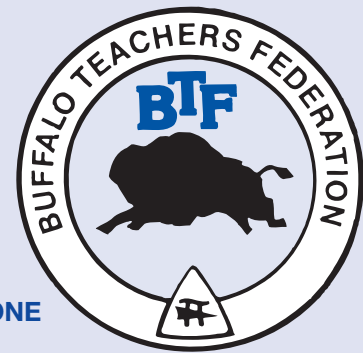


PROVOCATOR

March 2025

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION VOLUME 55/NUMBER 3

DEDICATION
SOLIDARITY
PROFESSIONALISM
PRIDE
SECOND TO NONE



BTF/District Agree to Transfer M.O.U.

A Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.), which streamlines teacher transfers, was overwhelmingly approved by the BTF Council of Delegates on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

The M.O.U., similar to one approved last year that worked well for teachers, was created February 6th when BTF officers and professional staff met with District officials.

The Executive Committee determined the M.O.U. created a “win-win” situation for both the teachers and the District as both parties seemed to get almost everything they wanted. The MOU was then sent to all teachers to read and let their delegates know whether they approved of the agreement.

Because of the procedural objection raised by a delegate from School 363@200 at the February 13th Council of Delegates meeting and thus prevented further business from being conducted, President Rich Nigro put the vote before the body via email, where it passed by a 114-2 margin with one (1) other delegate abstaining.

President Nigro and Superintendent Tonja Williams Knight have now signed the agreement, which modifies the terms of our contract.

So what did each side gain from this agreement? The District will get to use an electronic portal to receive the many transfer requests made annually.

The requests, which typically number several hundred, are allowed by Article XIV A of the BTF Contract, which states “A teacher may request transfer to another school by submitting a written request directly to the Associate Superintendent for Instructional Services.”

The Online Transfer Portal allows the District to process transfers more efficiently and display open positions on their website. The District did not want to return to sifting through paper copies of submitted letters. So signing this M.O.U. was a win for them.

The BTF attains several gains by agreeing to this M.O.U. Below is a summary of what this agreement will provide for teachers.

- Allows the transfer process to run for 8 weeks. The length of time is not specified in the BTF Contract and, prior to last year, would generally be 6 weeks

- Gives teachers traveling outside of the Continental 48 States the right to provide an alternate method of contact

- Allows teachers with a documented emergency who miss the transfer window the ability to be placed back in the transfer process rotation

- Reduces the number of days allowed for teachers to make a selection from 4 (as per contract) to 3. This will allow more teachers the ability to transfer

- Allows teachers the opportunity to apply for vacancies due to an anticipated retirement

In addition, the M.O.U. preserves the BTF contractual right to keep seniority as the controlling factor to determine transfers, except in specific cases as the result of an arbitration decision.

Last year, two tenure subject area

supervisors were unable to get through the entire list of eligible teachers and individuals who were lower on the seniority list were not given the opportunity to select a new placement. In one case, the supervisor went on a leave of absence and did not have provisions in place for someone to take over the duties in his absence. In the other, a director did not begin transfers at the agreed-upon time.

The District has put measures in place to ensure that this does not happen again and advised the BTF to contact the Deputy Director and Manager of Human Resources immediately should there be a problem.

Teachers who wish to apply for a transfer should visit the BPS website and enter their information into the Portal.

The deadline to apply, as per the BTF Contract, is March 23. More information about the transfer process, including eligibility, can be found in Article XIV of our collective bargaining agreement.

APPR M.O.U. Revised by Council of Delegates

The agreement between the BTF and District that governs the way teachers are evaluated has been modified.

By a large majority vote of the BTF Council of Delegates, the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.) between the parties has undergone a revision. The vote to modify the M.O.U. was scheduled to take place at the February 13 Council of Delegates meeting. The State deadline to make changes to existing APPR agreements was March 1st so it was imperative that the modification be considered before the February break.

