still submit a list of what they say is needed to improve teaching and learning in their school to the Receiver, with a copy to me at BTF.

We will be collecting copies to present to NYSED, the Legislature, and media for possible use in court.

THEY SAY 'STUDENT GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT MUST IMPROVE'

WE SAY TO THEM, "FINE HERE IS WHAT IS REQUIRED TO IMPROVE STUDENT GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT. IF YOU DON'T PROVIDE THE NECESSITIES, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LACK OF PROGRESS – NOT THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS." (June 4, 2015 Memo)

Once that written list is compiled by the faculty, the faculty should vote in support of those needs.

There should also be a vote of the faculty on any plan submitted by the District. The receiver is not bound by the vote; however, we want it for the record.

We want to have a written document of what you know you need so that we can also present that to the parents at their meeting for your school. Hopefully, they will say, “Yes, we agree”.

We are preparing a Presidents Report to update you on negotiations and other important issues. It should be out next week.

Stay tuned.

PR:su