

PROVOCATOR

June 2026

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION VOLUME 56/NUMBER 4

DEDICATION
SOLIDARITY
PROFESSIONALISM
PRIDE
SECOND TO NONE



Significant Reforms Made for Tier 6 Employees in State Budget

Thanks to member solidarity and action, including the Fix Tier 6 rally last spring in Niagara Square and the massive rally in Albany in May, meaningful pension reforms have been secured for Tier 6.

This year's state budget includes reforms for Tier 6 members in multiple retirement systems. The biggest win for members of the New York State Teachers' Retirement System, NYSTRS, which includes mostly teachers and teaching assistants, is that the retirement age will be reduced by five years from age 63 to 58 for members with 30 years of service. Prior to the budget, teachers were required to wait until age 63, regardless of years of service, to retire without penalty.

"This Tier 6 agreement is proof that when workers organize and stay united, change is possible. This is a victory for public workers across New York", said NYSUT President Melinda Person. "Because members across New York refused to give up, we secured meaningful progress for public workers – including lowering the retirement age from 63 to 58 after 30 years of service for members in the NYS and NYC Teachers' Retirement Systems and reducing contribution rates for many other public employees."

Reforms in Tier 6 for non-teacher unions will provide meaningful financial relief for public employees across New York State. The agreement includes substantial reduction in employee contribution rates, allowing Tier 6 members to keep more of what they earn. Nearly 90 percent of members will now pay a 3% contribution rate, compared to roughly 30% under the previous system.

- **For Tier 6 members in NYSERS, NYCERS and NYCBERS**, which includes many school-related professionals, support staff, and other workers, contribution rates will be reduced across most salary bands. The new NYSERS/NYCERS/NYCBERS Contribution Bands will be:

- o \$75k or less: 3%
- o \$75k - \$100k: 4%
- o \$100k - \$125k: 5.25%
- o \$125k or more: 5.75%

- **For Tier 6 members in the SUNY and CUNY Optional Retirement Program (ORP)**, contribution bands will be adjusted to align with changes in the other retirement systems, and members will receive an additional 1% state contribution to their ORP accounts.

- **For Tier 6 members eligible for overtime**, the overtime cap used in final average salary calculations will increase from \$22,500 plus CPI to \$30,000 plus CPI.

BTF Participates in Juneteenth Parade

Approximately two dozen BTF members walked June 13 in the 50th annual Juneteenth Festival parade on Buffalo's East Side.

The large parade, one of the longest in Buffalo history, proceeded down Genesee Street to Fillmore Avenue.

Thousands of onlookers applauded and cheered as the BTF made its way along the parade route with a decorated car and numerous walkers.





As June comes to an end, so has the 2025–26 school year. Looking back on the past 10 months, I am encouraged by the victories we have celebrated and the challenges we have faced together. Together—that is what matters most. And together, just some of the notable things we accomplished this year are:

- Negotiated an affiliation contract with NYSUT that provides the BTF with significant financial resources and allows us to hire our own teachers to serve as Member Relations Representatives while retaining a Labor Relations Specialist and legal support
- Negotiated several MOUs such as:
 - **Transfer MOU** that allows more teachers to avail themselves of the opportunity to change schools
 - **Retiree Healthcare MOU** that guarantees future retiree healthcare to our current temporary and laid off teachers who continue unbroken service with BPS
 - **Reduction in Force MOU** that enables affected teachers the opportunity to engage in the transfer process without having to wait two years as outlined in our contract
 - **Graduation MOU** that improved the language in our contract by providing teachers with a Board Day rather than having to use a Personal Day to attend the graduation of immediate family members
- Organized with Special Education teacher members to speak at Board of Education meetings advocating for resources and policies that are needed to work with our highest-needs students. This resulted in an **Agency Classroom MOU** that will endeavor to facilitate this goal
- Made demonstrable progress toward a new and better APPR agreement

While people will not always agree on everything, your steadfast commitment to one another and to the union continues to encourage and inspire me.

I hope, over the next two months, you take time to do what you love with the ones you love. As for the BTF officers, administrative assistants, and staff here at the office, we will continue working throughout the summer on contract negotiations, addressing grievances, preparing for arbitrations, processing Supplemental Benefit Fund claims, and distributing Extended Pay funds. And, of course, should you need anything, we are always here to support, advocate, and fight for you.

In solidarity,



BTF at a Glance

BTF President

Rich Nigro

BTF Vice President

Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan

BTF Treasurer

Joseph Montante

BTF Secretary

Nicole Herkey

BTF Executive Committee Members

Pre-K-6

Rachel Binda-Lis, Kim Parzymieso,
Jamie Stevens, Tara Rosa,
Janine Schuster, Chris Stephens

7-12

Tom Anthony, Dennis Brancato, Sam
Fritz, Mike Jeffers, Eve Shippens, M.
Sue Raichilson, Jonathan Zasowski

K-12

Amy Flynn, Mary Kiblin, Ellen Malone, An-
drea Manna, Becky Moola,
Gregory Sawicki

At Large

Tricia Andrzejewski, Danielle Harris,
Brian Meyer

BTF Headquarters Staff

Rich Nigro, *President*
Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan, *Presidential*
Assistant
Joseph Montante, *Presidential Assistant*
Tricia Andrzejewski, *Member Relations*
Officer
Nicole Herkey, *Member Relations Officer*
Nick Whitman, *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 2025-2026 school year as a service to BTF members and interested parties in the community. Subscription price is included in BTF dues.

