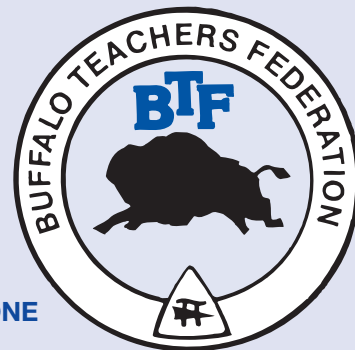


PROVOCATOR

February 2024

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION VOLUME 54/NUMBER 2

DEDICATION
SOLIDARITY
PROFESSIONALISM
PRIDE
SECOND TO NONE



SBF Benefits Set to Increase Sharply

By a unanimous vote, the five trustees of the Supplemental Benefit Fund have approved significant increases to the dental and optical benefits that teachers receive. This will be the first increase since 2018 and one of the largest ever enacted.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee in July, President Rich Nigro was confirmed as an SBF trustee, replacing Phil Rumore. In addition, Jesse McVerby, Delegate Chair at Lewis J. Bennett School #363, was confirmed as a trustee to replace Maria Baker, who retired in June 2023. The other teacher trustees include Ruyvette Townsend, Sue Raichilson, and Sam Fritz.

After the trustees met in October, President Nigro began an analysis of the status of the SBF's funding levels. Upon reviewing the data, he made a recommendation to the other trustees and made the motion to increase benefits. Ruyvette Townsend seconded the motion. All of the trustees agreed that increases were needed in several areas and applauded the proposal. So what does this mean for you?

Dental

Effective February 1, 2024, the dental benefits BTF pays via Delta Dental will increase by 60% across the board. That means every covered service that BTF funds, for both in-network and out-of-network dentists, will be multiplied by 1.6. For example, the allowance for a periodic exam to an in-network dentist will rise from \$15 to \$24, while a cleaning (prophylaxis) for an adult will rise from \$24 to \$39. This will result in significantly lower copay amounts for teachers and their dependents. In addition, the yearly maximum for dental benefits will rise by 60% to \$1,600 for the member and to \$960 for each eligible dependent. Finally, the lifetime orthodontic allowance will increase from \$1,100 to \$1,760 and the lifetime periodontal maximums, which are not subject to the annual maximum, will increase by \$500 in most categories.

Optical

Effective February 1, 2024, optical benefits will see fixed increases ranging from \$3 to \$5 for each covered service. That includes eye examinations, lenses, and frames. Blue light lenses, previously not covered, will be added as a service eligible for reimbursement. Finally, members have probably noticed that the second service on a biennial basis had smaller allowances than the first. That is no longer the case as of February 1st and a second service will be covered at the same level as a first service.

Dependent Age

When the Affordable Care Act was enacted by Congress in 2010, the age up to which dependents had to be covered under a parent's health insurance rose from 23 to 26. Unfortunately, SBF benefits were not able to follow suit at that time. Effective February 1, 2024, teachers will be able to maintain coverage for their dependents up until their 26th birthday. This will apply to dependents who have not yet reached age 23 and to dependents who are already age 23, 24, or 25. If you have a child in that age range who has already been deleted as a dependent as of January 2024, you will need to complete a new blue enrollment card and list all eligible dependents. Cards can be obtained from your Delegate Chair or by calling the SBF office at 881-5462.

Death Benefit

When an active teacher passes, the BTF Supplemental Benefit Fund pays a small death benefit to the beneficiary of record. That benefit will increase from \$1,200 to \$1,500 effective February 1, 2024.

While these increases are expected to make a big difference for teachers, there is more to come. President Nigro and the other trustees will continue to look at ways to make the benefits better for teachers. So don't be surprised if there are more improvements for 2025.

Save the Date

February 15

Council of Delegates Meeting, 7 PM
The Grapevine Banquets

February 19-23

Mid-Winter Recess

March 1

Deadline for Submitting Rx
Co-Pay Forms to BTF

March 9 & 10

Variety Club Telethon

March 19

Council of Delegates Meeting, 7 PM
The Grapevine Banquets

March 23

Deadline to Apply for a Transfer

March 26

BTF Retirement Workshop, 7 PM
Salvatore's Italian Gardens

March 29 - April 8

Spring Recess

Let's Fix Tier 6

We need your help! One of the biggest legislative priorities for the BTF and NYSUT is bringing equity to the later tiers of the New York State Teachers' Retirement System. This especially includes Tier 6, but also Tier 5.