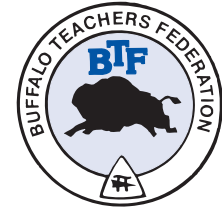
But after Delegate Melissa Kenney, School 363@200, raised a procedural objection, no further business was able to be conducted. Realizing that teachers would likely be harmed if the existing agreement had to stay in place, President Rich Nigro put together an email vote and sent it to all delegates on the last day before February break. At least 92 delegates needed to respond by 8 PM in order for the vote to be valid. Thankfully, 117 delegates participated. The measure passed overwhelmingly by a vote of 112-1 with an

additional 4 delegates abstaining from the vote.

The agreement, which had been in place since 2017, was negotiated under State Education Law 3012-d and requires that a “student growth” component be a part of the APPR. Since 2017, most teachers received an overall rating (called a HEDI rating) based on their observation score and the District-wide Student Growth Score. The tests used to calculate the Student Growth Score had, until last year, provided a stable metric that resulted in a rating of “Effective” for that component. Those tests included: Science 4, Science 8, and Regents exams in ELA, Algebra, Global History, U.S. History, and Living Environment.

Unfortunately, scores saw a dramatic drop in 2024. A new Algebra Regents test was given and numbers across New York State were markedly lower than they had been. In addition, the state stopped giving the Science 4 assessment and the District substituted Science 5. This was not a violation of the M.O.U. because the battery of tests itself was not part of the agreement.

(See APPR Revised Continued on page 3)



BTF at a Glance

BTF President

Rich Nigro

BTF Vice President

Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan

BTF Treasurer

Joseph Montante

BTF Secretary

Mark Mecca

BTF Executive Committee Members

Pre-K-6

Rachel Binda-Lis, April Hall,
Kim Parzymieso, Tara Rosa,
Janine Schuster, Chris Stephens

7-12

Tom Anthony, Dennis Brancato, Sam
Fritz, Mike Jeffers, Rich Pyszczek, Eve
Shippens, M. Sue Raichilson

K-12

Desiree Breckenridge-Barnes,
Melinda CuvIELLO, Amy Flynn, Mel Holden,
Karen Kane, Ellen Malone, Gregory Sawicki

At Large

Nicole Herkey, Brian Meyer, David
Stephens

BTF Headquarters Staff

Rich Nigro, *President*
Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan, *Presidential
Assistant*
Joseph Montante, *Presidential Assistant*
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Jenna Burke, *NYSUT Counsel*
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Robert Mueller, *NYSUT
Labor Relations Specialist*
Jennifer Rhee, *NYSUT
Labor Relations Specialist*

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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 2024-2025 school year as a service to BTF members and interested parties in the community. Subscription price is included in BTF dues.

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March 2025
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Negotiation is Not a Four-Letter Word

Negotiation is a word that can sometimes make people feel anxious. Knowing that, I would like to propose an alternate perspective on the word negotiation.

Any time two or more parties meet to discuss proposals that will determine a single outcome, they are negotiating. In earnest negotiations, each side listens intently as the other side speaks. The goal is to come up with something that is more beneficial than what you currently have or something that is being proposed. To negotiate is to find your way through some obstacle to the other side.

Every Building Committee meeting is a negotiation. The Delegate Chair and other representatives present an agenda to the principal proposing solutions or changes that will correct issues or improve working conditions. Discussions commence, hopefully leading to a positive outcome.

While more involved, every SBMT meeting is a negotiation. We often think that the most important SBMT meeting happens when reviewing the School-Based Budget. But those monthly SBMT meetings are just as if not more important, because they lay the groundwork for those more difficult conversations that take place in late winter/early spring. If your SBMT has six months of experience working with each other through smaller and less contentious topics, then members will tend to be more receptive to the insights and concerns of others when making shared decisions about next year's budget.

Recently, the Federation (including three classroom teachers) negotiated changes with the District to the APPR Performance Chart used to determine the student growth score, broadening the Effective score range for teachers (APPR 3012-e discussions are tentatively scheduled to begin next month). We also negotiated the 2025 Transfer MOU with the District, codifying a process that is beneficial to teachers.