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

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Letters to the Editor

Amnesty Leadership Group Thanks BTF for Donation and Making the World More Humane

Thank you for being a member of the Amnesty Leadership Group and for your recent contribution of \$500. I want you to know that you just did something really important for human rights. Living in a period when attacks on human rights are having such a devastating impact on people's lives around the world is truly heartbreaking. Yet your sustained commitment sends the message that no one has to fight this fight alone. When confronted with hate and abuse, you continue to show up to protect everybody's human rights.

Yours is an act of courage that is desperately needed in the world today.

Friend, it is thanks to your ongoing support that Amnesty International is able to make a real difference in people's lives. Your gift today will be put to work to support our Urgent Action Network, which mobilizes activists around the globe to defend

people under immediate threat of grave human rights abuses.

Your support also provides us with the resources needed to dispatch our Crisis Investigation teams when human rights emergencies occur. We go where others don't, to investigate and expose human rights violations; document the stories of people whose lives have been shattered; and demand justice for those whose human rights have been denied.

You, my friend, are Amnesty International, and I hope you will use your voice to influence our policy decisions and set our organizational priorities. Because without members like you, Amnesty could not continue to protect and defend human rights around the world—it's that simple. Thank you for helping to create a more humane world.

For Justice and peace,
Paul O'Brien, Executive Director

BTF Supports Habitat for Humanity

Your support is critical to helping families build decent, affordable homes and brighter futures. Thank you for helping to build a world where everyone has a decent place to live.

With gratitude,
Tolli Love
Chief Development Officer
Habitat for Humanity

Make-A-Wish Thanks BTF

Thank you so much for your recent donation to Make-A-Wish Western New York! We appreciate your generous support so much. We are only able to grant wishes in our community because of support like yours.

On behalf of our wish kids and families, thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

Sincerely,
Jodie

On behalf of Variety, the children's charity of Buffalo & WNY, I would like to express my extreme gratitude. Your generosity continues to amaze me and it's truly an honor to have your support.

Each year we ask the Western New York Community to come together in support of our community's most precious assets, our children. We are thrilled to say the response was tremendous, especially in a very difficult economy. I was pleasantly surprised that the Unions raised \$75,390. We are overwhelmed with gratitude for your help.

With Labor Organizations like yours, we've been able to impact hundreds of thousands of children across our region. Whether it is through donating adaptive bikes, allowing kids to have one of the most fundamental childhood experiences, or providing "camperships" to children who would never otherwise have the opportunity to camp, you make a difference. In fact, the support of donors like you is why Golisano Children's Hospital has

April Baskin Thanks BTF for Support

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks for your generous contribution and continued support of my re-election campaign.

Organized labor has always been a driving force in the fight for fairness, dignity, and opportunity for working families across New York State. I am deeply grateful for your trust and partnership as we continue working together to advocate for good-paying union jobs, safe workplaces, strong benefits, and economic justice for all.

Your support strengthens our shared mission to build stronger communities and ensure that working people always have a voice in government. I remain committed to standing alongside labor in the State Senate and fighting for policies that uplift workers and their families throughout Western New York and beyond.

Thank you again for your generosity, your solidarity, and the important work you do every day.

With sincere appreciation.
April N.M. Baskin

Over \$1,000 Raised for Variety Kids Telethon

dedicated their rehabilitation center on the Variety Tent #7/Robert Warner M.D. Rehab Center.

This year, we had the honor of having Sully Mettille as the 2026 Celebrity Child. His smile is contagious and his spirit is both admirable and inspiring. Helping children just like Sully is an honor and we couldn't do it without you.

Since 1934, Variety has been part of WNY, and we're continuing our commitment to the region's kids. All of our donations stay local and are dedicated to programing and equipment that changes children's lives.

Thank you again for your incredible support and cheers to 64 amazing years. It's my hope we can have your support for the 65th year ahead.

Fraternally,
Tony Vaccaro, Union Chair
Variety Kids Telethon

BTF Donates \$500 to National Federation for Just Communities

On behalf of the National Federation for Just Communities of Western New York, we would like to thank the Buffalo Teachers Federation for their generous gift, which is so important to the many adult and youth programs that the NFJC offers to our community.

Having conversations, sharing stories, bridging divides, and building strong communities is the core mission of the NFJC. Founded in 1951, the NFJC consistently searches for new ways to have conversations that build relations and community. Thank you for your support in helping us fulfill our mission.

Please visit our website; www.nfjcwny.org and Facebook page for updates on programs and other initiatives.

Again, we sincerely thank you for your generosity and continued support.

Sincerely,
Rene Petties-Jones, President/
CEO

BTF Donates \$500 to Buffalo Toronto Media

Thank you for donating \$500 to Buffalo Toronto Public Media, where every day you hear and see something new, interesting, and important to your life. Thank you for your generosity.

Every supporter of Buffalo Toronto Public Media is appreciated for their commitment to public broadcasting. Thank you for partnering in our efforts to remain your most trusted source for the programs you love and that make a difference in your life and in the lives of your family, friends, and neighbors.

Our team is so grateful for you – the extra step that you took to support great programming for the Western New York and Southern Ontario area is a vital one. Thank you for helping us make our community a more engaging place to call home.

Sincerely,
Lisa LaTrovato, director
Leadership & Legacy Giving
Programs

BTF Donates \$2,500 for Prostate Cancer Research

Your generosity is changing lives. As Roswell Park, we aim to not only provide the highest quality, most innovative care to our patients, but we’re taking it a step further. We want to change cancer as we know it and eliminate its grip on humanity.

