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BTF RELEASES DISTURBING DISRUPTIVE STUDENT BEHAVIOR SURVEY

The responses of one thousand, two hundred and seventeen (1,217) Buffalo Teachers to a BTF online survey relating to disruptive student behavior/discipline in the Buffalo Public Schools is a cause for great concern.

The complete survey can be found at www.btfny.org/press/disruptive_behavior_results_2018.pdf

Teachers from sixty-five of the sixty-nine schools and twelve “other sites” responded.

The questions and responses were:

- **Disruptive Student Behavior in my school is:**

8.6 % Dealt with quickly and appropriately

37.4 % Dealt with inconsistently and as such is problematic leading to continued disruptive student behavior and unacceptable learning conditions.

22.9% Is not dealt with appropriately leading to increased disruptive student behavior and unacceptable learning conditions.

17.5% Is almost out of control leading to increased disruptive student behavior and unacceptable learning conditions.

13.6% Out of control

Note: Only **8.6%** of the respondents report that disruptive student behavior is “Dealt with quickly and appropriately”.

31.1% of the respondents report that disruptive student behavior “Is almost out of control leading to increased disruptive student behavior and unacceptable learning conditions” and disruptive student behavior is “Out of Control”.

- **I Believe That Discipline and Suspensions Are Under Reported in My School.**

80.9% of the respondents **agree**.

19.1% of the respondents disagree.

- **An Administrator Discusses How a Student's Behavior Can Be Expected to Improve Before Returning The Student to the Teacher's Class.**

23.4% of the respondents reported **agreed**.

76.6% of the respondents disagreed.

The number of respondents and very troubling teacher statements from each school are listed separately.

The survey was done over a one month period.

“Everyone should be shocked and concerned with the results and teacher statements in this survey.

We must work together to ensure that our students’ learning environment and safety are not compromised by disruptive student behaviors, while also working with the disruptive students to find the cause of and how to correct the disruptive behaviors.

What we are seeing is a directive from the District to lower the suspension rates. This directive is being implemented by some administrators not reporting suspensions, not suspending students for serious and disruptive acts, and insufficient support personnel assigned to schools to determine and correct the source of the disruptive student behaviors.

The issue of disruptive student behavior as it impacts on student learning and school safety has no simple answer.

Everyone wants to reduce suspensions; however, just sending a student back to class after the student has started a fight, threatened to hurt a student, bullied a student, cursed at the teacher, hit the teacher, continued to disrupt the class, etc., sends the message to the other students that the behavior is acceptable. This invariably leads to other students adopting the disruptive behavior and most feeling unsafe. Ultimately, someone gets hurt – usually a student.

On the other hand, in many cases (not for me with my mother or probably for most) just suspending a student will not ameliorate the disruptive behavior. We need the resources and support personnel (including City, Count and State resources) to determine the cause and/or how to correct the disruptive student behavior.

In short, while we must continue to find ways to determine the causes of and ways to correct disruptive student behavior, we can not allow it to go unaddressed and uncorrected to the detriment of other students' education and safety." stated Phil Rumore, BTF President.

Note: A program called Restorative Justice/Practice has apparently been implemented in other school districts and has apparently been found to lessen disruptive student behavior and the suspension rate in some schools.

It has begun to be implemented in the Buffalo Public Schools; however, teachers are concerned that there is insufficient training, insufficient principal support and insufficient time in the day to implement it with fidelity. It is also but a small part of ensuring a decrease in disruptive student behavior and not a solution to the more serious acts of disruptive student behavior.

Teachers believe it should first be implemented in a limited number of schools to ensure proper training and implementation.

However, this program is just one part of a comprehensive action plan needed to reduce the incidents of disruptive student behavior.

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If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Philip Rumore at Buffalo Teachers Federation or email at sumhauer@btfny.org.