Please visit www.Fixtier6.org and click on the "Get Involved" button to show your support. Together, we can do this! We need to attract and retain quality educators, and that will be increasingly more difficult without legislative changes to the retirement system.

ALL of us need to be there for our Tier 5 and Tier 6 brothers and sisters. Thank you in advance for your support.



Winter Update

The Work Continues

Melinda and I are officially one quarter through our first term. And thanks to the help of your elected BTF officers, building chairs and delegates, NYSUT LRSs, and BTF & SBF administrative staff, we are well on our way to realizing some of the goals we set out to accomplish.

Communication

Our biggest aim was to improve communication and solidify a reputation both with our members and the District that issues and questions will be dealt with in a timelier manner. Our expectation is to see this reciprocated

by the District. Even if there has been improvement, this effort will be ongoing, so there will always be more room for progress. Many of the gains we've realized have resulted from monthly Labor/Management meetings. Some results yielded thus far are:

- Human Resources – Additional class assignment (commonly referred to as a 6th period class) policy was issued by HR directing principals to end this practice from occurring during preparation periods. Mind you, the BTF files a grievance yearly stating that instructional periods beyond what is specified in our contract must cease.
- Payroll – Jim Barnes (CFO) to pilot streamlining processing Extra Activity pay beginning with Alternate Instruction.
- Upcoming meeting topics: Workplace Violence Act (health and safety), issues with lack of support for special education teachers and classes, District Social Emotional Wellness Committee, and the transfer process.

Member Outreach

Member involvement can look very different from one member to another. Some members devote a significant amount of their time to engage in union activities. Others may participate in activities only occasionally. There can be many reasons that dictate the level of one's involvement. The important thing to remember is that involvement – be it great or small – is the cornerstone to unionism! With the help and input from longstanding Executive Committee and Delegate members, we have structured our BTF committees and training opportunities around the notion that involvement cannot occur in a vacuum. That is why both delegate and non-delegate members sit on many of our committees and have attended many of our trainings.

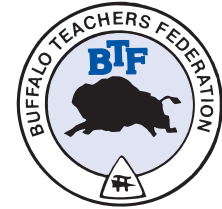
Ongoing delegate and member training opportunities continue as we work to engage all members. Since August, our NYSUT Labor Relation Specialists (LRS) have delivered recurring workshops titled **Delegate Training 101** and **When the Principal Calls**. We will soon begin holding our third workshop covering strategies for conducting Building Committee meetings. As we work to train more and more members, it is our plan for both LRS staff AND trained members to facilitate future trainings.

Fix Tier 6

As a Tier 4 teacher, I enjoy the peace of mind of my future retirement benefits thanks to the past work, support, and advocacy of my Tiers 1 and 2 brothers and sisters. I have what I have thanks to their voices and support. That's what unionism is. I've got your back, and you've got mine. Well, we've got your backs! And I'm asking all of you, regardless of what Tier you're in, to sign up to support the effort to improve Tier 6 for our family, friends, and colleagues who have a bleaker outlook when it comes to retirement benefits.

Please visit <https://fixtier6.org/get-involved> and get involved!

The teaching profession is not without its challenges. Thank you for your past hard work and advocacy for your students. I ask that you continue to support each other and have each other's backs. We will keep working to mitigate and eliminate those challenges. Solidarity!



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 Pyszczyk, Eve
Shippens, M. Sue Raichilson

K-12

Desiree Breckenridge-Barnes, Sean
Crowley, Melinda Cuvillo, Amy Flynn,
Mel Holden, Karen Kane, Gregory Sawicki

At Large

Mike Mecca, Brian Meyer, David
Stephens

BTF Headquarters Staff

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

Visit Our Updated Website
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 four times during the 2023-2024 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:
BTF Provocator, 271 Porter Avenue,
Buffalo, New York 14201.

