

# PROVOCATOR

February 2020

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION VOLUME 50/NUMBER 3

DEDICATION  
SOLIDARITY  
PROFESSIONALISM  
PRIDE  
SECOND TO NONE



## BTF Demands Mandatory Intervention Services for Disruptive/Suspended Students

Mandatory intervention services for suspended students is being demanded by the Buffalo Teachers Federation after a teacher survey on school safety and learning conditions was deemed “disturbing.”

A resolution calling for the services was unanimously approved by the BTF Council of Delegates. It calls for additional hiring of pupil personnel so caseloads do not exceed 100:1.

In a January 17 press conference, BTF President Phil Rumore said intervention services are needed to address behavioral issues and prevent student suspensions.

He said a survey of teachers indicated immediate action is necessary.

“The very disturbing response from hundreds of teachers (749), from 61 of the 76 schools/sites over a short period of time, is an urgent call for immediate action by the Superintendent and Board of Education to ensure that suspended students are provided with intervention services to resolve and correct the issues that gave rise to the suspension”, stated Rumore.

The survey, which questioned teachers on school climate, student behavior, and discipline, indicated that improvement is needed in all areas.

Only 17% of respondents said that student discipline problems are dealt with quickly and appropriately, while 83% said disruptive student behavior is leading to unacceptable learning conditions for the

students seeking to learn.

Phil said that there is “apparently a directive from the District to lower the suspension rates”. As a result, many administrators are returning disruptive students to the classroom or fail to report suspensions.

“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”, Rumore said.

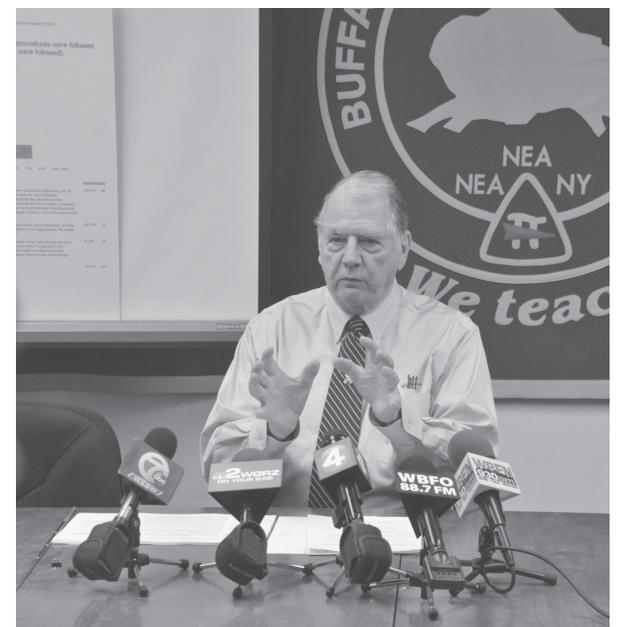
He said some school districts are using Restorative Justice/Practices to defuse disruptive student behavior and the program is beginning to be implemented in some Buffalo Public Schools. However, teachers are concerned there is insufficient training, insufficient principal support and insufficient time in the day to implement it with fidelity.

“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 and

we must begin in the early grades”, Rumore said.

“The Superintendent and Board of Education must immediately approve and implement a policy requiring that suspended students receive the intervention services of trained pupil personnel, e.g. school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, school attendance teachers, etc. and community/government partners.

**(The survey responses can be found at [www.btfny.org/pressrelease/2020/dis\\_survey\\_responses.pdf](http://www.btfny.org/pressrelease/2020/dis_survey_responses.pdf).)**



ABOVE: With cameras rolling, BTF President Phil Rumore stresses the need for intervention services.