Negotiations do not only occur with your employer. You may negotiate with your students at times regarding lessons, assignments, and grading. When your family discusses what to do over the weekend, you're negotiating. The bottom line is that we negotiate every day. It can cause temporary discomfort as we navigate our way through discussions, but ultimately it gives our voices power. And while the thing we originally wanted may look a little different after that process, the goal is to move forward through that process and get to something better than what we had when we started.

Convention Delegates Elected for NYSUT Representative Assembly

Convention delegates for the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) were elected recently to serve three-year terms.

A total of 24 teachers submitted petitions to the BTF office by the posted deadline. As there were 25 delegate seats available, an election was not held. Instead, all of the delegates were considered elected by acclamation as per the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (Landrum-Griffin Act).

The elected delegates will represent the Buffalo Teachers Federation during the Representative Assembly of our state affiliate. During the conventions, the delegates will vote on policies that will affect education on the state level.

The 2025 NYSUT Representative Assembly is scheduled for May 2-3 in Rochester.

Convention delegates elected for NYSUT, listed alphabetically, are:

Tricia Andrzejewski	Daphne McNab
Dennis Brancato	Brian Meyer
Desiree Breckenridge-Barnes	Joseph Montante
Olga Camacho	Rich Nigro
Gregory Conley	Sue Raichilson
Amy Flynn	Tara Rosa
Danielle Harris	Trisha Rosokoff
Nicole Herkey	Gregory Sawicki
Michael Jeffers	Janine Schuster
Melissa Kenney	Eve Shippens
Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan	Ruyvette Townsend
Michael Mecca	Jennifer Yund

BTF Helps Needy Children through Toy Drive

The BTF Women's Committee has been continuing the work to make a positive impact on the community. For the fifth straight year, the Buffalo Teachers Federation has sponsored a toy drive and helped facilitate the distribution of personal care items to women and children in the area. Teachers donated many items and the BTF contributed funds to supplement the donations.

This year, donations were given to Child and Family Services, Jericho Road Community Health Center, the Father Belle Center, and two non-profit sites assisting those affected by Hurricanes Helene and Milton who sought refuge in Buffalo. The Women's Committee welcomes new members. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the BTF to be put in touch with Desiree Breckenridge-Barnes, chair of the committee.



ABOVE: Pictured with some of the donated toys, Elaine Lydon, Charlotte Waton-Wales, Desiree Breckenridge-Barnes, and Kim Baldinger are proud of the work the Women's Committee has done.

APPR Revised

(Continued from page 1)

These factors, coupled with a general downward trend in the other areas, led to a 2024 District Growth Score of "Developing" for the first time. This score, in turn, was combined with teachers' individual observation scores to produce an overall rating. Because the District score was "Developing", even teachers with a "Highly Effective" observation score had an overall HEDI score of "Effective". The BTF leadership team, along with 3 classroom teachers, met to find ways to ensure that the Student Growth Score is "Effective" once again. The team met with District officials on three occasions and finally, on February 4th, a tentative agreement was reached.

While not part of the M.O.U., the District agreed to eliminate the Science 5 assessment as well as the Regents exams in Algebra and Living Environment. Living Environment is being rebranded as Biology once again and June 2025 will be the first administration of the new exam.

In addition to agreeing to use just the four exams that seem to be more stable, the District agreed to a slight lowering of the score brackets that determine "Developing" and "Effective". This, the parties believe, should allow the Student Growth Score to return to "Effective".

Of the agreement, President Rich Nigro remarked, "It's in the best interest of both the BTF and the District to see that the APPR process is fair and does not harm our members. This modification should provide that security until a new agreement on APPR can be reached. We expect to start talks on such an agreement in the coming months."

Under 3012-e, the new law that governs teacher evaluations, a student growth component is not required. Obviously, the BTF wants to secure the best agreement possible and will begin examining various models to see that will work best for our teachers. The 3012-d parameters will stay in place until a new agreement can be reached, but in no case can it extend beyond 2032.

Stay tuned!

