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BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION CALLS FOR SCHOOL REOPENING PLANS DELAY

The BTF today called for school districts to have more time in which to submit reopening plans by applying for an extension for submission of their reopening plans.

“We are considering educational issues and plans that, if not done correctly, will result in the loss of lives and permanent physical harm to students, parents, school staff and the community, as well as the deadly spread of the COVID-19 virus.”, stated Phil Rumore, President of the BTF.

The BTF called for specifics of plans, i.e. how and when they will be done.

For example:

- How and how often are schools going to be sanitized and made safe, not just cleaned, e.g.:
 - Classrooms where food is eaten.
 - Student bathrooms, most of which have no warm water.
 - If a student/adult sneezes, coughs, etc.
 - Many classrooms have windows that do not open.
- What are the exact schedules for instruction?
- How will students and staff be assured that each student’s temperature is taken each day?
- What will be done if a student purposely takes off their mask?
- How will students who need to use the bathroom be assisted/monitored?
- What are the procedures when a student/adult contracts the virus?
- Will there be a nurse in all buildings at all times? What if one is not?
- How will the plans be monitored and adjusted?
- How will art, music and physical education classes be conducted? We can’t have teachers going from room to room exposing themselves and others to possible infections.
- How is safety ensured when students take their masks off to eat?

The curriculum for all grades/subjects must be revised for distance learning.

Teaching all students in a classroom is not the same as distance learning.

We must also be prepared for the unfortunate need for a complete pause in any in-school learning.

The BTF also called for:

- The ability of parents and staff to choose virtual learning to ensure their children's or their safety.
- The State and agencies to consider the zip codes of students/adults in making reopening decisions as it is known that some communities were unfairly impacted more than others.

The BTF also took issue with the school district's "reopening" actions, e.g.

- The reopening committees only met 6 times for about an hour or hour and a half.
- Meeting entailed being told in general on what others were working.

"As I have said previously, if you make a decision that results in the death or serious physical harm to someone, you should have to explain that decision to that person's family.

You can make up for lost education; however, you can't bring someone back to life.", Rumore concluded.