## BTF Resolution Seeks Intervention Services

In reference to the issues raised by the teacher survey, the BTF Executive Committee and Council of Delegates (elected school representatives), unanimously passed the following resolution:

**WHEREAS**, Buffalo teachers are seeing a significant increase in student behaviors that are detrimental to student learning and school safety; and

**WHEREAS**, Suspension alone, in most cases, does not address the underlying cause of the detrimental student behavior; and

**WHEREAS**, The District, in order to reduce suspensions, must not focus on the number of suspensions, it must focus on the behavior(s) that resulted in each suspension; and,

**WHEREAS**, Buffalo teachers, while being very concerned about the student behavior that is detrimental to student learning and school safety, also believe that to end said student

behavior, suspensions must require District-provided intervention(s); and

**WHEREAS**, Said intervention(s) involves the resources of trained pupil personnel, e.g. school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, school attendance teachers, etc. and community/government partners; and

**WHEREAS**, The caseload of trained pupil personnel employees is, instead of 100:1, often 800:1 or more; and

**WHEREAS**, It is the District’s responsibility to ensure that suspension necessarily entails intervention(s).

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, That the Buffalo School Board/District will ensure that every student suspension requires the student to receive the intervention services of school counselors, school social workers, school

attendance teachers, school psychologists and/or other trained providers to work with that student, and if necessary, his/her family, so that the behavior that led to the suspension ends, and the student and other students can succeed; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the Board of Education, to ensure that the required intervention services are provided to suspended students, establish caseloads for the above named District providers of no more than 100:1; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That the Board/School District will continue and expand its outreach to city, state and local agencies that can provide said intervention services; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That henceforth the designation “Suspension/District intervention(s)” will be used and implemented.



## “WE CAN NOT AND WILL NOT BE SILENT”

Where, as our recent survey of teachers shows:

- 83.00% of the teachers responded that disruptive student behavior is leading to unacceptable learning conditions for the students seeking to learn.
- 21.96% 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 Underreported in my school
  - o 71.79% of the respondents agree.
- 69.00% Reported that an Administrator does not discuss, as required by our contract, how a student’s behavior can be expected to improve before returning the student to the teacher’s class.

## “WE CAN NOT AND WILL NOT BE SILENT”

We must 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 how to correct the disruptive behavior and we must begin in the early grades.

When a student is suspended, the District must be required to provide the intervention services of trained pupil personnel, e.g. school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, attendance teachers, etc. and community/government partners.

Just sending a student home who has committed an act of violence, threatened a student or the teacher, etc. only to have that student returned, does nothing to correct the behavior and sends the wrong message to the rest of the students.

The district must be required to provide an intervention.

And yes, caseloads of as many as 800/1, being required to do extracurricular tasks, walk the halls with a walkie-talkie, complete paperwork for an administrator, etc. must end. Caseloads of our school counselors, school social workers, psychologists, attendance teachers etc. needs to be lowered to 100/1 at most.

We will be working on all levels - local, state, and federal to ensure that districts are required to provide intervention to suspended students and that there are penalties for districts who do not.

From now on when someone complains about or covers up suspensions, the response must be “Do you mean that you don’t want to work with the students and if necessary their families to help the students so that the detrimental behavior no longer occurs?”

## “WE CAN NOT AND WILL NOT BE SILENT”

When our students were denied admission to the Erie County Interscholastic Conference (ECIC), we threatened legal action, issued press statements, held a solidarity day, passed a motion (unanimously) to continue to organize and prepare for legal action on behalf of any of our teams/organizations that have faced similar discrimination.

## “WE CAN NOT AND WILL NOT BE SILENT NOT NOW, NOT EVER”

## BTF at a Glance

### BTF President

Philip Rumore

### BTF Vice President

Rebecca Pordum

### BTF Treasurer

Joseph Montante

### BTF Secretary

Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan



### BTF Executive Committee Members

#### Pre-K-6

Rachel Binda-Lis, April Hall,  
Sophia Howard-Johnson,  
Trisha Rosokoff, Janine Schuster,  
Ruyvette Townsend

#### 7-12

Dennis Brancato, Patrick Foster,  
Lynn Garcia, Melissa Kenney,  
M. Sue Raichilson, Chris Salamone,  
Eve Shippens-Nieves