Reaching that goal would not be possible without your support, and we are incredibly grateful to your partnership in our mission to end cancer.

Thousands of cancer patients and their families turn to Roswell Park for hope every year. Here, we are committed to caring for the whole person. That includes providing exceptional medical care and compassionate programs to enhance quality of life.

Our world-renowned scientists are working tirelessly to discover new ways to save more lives, and your contributions are key in that pursuit. Hand-in-hand, we aspire to free our world from fear, pain and loss due to cancer.

Please know the difference you are making for people seeking care today and the next generation of cancer patients. On behalf of all those who walk through our doors, thank you!

Most Sincerely,
Candace S. Johonson, PhD
M&T Bank Presidential Chair
Roswell Park Cancer Center

PAL Thanks BTF for \$1,000 Donation

The Police Athletic League of Buffalo, Inc. (PAL) is a nonprofit organization operating under the direction of a Board of Directors. We provide youth of the City of Buffalo with recreational, educational, and enriching preventive programming activities in a structured and supervised setting. We utilize professional recreational coaches and law enforcement personnel to provide leadership and direction for our youth. Providing the foundational tools and knowledge youth need to become responsible successful adults.

“The Mission of PAL is to improve the immediate and future quality of life for the youth through enrichment and recreational programming in collaboration with law enforcement.”

On behalf of the Police Athletic League of Buffalo Board of Directors, we would like to thank you for your Major Gift contribution in the amount of \$1,000, received April 6, 2026.

Thank you for supporting the Mission of Buffalo PAL and joining our efforts to improve the overall physical health, social/emotional well-being, and quality of life for thousands of our youngest citizens.

Sincerely,
Chief Dennis J. Richards
Board President

Nekia Kemp, Ms
Executive Director

Welcome New Members

The following 22 teachers have joined the Buffalo Teachers Federation since the last issue of the *Provocator*. Welcome to the union!

Uzma Ashfaq
Shane Bucci
Matthew Coloprisco
Emily Curran
Desireé Desiderio
Kristy Dolina
Linda Emmi
Shawn Foster

Kathy Frederick
Dennisha Huff
Jacob Jaskula
Rachel Kent
SueSue Kie
Lisa King
Maureen Lenahan
Jason McNair

Courtney Nelson-Benton
Sarah Pratt
Ryan Robinson
Jessenia Rosado Rivera
Christina Sampman
Vershawn Young

52 Teachers, Clocking almost 1,450 Total Years of Service, Honored May 20 During BTF's Annual Retirement Dinner

Fifty-two teachers, with a total of 1449.9 cumulative years teaching in the Buffalo Public School District, attended the annual BTF Retirement Dinner following a brief Council of Delegates meeting May 20 at The Foundry Lounge.

The retiring teachers had careers ranging in service from 9 to 41 years in Buffalo Public Schools. Prior service in other school districts was not part of the calculations.

Among the retirees were two long-time members of the BTF Executive Committee. Trisha Rosokoff and Sue Raichilson each had 27 years of service.

The annual dinner, a long-standing tradition for retiring teachers who wish to attend, was started by the BTF as a way to honor teachers for their dedication and service. Each participant receives a complimentary dinner and a framed certificate for their service. The dinner follows a brief meeting of the Council of Delegates.

BTF President Rich Nigro and Vice President Melinda MacPherson Sullivan presented the certificates. MacPherson Sullivan also emceed the event. In opening remarks, President Nigro told the retirees they will always be part of the BTF and can call with their questions and concerns.



2026 BTF RETIREMENT DINNER	
RETIREE - NAME	YEARS
Mary E. O'Connell	41
Ramona Adams-Franklin	40
Lori Pasquarella	38
Michael Sorrentino	37
Jacqueline J. McMillan	36.4
Starling Bryant	35
Candace Jackson	34
Kathleen Zatkos	33
Lorianne Fincik	32
Mary Fleming	32
Kim Minor	32
Tonya Sieracki	32
Roseanne Cullis-Santiago	31.1
Elizabeth J. Curtis	31
Melissa Johnson	31
Vincent Corulli	30.5
Glenn Mogavero	30.5
Mary Bellet	30
Lisa Godios	30
Nadine Jones	30
Celeste A. Notaro	30
Melanie Pyne	30
Felicia Scaccia Berst	30
Giovanna Bufalino	29.3
John McTigue, Jr.	29
Joan Campbell-Cook	28.5
Kim Baldinger	28
Stephen Zatlukal, Jr.	28

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Sebastiana Giuca-Bauman	27.5
Amy Borowiak	27
Mary Jane Hannon	27
Linda F. Jones-Martin	27
Pam Machelor	27
M. Sue Raichilson	27
Trish Rosokoff	27
Anthony Scarozza	27
Monica Stankewicz	27
Lisa Gionis	25.5
Pamela Perry	25.5
Paul Gennuso	25
Michelle Lash	25
Doreen Regan	25
Madeline Baker	24
Patricia Gentzler	22
Donna Wakeley	20.6
Fabiola Friot	20
Mary Priester	20
Lynn Thompson	20
Gladys Soto-Krueger	19
Roslie Radoccia	15
Lisa Berton	11.5
Kathleen Cody	9



Sara Rodland Receives Prestigious Sandy Feldman Award for Outstanding Leadership

Sara Rodland, longtime president of the New York State United Teachers' Retiree Council #44, received the Sandy Feldman Outstanding Leadership Award May 1, during the NYSUT Representative Assembly in Albany.

