

President's Report

PHILIP RUMORE, PRESIDENT



BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION

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NEGOTIATIONS

As per yesterday's email, our next negotiating session with PERB and the District is scheduled for Wednesday, October 28. We will also be proceeding on a parallel track with our Improper Practice Charge against the District for bargaining in Bad Faith.

In response to questions from teachers:

Q. If public employees (teachers) are forced to go on strike, what happens?

A. The current contract is no longer in effect. Under what is called Triborough legislation, our current contract stays in effect until a new one is negotiated. If public employees (teachers) go on strike, the contract is no longer in effect.

As you know, each striking employee is fined two (2) days pay for each day they are out on strike.

Q. Teachers have said let's "work to rule". Can we do that?

A. That depends on what you mean by work to rule. Both our teachers and the District should follow the contract.

The Taylor Law definition of a "strike" is, among other things, "*any... concerted... slowdown.*" This definition has been broadly interpreted. A "strike" thus can include any concerted reduction of services normally rendered. Teachers who purposefully refused to participate in faculty meetings, field trips and parent-teacher conferences, or in other activities even where the activity is not required by the collective bargaining agreement, have been held to have engaged in an unlawful strike. Group resignations or refusals to accept overtime or extra duties would be considered an unlawful strike. PERB would consider it to be an unlawful strike where employees withheld voluntary services where there is a practice of performing them. (as per our attorney)

If someone is advising you to take any actions such as the above, they either don't know the facts or may be putting you, the BTF and others in jeopardy.

Yes, Buffalo teachers have gone on strike before. Yes, I went to jail the last time and have no fear of going again. However, my responsibility and that of the officers is to continue to make decisions that are in your best interest and to not make statements just for the sake of trying to look tough.

PERB has requested that we not engage in actions that will disrupt what they are attempting to accomplish while they are involved in our negotiations.

There will be plenty of time to take decisive actions. Enough said.

A.P.P.R.

We continue to hear that teachers are being told to increase their SLO/LMA targets. Do not be pressured into raising your SLO/LMA goals. You will then be penalized for your students not reaching their targets. If you are being pressured by your administrator, call BTF.

If your administrator wants to raise the targets, let them do so. They will then be responsible for your students not reaching the targets they set. Keep your documentation of your targets you have submitted.

Teachers who received an "Ineffective" composite score should appeal that score. See www.btfny.org the APPR tab for information on this and all APPR issues. If you do not see your concern addressed there, please email your concern/question to sumhauer@btfny.org and we will answer it or forward it to NYSUT for an answer.

Teachers who received an ineffective rating for the 2014-2015 school year should submit their appeal, based on the instructions, to the BTF by October 23, 2015.

The District is not amenable to extending the October 23, 2015 due date for SLO and LMA's. However, they have stated that they will address requests on a case by case basis. If you are unable to reasonably complete your SLO/LMA by October 23, 2015 submit an email

request to the administrator responsible for your evaluation, (Principal, Assistant Principal, Department head) and to the Office of Shared Accountability through the APPR-SLO@buffaloschools.org email address, stating the reasons for the request, i.e. roster has recently changed, haven't met with students yet, I have not been trained, have just returned from leave, etc.)

Remember, there is no new APPR. We are still operating under the previously negotiated APPR. The BTF and District will be seeking a waiver of the November deadline for completing a new APPR.

RECEIVERSHIP REMINDER

As the BTF and NYSUT work on legal challenges and legislative initiatives, we again ask that teachers in each building ensure that you have asked for everything you believe you and your students need e.g., small class sizes, more support services, materials, etc.

We also ask that you request a copy(s) of the School Intervention Plan that was submitted to the Superintendent and at a meeting of your BTF members, have a secret ballot vote on whether you support the plan.

Remember, your school's Intervention Plan is a recommendation. The Superintendent/Receiver has the final say as to what is submitted. We have requested copies of the plans that were submitted and will post them on our website so that you can determine if there were any changes.

The District has sent NYSED a list of changes to our contract. We have sent a letter to the District advising them that they have incorrectly interpreted the regulation. Once the regulations are clarified, we will be having a meeting with the Receivership schools.

OPT-OUT

The Council of Delegates unanimously passed a motion asking that Buffalo teachers Opt their own children out of the NYS tests. We will also be working with other state, local and national organizations. Please see www.btfny.org the Opt-out tab.

FRIEDRICHS

As you have heard, the United States Supreme Court is going to hear a case supported by the anti-union billionaires and hedge fund operators to attack what is called Agency Fee.

Agency Fee legislation ensures that all members of a union that benefit from representation, healthcare, job protection, salaries, etc. pay their fair share in dues i.e, are not free-loading on the backs of others. We will be providing more information on this and/or plans.

REWARDING INCOMPETENCE

Yes, the person who promoted and destructively forced the Common Core, Charter School and other anti-student and anti-teacher initiatives on us is now being considered for the position of U. S. Secretary of Education. What happens here is now exemplified on a national level.

NYSUT is urging all members to call the White House switchboard at (202)456-1414 as well as a special White House telephone line dedicated to public comments at (202)456-1111 to express their displeasure in John King's appointment.

While advocating that as well, I suggest that we also email, phone, etc. our U.S. Senators and Members of Congress. While the U.S. Senate will have the vote, we need to alert all Members of Congress of the harm that he did here and what is ahead for the country if he is named Secretary of Education. Here are the contacts.

Charles Schumer
United States Senator
Tel: (202) 224-6542
www.schumer.senate.gov/contact/email-chuck

Chris Collins
US Congressman, District 27
Tel: (202) 225-5265
chriscollins.house.gov/contact/email-me
(Enter Zip Code 14221-7380)

Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator
Tel: (202) 224-4451
www.gillibrand.senate.gov/contact/

John Kline, Chairman, US House of Representatives
Education and the Workforce Committee
Tel: (202) 225-2271
(Enter Zip Code 55337-2513)

Brian Higgins
US Congressman, District 26
Tel: (202) 225-3306
higgins.house.gov/contact
(Enter Zip Code 14210-1433)

Lamar Alexander, Chairman, US Senate
Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee
Tel: (202) 224-4944
www.alexander.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/email
(Enter Zip Code 37203-1072)

DIANE RAVITCH BTF FRIEND OF EDUCATION

Dr. Diane Ravitch has agreed to come to Buffalo to accept our "Friend of Education" Award. This is a huge honor for us as she makes very few personal appearances. She is scheduled to be here on November 17th. Details will follow as plans are formalized.