#### K-12

Susan Baker, Amy Flynn,  
Nicole Herkey, Ellen Malone,  
Mark Mecca, Gregory Sawicki,  
Elizabeth Spiro-Carman

#### At Large

Tom Anthony, Marc Bruno,  
Mike Mecca

### BTF Headquarters Staff

Philip Rumore, *President*  
Joseph Montante, *Presidential Assistant*  
Rebecca Pordum, *Presidential Assistant*  
Tim Connick, *NYSUT Counsel*  
Jenna Burke, *NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist*  
Matthew Kibler, *NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist*  
Robert Mueller, *NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist*

Visit Our Updated Website  
[www.btfny.org](http://www.btfny.org)

## PROVOCATOR

### BTF Provocator Staff

Joseph Montante, *managing editor, photo editor*  
Chris Salamone, *editor*

The **Provocator** is the official publication of the Buffalo Teachers Federation. It will be published five times during the 2019-2020 school year as a service to BTF members and interested parties in the community. Subscription price is included in BTF dues.

**Postmaster**, send address changes to:  
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February 2020  
Volume 50, No. 3  
Circulation 4400

# Letters to the Editor

## BTF Supports EPIC with Purchase of Ad

Thank you. On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, and the families that we serve at EPIC-Every Person Influences Children, please accept our gratitude to the Buffalo Teachers Federation support of EPIC's 2019 Annual Heroes Reception, with the purchase of the full advertisement page.

EPIC supports new families, families facing challenges and parenting teens through parenting classes and workshops. We increase family engagement in education by connecting parents and teachers, encouraging early literacy and building parents' capacity to be actively involved in their children's education. Our youth services focus on developing self-confidence and healthy relationships for middle and high school students. Through our professional development programs, we train teachers and agency staffs strategies critical to family engagement.

Because of your donation, we can help families, schools and communities raise children to become responsible and successful adults by encouraging literacy, supporting youth and helping families through all the challenges (and joys) of parenting.

For more information about our programs and successes, please visit our website at [www.epicforchildren.org](http://www.epicforchildren.org). Again, thank you for your generosity. Sincerely,  
Tara N. Burgess, Executive Dir.

## BTF Supports BPO Kids Concerts

It was an absolute pleasure to visit you all at your office last week.

I immediately felt so welcome and I appreciate the time you took to discuss the BTF and the BPO with me. I think it is truly incredible that you offer such a great opportunity to your teachers, parents, and students.

This program embraces the importance of a musical, cultural, collective experience in our lives. I look forward to seeing BTF members enjoying our BPO Kids Concerts.

Thank you for your continued support of our Orchestra and great city!

Warm appreciation,  
Claire Saunders, Coordinator Group Sales & Community Engagement

## YMCA Thanks BTF

Thank you for your commitment to helping others learn, grow, and thrive through your support of the Y's 2019 Annual Campaign. Please enjoy this YMCA desk calendar as it highlights the many people who benefit from the YMCA.

Your support helps the Y to transform people's lives by providing access to healthy activities, teaching new skills, inspiring strong character values, enriching family relationships and so much more.

The impact of the Y's charitable mission to serve all could not extend as far as it does without you. Thank you again for being a generous supporter.

Sincerely,  
Danielle Roberts, Executive Dir.

## BTF Donates to CEJ

Thank you for your great generosity! We, at CEJ Buffalo (Coalition for Economic Justice), greatly appreciate the Buffalo Teachers Federation donation of \$1,500, and your continued support. Your contribution helps to further our mission through our campaign work, including Buffalo Transit Riders United (BTRU), the Poor People's Campaign, and our work with labor, such as Wendt and New Era.

Your support is invaluable to us, thank you again! If you have specific questions about the work we are doing, please reach out to me at [holly@cejbuffalo.org](mailto:holly@cejbuffalo.org) or by phone, 716.427.3625.