Sara, a tireless labor champion since 1976 for both the Buffalo Teachers Federation and the Retirees' Council, was recognized during the convention in a video in which colleagues and BTF officers praised her selflessness and her ability to connect with people.

"When you think of unions, you need to have leaders and you need to have soldiers. With Sara you have both. She's heavily involved in all things union", said Rich Nigro, president of the BTF.

"Sara just dives in and takes on every challenge", Joseph Montante, treasurer of the BTF explained. "She's one of the most dedicated people I've met in my life. She will not stop... Retired from Buffalo, but there's no stopping Sara".

Rodland started her career in Buffalo Public Schools in 1971 as an elementary teacher who delighted in watching children's minds at work. The Buffalo Teachers Federation strike in 1976 galvanized her union involvement and, over the years, she served her local in various capacities, including building delegate chairperson, Political Action Committee member, Executive Committee member, and co-chair of the Public Relations Committee. She was eventually elected secretary for the BTF.

She retired in 2010, the same year Retiree Council #44 was formed and she became its first vice president, along with Stan Nowak, the first president.

As President of RC #44, Sara mobilizes Buffalo retirees for phone banking, political action, and working at the Teacher's Desk. She is also a member of the NYSUT's Political Action Committee and Women's Committee.

"There was always something going on that needed to be addressed, and

we needed to stand up and fight for what was right", Rodland said. "It's important to help people when you can. Whenever I hear something I can do to help someone, whether a student, teacher, or making something better, I'm happy to do that."



ABOVE: Joseph Montante, Melinda MacPherson Sullivan, Rich Nigro, Sara Rodland, and NYSUT President Melinda Person

RENY/ Western Zone Issues Invitation

Retired Educators of New York/ Western Zone invites all new retirees as well as those already retired to be members of RENY/Western Zone. RENY will host a meeting on Tuesday, September 15 at Alton's, 2221 Transit Road, Elma. This is a complimentary celebration honoring new and past retirees. There will be a charge card bar, complimentary buffet dinner, and a short intro into what RENY/Western Zone is all about.

If you join Western Zone on this evening ONLY, the cost is \$29 for the year. This represents a \$10 savings on the annual dues.

It is rewarding to belong to more than one group that supports not only retirees, but also current educators, students, and those pursuing a career in the field of education. We also advocate for our retirement benefits.

RSVP to: Michelle Claus, 716-481-5279 or joeclaus@msn.com by August 20th

Hope to see you at Alton's on September 15.

Retirees Can Remain Active, if They Want To...

You don't have to say goodbye to your friends and colleagues when you retire. The Buffalo Retired Teachers Association (BRTA) will keep you busy and in touch.

The BRTA is open to all Buffalo teachers and administrators who are retiring. The BRTA hosts four luncheons during the school year, including the Fall Luncheon on the first day of school in September, Holiday Luncheon in December, Winter Luncheon in February, and the Spring Luncheon, held in May.

During June, BRTA men and women participate in the Annual Golf Tournament. Travel excursions are sponsored by the BRTA throughout the year, including international vacations, day trips to various locations within a 100-mile radius, overnight trips outside New York State, and theater trips to Shea's Buffalo Theatre.

The BRTA newsletter keeps members informed of all important issues. And, although retired, members of the BRTA don't forget the students. Each year, three \$1,000 scholarships are awarded to graduating seniors of the Buffalo Public Schools.

Life membership in the BRTA is \$150 and must be paid in full. Annual membership is \$15 per year.

For more information contact Linda Parada, membership secretary, at (716) 472-1303 or online at www.BRTA.biz.



Welcome to NYSUT Retiree Council #44



Congratulations to our new retirees! As you conclude your time as an active teacher and BTF member, be assured that you are still a union member in NYSUT and AFT. You are Union for Life.

NYSUT Retiree Councils, established in 1991, are a powerful voice for retirees, who continue to support the values and work of our union.

Upon retirement, BTF members become members of NYSUT Retiree Council #44 and join more than 270,000 NYSUT retirees. As a retiree, you can stay involved and take advantage of the many benefits that NYSUT offers its members.

Retired members serve as delegates to the NYSUT, NEA, and AFT conventions where they represent the interests of their retired colleagues as well as support the issues important to active teachers.

RC #44 partners with retirees from Western New York (Retiree Councils #1, #2, and #3) to plan activities for its members.

Traditionally, there is fall luncheon (Monday, October 19, 2026) to welcome new retirees and to celebrate Retiree Recognition Day. There is also a holiday luncheon (Tuesday, December 8, 2026) and a retiree conference (Tuesday, May 18, 2027 in the spring. These events provide members the opportunity to network with retirees as well as to keep up to date on member benefits, legislation, and issues pertinent to retirees.

There are a variety of activities that retirees can engage in. RC #44 members volunteer at The Teacher's Desk on a weekly basis from September through May. We participate in the Making Strides Walk, Western New York Women's Committee, and participate in political action activities to support NYSUT endorsed candidates, to name a few.

We are a 2026 recipient of the NYSUT Local Community Service Award and the Ken Kurzweil Social Justice Award. Our retiree council is active and involved!

Members can also participate in workshops and trips. You can keep informed of all of our events through our RC #44 newsletter and by following us on our Facebook page (NYSUT Retiree Council #44) and the Facebook page of the Coalition (WNY Regional NYSUT Retiree Council) and our website <http://rcwest.ny.aft.org>.

Retirees do not pay dues to belong to NYSUT. RC #44 has a voluntary participation fee that is collected each year. We encourage our members to continue to contribute to NYSUT's political action fund VOTE-COPE.