Scholarships Available For Teachers' Children

Scholarships, funded by a BTF settlement and earmarked for the children of Buffalo teachers first, are being administered by The Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo.

Scholarships for the 2025-26 academic year will be awarded in the spring. Students who are high school seniors or enrolled in an accredited program are encouraged to apply.

Awards range from \$1000-\$6000 and the funds are allocated to the children of Buffalo teachers before other applicants.

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

To apply, visit www.cfgb.org and click on the 'Scholarships' tab under Community Change. You also may call the CFGB at 852-2857.

Letters to the Editor

BTF Supports Habitat for Humanity's Efforts to Provide Affordable Housing

Partnership is at the heart of everything Habitat for Humanity has accomplished in the nearly 50 years since our founding in Americus, Georgia. Powerful partnerships – with local Habitat offices, faith groups, corporate sponsors, homeowners, volunteers and supporters like you – have helped us build homes with millions of people, changing lives through affordable home ownership.

The challenges we face in today's housing landscape are unprecedented. Families and individuals face record unaffordability, increasing housing shortages and major barriers to first-time homeownership. We need to take bold steps to meet this growing need, and your support has never been more important.

I'm excited to share that we are increasing our collaboration efforts with Habitat for Humanity Buffalo and the

Roswell Park Thanks BTF for Generosity

You've shown such generosity toward Roswell Park's lifesaving work. Thank you for your partnership in creating a world in which someone doesn't have to fear a cancer diagnosis.

Thousands of cancer patients and their families turn to Roswell Park in search of hope every year. We are wholeheartedly committed to providing them with exceptional medical care and compassionate programs to enhance their quality of life. Together with supporters like you, we aspire to free our world from fear, pain and loss due to cancer. We work hand-in-hand with our world-renowned scientists, who are diligently working to discover ways to save more lives.

Please know, we could not fulfil this critical work without you. On behalf of all those who walk through our doors, thank you!

Most sincerely,
Candace S. Johnson, Ph.D
President & CEO
M&T Bank Pres. Chair in Leadership
Roswell Park Comp.Cancer Center

broader Habitat network across the U.S. to make us stronger, more efficient and better positioned to serve your community. We are committed to our vision of a world in which everyone has a decent place to live. We have always believed that we are stronger together, and thanks to your dedicated support, we continue to move closer to that vision. Now, more than ever, Habitat's mission is needed to build and improve homes, revitalize neighborhoods and create more opportunities for homeownership.

Please accept my heartfelt appreciation for your generous support and all that you do to help empower people to transform their lives through stable, decent, affordable homeownership.

With Gratitude,
Jonathan T. M. Reckford, CEO
Habitat for Humanity International

BTF Supports Buffalo Toronto Public Media

Thank you for making a donation of \$500 to Buffalo Toronto Public Media where every day you hear and see something new, interesting and important to your life. Thank you for your generosity.

Event support of Buffalo Toronto Public Media is appreciated for their commitment to public broadcasting. Thank you for partnering in our efforts to remain your most trusted source for the programs you love and that make a difference in your life and in the lives of your family, friends and neighbors.

Our team is so grateful for you – the extra step that you took to support great programming for the Western New York and Southern Ontario area is a vital one. Thank you for helping us make our community a more engaging place to call home.

Sincerely,
Lisa LaTrovato, Director
Leadership & Legacy Giving
Programs

City Mission Thanks BTF for Assistance

Thank you for starting 2025 with a gift to help renew lives at Buffalo City Mission! Your partnership means so much to our neighbors in need – as many continue to struggle to afford food or a place to live.

Through your support, our guests will receive shelter, meals, warm clothing, spiritual guidance and essential recovery services. By God's grace, the hope you make possible will lead to lasting transformation. That's the power of your generosity!

Thank you again, and God bless you for showing kindness to our homeless and hurting neighbors this winter.

Thankful for your partnership,
Aubrey Calhoun
Executive Director and CEO

BTF Donates \$250 to EPIC Program

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff and families that we serve at EPIC-Every Person Influences Children, we would like to extend our sincerest gratitude for your donation of \$250 on Dec. 2, 2024.

