

President's Report



PHILIP RUMORE, PRESIDENT

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EMAIL/FACEBOOK

We continue to have teachers say “I didn’t know that.”, although the information was emailed and posted on our website.

You are receiving this in hard copy because many have requested it.

While we still need your personal email address for quick communications, we are again setting up a Facebook Group.

We tried it about a year or so ago; however, security and hacking were problems that have now been addressed.

To stay up to date on the latest BTF news, join our new Facebook group. Go to www.facebook.com or open the Facebook app on your device. In the “Search Facebook” toolbar type in “Buffalo Teachers Federation – Official Group”. Depending on your app, you may need to search in the group category. Click on the BTF group to open it and click “Join”. We will confirm with our membership records that you are a member and then accept you into the group. Please also invite other teachers to join as well.

We are also putting finishing touches on our new improved website and will link the website to Facebook.

NEGOTIATIONS

The current board majority is apparently seeking to make changes to the District’s negotiating team. As you know, the Fact-Finder’s Report was rejected. In addition to not liking the Fact-Finder recommending significant salary increases, e.g. MS+30 max going to \$96,761.00, they also did not like the lack of having 15% healthcare payment for active and retired teachers, did not like the lack of a longer day and school year. Actually, they did not like most of the report that was done by an impartial PERB-appointed Fact-Finder.

We consider the Fact-Finder’s report our starting point in negotiations.

Yes, we couldn’t start serious negotiations until the final decision in our step case in March 2013 but no, that does not mean that we will accept a contract that is an insult to Buffalo teachers.

Be assured that although some Board members really want to see the new contract settled fairly, others who say they want a settlement want it settled by gutting the contract.

Remember the latest offer to us from the District was:

- Salary increases of:
 - 2010-2011 1%
 - 2011-2012 1.25%
 - 2012-2013 1.5%
 - 2013-2014 ?
- 15% payment towards healthcare by active teachers.
- 15% payment towards healthcare by retired teachers.
- Workers compensation eligibility decreased from 5 years to 3 years for assaults.
- Increased healthcare copays.
- No retroactive pay for retirees.
- Six (6) hours fifty (50) minutes day to seven (7) hours thirty (30) minutes.
- Two (2) extra days.
- Medicare Advantage for retirees.

As this was being written, we have been informed that the District is “in the process of discussing the retention of new outside Counsel” They have canceled the April 27th and May 5th negotiating sessions. In addition, they will not be resuming negotiations until after the end of May.

In light of these developments, we will be taking the following actions:

- We will file an improper practice charge with PERB and seek the assignment of a PERB-appointed “Conciliator”
- We will have a mass protest rally before the next Board meeting on Wednesday, April 29th at BAVPA (450 Masten Ave., Buffalo 14209).
- We will begin picketing Board members’ homes
- We will be placing advertisements in local papers (not *The Buffalo News*)

In addition, my request for the following was passed unanimously by the BTF Executive Committee and Council of Delegates:

MOVED: that BTF President Philip Rumore is authorized to prepare for any and all possible actions by teachers should a new contract not be in place by June 10, 2015 and that he is authorized to recommend any and all appropriate actions at the June 11, 2015 Executive Committee and Council of Delegates meeting.

Your Delegate can provide you with more information on this motion.

Now, more than ever, we must remain united. Yes, it will be a battle, but with your continued solidarity and support, we will prevail.

APPR

In response to questions, yes, major new APPR battles begin. As you have read, we are required to negotiate a new APPR.

The consequence of receiving “Ineffective” or even “Developing” are severe (termination) but as troubling are the new requirements to obtain tenure and terminate teachers, e.g.

- Student Standardized Test scores as much as 50% of the APPR.
- Evaluation by Principal and an Independent evaluator from another district school, another school district or a trained educator not from a school district.
- An “Ineffective” rating on student performance requires that “Developing” be the highest rating obtainable.
- Goals set by SED.
- Two (2) consecutive “Ineffective”(s) can be grounds for dismissal.
- Three (3) consecutive “Ineffective”(s), the District must pursue 3020A (dismissal) charges.
- Four (4) years to obtain tenure.
- Teacher must receive an “Effective” or “Highly Effective” rating 3 of the 4 years of the probationary period to receive tenure.
- No tenure if teacher receives an “Ineffective” in the 4th year of probationary period.
- Score not based upon 100 points but by a “rubric” developed by NYSED.

There is more that is as bad.

This will obviously mean that we must negotiate an APPR that can’t be misused and that incorporates student attendance, English language learners, students with disabilities, poverty, etc.

The battles will be tougher; however, as in the past, we will prevail.

As of now, we will work with legislators to change some of the anti-teacher/anti-school aspects of the law and work with our new Regent and her colleagues to ensure that the regulations developed by NYSED are fair and appropriate.

BUFFALO NEWS BOYCOTT

As you (if we have your email address!) know, we are asking all Buffalo teachers to stop their subscriptions to *The Buffalo News* for the month of May. Please see BTF website www.btfny.org, News & Alerts, 04/16/15. We need everyone, their family and friends to stop their subscriptions for the month to send a message. If that doesn’t get their attention, we will then not only boycott the *News* but its advertisers.

While some have expressed concerns relating to some stories, remember quite often the reporters are following orders. As for the vicious, ill-informed “editorial” board, it doesn’t get much worse. We have asked and received support from colleagues in other districts and are reaching out to other organizations.

The phone number to cancel is 842-1111. You can also call 849-6027 to register your complaints.

As per the email (if we have your email address! No – I’m not going to stop) and website, please email sumhauer@btfny.org to advise us that you have canceled your subscription. So far you have been great. Let’s keep it up.

OPT/OUT OUTRAGEOUS BEHAVIORS

We were successful in working with Board members to end “sit and stare” where students had to sit and stare at their desks if they were “opted-out” of the state tests.

We have heard that some administrators were doing such things as having students take another test, promising events for students who took the tests, asking “Do you really not want to take the test”, etc.

Please email me at sumhauer@btfny.org with any similar outrages – We will take immediate action.

Stay tuned.