Advertising: Rates and anticipated publishing schedule may be requested from the BTF, 716-881-5400, FAX 716-881-6678. Although advertising is screened, advertising does not imply BTF endorsement of the product, service or the views expressed. Your patronage of our advertisers is appreciated.

The BTF is an affiliate of NYSUT, AFT and NEA.

February 2024
Volume 54, No. 2
Circulation 4400

Letters to the Editor

Explore Buffalo Grateful to BTF

On behalf of all of us at Explore Buffalo, thank you so much for the generous donation from the Buffalo Teacher Federation! We are honored and deeply grateful for this gift to support our annual educational programs.

Thank you for your encouragement, helping us realize our mission to promote Buffalo and Western New York architecture, history, and neighborhoods through quality educational programs for learners of all ages.

With gratitude for your support,
Brad Hahn, Executive Director

HOME Donation Helps Change Area Lives

Thank you for changing lives with your support!

Your generous gift will be put to work right away. Your support allows us to investigate housing discrimination claims, provide counseling to discrimination victims, deliver educational programs, and assist families in moving to neighborhoods of greater opportunity.

It is your generosity that propels HOME (Housing Opportunities Made Equal) as we continue to create stronger and more diverse communities together. For the lives you have touched and improved with your gift, I thank you.

Sincerely,
M. DeAnna Eason
Executive Director

BTF Donates to WNY Firefighters

Thank you for your support of our firefighters and your contribution to our Western New York Volunteer Firemen's Association.

Your contribution to our Association helps to provide vital equipment and training to our volunteers and first responders.

Your contribution also funds ongoing Fire Prevention & Safety programs in our local schools, both public and private.

It also helps to send members of the WNYVFA to Albany for an annual Legislative Weekend where we work with our elected officials in developing better and more effective Fire and EMS laws.

Each year the Western New York Volunteer Firemen's Association holds our annual convention where we present training seminars for our firefighters and first responders over a three-day event that draws thousands in attendance. These seminars include hands-on pump operations and hose handling, as well as classroom instruction for both new and veteran members.

Also at our WNYVFA convention, we honor our members with recognition for their years of service in our local communities as well as special awards and honors for Firefighter of the Year, EMS of the Year, plus Heroism and Outstanding Service awards.

Our work in the community is made possible by caring people like you. We greatly appreciate your support as we continue in service to our beloved community of Western New York.

Sincerely,
Western New York Volunteer
Firemen's Association

Wings of Compassion Thanks BTF

Thank you for your donation with a value of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500) to Wings of Compassion Ministries, Inc.

Wings of Compassion Ministries, Inc. is sending this letter to all of our dear partners, churches, organizations, corporations, and friends who have generously supported us through the years. We are a nondenominational, 501(c)3 tax-exempt charity providing spiritual and physical assistance to needy people in the inner-city community. Your generous support and compassionate heart are appreciated.

Elsie Guash-Rosario
Secretary

NYSUT/AFT/NEA/ BTF Dues for 2023

It's that time of year when everyone is gathering information to prepare their tax returns. Union dues withheld from your paycheck *may* be tax deductible. Please note that the calendar year had only 20 payrolls with dues deduction, not 21, as is normally the case.

The total dues for full time employees are **\$901.71**.

This includes \$577.33 for the period January-June (\$44.41 x 13 checks) and \$324.38 for September-December (\$46.34 x 7 checks).

For part time employees, the total dues are **\$449.36**.

This includes \$287.17 for January-June (\$22.09 x 13 checks) and \$162.19 for September-December (\$23.17 x 7 checks).

Adult Learning Center dues totaled **\$372.11**. This includes \$225.81 for January-June (\$17.37 x 13 checks) and \$146.30 for September-December (\$17.37 x 7 checks).

BTF to Host March 26 Retirement Workshop

A workshop for teachers considering retirement in the near future will be conducted Tuesday, March 26 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 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 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, look for an email in March where there will be instructions for registering. You may call the BTF at (716) 881-5400 if you have questions.