In solidarity and with deep gratitude.  
Holly Nowak, Executive Dir.

## Substitutes United Thanks BTF for Aid

On behalf of the Hicks family and Substitutes United of Buffalo, we wish to extend our heartfelt thank you for all your help and support during this tough time, the passing of Stephen Hicks.

You were a true mentor to him and we look forward to continuing that relationship. We appreciate all you have done. It was very considerate of you and we appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Please stay well and have a happy, healthy New Year.

Sincerely,  
Shirley Sapp-Burgess  
Acting President  
Substitutes United of Buffalo

## Chicago Teachers Glad for BTF Strike Support

Thank you so much for the support during our recent 11-day strike!

While the issues of this strike concerned the Chicago Public Schools, this became a fight for so much more – for the schools our children deserve, for the power of organized labor and for a fairer and more just society.

On November 15, Chicago Teachers Union members voted to accept the tentative agreement with an 81 percent yes. This contract is a powerful advance for our city and our movement for real equity and educational justice for our school communities and the children we serve.

On behalf of the 25,000 red-wearing members of CTU who marched in rallies, stood on strike lines and carried picket signs, I wish you solidarity, and again, my heartfelt thanks!

In Unity,  
Jesse Sharkey, President

## BTF Donates to Explore & More Annual Appeal

On behalf of Explore & More – The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Children's Museum, I want to extend a heart-felt thank you for your generous support! The Museum is exceedingly grateful for both your assistance and for embracing our mission to provide the children of Western New York with a world-class museum offering hands-on educational experiences that inspire creativity, curiosity and imagination.

Thank you for your recent contribution of \$200 to our 2019 Annual Appeal. As a member of the Explore & More family, you understand how important it is for kids to learn through play. Your gift is already unlocking the limitless potential of all children through our many play-based learning activities.

Through the generosity of donors like you, Explore & More has been able to grow our operations each year. This continued growth has readied us to serve over 200,000 visitors annually as we settle into our new home at Canalside on Buffalo's Waterfront. Through your gift, you are helping to revitalize our region for children and families.

Thank you for believing in the importance of play and informal learning experiences and for investing in our community's greatest asset, our children.

Warmly,  
Michelle Urbanczyk  
Chief Executive Officer

## BTF to Host March 24 Retirement Workshop

A workshop for teachers considering retirement in the near future will be conducted Tuesday, March 24 by the Buffalo Teachers Federation.

The event will begin at 7 PM at Salvatore's Italian Gardens, located at 6461 Transit Road in Depew. Refreshments will be served.

After a few opening remarks from BTF President Philip Rumore, a representative from the New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS) will explain the various options for receiving your benefit. The presentation will include sample calculations of benefits, the Post Retirement Death Benefit, and penalties for retiring early.

When that portion of the program is finished, the NYSUT Labor Relations Specialists assigned to the BTF will make a presentation about the District benefits available to Buffalo teachers. This includes health care, the Early Retirement Incentive, payout for unused sick days, and a bonus payment for early notification of retirement.

The last part of the program will focus on the Supplemental Benefit Fund and options for picking up COBRA coverage after you retire.

If interested in attending, look for a posting in your building on the BTF bulletin board. Your Delegate Chair should have registration forms. You may also call the BTF office at 881-5400 for more information.

## BTF Scholarships Available

BTF Scholarships, some earmarked specifically for the children of Buffalo teachers, are being offered by The Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo.

The Foundation will be administering the scholarships of the BTF for the 2020-21 academic year in the spring.

Students who currently are high school seniors or are already enrolled in an accredited program are encouraged to apply.

Applications are accepted from students all over Western New York and some money is allocated specifically for the children of Buffalo Teachers. Awards range from \$1000-\$6000.

The application process opened on January 1st and closes May 1st.

To apply, visit [www.cfgb.org](http://www.cfgb.org) and click on the 'For Scholarships' tab. You also may call the CFGB at 852-2857.

