

President PHILIP RUMORE



October 27, 2020

BUFFALO TEACHERS
FEDERATION, INC.

MEMO TO: Dr. Kriner Cash, Superintendent, BPS
Members, Buffalo Board of Education

FROM: Philip Rumore, President, BTF

RE: My October 21, 2020 Statement to the Buffalo Board of Education

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(716) 881-5400
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While I was online viewing the October 21, 2020 Board meeting and had telephoned the phone number given, I was unable to respond, as no identification number and “password” had been forwarded to me.

Fortunately, one of the secretaries took it upon herself to contact me to determine the problem and then forward the contact information.

Several parents and staff contacted me after the Board meeting to express similar concerns relating to the publicizing of the procedures for speaking at a Board meeting.

While giving the phone number and when to call, the District website does not advise the person that they should/will receive a document containing the number to call during the meeting and the two (2) code numbers they will need to use to be able to speak.

There is apparently no form/document that is provided for the staff and participants.

As for my presentation:

- Members of the District Reopening Committee have related the following concerns:
 - Up until recently, there have been few meetings.
 - When they have asked for documents, they have not been provided, e.g.
 - When asked for a copy of the District plan prior to its submission, they were told “no”. They should review it online after it is submitted to the State.
 - When advised that principals were provided with a document to determine staffing, needed resources, etc., parents and teachers on the committee asked for a copy. They, instead of being told they would be sent a copy, were told “no”. They (parents included) should obtain it from the principals. We obtained one from a principal, who was nervous about providing a copy. What does that tell you? (See Document I)
- District Committee members were provided with the following Definition of “Meaningful Engagement” (Document II).

- “Stakeholders (parents/caregivers, teachers, administrators, support staff) working together to support and improve the learning, development, and health of students. Listening, offering suggestions, developing plans that aid in the goal of a workgroup or committee. Acknowledging and understanding the feedback loop and ensuring representatives speak on behalf of constituents – allowing everyone to have a voice. Meaningful engagement is not the same as shared decision making.” (emphasis added)

In other words all the verbiage that comes before the last sentence “Meaningful engagement is not the same as shared decision making” means nothing, i.e. You are here for show.

As you know, the way we have agreed to make decisions in meetings such as the site-based committees, is based on “consensus”.

The agreed definition being “Consensus”:

“SBMT’s will make all decisions based on consensus.

Simply defined consensus means that all members ‘can live with’ the decision. Consensus ensures that all parties have involvement in the decision. Consensus is not synonymous with unanimous agreement. When decisions are reached by a consensus, it is not necessary that all members completely agree. It is only necessary that they minimally agree. Before consensus can be reached, each member of the SBMT has the right and the obligation to express any disagreement, and to propose a compromise. Through such discussion, team members develop a sense of ownership in the decision, because all parties have had a real say in the decision.”

This has worked to foster cooperation to provide our students with what all believe is in the best interest of our students.

- We have been advised that of the Buffalo Public Schools Reopening Sub Committees:
 - The last Transportation Committee meeting was on September 10, 2020.
 - The last Health and Safety meeting was on August 25, 2020.
- When I expressed concern that we have received no response to correspondence sent to you on October 2, 2020 and October 9, 2020 in which we provided positive suggestions for reopening (enclosed), Dr. Darren Brown-Hall’s response was that we could have contacted him for a response. I guess that’s the District’s method of meaningful communication... you keep contacting us, we need not respond.

Knowing the Superintendent and members of the Board, I find it troubling to believe that the above and other similar issues are condoned.

As you know from the correspondence and statements to you, it is not just the BTF members but also parents who have reason to believe they are being excluded from the decision making that is critical to the safety and education of our students.

We remain very concerned with the possible outbreak of COVID-19 in Buffalo. As you know, most of our students and parents live in poverty, without adequate healthcare and support services.

Indeed, many of our students are homeless.

While providing for their education, we must work to provide for and ensure their, their families' and the community's safety and well-being.

Yes, our task is greater than others'; however, it is one that must be achieved... together.

cc: Darren Brown-Hall, Chief of Staff

Reopening Plans

Phase In

Due: Wednesday, October 28

As we begin planning for the Preliminary Phase-in model, we are asking administrators to work with their school communities to develop a plan that meets the needs of your student population. Based on current data and survey results, we would like for you to identify groups or individual students to begin to return to In-person learning with up to a maximum of 100 students. Narrow your scope if you have large populations in targeted subgroups. Please complete the template below and return to your ASL for approval by **Wednesday, October 28**. As part of the approval process, the expectation is that you will rehearse this plan prior to executing.

Consider the following groups as you begin to identify students (This is a sample list and is not limited to options below but may include other configurations)

1. Students who are not thriving in the remote learning environment (Highest need learners, students having a difficult time with remote learning in areas such as: Poor Attendance, Not Passing, Struggling Students)
2. Special Education Students (6:1:1, 12:1:1, 8:1:1, 15:1)
3. English Language Learners (Entering/Emerging)
4. Pre-Kindergarten
5. Kindergarten
6. Grade 1
7. Grade 9
8. Off Track Seniors

This chart is a sample

Students/ Class	Grade	Number of Students
Ex. 6:1:1 NYSAA	1	6
Ex. 8:1:1	4	7
Ex. 12:1:1	7	12
Ex. 15:1	7	15
Ex. 15:1	8	13
Ex. Pre - Kindergarten	Pre-K	36
Total		89

School:	Principal:
Overall Number Staff Members:	

Students/ Class	Grade	Number of Students

Rationale for student determination:

Data (Please provide data sources):

Staffing Logistics:

Physical Layout Needs and Logistics:

Overall Needs:

Once you have selected the groups you have identified to come back, you will need to contact the following to solidify your plans:

Communicate with parents of targeted group or essential information

Engagement of the following groups: Reopening Team, Community Based Team, Site Based Meetings, Parent Meetings, Building Committee, PTO, Teachers, school nurse and building engineer are required. Please provide sign in sheets.

Set up a meeting with your ASL to review square footage capacity utilizing the Canon Design Tool

Submit this form by: Wednesday, October 28



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Dr. Kriner Cash, Superintendent

**Reopening Committee Meeting -
 Monday, October 19, 2020; 4:00pm**

Agenda Topic:

- 1.) October 7, 2020 Board of Education Work Session - Feedback...?
 - a. Areas of concern/consideration?
- 2.) Meaningful Engagement? - Edit, rework, add to... the following definition:

A

11:30

Stakeholders (parents/caregivers, teachers, administrators, support staff) working together to support and improve the learning, development, and health of students. Listening, offering suggestions, developing plans that aid in the goal of a workgroup or committee. Acknowledging and understanding the feedback loop and ensuring representatives speak on behalf of constituents - allowing everyone to have a voice. Meaningful engagement is not the same as shared decision making.

- 3.) Hybrid Learning Plan - Individual School plans
- 4.) Future Reopening Meetings - every other Monday @ 4:00pm
 November 2, 2020
 November 16, 2020
- 5.) Health and Safety - Thermal Scan demo.
- 6.) IT Update: From CTO Myra Burden:

Last meeting held on October 8th

Discussion topics include device distribution, internet connectivity, and addressing ad hoc issues conveyed by the committee. Committee reviewed the distribution plans for teacher device upgrades and PreK-1 device distribution.

Device Distribution - PreK-1 device distribution has begun! Letters have gone out to all families in PreK, Kindergarten, and Grade 1 providing a specific date for each household.