



Buffalo Teachers Federation, Inc.  
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Buffalo, New York 14201  
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[www.btfny.org](http://www.btfny.org)

President, PHILIP RUMORE

April 29, 2020

TO: Dr. Kriner Cash, Superintendent, BPS

FROM: Philip Rumore, President, BTF

RE: Support for Recommendation

What follows is a complete copy of my support for your recommendation relating to the closing of school buildings for students and staff and the continuation of Distance Learning (attached).

Since the last part that I texted you last evening didn't print when sent on April 28, 2020, what follows is the complete letter of support for your important recommendation.

Dr. Cash,

**"While there has been no vote of the teachers on your recommendation to keep schools (school buildings) closed for student instruction and as challenging as it is, to continue Distance Learning, I am confident that Buffalo teachers, as do I, support your decision. Indeed, if one life was lost as a result of having our children risk theirs or other's lives by returning to school knowing of the clear and present dangers, those who advocated for and approved that tragedy should be held accountable. I know your recommendation was not easy; however, it is the only one that will ensure the safety and health of our students, parents, staff and community. You have my and I am confident the support of Buffalo teachers for your life saving recommendation.**

**Those who advocate(d) for the life-threatening opening of schools and similar gatherings, should have to explain their actions to the families and loved ones of those who died needlessly as a result of their actions."**

We both know that if, in the unlikely event the health experts and healthcare community affirm that gatherings such as reopened school buildings with students and staff are allowed, this decision can be reviewed by you and the Board of Education.



## BUFFALO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Office of the Superintendent

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[krinercash@buffaloschools.org](mailto:krinercash@buffaloschools.org)

April 27, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Forty-five states have made the Executive decision to close or have recommended closure of their public schools for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. New York, hardest hit of the 50 states by the coronavirus onslaught, has not. Governor Andrew Cuomo is facing enormous political and economic pressure to re-open the NYS economy. Any plan to re-open the NYS economy will eventually have to consider how and when to re-open schools. My professional, well-informed recommendation is that schools be closed for the remainder of this school year.

As educators, our first and foremost concern must always be the safety of our children, staff, and others that engage with our school communities in any capacity. We must do everything in our power to keep them out of harm's way. Every scientific indicator suggests we are still in the throes of this global pandemic. We are learning that we really do not know much about this deadly and elusive virus. For example, we have no reliable, trustworthy data on who has the virus in Erie County and who does not.

The emerging science related to the coronavirus tells us that our reported number of cases and deaths are likely vastly undercounted here and everywhere, and the testing to determine who had or who does have the virus is still inadequate. Public health officials have indicated time and time again that the curve and peak period for the Western New York Region is behind New York City's not ahead of it. Therefore, all indications from the experts in the field of community health are that the worst is yet to come for Buffalo.

This is just the 30,000 ft., common sense view of the matter. Allow me to offer more concrete bulleted reasons why it is not safe to re-open schools any time soon.

- Testing – too limited, too many can't get it, need to double, triple
- Contact tracing – has dissipated, not occurring at levels needed
- Antibody test – being studied, work in progress, no beta test
- Treatments – experimental, unreliable
- Vaccine – many months away, none at this point
- Asymptomatics – are everywhere and lethal, especially w/o testing
- Unknowns – what we thought we knew is being upended weekly
- Most vulnerable populations – poor, black, brown at higher risk
- Medically fragile – many of our students and staff are so designated
- Underlying conditions – many of our students and staff may be at higher risk
- Young and middle aged – contrary to early reports are dying from COVID-19
- Children – will parents send their children back to school if it is unsafe?

***“Putting Children & Families First to Ensure High Academic Achievement for All”***

- Staff – will staff return to school if it is unsafe?
- Transportation – yellow bus drivers laid off making an immediate return difficult
- Operations – ramping back up a large complex school system...time
- Liability – lawsuits await if we lose a child or staff to the virus...
- Japan – Island of Hokkaido opened to soon, resurgence more deadly...
- Schools – are social gathering places by definition
- Children – especially young ones touch everything
- PPE – not nearly enough for our frontline health care workers, let alone schools

I am writing to my Cabinet members at this critical juncture to hear your positions on the following questions: Do you agree that we should we close the Buffalo Public Schools for the remainder of this school year? If not, when should we re-open? What conditions would have to be in place for you to believe that it is safe to re-open our schools?

Throughout my career, I have always applied the 10/10/10 Rule to the most critical decisions I have had to make: How will I feel about the decision after 10 minutes; how will I feel about the decision after 10 months; and, how will I feel about the decision after 10 years? I have said throughout this unique closure period that I do not want to lose one child or one staff member to coronavirus because we closed too late or because we came back too soon. Will you stand with me on behalf of our children and families? I await your responses.

Respectfully,



Dr. Kriner Cash  
Superintendent

Subject: **Fwd: Please Review**  
Date: 4/29/2020 5:15:47 PM Eastern Standard Time  
From: rpordum@aol.com  
To: btfnyp@aol.com

Phil,

Dr. Cash shared his letter with BPTO members today

-----Original Message-----

To: [rpordum@aol.com](mailto:rpordum@aol.com)  
Sent: Wed, Apr 29, 2020 2:44 pm  
Subject: Fwd: Please Review

Becky: FYI BPTO met with Dr. Cash (via Zoom) today and he released this letter calling for the schools to remain closed.....Chris

-----Original Message-----

From: Rachel Fix Dominguez <[rachel\\_fix@post.harvard.edu](mailto:rachel_fix@post.harvard.edu)>  
To: Eve Shippens <[eshippens@gmail.com](mailto:eshippens@gmail.com)>; Roberta Cates <[roberta.cates@yahoo.com](mailto:roberta.cates@yahoo.com)>; Jerry Turcotte <[jerryturcotte@gmail.com](mailto:jerryturcotte@gmail.com)>; Danielle Grzymala <[danigriz07@gmail.com](mailto:danigriz07@gmail.com)>; dennice barr <[cookieatburgard@gmail.com](mailto:cookieatburgard@gmail.com)>; Chris Salamone <[salamone426@aol.com](mailto:salamone426@aol.com)>; Keith Jones <[sonnyp9150@gmail.com](mailto:sonnyp9150@gmail.com)>  
Sent: Wed, Apr 29, 2020 1:09 pm  
Subject: Fw: Please Review

Hi All,

Dr. Cash is planning to send this letter to Albany, calling on NYS government to keep the school buildings shut. He wanted to let us know, since we have called for keeping the buildings closed. This letter has received support from a wide swath of community members, including the Mayor, Common Council members, BOE members, BPS cabinet members, BTF President and BPS teachers and staff, BCSA President and school and central office admin, and faith-based community members.

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