Upon retirement you are no longer an NEA member unless you join as a lifetime member. This will enable you to continue to enjoy all the benefits of NEA membership.

We look forward to welcoming you into our organization and encourage you to become an active member!

If you have any questions, please contact Sara Rodland, president of RC #44 at (716) 689-9561 or by email sarasarasara2008@live.com.



Save the Date

July 24

Buffalo Bisons Baseball Game, 6:35 PM
Sahlen's Field

July 30 & 31

Delegate Training 101, 9 AM
BTF Headquarters

August 15

Puerto Rican & Hispanic Day
Parade, 11 AM
Niagara Square

August 23

Miss Buffalo Boat Ride, 1:30 PM
Erie Basin Marina

September 7

Labor Day Parade, 10 AM
Dorrance Ave. & McKinley Pkwy

BTF Attends NAACP Dinner

The Annual Medgar Evers Awards Gala was held on Saturday, June 20 at the Buffalo Convention Center. The BTF was represented at the 58th annual gala which featured Rev. Dr. Wendell Anthony, president of the Detroit Branch of the NAACP, as the keynote speaker.



Did You Know...?

That the Board agrees to provide written notification to all applicants for a promotional position of both the receipt of their application(s) and selection/non-selection for said position(s).

This can be found in Article XV.C of the BTF collective bargaining agreement.

BTF Undergoes Complete Landscaping Renovation

If you haven't noticed the improvements to the landscaping around the BTF office at 271 Porter Avenue lately, you should come by and have a look!

Things started last fall when Elbers Landscaping was hired to remove the overgrown taxus shrubs that had been planted decades ago. Heavy equipment was needed to uproot these well-established plants.

Elbers also planted a few new ornamental trees, flowering shrubs, and perennials. The BTF staff set up soaker hoses to keep everything watered in what was a warm, dry autumn. This year, thanks to the horticulture students at McKinley High School, the BTF had its makeover completed by the school's senior class.

For several weeks, working after school

and weekends, 10 seniors and one junior classman ripped out the last of the existing shrubs and perennials, designed a new landscape plan, and replanted the areas with more shrubs, perennials, and annuals. Landscaping and construction are part of the Horticulture 12th grade curriculum and this was a perfect fit for the BTF's needs. The students were transported to the project using a bus provided by CTE Director Rob Harris.

The project was completed under the leadership of Ronald Callea, a CTE/Horticulture teacher at McKinley for 20 years. Callea said he was approached by BTF President Rich Nigro to see if the students would be interested in helping to beautify the property. He said the students often do work in the community, so this was a perfect project for them.





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Grabiarz Students Travel to the Beat of a Different Drum

Some music students at the P.F.C. William J. Grabiarz School of Excellence #79, are literally beating a different drum.

The students are members of the Drumline, a percussion band that uses buckets instead of drums to produce its award-winning sound.

The band, under the direction of Anne Landey, includes students in grades 4 through 8 who created a Drumline in their class and used the student-composed class project to compete.

“In September 2023, I walked into my classroom with 30 buckets from Home Depot. The students took to drumming instantly. I had intended the drumming to be for junior high only, but my other classes protested. My 6th grade team really took to drumming and became high competition for the other classes. The Drumline was soon featured by the District on Spotlight”, Landey explained.

One reason the Drumline was created by Landey was because buckets cost only \$5 each, while drums cost about \$500 each. Since playing pitched and unpitched percussion instruments is part of the curriculum, she looked for a way to bring drumming to the classroom.

Another factor she was anxious to share was what she learned when on unexpected sick leave.

“My kidneys failed in July of 2020 and I had to go on dialysis. I was able to teach virtually during that time. In September of 2021, I got a transplant. During shut down and while I was on medical leave, I studied and practiced percussion techniques intensely. I had taught bucket drumming at school 89 but as someone who played the violin, flute, and piano, my drumming skills were what I had learned in high school and in percussion technique classes I took in university. 2023 was my first time back in the classroom since my transplant and I was excited to implement what I had studied while on leave”, she explained

Landey felt the creation of a Drumline would be a good fit for her students because it is part of the curriculum.

“The definition of a percussion instrument is anything that makes a sound when you hit it. With the drums we read music, compose, perform, play in large and small ensembles and learn to conduct”, Landey explained. “Students learn to work together to create. They learn how to speak to one another to promote positive interactions. They get peer feedback as well as teacher feedback. All of this is part of the curriculum.”

Drumline competitions are offered at Darien Lake and other venues around WNY. All a teacher needs to do to participate is train a group and apply. So Landey did just that, with winning results.

In their first competition at Darien Lake, the students took home first place in percussion. During the 2024-25 school year, the Drumline grew and competition became fierce with school-wide competitions. They were invited to perform at a Bisons game.

Then in May 2025, the 7th graders went back to Darien Lake and scored 100 and placed first in percussion and also won the Grand Judges’ Award. Since then, they have been sponsored by Lowe’s Amherst store on Transit Rd. and Main St. for competitions and performed in the store. They have also been invited back to play before a game for the Bisons.

This year, several groups also competed at Darien Lake on May 29. The fourth-grade chorus won an Outstanding award, 4th grade Drumline took third place, 4th grade Special Ed percussion got an Outstanding award and the Jr. High Drumline took 2nd place.

In a June 5 competition at Darien Lake, the 6th grade chorus took second place, Elementary Drumline took first place, Special Ed Drumline took third place, and the Jr. High Drumline took second place.



Extended Pay Plan Questions & Answers

For the 2026-2027 School Year

Periodically, the BTF receives inquiries about the Extended Pay Plan.