## Hundreds Brave Bad Weather for Women's March

Hundreds of Western New Yorkers braved the frigid temperatures and blowing snow January 20 to attend the Women's March in downtown Buffalo.

The Fourth Annual Women's March, part of a national movement, highlights the role of women in the fight for equality and justice for all. The March was organized by the Western New York Peace Center.

The BTF, a supporter of the event, provided free bus tokens to Buffalo Public School students who wanted to attend the event.

BTF President Phil Rumore and Vice President Becky Pordum and dozens of teachers walked with the students.

Despite the cold outside City Hall on Niagara Square, several speakers addressed the crowd and encouraged participants to fight for civil rights for everyone on the planet.

Among the speakers were: Victoria Ross, executive director of the WNY Peace Center; Nadia Shahram, an Iranian American attorney; and Tanvier Peart of Buffalo League Young Professionals. Songs were led by the Western New York Resistance Revival Chorus and community activist Patricia Bozeman, who received an award Sunday during the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration in Kleinhans Music Hall.



1. BTF Vice President Becky Pordum, left, and President Phil Rumore, right, meet with students from School 6 at the March.

2. On snow-covered sidewalks in front of City Hall, a large crowd gathers to hear the speakers.

3. Liz Spiro-Carman, an Art teacher at School 6, helped to promote the event and encouraged students to attend.

## Transfer Letters Due March 23

If you are planning to move to another school next year, or just want to find out what openings are available, the deadline for transfer letters is March 23.

Transfer letters must be sent to Ms. Jamie Warren, Associate Superintendent for Human Resources; Buffalo Board of Education; 65 Niagara Square; City Hall Room 719; Buffalo, New York 14202.

As per Article XIV of the Contract (pages 30-31), a teacher can apply for a voluntary transfer for the next school year by writing a letter to the Human Resources Department by March 23.

In your letter, you should identify what and where you currently teach and that you want to be advised of all available openings in your tenure area. There is a sample letter on the BTF website under BTF Forms.

If you do not want your principal to know about the request, you can ask that your letter be kept confidential.

Once your letter has been received, your supervisor will contact you sometime during the summer and inform you of the available positions. You will then have four days to decide whether you want to accept a new position or remain at your current school.

## Reimbursement for Rx Co-Pays Available

Did you know that you can receive a reimbursement for prescriptions you and your dependents had filled in 2019?

The Supplemental Benefit Fund will pay \$2 for every prescription filled for you and each eligible family member, up to \$100 per person.

You must obtain a computer-generated prescription roster from your pharmacist and submit it along with a completed Rx Co-Pay Claim Form to: SBF, c/o BTF, 271 Porter Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14201.

The Rx Co-Pay Claim Form is available from your building delegate, the SBF Office, or our website, [www.btfny.org](http://www.btfny.org), under the forms tab.

The deadline for submitting the forms is 5 PM Friday, March 6.



## Teacher Salary Is Based on 202 Days

One of the least understood but most important aspects of the salary we earn as teachers is the paycheck structure. Most teachers know their salary and know they receive a 5-day check on the second Friday after school starts, followed by a full check every two weeks for 21 pay dates thereafter.

Doing the math, our checks are spread over 43 weeks or 215 weekdays. Our Contract says we will work for a total of 188 days but many issues involving pay are based on a formula using 1/200. So are we paid for 188, 200, 215 days or some other number? The definitive answer is none of the above. It's 202.

Each year, the Director of Personnel, Wage, and Salary Administration (currently Richard Thompson) issues a calendar with pay warrant dates and a listing of which are the 202 paid days of service. This school year, that includes the 188 work days plus the following holidays: Labor Day, Columbus Day, Election Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day plus Friday, Christmas Eve and Day, New Year's Day, MLK Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, and Memorial Day. Note that prior to the 2016 Contract, we were paid for 200 days. However, when two days were added to the teacher schedule, the number of "service days" increased to 202.