27th Annual BTF Thanksgiving Food Drive Provides Dinner for Needy Buffalo Families

Once again, more than 100 area families enjoyed Thanksgiving dinner this year through the generosity of the Buffalo Teachers Federation and its teachers.

For the 27th consecutive year, cash and food donations were collected to ensure that needy families would enjoy the holiday with a traditional feast. This year, Lorraine Elementary #72 and Hutch Tech made the largest donations. The Hutch Tech JROTC boys and girls also helped pack bags of food for distribution to individual families.

Thousands of dollars in food and gift certificates were donated by BTF members and were distributed through several charitable and non-profit groups. It is estimated that more than 3,500 families have benefited from the BTF Thanksgiving Food Drive

throughout the years.

After the food was collected, volunteers met at the BTF office, where they stuffed shopping bags with all the traditional foods for a Thanksgiving feast including corn, green beans, sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, dinner rolls, stuffing mix, and a \$15 gift card for Tops Supermarkets to purchase a turkey. Dozens of boxes of food items were packed for area nonprofit organizations for distribution to the needy.

The agencies distributing the food and gift certificates were: Gloria Parks Community Center, Native American Community Services, Buffalo City Mission, Community Action Organization, Friends for a Better Buffalo, and Fulgham Family Foundation.



Women's Committee Active in Community

The BTF Women's Committee has been working hard to make an impact on the community.

In October, the Committee, chaired by Desiree Breckenridge- Barnes, held a Health and Wellness Fair, which served hundreds of families. The Fair was made possible by donations and support from the Alan Core Funeral Home, Buffalo retired teachers from NYSUT Retiree Council 44, Solutions for Counseling, and Say Yes.

In December, the Women's Committee held a successful Toy Drive and self-care product giveaway.

Donated items were distributed during the holidays by Child & Family Services, Jericho Road Community Health Center, and Haven House.

The Women's Committee welcomes new members and meets virtually, and sometimes in person, from 6-7 PM on the first Tuesday of each month. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the BTF to be put in touch with Desiree Breckenridge-Barnes.



1. With a dolly in hand, VP Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan helps School #72 teachers Johanna Woodams and Tim Aguglia unload boxes of donated food.

2. Serving residents on the West Side, volunteers from the Native American Community Center pose for a photo with the BTF officers.

3. Driving the first of several trucks from Hutch Tech, Eric Eschberger moves food to the tailgate as President Rich Nigro carries it inside.

4. With a group of hard-working JROTC cadets, Col. Jeffrey Abramowitz ensures that bags of food are packed correctly.



Above: Surrounded by toys, Desiree Beckingridge-Barnes, Rich Nigro and Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan get ready to make a delivery.

Emerson Science Teacher Saves a Life

You never know what a day will bring. For James Damon, it was a life-changing experience he will not soon forget.

Damon, a science teacher at Emerson School of Hospitality, was minding his own business on the evening of December 5, traveling on the Scajaquada Expressway. Suddenly, a woman who was driving erratically, clipped his vehicle. Damon followed the car as it left NY 198 and entered I-190 South.

It quickly became apparent to him that the driver was having some type of medical emergency and Damon called 911.

The woman's car crashed into the center median near Niagara Street and the vehicle came to a stop. Damon rushed to the woman's side and pulled her from the vehicle and began CPR.

Soon thereafter, an Erie County Sheriff's deputy and then the Erie County Sheriff's Office Medical Response Unit arrived and assisted Damon with the rescue.

Working together, Damon and the first responders were able to establish a pulse and the woman was taken to hospital for further treatment.

Thanks to Damon's quick thinking and heroic actions, the life of a Buffalo woman was saved.



Above: After having saved a life just two days earlier, James Damon came to the BTF office to attend a training.

Sixteen to Attend AFT Convention in July

Sixteen BTF members were elected delegates to the biennial American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Convention.

The convention will be held July 22-25 in the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, TX.

While an election of delegates for the three-year term is usually held, there were fewer candidates than the 20 delegates allotted to the BTF. Therefore, the 16 candidates are considered "elected by acclamation", as per the rules of the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act, sometimes called the Landrum-Griffin Act.

The BTF is affiliated with both the AFT and the National Education Association (NEA), the two national teacher unions representing educators from all 50 states.

