

President's Report

PHILIP RUMORE, PRESIDENT



**BUFFALO
TEACHERS
FEDERATION**

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www.BTFNY.org

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NEGOTIATIONS

Our next negotiations session is scheduled for Monday, July 28, 2014. We have advised the fact finder that we expect to make a formal fact finding presentation leading to a fact finder's report. Peter Applebee, Manager of Higher Education, Education Finance and Federal Programs for NYSUT, will be meeting with the BTF team prior to our session to review the District's budget and the contract proposals. Each team makes its presentation, after which, "rebuttals" and clarifications may be provided.

As per the June President's Report, we are appointing an Action Committee to organize and prepare for all eventualities, e.g. rallies, picketing, media, etc. if there is no acceptable contract proposal and of course, a contract proposal that is worthy of your consideration.

IN ORDER TO CONTACT YOU IMMEDIATELY, WE NEED YOUR PERSONAL EMAIL ADDRESS. We may need to contact you with an immediate update. Please take the time to update and provide your personal email using the following procedures:

- Go to www.btfny.org
- Click on "Links Tab"
- Click on "Update Your BTF Member Information Here"
- Fill Out Information on the "Update Form"
- Click "Submit Updated Information".

If you have difficulties, you can email your email address to sumhauer@btfny.org.

THE NEW BOARD MAJORITY

The Board's new majority has issued what they call "A Vision for Buffalo Public Education". To get our students out of "failing schools" it includes more Charter Schools, State takeovers of some schools, transferring students to suburban schools, Opportunity Scholarships (Vouchers) and increased funding for Charter Schools (less for our schools).

It also includes a "New Deal for Teachers". Included in the "New Deal" is movement away from a salary schedule to merit pay based upon student test scores, principal evaluations, peer evaluations, parent and student surveys, and increased pay for teachers who work in the toughest schools.

Also included in the "New Deal", are reduced health care benefits and a "major rewriting of the work rules, evaluations, seniority and hiring/termination portions of the contract". The complete document can be viewed by going to www.btfny.org/News&Alerts/"A Vision for Buffalo Public Education".

Hopefully, the new majority will soon realize that it is not the teachers and our contract (the same one that is in effect at schools with higher test scores) but rather the lack of services and support for students with problems few can imagine – absenteeism, poverty, standardized tests that not only take hundreds of hours away from instruction, inhibit creativity and critical thinking but also take the joy out of teaching and learning as well as, in many cases, the lack of parental support.

We look forward to continuing to work with the former majority and opening lines of communication with the new majority to find a common ground on what will really help teachers teach and students learn. Hopefully, the new majority will realize that is what we all seek. Stay Tuned.

SUMMER SCHOOL ISSUES

The expansion of summer school programs has resulted in problems that we are working with the District and Say Yes to correct. If you have concerns, call BTF.

ZEPHYR TEACHOUT & TIM WU PETITIONS

Thanks to you, the BTF has submitted close to 500 signatures to get Zephyr Teachout and Tim Wu on the ballot for Governor and Lieutenant Governor in the Democratic Primary. We are sure that the Governor will spend millions of dollars, if necessary, to invalidate signatures to prevent them from getting on the ballot.

As you may have read, the candidates for Governor and Lieutenant Governor run separately. In the past, a Governor was elected with a Lieutenant Governor with whom he was not running.

In addition, we believe that if this happens, the votes from other ballot lines where the candidates did not run together do not count towards the Governor's total numbers.

We believe that Zephyr Teachout will be in Buffalo. We will email you when the details are known.

THE NEW INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

I have worked with Donald A. Ogilvie, the new interim superintendent, previously. I found him to be intelligent, thoughtful and a person who seeks solutions to problems.

We look forward to working with him and his team.

UNEMPLOYMENT

If you believe that you might not have a position in September, you should apply for unemployment insurance. Please remember that temporary teachers have to be rehired each year by the Board. Some temporary teachers, in previous summers, have received a certified letter from the District that indicates in part, that based on the Board's budget, your evaluation and certification etc., it expects to be able to employ you next year. This letter is sometimes referred to as a "reasonable assurance letter".

In the past, this letter has been used by the District in an attempt to prevent temporary teachers from receiving unemployment benefits. If you received such a letter, fax a copy to BTF at 881-6678.

If you apply for unemployment compensation benefits, believe you are eligible, and are turned down, ask for a hearing and continue to report. List the BTF as your representative. Call us when you receive notice of a hearing date.

SUMMER REMINDER

WHEN SOMEONE ASKS YOU HOW YOU ARE ENJOYING YOUR "SUMMER VACATION", REMIND THEM THAT THE CHILDREN ARE ON "SUMMER VACATION"- TEACHERS ARE LAID OFF. NOT ENOUGH PEOPLE KNOW IT IS NOT A PAID VACATION FOR TEACHERS IN THE SUMMER, BUT RATHER TWO MONTHS WITHOUT PAY. LET US CONTINUE USING THE TERM SUMMER "LAY-OFF" AND MAYBE THEY WILL GET THE MESSAGE.