While we are paid for the 202 days listed above, our pay is spread over 215 days. The additional 13 days are the rest of Winter Solstice Break, the rest of the Mid-Winter recess, and the rest of Spring Break. This arrangement makes it easier for teachers to plan and provides regular paychecks during the course of the school year. The fact that there were 200 paid days for so long explains why overage pay, termination compensation, and additional days of four (4) hours or more are paid at the rate of 1/200 of a teacher's salary (Article VIII, B (2)). This did NOT change in the 2016 Contract and that works to the benefit of teachers.

But the 202 days of paid service has many more implications than termination compensation or overage pay. In order for a teacher to move up a salary step, (s)he must have 160 days of paid service in a school year or a combination of school years (Article XXV, E (4) (a)).

In order for a temporary teacher to be provided health insurance over the summer, that teacher must have been employed a minimum of 100 days in the school year and still be on the payroll at the end of the school year (Article XXVI (2), A (9)).

In both of the above instances, these are paid days out of the total of 202, not school days. Thus, the fact that there are now 202 service days may, in some instances, be beneficial to teachers.

Furthermore, when the District reports service credit to the Teachers' Retirement System, they are reporting paid days. A full year of service is defined as 170 days with NYSTRS but that is paid service days, not school days. So the 202 days could make a big difference in the service credit reported for teachers, especially those who do not work a full year.

In general, the 202 days of paid service works to the advantage of teachers. Since many aspects of compensation call for an exact number of days, the paid days of service usually help teachers achieve that minimum threshold faster. In some cases, that difference could be significant!

## NYSUT/AFT/NEA/BTF Dues for 2019

It's that time of year when everyone is gathering information to prepare their tax returns. Remember, if you file an itemized tax return, Union dues withheld from your paycheck may be tax deductible. Please check with your tax professional as new Federal tax laws are in effect.

The total dues for full time employees are \$883.60.

This includes \$574.34 for the period January-June (\$44.18 x 13 checks) and \$309.26 for September-December (\$44.18 x 7 checks).

For part time employees, the total dues are \$441.80.

This includes \$287.17 for January-June (\$22.09 x 13 checks) and \$154.63 for September-December (\$22.09 x 7 checks).

Adult Learning Center dues totaled \$408.76. This includes \$287.17 for January-June (\$22.09 x 13 checks) and \$121.59 for September-December (\$17.37 x 7 checks).

### Nadia Shahram, Esq. An Attorney With Purpose

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- Suzanna C.G.

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## BTF Prevails in Sixth Class Arbitration

A decision from PERB arbitrator Marvin Johnson affirmed the BTF's position that academic teachers working in grades 7-12 "shall be assigned no more than five (5) forty-five (45) minute teaching periods per day."

This language can be found in Article X, A of the Contract.

In this grievance, a teacher was "asked" to teach a 6th class in the 2015-16 school year by the assistant principal. The teacher, believing compensation was automatic, agreed and this continued for about six months until another educator was brought in to teach the class.

The District contended that the teacher "volunteered" to teach the extra class and that as a result, would not receive extra compensation. A grievance was filed (which the District claimed was untimely) and the battle began. The issue of timeliness was overruled.

Ultimately, the case wound up in front of Arbitrator Johnson and the decision was issued that the District must pay the teacher for the extra class. This is not the first time such a decision has been issued, but the fact is, the District continues to assign certain teachers a sixth class and payment for this class is not automatic. In fact, our Contract does not address payment at

all!

Labor Relations Specialist Jenna Burke contended that the Grievant must be "made whole" by receiving 20% of his salary for the portion of the school year he taught a sixth class.

In this case, CTE Director Rob Harris testified that "an individual agreement between a principal and a teacher to teach a sixth class was outside of the CBA." Accordingly, Arbitrator Johnson ruled that "...the District violated the Contract when it entered into an agreement with the Grievant allowing him to teach six classes."