Essentially, the Extended Pay Plan is a form of a savings plan for teachers who want to be assured they have budgeted monies for the summer following the school year. Interest monies are used to help defray the BTF's operational expenses and thereby keep dues costs down.

The program is optional for any Buffalo teacher who wishes to participate. Any teacher who wishes to participate in the Extended Pay Plan for the summer of 2027 should be aware of all the information that follows.

Q. How much money do I receive during the summer?

A. You decide how much you want to receive during the summer of 2027. Assuming there are no difficulties, payroll deductions occur from 20 paychecks during the 2026-27 school year. The amount you receive will depend on how much you have deducted from each check.

Q. How do I receive my summer payments?

A. You must receive your summer payments as direct deposits. (Please see the Direct Deposit Section.)

Q. How much money will come out of each check?

A. The exact amount of deduction is determined by you and will be withheld from 20 of your 22 paychecks. The minimum deduction per paycheck allowable is \$40. You may increase this amount in \$5 units (i.e. \$45, \$50, \$55, \$60, etc.).

Option 1: One direct deposit issued during the summer recess. Formula: to determine the exact amount of the summer direct deposit under Option 1, multiply the amount deducted each paycheck times 20. **Example:** \$100 withheld per paycheck times 20 equals \$2,000. If you saved \$100 per paycheck and selected **Option 1**, your one summer direct deposit would total exactly \$2,000. **Option 2:** Two direct deposits issued during the summer recess. Formula: to determine the amount per deposit under Option 2, multiply the amount deducted each paycheck times 20 and divide by 2. **Example:** \$100 withheld each paycheck times 20 equals \$2,000 divided by 2 equals \$1,000. If you saved \$100 per

paycheck and selected Option 2, your two summer direct deposits would each total exactly \$1,000.

Option 3: Four direct deposits are issued at two-week intervals during the summer recess. **Formula:** To determine the amount per direct deposit under Option 3 multiply the amount deducted each paycheck times 20 and divide by 4. **Example:** \$100 deducted per paycheck times 20 is \$2,000 divided by 4 equals \$500. If you saved \$100 per paycheck and selected Option 3, your four summer direct deposits would each total exactly \$500.

Q. Are there other teachers participating in the BTF Extended Pay Plan?

A. Currently more than 2,000 teachers are participating.

Q. How do I sign up?

A. You must complete an Extended Pay Plan card. The Extended Pay Plan card is divided into 3 cards. Be sure to complete the top two cards as instructed. Be sure the amount that you would like to have deducted from each paycheck is listed. The third card is for direct deposit (please see the direct deposit section below). Cards are not available online. Contact your building delegate for an application form or call Joseph Montante or his assistant, Jackie Newton, at the BTF Office (716-881-5400). **ALL CARDS MUST BE RETURNED TO THE BTF OFFICE.**

Q. When should I sign up for the Extended Pay Plan?

A. Submit your form during the months of May, June, and July for the following September. New teachers may enroll when they receive their New Membership Packet.

Q. What is an advance withdrawal?

A. An advance withdrawal is available to you should you need funds before the summer. One withdrawal per school year is allowed. Call the BTF and ask to speak with either Joseph Montante or Jackie Newton and they will take the necessary information over the telephone. Please be advised that it may take three to five days to process a check.

Q. Am I allowed a second withdrawal? **A.** Yes, however, if a second withdrawal is taken, you will be asked to discontinue your paycheck deduction for the remainder

of the school year.

Q. Will I be able to have my summer disbursement before the scheduled payments?

A. No. To keep our records accurate, up to date and provide sufficient time for our accountants to review the accounts, there will be no withdrawals after June 1st of each school year unless there is an extraordinary circumstance, which we will ask be accompanied by appropriate documentation.

DIRECT DEPOSIT

The BTF/Extended Pay Plan Program reached an agreement with Northwest Savings Bank for **DIRECT DEPOSIT** of your Extended Pay Plan checks. Listed below are ways that Direct Deposit can make your summer checks efficient and safe:

- 100% of the funds are available when the funds are deposited to your account.
- Funds are in your account when you are sick or on vacation.
- No worries if the mail is late or lost. The best way to ensure the accuracy of your banking information is to include a voided check for the account that you would like to have the funds deposited into.
- Northwest Bank will have your Extended Pay Plan funds electronically deposited during summer into the bank of your choice. You DO NOT need to have an account at Northwest Bank.
- Please remember that if you make any changes to the account that your Extended Pay Plan funds are deposited in, **YOU MUST** notify the BTF before June 1st to be sure that your summer payments are deposited into the correct account.

Paper checks are no longer an option for the summer, and you will need to complete the third card of the Extended Pay Plan card. If you need an advance during the year, that will still be via paper check.

Extended Pay Plan Dates Set

Extended Pay Plan disbursement dates for the summer are:

- July 17
- July 31
- August 14
- August 28

The number of disbursements you will receive has been pre-selected by you. If you have questions, please call the BTF.

BTF Releases Auditor's Report

2024-2025

BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION, INC. AND AFFILIATE

Consolidated Statements of Activities

For the years ended August 31,	2025	2024
Revenue:		
Member dues	\$ 3,835,404	\$ 3,709,611
Investment income (Note 3)	744,202	1,053,523
Rent	191,791	114,424
Other	37,673	20,699
Total revenue	4,809,070	4,898,257
Expenses:		
Program	3,158,853	3,043,627
Management and general	577,066	470,400
Total expenses	3,735,919	3,514,027
Excess of revenue over expenses	1,073,151	1,384,230
Post-retirement health care benefit obligation (Note 6)	(129,434)	312,411
Change in net assets	943,717	1,696,641
Net assets - beginning	6,509,296	4,812,655
Net assets - ending	\$ 7,453,013	\$ 6,509,296

See accompanying notes.