For 44 years, EPIC's vision has been a world where every child has a strong start and a promising future. We provide research and evidence-based programming in Family Engagement, encouraging early literacy and building parents' capacity to become more actively involved in their children's education through programs such as Ready, Set, Read! and Storytime Family Literacy. We also provide extensive Parenting Education, offering support and solutions for struggling parents, through programs like Families in Transition and Triple P.

We appreciate your belief in EPIC's work to strengthen families and build community to raise children who make a positive impact in the world. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach me at 716-332-4114 or by email at burgess@epicforchildren.org.

Thank you again for your support.

In gratitude,
Tara N. Burgess, executive director
Paul J. Gorski, director of
ODevelopment

BTF Thanked for Holiday Assistance

I hope this message finds you well and filled with the joy of the season!

On behalf of The Salvation Army, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude for the Federation's recent gift to our organization during this special time of year.

The holidays are a time of celebration—however, they can also be a season of hard decisions and sadness. Thanks to the ongoing support of our wonderful donors, the Salvation Army ministers to the physical and emotional needs of every family who comes through our door.

The Buffalo Teachers Federation's support means so much to the families we serve. Thanks to your kindness, we can provide warm meals and gifts of warmth from our canteen during Street Feed, invite parents to hand-select toys during Toy Shoppe for their children to open on Christmas morning, provide our clients with comprehensive job readiness services, and so much more. Moreover, your generosity reminds us of the true spirit of the holidays — giving, caring, and sharing kindness with those around us.

We wish you and your loved ones a joyous and peaceful holiday season, and a happy and healthy New Year!

On behalf of all those we serve, thank you!

Laurel Hopkins, Associate Donor Relations

Did You Know...?

Teachers can receive a payment for waiving health insurance from the District? The Waiver Incentive, which is now at \$3,000, is paid to teachers who forgo insurance because they have coverage from outside of the school district. The Waiver Pool is for teachers who are not taking health insurance because they are covered by another district employee. Teachers who are part of the Waiver Pool receive an annual payment of \$1,200.

Both the Waiver Incentive and Waiver Pool, including eligibility for each, are described in Article XXVI of the collective bargaining agreement.

MilkBone Workers Appreciate BTF Solidarity

On behalf of the members of the BCTGM Local 36G out of Buffalo, NY, I want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to you and your members for your unwavering support during our recent strike at the Smucker MilkBone plant.

Your solidarity and commitment to our cause have made a world of difference, not only in the strength of our resolve but also in the impact we have had on achieving the justice and dignity we deserve as workers.

In times of struggle, it is the collective power of the people like you and the local community that enables us to stand strong in the face of adversity. Your vocal support, financial contributions, and encouragement helped us weather the storm and

continue to fight for fair wages, better working conditions, and respect for the labor that powers our community.

The unity we experienced during this strike has brought us closer, and it's because of supporters like you that we are able to move forward with hope and determination. We are proud to have you as an ally and appreciate your support in our mission.

Thank you once again for standing with us during this critical time. Together, we have shown that when workers unite, we are a force to be reckoned with. We look forward to continuing this journey alongside you.

In Solidarity,
Scott Baer

Save the Date

March 13

Council of Delegates Meeting, 7 PM
The Grapevine Banquets, Depew

March 23

Deadline to Apply for a Transfer

March 25

BTF Retirement Workshop, 7 PM
Salvatore's Italian Gardens

April 14 - April 21

Spring Recess

April 24

Council of Delegates Meeting, 7 PM
The Grapevine Banquets, Depew

May 20

BTF Retirement Dinner, 5:30 PM
Salvatore's Italian Gardens

BTF to Host Retirement Workshop

A workshop for teachers considering retirement will be conducted Tuesday, March 25 by the Buffalo Teachers Federation.

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

After a few opening remarks from BTF President Rich Nigro, a representative from the New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS) will explain the various options for benefits. 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 negotiated benefits available to Buffalo teachers. This includes healthcare, 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.