So why is this important? The lesson here is that **neither a principal nor a director can promise you extra payment for teaching an additional class.**

This has been happening in various subject areas both this school year and last (including math and science). The upshot is that you should not agree to teach an extra class. If you are assigned an extra class by your administration, you need to contact your LRS and file a grievance.

A Federation grievance was filed this year (and last year) on the matter. And while the District has agreed to pay the affected teachers for the extra class, the larger issue is that they should not be assigning an extra class to anyone!

## Did You Know...

That upon the request of the teachers, the BTF Building Committee may arrange for the installation of vending machines for staff use only?

The installation, operation, control, and maintenance of the machines shall be the responsibility of the teachers in that building subject to reasonable safety precautions.

All proceeds from these machines shall be used in such manner as the teachers in that building shall determine.

This can be found in Article XI, I of the Contract.



## Buffalo's First African American Teacher Remembered

Her name was Ida Dora Fairbush and she truly was a pioneer. She was born on March 15, 1869 and died on September 20, 1945. Between those two dates, she lived life as a daughter, sister, student scholar, educator, and community builder. In spite of significant contributions to her community, Ida's story is largely unknown. Her history, like those of countless other Black women in this country, has not been fully documented in local history texts,

educational curriculum, or popular literature.

However, a new publication written by Barbara Seals Nevergold, Ph.D. seeks to change that. Dr. Seals Nevergold was the president of the Buffalo Board of Education before deciding not to run for re-election in 2019. The booklet, titled Ida D. Fairbush, was printed with the support of the Buffalo Teachers Federation. A copy of the publication will soon

be sent to every library in the BPS system. A great deal of research went into the publication and teachers and students are encouraged to have a look.

The BTF has endowed a scholarship for Buffalo high school students in Ms. Fairbush's name. The Ida Dora Fairbush Memorial Scholarship of \$1000 will be presented for the first time in June 2020.



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# Don't Shortchange New York State: Be Counted! Fill Out the Census

Every 10 years, the US Constitution requires Congress to count every person living in the United States.

This count, known as the Census, includes all residents, non-citizens and children.

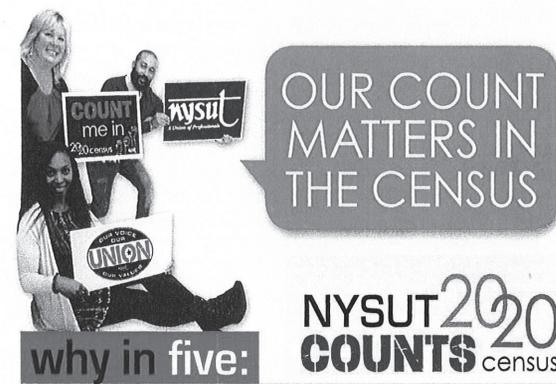
Information from the Census is used to distribute more than \$700 billion in federal funds for programs such as Medicaid, Title 1, school lunches, special education, housing assistance, and many others.

In addition, New York State's congressional districts and State Senate and Assembly districts will be redrawn in 2021 based on Census data. Experts, using population trend projections, predict New York could lose one, possibly two, congressional seats.

For the first time, people will be able to fill out the Census survey online, by telephone, or by mail. The Census Bureau will begin sending mail to all residents in the middle of March and the first day to complete the Census online is March 12. In the following weeks, the Bureau will send reminders to households that have not responded.

As the response rate increases, the state's share of federal funding gets larger.

Children, non-English speakers, immigrants, and those without access to the internet are at higher risk of being undercounted. This is due to fear and distrust of government, concerns about privacy and security, and apathy.



why in five:

- 1 Don't let New York get shortchanged.**  
We need every single adult and child in NYS to be counted.
- 2 New York could lose congressional seats.**  
Fewer seats means less say in federal policymaking.
- 3 New York could lose BILLIONS of dollars.**  
Census data determines how the federal government distributes more than \$700 billion for schools, hospitals and roads.
- 4 The census is safe for ALL state residents.**  
The law prohibits the census bureau from sharing personal data with other federal agencies.
- 5 Because it's easy.**  
Filling out your census form only takes a few minutes online.

