

Buffalo teachers, once again, take to picket lines in efforts for new contract

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Buffalo, N.Y. - Buffalo teachers picket outside Public School No. 3 - D'Youville Porter Campus on Friday, Sept. 9, 2022. *Photo credit Brayton J. Wilson - WBEN*
By [Brayton J. Wilson](#), WBEN.com Newsroom



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Buffalo, N.Y. (WBEN) - For a second-straight week, teachers of the Buffalo Public School District took to the sidewalks outside their respective schools to picket, as contract negotiations continue between the district and the Buffalo Teachers Federation.

"I'm really excited just to see that through the summer and as we get on into the fall now, the enthusiasm and the support for having some action and doing something about getting this new contract that the teachers are really starting to rally. It's coming together," said teacher Sam Fritz at the D'Youville Porter Campus, Public School No. 3 on Friday.

Teachers continue to fight the Buffalo School Board with regards to the status of contract negotiations, which continue to drag out longer as the day go on. The teachers in the Buffalo Public School District have not been working with a new contract for over two years, at this point.

"Let's be honest, I mean, it's two years. A week here-and-there is not going to bother anybody. We're going to keep doing it until we get some action, and that's our stand," said teacher Mark Borgioli picketing outside the Academy for Visual and Performing Arts.

Also addressed on Friday morning was the proposed three staggered start times for Buffalo Public Schools in an attempt to combat the issues with bus driver shortages. This new proposal will see start times for schools at 7:30 a.m. ET, 8:30 a.m. ET and 9:30 a.m. ET, compared to the current start times at 8 a.m. ET and 9 a.m. ET.

However, when speaking on WBEN with Susan Rose and Brian Mazurowski on Friday, Buffalo Teachers Federation President Phil Rumore brings up the issues with this proposal.

"It involves changing the start and ending times significantly. Teachers have already, and a lot of times, arranged their childcare. There is no delineation at all as to what they're talking about, what schools, what times, etc. And [the Buffalo School Board] expects us to sign off on it," Rumore said.

Long working hours have been a constant topic of discussion for teachers during contract negotiations, while other talking points include better wages for teachers across the district, while also addressing staffing concerns, which should be better resolved with a new contract in place.

"We've had over 100 teachers poached by suburban districts, so we are hurting, as far as teachers," said teacher Susan Baker at D'Youville Porter Campus of the effects of having no new contract in place. "Most of us have additional duties and additional classes on our schedule this year."

With contract negotiations continuing to spin its tires with little to no progress being made, some teachers have pushed Rumore to call for a teachers strike in the City of Buffalo. Rumore has said that while it remains a possibility, it would be seen as a last resort option.

When asked about concerns of a strike among teachers on Friday, many of the picketing teachers agreed with Rumore, saying it's important to do what's best for the students.

"It's something we want to avoid, if possible," Borgioli said. "I think doing things in the morning is just to show that we're serious about this, and this is something we're very concerned about. We would very much like to avoid a strike, because realistically, with the superintendent and the powers that be up top, I mean, we are on the same team. At the end of the day, our goal is to educate children. So I'm going to hope that it's not going to come to that, and I hope that things get resolved before that happens."

"There are a lot of disincentives for us to go on strike. It would be at a great sacrifice. We would have to feel that there was no other alternative for anything like that to happen," Fritz added. "I'm optimistic that we won't be going on strike anytime soon, but if we have to, I guess that's what would [have to] happen."

The pickets lasted for only about 15-20 minutes each Friday morning, as teachers took to the streets while students made their way into the schools.