Among the delegates are all four BTF executive officers, President Rich Nigro, Vice President Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan, Treasurer Joseph Montante, and Secretary Mark Mecca.

The other delegates elected to represent the BTF at the AFT conventions for 2024 and 2026 are: Dennis Brancato, Desiree Breckenridge-Barnes, Gregory Conley, Amy Flynn, Nicole Herkey, Melissa Kenney, Lisa Laske, Daphne McNab, Michael Mecca, M. Sue Raichilson, Gregory Sawicki, and Trisha Rosokoff.

The delegates will be responsible for examining and voting on resolutions that will determine the focus of the AFT for the next two years.

Reimbursement for Rx Co-Pay Available

Did you know that you can receive a reimbursement for prescriptions you and your dependents had filled in 2023?

The Supplemental Benefit Fund will pay you \$2 per script for yourself and for the dependents you have on file with the SBF, up to \$100 per person.

Starting in January, you must obtain a computer-generated roster from your pharmacist and complete the Rx Co-Pay Claim Form available from either your building delegate, the SBF Office, or from our website, www.btfny.org. Look under forms.

The deadline for submitting the form is Friday, March 1st at 5:00 PM.

Teacher Performs with BPO

Karen Saxon, a music teacher at City Honors School, had the honor and privilege of singing at the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra's Classical Christmas concerts on December 8 and 9 at Kleinhans Music Hall.

With her mellifluous mezzo-soprano voice, Saxon performed *O Holy Night* and *Sweet Little Jesus Boy* with the backing of the BPO. Regarding the experience, she remarked, "Being asked to sing with the BPO was a dream come true and a full circle moment. I remember when phenomenal music educator Donald Hilliard made me earn my own money to purchase a ticket to see Kathleen Battle's QRS series recital at Kleinhans as a teenager. I was awestruck! I knew at that moment that I wanted to sing - and that I wanted to sing on the Kleinhans stage with the BPO. That dream has been fulfilled and I am floating on air in a sea of gratitude!"

A vocal music teacher with Buffalo Schools for 24 years, Karen Saxon serves on the Board of Directors for Starring Buffalo and is the co-director of the Buffalo United Community Choir. In addition to her singing talent, she is also an accomplished pianist and expert choral conductor. The BTF is proud to have such a talented

professional vocalist among our ranks and could not be happier for her. Congratulations!



Above: After the December 9 concert, Karen Saxon felt honored to have had the opportunity to perform.

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 requests is March 23.

Transfer requests must be sent to Ms. Tameki Hollie-Mcgee, Chief of Human Resources; Buffalo Board of Education; 65 Niagara Square; City Hall Room 719; Buffalo, NY 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 submitting a written request 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.

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

Once your request 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.

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 2024-25 academic year will be awarded in the spring.

Students who are currently high school seniors or are already 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 opens 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.

BTF Training Workshops Prove to Be Successful

What should you do if you receive a counseling memo?

How about if serious allegations are made against you? What are your rights?

Are you obliged to answer questions asked by your principal or by Human Resources? Could something you say be used against you?

A new training titled *When the Principal Calls* was held at the BTF office November 28 and was attended by 20 delegates.

The two-hour seminar, prepared and presented by the labor relations specialists assigned to the BTF, focused on the representational rights afforded to teachers under NYS law. During the training, delegates learned about Garrity Rights, Cadet Rights, and Just Cause.

The interactive session proved to be very popular and filled up quickly. In response, BTF created a second session for this training on December 7.

In August and September, BTF held three workshops titled *Delegate Training 101*.

"Training our delegates is of paramount importance", said BTF President Rich Nigro. "Once we empower our building leaders, the entire union becomes stronger."

The leadership of the BTF and the LRS staff are planning more trainings in the future. This includes new workshops that need to be developed, as well as repeating the trainings previously offered.

All delegates and alternates are encouraged to attend.



1. The participants of the December 7th training pose for a photo at the conclusion of *When the Principal Calls*.

2. Despite being veteran unionists who have attended many BTF workshops, Dennis Brancato and Nicole Herkey sign in and await the start of the new training session.

