

President PHILIP RUMORE



March 18, 2022

BUFFALO TEACHERS
FEDERATION, INC

MEMO TO: Dr. Tonja M. Williams, Interim Superintendent, BPS
Members, Buffalo Board of Education
Gregory Poland, Mediator, PERB

FROM: Philip Rumore, President, BTF

RE: District Insults Buffalo Teachers

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

The contract proposals you approved and the statements made by your Chief Negotiator, at the Board meeting and at our negotiations session today, are an insult to Buffalo teachers, who have and continue their commitment to our students through the pandemic, the lack of security for themselves and our students and many other serious issues delineated in our recent school safety survey.

First, for your Chief Negotiator, Nathaniel Kuzma, to state at your Board meeting (with apparently no dissent) and several times at our negotiating session that we are “trying to bankrupt the District with our contract proposals”, is not only insulting, it is wrong.

Our proposals were intended to demonstrate just how far Buffalo teachers are behind their colleagues in similar cities, i.e.

“ (1) Effective 7/1/18 the base teacher’s salary, B.S. Step 1, shall be the average salary for public school teachers in the Big Six school districts (including Albany but excluding Buffalo) for B.S. Step 1 for the 2019-2020 school year¹. Each step on the Salary Schedule, each column across the Salary Schedule, and all other teachers’ compensation shall be increased proportionately.

¹For the purpose of these negotiations, based on the New York State Education Department data, the 2021-2022 BS Step 1 average salary for the Big 6 (including Albany minus Buffalo) is \$54,540.

(2) Effective 7/1/2019 - Step 27 Will Be Eliminated
Effective 7/1/2020 - Step 26 Will Be Eliminated
Effective 7/1/2021 - Step 25 Will be Eliminated
Effective 7/1/2022 - Step 24 Will Be Eliminated
Effective 7/1/2023 - Step 23 Will Be Eliminated

(3) The coaching and club rate, where less, will be the average of the Big 6, minus Buffalo. Thereafter, they will be increased by the same percentage as the salary schedule, e.g. BS Step 1.

Psychologists’ salaries will be increased by the same percentage with the same reduction in steps, i.e. from 27 steps to 22 steps. (See XXV D) (13), Line 13)”

Not only are we behind these cities i.e., our BS Step 1 is actually \$38,757, whereas, the Big 6 average is \$54,540, it takes Buffalo teachers longer to reach the maximum "Longevity" salary step, as you can see from the document provided to your negotiating team. Note: The "Longevity Step" is the step where other districts' teachers reach maximum. (attached)

As a further insult, you propose:

- No salary increase for the first year of the new contract (2019-2020).
- No retroactive payment for teachers who retired prior to the ratification of a new contract.
- To increase the number of weeks teachers must work from forty-two (42) to forty-four (44) weeks.
- That teachers required to work after the forty-two (42) week maximum will not be paid. Will only receive 1/200 after the forty-fourth week.
- To increase the hours of special area teachers teaching both elementary and secondary students from two hundred forty (240) minutes to two hundred fifty-five (255).
- That teachers pay twenty percent (20%) toward their health care. Note: We are informed the District's healthcare costs went down.

And, your gracious salary offer for Buffalo teachers:

- 2019-2020 - 0% salary increase
- 2020-2021 - only "Teachers employed by the District at the end of the 2020-2021 school year, who continue to be employed by the District as of the ratification of this Agreement shall receive a one (1) time bonus in the amount of 5% of their annual salary as of the date of ratification of this Agreement."
- 2021-2022 - Effective upon ratification of this Agreement, teacher and psychologist salaries shall be increased by 4%. (4%)
- 2022-2023 - (0%)
- 2023-2024 - Effective July 1, 2023, teachers and psychologist salaries shall be increased by 5%, or 3.94% (5% or 3.94%) if the parties agree to include a form of step compression.
- 2024-2025 - Effective July 1, 2024, teacher and psychologist salaries shall be increased 2.5%
- 2025-2026 - Effective July 1, 2025, teacher and psychologist salaries shall be increased by 4% or 2.94% if the parties agree to include a form of step compression. (4% or 2.94%)

Step Compression:

- Effective July 1, 2023, Step 16 will be eliminated from the teacher salary schedule (but reduces salary increase to 3.94%)
- Effective July 1, 2025, the new Step 16 will be eliminated from the teacher salary schedule (but reduces salary increase to 2.94%).

These statements and contract proposals are how you value Buffalo teachers?!

We obviously need the assistance of the PERB Mediator as your statements at the negotiations table and contract proposals and insults demonstrate your intentions.

In light of the above, we cannot, at our next scheduled negotiating session, March 21, 2022, present a package of BTF modified proposals and a response to the District's proposals. We are prepared to resume with the PERB-appointed mediator. We assume Gregory Poland will continue.

As we informed your negotiating team, your insults and proposals will be made public.

**Erie County School District Comparison
2020-2021**

<i>District</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>	<i>Longevity Step</i>	<i>Salary at Longevity Step</i>		<i>Buffalo at Other District Longevity Step</i>	
			<i>BA</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>BA</i>	<i>MS</i>
Akron	AK	20	79,516	95,500	72,573	79,783
Alden	AL	21	81,405	90,953	74,455	81,665
Amherst	AM	21	87,648	95,498	74,455	81,665
Buffalo	BU	27	85,747	92,957		
Cleveland Hill	CH	5/24	40,347	92,586	45,177	87,311
Cheektowaga	CK	23	87,315	89,465	78,219	85,429
Clarence	CL	10/21	51,469	100,500	54,587	81,665
Cheektowaga Sloan	CS					
Depew	DP	25	88,483	95,959	81,983	89,193
Erie 1 Boces	E1B	23	81,498	83,248	78,219	85,429
East Aurora	EA	22	84,632	92,259	76,337	83,547
Eden	ED	20	84,000	89,000	72,573	79,783
Frontier	FR	21	85,641	92,141	74,455	81,665
Gowanda	GO	21	84,700	87,000	74,455	81,665
Grand Island	GI	5/20	47,272	91,527	45,177	79,783
Hamburg	HA	19	75,335	94,816	70,691	77,901
Holland	HO	26	87,000	90,000	83,865	91,075
Iroquois	IR	25	89,200	93,200	81,983	89,193
Kenmore	KN	22	86,644	95,245	76,337	83,547
Lancaster	LN	22/21	75,667	95,700	76,337	81,665
Lake Shore	LS	25	85,935	94,190	81,983	89,193
Lackawanna	LK	25	96,941	103,643	81,983	89,193
Maryvale	MV	19	78,772	83,772	70,691	77,901
North Collins	NC	24/25	74,305	83,947	80,101	89,193
Orchard Park	OP	20	90,866	100,372	72,573	79,783
Sweet Home	SH	24	85,882	100,469	80,101	87,311
Springville	SP	22	87,291	95,919	76,337	83,547
Tri-County Boces	TCB	24	93,071	94,071	80,101	87,311
Tonawanda	TN	25	75,903	90,996	81,983	89,193
West Seneca	WS	15	83,256	94,425	63,163	70,373
Williamsville	WV	16	95,713	100,750	65,045	72,255