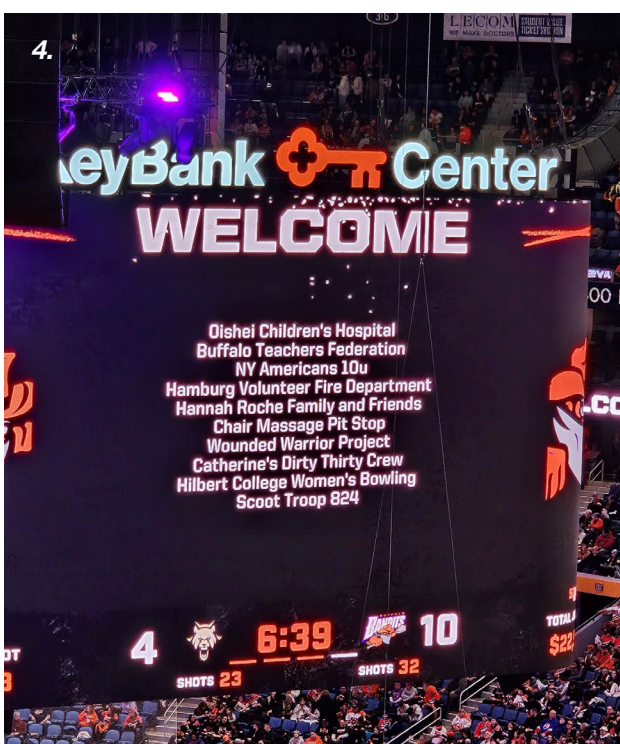
If interested in attending, please register using the link emailed to all teachers on February 11. You may call the BTF at (716) 881-5400 if you have questions.

BTF Partakes in First Bandits Game

For the first time ever, the BTF Social Committee organized an evening with the National Lacrosse League (NLL) champions, the Buffalo Bandits. The game, played on February 1, was held at KeyBank Center.

Taking advantage of group sales pricing, and with a supplement from the BTF, teachers and their families were able to secure seats for just \$20 each. More than 320 tickets were sold and guests watched as forwards Dhane Smith and Josh Byrne racked up goal after goal to help lead the Bandits to a 16-10 victory.

The Bandits, NLL champions for the past two years, pulled away from the Albany FireWolves in what was a rematch of last year's championship contest. They led 10-4 at halftime and never looked back. For many, this was their first time experiencing a Bandits game. The atmosphere was electric as the Bandits extended their winning streak to six straight games and a perfect start to their season. A great time was had by all!



1. Donning Bandits chapeaus, BTF President Rich Nigro and his daughter Amber, a social worker at South Park High School, get into the spirit of the game.

2. Seated in Section 301, Lisa Voigt, Meagan Riordan, Amy Flynn, and Nicole Herkey await the start of the game.

3. Despite working at different schools, long-time friends Sheri Leiser and Trish Andrzejewski were able to sit together and enjoy the action.

4. Featured on the Jumbotron, BTF was officially welcomed to KeyBank Center.

5. Right after the faceoff, Dennis Brancato, VP Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan, and husband Jerry Sullivan are excited to watch the Bandits trounce the Albany FireWolves.

Good Times Roll with Bowling Event

For the first time, Lunar New Year was a day off for teachers and students in New York State. The BTF Social Committee decided to take advantage of the mid-week holiday and scheduled a family bowling event at Classic Lanes in Kenmore.

About three dozen teachers and family members turned out on Wednesday, January 29 for an afternoon of strikes, spares, and misses. And while the

competition was far from intense, the fun was.

Since all schools were closed, several of our teachers with young children brought them along to partake in the event. The BTF Social Committee has sponsored several events this year and there are more to come! If bowling wasn't for you, we look forward to seeing you at another event soon.