4

BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION, INC. AND AFFILIATE

Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements

1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Organization

The consolidated financial statements (the financial statements) of Buffalo Teachers Federation, Inc. and Affiliate (the Organization) include the accounts of Buffalo Teachers Federation, Inc. (the Federation) and its controlled affiliated entity, the Buffalo Teachers Federation – PAC (the Committee).

The Federation is the bargaining unit for teachers employed by the City of Buffalo Board of Education (the Board of Education).

The Committee is a political action committee established to foster, encourage, and support good government by soliciting funds within New York State and endorsing candidates for election at the local and state level.

All significant intercompany transactions have been eliminated in the accompanying financial statements.

Cash

At various times, cash in financial institutions may exceed federally insured limits and subject the Organization to concentrations of credit risk.

Receivables

Receivables from the Buffalo Teachers Federation, Inc. Supplemental Benefit Fund (SBF), a tax-exempt health and welfare organization, and national and state organizations are stated at the amount management expects to collect from outstanding balances. An allowance for estimated credit losses is recorded based on management's assessment of the collectability of individual account balances, historical trends, and forecasted economic conditions. Amounts outstanding after management has used reasonable collection efforts are written off through a charge to the allowance and a credit to receivables. Management has determined an allowance for estimated credit losses is not necessary as of August 31, 2025 and 2024.

Investments

Investments are stated at fair value based on quoted prices in active markets.

Property and Equipment

Property and equipment is stated at cost, net of accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is provided over estimated useful lives using the straight-line method.

Income Taxes

The Federation is a 501(c)(5) organization exempt from taxation under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Committee is a political action committee organized under Section 527 of the Code and is exempt from taxation.

Functional Expense Allocation

The financial statements report certain categories of expenses that are attributable to program and supporting functions. Some expenses require allocation on a reasonable basis that is consistently applied. The allocated expenses include personnel, occupancy, office supplies, public relations, and professional fees, which were allocated based on employee responsibilities and use.

Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported in the financial statements and accompanying notes. Actual results may differ from those estimates.

Revenue Recognition

The Organization represents contract, probationary, and temporary teachers of the Buffalo Public Schools and provides a variety of benefits to its members including legal representation and financial assistance. The Organization's main source of receipts is dues collected from its members by their employer, the Board of Education, on a bi-weekly basis from the end of September through July. Dues revenue is generally recognized and collected during the service period.

Subsequent Events

Management has evaluated events and transactions for potential recognition or disclosure in the financial statements through June 8, 2026, the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION, INC. AND AFFILIATE

Consolidated Statements of Cash Flows

For the years ended August 31,	2025	2024
Operating activities:		
Change in net assets	\$ 943,717	\$ 1,696,641
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash flows from operating activities:		
Depreciation	22,853	17,888
Net unrealized and realized gain on investments	(234,075)	(602,621)
Changes in other operating assets and liabilities:		
Receivables	(360,883)	102,458
Prepaid expenses	(192)	(5,158)
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	95,585	489
Accrued postretirement health care benefits	(34,356)	(457,729)
Net operating activities	432,649	751,968
Investing activities:		
Purchase of property and equipment	(142,139)	(5,436)
Purchase of investments	(10,419,541)	(7,547,719)
Proceeds from sale of investments	9,779,030	7,194,624
Net investing activities	(782,650)	(358,531)
Net change in cash	(350,001)	393,437
Cash - beginning	1,089,154	695,717
Cash - ending	\$ 739,153	\$ 1,089,154

See accompanying notes.

5

Reclassification

The 2024 financial statements were reclassified to conform to the presentation adopted in 2025.

2. Receivables

	2025	2024
SBF (Note 5)	\$ 72,882	\$ 60,351
National and State Organizations	396,666	50,605
Interest and other	3,791	1,500
	\$ 473,339	\$ 112,456

3. Investments

	2025	2024
U.S. Government securities	\$ 23,045	\$ 195,537
Common stock	2,576,394	1,931,761
Mutual funds	1,569,216	1,897,664
Corporate bonds	848,721	327,342
Certificates of deposit	530,215	534,335
Money market	1,245,349	1,031,715
	\$ 6,792,940	\$ 5,918,354

Investment income is as follows:

	2025	2024
Interest and dividends	\$ 510,127	\$ 450,902
Net unrealized and realized gains	234,075	602,621
	\$ 744,202	\$ 1,053,523

4. Property and Equipment

	2025	2024
Land	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
Buildings and improvements	500,422	490,640
Office furniture and equipment	164,939	174,939
Computer equipment and software	218,742	86,385
	909,103	776,964
Less accumulated depreciation	669,165	656,312
	\$ 239,938	\$ 120,652

5. Transactions with SBF

The Organization receives rent (for the use of a portion of its building) from SBF, which totaled \$25,000 and \$17,000 for the years ended August 31, 2025 and 2024.

The Organization also remits payment of certain SBF personnel and other expenses for which it is reimbursed. Amounts owed to the Organization from SBF at August 31, 2025 and 2024 included in receivables were \$72,882 and \$60,351.

