



President PHILIP RUMORE

November 10, 2022

BUFFALO TEACHERS  
FEDERATION, INC

271 PORTER AVENUE  
BUFFALO, N.Y. 14201  
(716) 881-5400  
FAX (716) 881-6678

**MEMO TO:** Dr. Tonja M. Williams, Superintendent, BPS  
Nathaniel J. Kuzma, Esq., General Counsel, BPS  
Members, Buffalo Board of Education

**FROM:** Philip Rumore, President, BTF

**RE:** Negotiations

You wait until 8:37 a.m., November 9, 2022, the day we were to continue negotiations at 11:30 a.m. to advise us that you are cancelling negotiations? You could have done so on Monday or Tuesday. You have my cell phone number.

There were issues that could have been discussed and possibly agreed to on Wednesday. Yet, you waited until 8:37 a.m. on November 9, 2022, the day we were to resume negotiations, to cancel them.

Buffalo teachers are not happy.

In addition, the nasty and incorrect statements contained in your October 28, 2022 submission to the fact-finder, that we assume you have read, demonstrate the District's disrespect for Buffalo teachers, e.g.

- In reference to the District package that was submitted to the fact-finder and to which the District refers, i.e. ,

**SALARY**

2019 - 2020 - 0% **8% *one time bonus of salary on date of ratification***  
 2020 - 2021 - 0% ***if hired prior to January 1, 2021 – nothing upon the***  
 2021 - 2022 - 0% ***later ratification or July 1, 2022***  
 2022 - 2023 - 8% or 7% if Step 16 removed  
 2023 - 2024 - 6% or 5% if Step 16 removed  
 2024 - 2025 - 4% or 3% if Step 16 removed

You state, "If accepted, there will be no reason, absent a lack of dedication to our students and a desire for a less vibrant urban environment, to continue the alleged teacher flight to the suburbs" (emphasis added). (p. 6) The teachers I have spoken with, who were leaving the District, as all Buffalo teachers do, care deeply for their students and did not want to leave them. They cited what they considered the District's lack of support for and caring for their students and them. Shame on you.

You also state “This proposal, if accepted, will make the total financial package offered to our teachers surpass any other District in the region, suburban or otherwise.” (p. 6)

	<u>Max. Step (MS)</u>	<u>Salary at Step</u>	<u>Cumulative Earnings 30 Years</u>
Williamsville	16	\$100,750	\$2,432,150
Hamburg	19	96,927	2,214,522
Buffalo	27	92,957	2,086,456

These salaries are also what is used to determine retirement income.

Despite the District having been provided with the above insulting salary proposals and salary step information, you make this statement?!

Also, in your (the District’s) October 28, 2022 correspondence, despite the Fact-Finder setting that date as the new date for the parties to “submit their rebuttal or clarifying materials” (August 25, 2022), you state “The Federation did not even attempt to explain why their proposals are warranted. Seemingly, the only take away is, whatever is being offered, is not enough and they want more.” (p. 1)

That is false. In our October 12, 2022 submission, we –

- showed the average BA Step 1 salary comparisons with the Big 5 Districts. The average was \$55, 596. For Buffalo, it is \$37,649. (Document IV)
- showed great disparities in the salaries and steps to reach maximum for thirty-three (33) surrounding school districts. (Document V)
- also detailed the lifetime earnings discussed above. (Document VI)
- provided our counter to the District SBF proposal and the reason for the needed increase. (Documents VII and VIII)

Further, in our October 28, 2022 submission, we –

- show, using District data, that the District’s healthcare costs remained constant for 2020-21, 2021-2022 and 2022-23.
- show that the District’s statement relating to the coaching committee was incorrect and that, in fact, the District inhibited progress.
- provide a comprehensive analysis of the District’s current and future financial position.

In addition, in the District’s October 28, 2022 submission to the Fact-Finder, you state (p. 5) –

- that the District “bid against itself” on October 25, 2022 when it submitted a proposal. Once again, this is false. The District made a salary proposal on April 28, 2022 and on June 6, 2022 refused to make a salary counter-proposal to the BTF’s May 6, 2022 salary proposal.

The District was not bidding “against itself”. On October 25, 2022, it was responding to the BTF’s May 6, 2022 proposals as it should have when it refused to respond on June 6, 2022.

The District falsely states “The Federation claims, again without any support, that our students do not have the best teachers because the best and brightest apparently leave at the first opportunity when a wealthy suburb calls” (p. 5). This is a pathetic lie! We never said this.

The District also falsely claims that the Improper Practice Charges filed against the District “were attempts to drag out our negotiations” (p. 6). Negotiations do and did proceed with the filing of charges against the District.

The District attempts to defend its refusal to agree that the “parties will schedule in advance a minimum of two tentative negotiating sessions with agreed time limits.”

BTF, having agreed to changes to the ground rules we have used for many years, in response to our several inquiries as to their reason for its refusal, received an answer of “No”.

The District, despite the agreement of Superintendent Dr. Tonja M. Williams and the Fact-Finder, to attempt to settle possibly easily resolvable issues “low-hanging fruit” states that the BTF is “doing so in an effort to gain benefits without giving up concessions in return.” (p. 9)

In addition to any proposals having to be agreed to by both parties, some of the proposals benefit the District as well as the BTF.

The District also states other districts can “simply raise taxes to overpay their own teachers to leave Buffalo.” (p. 15) First, the statement is insulting to other districts and their teachers. It is also wrong. There is a tax cap for suburban districts and their budgets have to be voted on by its taxpayers.

You can hopefully see from the above and by reading your seventeen (17) page document, filled with false statements, harsh language, and inaccuracies, why negotiations have been so contentious.

That you have, obviously, agreed to all that has transpired is disappointing to say the most.

Buffalo teachers, when advised of your actions, will obviously be very angry and rightly so.

PR:ls