[nysutcensus.org/pledge](http://nysutcensus.org/pledge) #CountMeIn #NYSUTCensus

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*Joe is the Husband of BTF member Barbara Polino Frandina*

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# BTF Leads Fight for Football Teams

Once again, the Buffalo Teachers Federation was the first to step up for BPS students when Section VI football officials decided to change the scheduling model and leave Buffalo athletes out in the cold.

Almost immediately after announcing it planned to move to league-based scheduling, which would leave Buffalo schools without a league, the BTF went to bat for our students.

Within a week, the BTF, Board of Education, City of Buffalo, and community leaders were prepared to take legal action when Section VI decided to delay its decision and hold further discussions before taking any action.

Under league-based scheduling, city schools remain in the section, but would face challenges in filling out a schedule by not being in a league. The Buffalo Public Schools petitioned to become football-only members of the Erie County Interscholastic Conference, but the ECIC turned them down, citing difficulty fitting the schools into the schedule.

That's when BTF President Philip Rumore quickly took action. He brought the matter to the BTF Executive Committee, which passed a resolution "to take and support legal actions against the Erie County Interscholastic Conference (ECIC) for refusing Buffalo Public School football teams admission to the ECIC"

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and "support efforts to ensure the admission of BPS teams to all such leagues".

Rumore said the Section VI and ECIC actions appeared "to be discrimination against our students" and violated "Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, and religion in public schools."

With the threat of legal action by the BTF, the School Board and the City of Buffalo, Section VI has decided to delay its move to league-based scheduling.

If league scheduling is implemented, five Buffalo Public Schools and one charter school will be left without a league. The BPS teams affected are Bennett, Burgard, Hutch-Tech, McKinley, and South Park. Section VI's lone charter school with a team is WNY Maritime/Health Sciences.

## Ninety-Seven NYS Teachers Achieve "Gold Standard"

NYSUT has announced that 97 teachers from across the state have earned national certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Another 60 educators had their certifications renewed in 2019.

Among the 97 is BTF member **Lan Zhang**, an ENL teacher from School 19. More information on this will be forthcoming but Ms. Zhang is one of only 2,115 teachers statewide who have completed a rigorous performance-based, peer-reviewed assessment process that includes a review of teaching portfolios, student work samples, videos and analysis of a candidate's teaching and student learning. Congratulations!!

## Save the Date

### February 20

Ski Day at Kissing Bridge  
Register Online

### February 29 & March 1

Variety Club Telethon  
Seneca Niagara Casino

### March 6

Rx Reimbursement Requests  
Due by 5:00 PM

### March 24

BTF Retirement Seminar  
Salvatore's Italian Gardens

## Welcome New Members

The following 39 teachers have joined the Buffalo Teachers Federation since the last printing of the Provocator. Welcome to the union!

Erin Bastian  
Alyssa Biscotto  
Orman Blenman  
Katie Broderick  
Kerry Calvert  
Christina Carducci  
Susan Colosimo  
Claire Deschamps  
Lauren Dierken  
Kathy Frederick  
Yvonne Gibson  
Joshua Girard  
Torye Harris

Elizabeth Anne Jasen  
Jacqueline Johnston  
Caitlin Kamholz  
Elizabeth Kobialka  
Lila Mandzyk  
Robert McGinnis  
Melissa McGowen  
Charles Meier  
Dawn Merle  
Lauren Miller  
Liat Notaro  
Mary Jae Peterson  
Jessica Phillips

Moire Puccio  
Amanda Richter  
Kristina Rovison  
Kelly Sanbelmo  
Megan Schrader  
Michael Schroeder  
Andrew Sliwowski  
Adam Smith  
Lovell Smith  
Melissa Smyth  
Julia Tuttle  
Krista Van Wagner  
Sarah Wetherbee