1. Along with his daughter, School 131 Delegate Chair Dave Haas spent the afternoon knocking down pins.

2. Taking advantage of the day off, Tonya Barrett and her daughter get ready to hit the lanes.

3. After completing two games, Stan Nowak, Sebastiana Giuca-Bauman, Gina Dormer, Kim Meissner, Jack Bauman, and Vera Gracievski pose for a photo.

4. Despite one shy child, EC member Tara Rosa and her kids had a fantastic time bowling.



Teacher Wins \$1,000 in Grant Money

Shelaine Ress, a science teacher at Lydia T. Wright School #89, has been awarded \$1,000 in grant money to use for a classroom project. Back in October, BTF send an email to all teachers advertising that several grants were being offered by the NYS Retired Teachers' Association, Western Zone (RENY).

Ress answered the call and described, in great detail, her idea to build a magnetic levitation train that would glide above a track. The use of repelling magnetic forces, she explained, would cause the train to float above the track while another force propelled it. This is the same concept used on a monorail.

Her fascinating project will likely begin in early March. Technology teacher and colleague James Heidrich will be assisting, especially with some of the building. While Ms. Ress won the grant, the biggest winners will be her students, who will engage in a meaningful project that is sure to grip their attention. The BTF congratulates Shelaine Ress. Well done!



ABOVE: Pictured from left to right are: Science Department TOSA Annette Miller, Western Zone RENY President Michelle Claus, RENY Board Member Stan Nowak, Awardee Shelaine Ress, RENY Grants Committee Chair Maria Hager, and School 89 Principal Nicole Smith.

Welcome New Members

The following 18 teachers have joined the Buffalo Teachers Federation since the last printing of the Provocator. Welcome to the union!

- Kelly Borgogelli
- Christopher Brown
- Leiana Cabin
- Amelia Cardona
- Gabriella Didio
- Theresa Dixon
- Terence Drakes
- Stephanie Fronczak
- Alyssa Genovese
- Mya Gruin
- Justin Hauret
- Lori Hymers
- Fikrte Kitaw
- Timothy Nixon
- Alvaro Padilla Sanchez
- Mollie Ross
- Nilda Snow
- Kyle Yelich

NYSUT/AFT/ NEA/BTF Dues for 2024

It's that time of year when everyone is gathering information to prepare tax returns. Union dues withheld from your paycheck may be tax deductible.

Please check with your tax professional whether you are eligible to deduct union dues from your NYS return.

The total dues for full time employees are **\$974.12**.

This includes \$648.76 for the period January-June (\$46.34 x 14 checks) and \$325.36 for September-December (\$46.48 x 7 checks).

For part time employees, the total dues are **\$487.06**.

This includes \$324.38 for January-June (\$23.17 x 14 checks) and \$162.68 for September-December (\$23.24 x 7 checks).

Adult Learning Center dues totaled **\$439.39**. This includes \$292.60 for January-June (\$20.90 x 14 checks) and \$146.79 for September-December (\$20.97 x 7 checks).

Special BTF Pins Available

If you have 20, 25, 30, or 35 years of teaching experience in the Buffalo Public Schools and would like a pin to commemorate your service, please complete the form below and mail it to the BTF, c/o Joseph Montante, 271 Porter Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14201. This form may be emailed to jmontante@btfny.org.

BTF Commemorative Pins

Name: _____




Home/cell phone: _____

Home address: _____

Personal E-mail: _____

School: _____

No. of years teaching in BPS: _____

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Greg Mucha
Optician

Joe Frandina
Optician

Call Today for An Appointment With our Optometrist!

Call Today for An Appointment With our Optometrist!

Joe is the Husband of BTF member Barbara Polino Frandina

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Editor's Note: This is the third in a series of articles outlining the history of the BTF from its beginning in 1920 through the present. The information contained herein is supported by historical documents stored at the BTF office.

The History of The Buffalo Teachers Federation

Part 3, A Federation is Formed

by Joseph Montante

It was spring 1920 and teachers across New York State were jubilant that the hard-fought salary bill became law. Buffalo teachers were celebrating the \$400 that would be added to their annual salaries the next year. But the advocacy that pushed the salary bill over the finish line gave rise to two other landmark events. On a state level, there would soon come the dawn of the New York State Teachers' Retirement System. But locally, a federation of the various educational organizations of Buffalo was formed.

