

## Letter: News editorial is wrong, one-sided and detrimental

Oct 7, 2022

**O**nce again, The Buffalo News editorial board **takes a position**, this time on retiree healthcare, that is factually wrong, one-sided, and detrimental to Buffalo teachers' and others' healthcare.

First, in reference to our current contract negotiations, any healthcare savings will not, as The Buffalo News printed, help pay for raises.

“Savings” would not begin for 15, 20 or 30 years, when new teachers retire, since teachers must have at least 15 years of service to receive retiree healthcare.

You mention that other districts don't have this benefit.

You don't mention that:

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- The average 2020-2021 BA Step 1 starting salary for the Big 5 school districts (not including Buffalo) was \$55,596; whereas, Buffalo's (Step 2) is \$39,531.
- It takes Buffalo teachers 27 years to reach maximum salary; whereas, in surrounding districts the average is 22 years.
- Life-time earnings are therefore over \$100,000 less than in other districts.

You refer to “economic conditions” dictating changes. Note: The district has a \$90,000,000-plus surplus.

The district will receive additional Foundation Aid – \$41,260,020 more for 2021-2022, \$34,947,010 more for 2022-2023 and \$34,974,010 more for 2023-2024.

There will apparently be \$40,000,000 more when the COLA is added.

This is in addition to other state and federal aid.

Having some healthcare security also keeps many teachers working in Buffalo.

The issue should be the lack of adequate healthcare for all in our country.

Most other counties already provide healthcare for their citizens.

Our country should not only provide healthcare for all, as do other countries, it should be superior to that in other countries.

Philip Rumore

President

Buffalo Teachers Federation