3. Using the new screens at the BTF office, LRS Rob Mueller gives an overview of the topics to be presented.

4. With President Nigro sitting in, delegates learn about Garrity Rights, which are afforded to all teachers.

Keeping Records Can Prevent Problems Grievances Settled by Arbitration Decision

Whether you are new to the Buffalo School District or a veteran teacher, make sure you are saving your records.

The District has more than 7,000 employees and 30,000 student records to store and maintain. As such, the District sometimes is unable to provide accurate personnel records for its employees.

As a Buffalo and New York State public school teacher, you are entitled to certain benefits. To protect those benefits, it is the best practice to maintain the records listed below. Teachers who maintain the records are likely to have better overall outcomes when a question of their benefits or rights arise.

- Education transcripts
- Proof of certifications
- Copy of advanced credit differential form
- Copy of prior credit experience
- Substitute teaching records
- Temporary appointment letters
- Probationary appointment letters
- Tenure appointment letters
- Any document relating to a change in tenure area or a new appointment
- Coaching appointment letters
- Any record of extra activity hours, such as after school programs and interview teams

- Evaluations and Annual Professional Performance Reviews
- Professional Development records
- Paystubs – keep for 12 months to show rate of pay and accrued sick and personal leave days
- Layoff notices
- Leave requests and approval letters
- Accident Reports/Workers Comp forms
- Family Medical Leave Act paperwork
- Americans with Disabilities Act paperwork
- Retirement Notification Letter
- Any documents mailed or emailed to the School Board or District representatives

Maintain the above records as a hard copy or scan and store a digital copy in a secure location in your home.

This is not an exhaustive list. When in doubt, keep a copy of the record. If you are using an email address to maintain your records, make sure it is a personal email address and not a school email address. Where possible, obtain a date-stamped copy, a certified return receipt, or save the email identifying the date and time.

Dozens of outstanding class size overage claims, unpaid for several years due to an unsettled interpretation of our contract, are finally being paid.

NYS Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) Arbitrator Richard N. Chapman recently clarified the language when he issued the following explanations through an arbitration decision:

Integrated Co-Teaching Classrooms in the Buffalo Public Schools are composed of both students without disabilities and students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) requiring an Integrated Co-Teaching classroom. These classes are taught by both a General Education Teacher and a Special Education Teacher.

- *Class size overage exists for the General Education Teacher in the Integrated Co-Teaching Classroom when the combined total number of students without disabilities and students with an IEP requiring an Integrated Co-Teaching Classroom exceeds the maximum class size set forth in Article IX of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.*

- *The maximum number of students with an IEP requiring an Integrated Co-Teaching Classroom on the roster for Integrated Co-Teaching is twelve (12) students.*

- *A class size overage exists for the **Special Education Teacher** in the Integrated Co-Teaching Classroom when the number of students with an IEP requiring Integrated Co-Teaching on the roster is in excess of twelve (12) students.*

- *Class size overage payments pursuant to this agreement will be calculated according to Appendix G of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.*

The NYSUT Labor Relations Specialists are working with the District to identify all of the outstanding grievance matters on this subject and ensure that the affected teachers in those grievances are compensated appropriately according to Arbitrator Chapman's award.

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 Jackie Newton, 271 Porter Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14201. This form may be faxed to (716) 881-6678.

Name: _____ Home/cell phone: _____

Home address: _____

Personal E-mail: _____

School: _____ Number of years teaching in BPS: _____

Visit Our Updated Website

www.btfny.org

Variety Kids Telethon Set for March 9-10

The Buffalo Teachers Federation will once again participate in the 62nd Annual Variety Kids Telethon. The Telethon, benefiting the Robert Warner MD Rehabilitation Center, John R. Oishei Children's Hospital and other charities in Western New York, will take place on Saturday, March 9, from 6 pm-11 pm on WGRZ, Channel 2, and Sunday, March 10, from 10 am-8 pm on WBBZ, Channel 5 and will be streamed online.

Donations for the telethon will be collected by delegate chairs in each building and at the BTF office, 271 Porter Avenue, Buffalo. In addition, a link to make donations online will be sent to all teachers in early March. Please consider donating to this worthy cause.