6. Post-Retirement Health Care Benefits

The Organization provides postretirement health care benefits to all retirees who attain age 55 with fifteen years of service. Employees who retire after September 1, 2017 contribute annual amounts ranging from \$360 to \$900 depending on insurance coverage. It is the Organization's practice to fund these benefits as incurred. The measurement date used to determine the benefit obligation is August 31st of each year.

The status of the postretirement health benefit plan as of and for the years ended August 31, 2025 and 2024 is as follows:

	2025	2024
Accumulated postretirement benefit obligation (APBO)	\$ 700,997	\$ 735,353
Accrued postretirement benefit obligation (benefit liability)	700,997	735,353
Accumulated adjustment to net assets without donor restrictions	1,612,786	1,742,220
Benefit cost	(158,106)	(138,578)
Benefits paid	5,684	6,740

At August 31, 2025 and 2024, the following items included as adjustments to net assets available for benefits had not yet been recognized as components to benefit cost:

	2025	2024
Net gain	\$ 1,612,786	\$ 1,742,220
Weighted-average assumptions used to determine benefit liability:		
Yearly health care premium increases	6.00%	6.00%
Discount rate	5.00%	4.75%
Yearly retiree contribution increase	3.00%	3.00%
Weighted-average assumptions used to determine net periodic benefit cost:		
Discount rate	4.90%	4.90%

Expected future annual benefit payments:

2026	\$ 13,300
2027	24,900
2028	25,400
2029	25,800
2030	26,100
2031 – 2035	153,100
	\$ 268,600

7

7. Retirement Plan

The Organization has a qualified contributory defined contribution 401(k) plan covering essentially all full-time employees. The Organization made no contributions to the plan for the years ended August 31, 2025 and 2024.

8. Contingencies:

The Organization is subject to claims and lawsuits that arise in the ordinary course of business. In the opinion of management, these claims and lawsuits will not have a material adverse effect upon the financial position of the Organization.

9. Financial Assets Available for Operations

The Organization’s primary source of financial assets are member dues, rental income, and investment income, which are acquired throughout the year to help meet the Organization’s cash needs for general expenditures.

The Organization’s financial assets available within one year of the balance sheet date to meet cash needs for general expenditures consist of the following at August 31, 2025 and 2024:

	2025	2024
Cash	\$ 739,153	\$ 1,089,154
Receivables	473,339	112,456
Investments	6,792,940	5,918,354
	\$ 8,005,432	\$ 7,119,964

10. Expenses by Nature and Function

2025	Program	Management and General	Total
Per capita dues	\$ 2,399,420	\$ -	\$ 2,399,420
Personnel	466,572	381,739	848,311
Occupancy	60,069	25,743	85,812
Office supplies and expenses	59,394	33,127	92,521
Public relations and contract enforcement	58,794	-	58,794
Professional fees	-	118,052	118,052
Other	114,604	18,405	133,009
	\$ 3,158,853	\$ 577,066	\$ 3,735,919

2024	Program	Management and General	Total
Per capita dues	\$ 2,400,204	\$ -	\$ 2,400,204
Personnel	397,223	325,001	722,224
Occupancy	46,785	20,050	66,835
Office supplies and expenses	45,952	22,378	68,330
Public relations and contract enforcement	52,600	-	52,600
Professional fees	-	90,112	90,112
Other	100,863	12,859	113,722
	\$ 3,043,627	\$ 470,400	\$ 3,514,027

BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION, INC. AND AFFILIATE

Additional Information
Consolidated Schedules of Investments

August 31,	2025	2024
Raymond James	\$ 3,320,408	\$ 3,065,993
FNC	1,008,540	705,546
FNC - 1990 Settlement	1,520,077	1,415,725
FNC - Extended Pay Plan	943,915	731,090
	\$ 6,792,940	\$ 5,918,354

BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION, INC. AND AFFILIATE

Additional Information
Consolidated Schedules of Program Expenses

For the years ended August 31,	2025	2024
Per capita dues	\$ 2,399,420	\$ 2,400,204
Salaries	416,030	345,865
Payroll taxes	35,384	28,173
Post-retirement health care benefit expense	(86,958)	(76,218)
Other employee benefits	87,847	85,438
Allowances	7,516	7,924
Travel and other	6,753	6,041
Contributions	17,597	9,060
Public relations	57,386	47,329
Contract enforcement	1,408	5,271
Provocator	10,679	3,340
Professional development	17,990	9,180
Stipends and committee expenses	24,712	17,045
Conventions	16,080	42,222
Real estate taxes	14,450	11,638
Utilities and telephone	15,974	12,902
Office supplies and expense	37,812	27,276
Postage	9,444	6,274
Insurance	895	3,804
Maintenance and repairs	28,750	18,441
Meeting room rentals	12,138	12,402
Depreciation	15,997	12,522
Miscellaneous	11,549	7,494
	\$ 3,158,853	\$ 3,043,627

BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION, INC. AND AFFILIATE

Additional Information
Consolidated Schedules of Management and General Expenses

For the years ended August 31,	2025	2024
Salaries	\$ 340,388	\$ 282,980
Payroll taxes	28,950	23,051
Post-retirement health care benefit expense	(71,148)	(62,360)
Other employee benefits	71,875	69,904
Allowances	6,149	6,484
Travel and other	5,525	4,942
Real estate taxes	6,193	4,987
Utilities and telephone	6,846	5,530
Office supplies and expense	29,080	19,689
Postage	4,047	2,689
Insurance	383	1,630
Maintenance and repairs	12,321	7,903
Professional fees	118,052	90,112
Depreciation	6,856	5,366
Miscellaneous	11,549	7,493
	\$ 577,066	\$ 470,400