During a meeting with Superintendent Ernest Hartwell in March 1920, Hutchinson High School Principal David Childs suggested that a federation of the eleven educational organizations of Buffalo be formed to advocate for the salary bill and that Principal Harry Smallenburg be its first president.

The federation was to be known as the Buffalo Federation of Educational Associations (later as the Buffalo Teachers Federation) and the original members, along with their number of permitted delegates, were:

Name	Delegates
Administrative Women in Education	1
Grammar School Principals' Council	1
High School Principals' Association	1
Industrial Teachers' Association	1
Kindergarten Union	2
Physical Education Association	1
Public School Athletic League	1
Schoolmasters' Association	2
Science Teachers' Association	1
Women Principals' Association	1
Women Teachers' Association	9

Most local teacher unions in New York today are labelled as "Associations", such as the Williamsville Teachers' Association or Maryvale Teachers' Association. A federation (such as the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) or the United Federation of Teachers (UFT)) is composed of several groups or associations.

In the beginning, the BTF truly was composed of various associations. While that is no longer true, we

have kept the name Buffalo Teachers Federation, probably for historical reasons. Of the original 11 associations, only two survive today, the Schoolmasters' Association and the Women Teachers' Association. Some of the members of each association are also part of the BTF, but some are retirees and some members of the Schoolmasters' Association are building engineers.

Of note, and probably to the surprise of many teachers today, is the fact that administrators were indeed part of this federation. Many of the early presidents were principals. Administrators stayed members of the BTF until the passage of the Taylor Law in 1967. The last admins said goodbye to the BTF in 1968 and went on to form their own union, the Buffalo Council of Supervisors and Administrators (BCSA).

Eclipsed by the excitement of forming an advocacy federation was the creation of the New York State Teachers' Retirement System, officially formed in 1921. Few people paid attention to it due to the hooaha from the salary bill. The teachers of Buffalo and a few other cities had local pension plans. A hearing concerning the new pension plan was held in Albany. Assemblyman Joseph McGuinness chaired the hearing and said with a smile "At a hearing of this type, it is customary that the opposition be allowed to speak first. However, I suppose there is no opposition."

To everyone's surprise, a small, elderly woman, dressed in black, hobbled up to the desk and said she wished to oppose the creation of NYSTRS. She told of how she had taught in school houses decades earlier where the roofs leaked and with no supplies. At the climax of her speech, she said, "Mr. McGuinness, I just can't live on \$200 a year." Two hundred dollars was the minimum annual pension inserted into the bill. With no hesitation, Assemblyman McGuinness turned to the other members of the committee and said "Raise the minimum to \$400". The committee agreed unanimously.

The Buffalo Federation of Educational Associations took up the subject of

abandoning the local retirement system and becoming part of NYSTRS. It was decided that NYSTRS was far superior to the local system and that an effort should be made to transfer teachers from the local system to the new State system.

In order to accomplish this, it was necessary to obtain affidavits from at least 2/3 of the teachers in the local system. As this started, the banished and sacked Teachers' Educational League (T.E.L.), perhaps seeking revenge, opposed the effort. After going to great lengths, the required number of signatures were obtained for the Buffalo teachers to become members of the State system.

The T.E.L. took the matter to court and found a defect in the affidavits. Buffalo teachers were thrown back into the local system and contributions made by teachers into the State system were returned! The Federation started the battle all over again and used a foolproof affidavit. This time, acquiring the necessary 2/3 of the teachers to sign affidavits was easier and Buffalo teachers were finally, and permanently, part of NYSTRS.

This was the last that anyone heard from the T.E.L. While they were no longer a threat, there lay many challenges ahead. So what was the Federation's goal after the salary bill and successful admission to NYSTRS? How was business conducted? Did the Federation charge dues? Where did they meet?

These questions and more will be addressed in the next issue of the *Provocator*.