Did You Know...?

That teachers can now accrue up to 250 sick days? This is a new provision in our contract that was negotiated in the last round of bargaining and represents a significant improvement on the previous maximum of 220 days. However, when a teacher retires or resigns, the number of days that can be "sold back" under what is known as Termination Compensation remains 220.

Council of Delegates Unanimously Passes Resolution

The BTF's Council of Delegates has unanimously approved the resolution below that condemns those whose actions fan the flames of hatred. The resolution was referred by Kevin Gibson, a delegate from Hutch Tech High School, and recommended to both the Executive Committee and Council by President Rich Nigro at the December Council meeting.

WHEREAS the Buffalo Teachers Federation rejects the recent attacks on Jewish and Muslim people in New York, Vermont, Ohio and elsewhere in the country who have been assaulted on the streets, in their

communities; and in places of worship and WHEREAS the BTF opposes bigotry and discrimination based on race, religion, national origin, immigration status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender; and WHEREAS BTF is an inclusive body that values the diversity of its membership and opposes hate. THEREFORE, be it resolved, that the BTF call upon the leadership of this country to stand opposed to those whose actions and policies fan the flames of hatred.

Welcome New Members

The following 45 teachers have joined the Buffalo Teachers Federation since the last issue of the Provocator. Welcome to the union!

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Elizabeth Affronte | Danielle Dowell | Cory Mitchum |
| Sherrin Barone | Monika Felker | Jessica Nemeti |
| Theresa Bernys | Ann Fredo | Bridget O'Connell |
| Adriana Bolender | Jacqueline Garlow | Julie Patel |
| Tyina Brooks | Jina Gentry | Gina Pecoraro |
| Chavon Campbell | Kathleen Gibbs | Brittany Penaloza |
| Ronan Carbone Petean, Jr. | Jaleah Greene | Amiya Roberts |
| Craig Chatman Bey | Kimberly Heider | Andrea Silvestrini |
| Megan Cloen | Mikalya Highsmith | Leah Skarupinski |
| Elizabeth Colombo | Anneliese Hock | Olivia Smith |
| Shannon Connors-Hershey | Catherine Horton | Alicia Struckmann |
| DeAndra Contangelo | Jacob Hyzy | Ann Sullivan |
| Richard Cowans | Lauren Koons | Allison Swatsworth |
| Sherry Crumity | Luis Maisonet | Annamaria Todaro |
| Jennifer Dombrowski | Katherine Merrill | Serena Wei |

Plan...Protect...Invest...

Proudly
Helping
Buffalo School
Employees
with their
403(b)
Since 1972



SGROI
FINANCIAL

- Local family owned financial firm
- Full transparency on all fees/costs
- Stress-free sign up process

716-674-6700 www.sgroifinancial.com

Securities offered through Cadaret, Grant & Co., Inc., member FINRA/SIPC. Advisory services offered through Sgroi Wealth Advisory Group LLC, an SEC Registered Investment Advisor. Sgroi Wealth Advisory Group LLC, Sgroi Financial LLC, and Cadaret, Grant & Co., Inc. are separate entities.



Charles San George



EST. 1985



Charles San George II O.D.

Sheridan / Delaware Plaza Across From Tops
874-4600
Convenient Parking

100% Coverage for Teachers and Dependents

Monday through Fri: 9:30AM - 6:00PM [We Supply and Submit Your Forms](#)

Saturdays: 9:30AM - 2:00PM

Eye Examinations by Appointment - Evenings Available



Greg Mucha
Optician

Call Today for
An Appointment
With our
Optometrist!

834-3511
Eyewear Unlimited
1480 Hertel Avenue @ Sterling Avenue

100% Total Coverage*

Complete Frame & Lens Coverage
for BTF & Dependents

Single Vision or Flat-Top 28
* Plastic lenses power to ± .400 SPH. • with ± .200 CYC.
Choose from a Special Selection of Frames.
Tints extra. Not Good with other offers.

Joe is the Husband of BTF member Barbara Polino Frandina



Joe Frandina
Optician

Call Today for
An Appointment
With our
Optometrist!