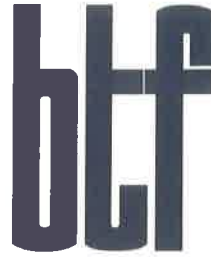


President PHILIP RUMORE



August 12, 2020

MEMO TO: Dr. Kriner Cash, Superintendent, BPS
Members, Buffalo Board of Education
District Reopening Committee

FROM: Philip Rumore, President, BTF

RE: Urgent Educational and Safety Concerns that Must Be Addressed

BUFFALO TEACHERS
FEDERATION, INC.

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

The following is a compilation of very serious and important concerns/issues/questions that have been raised by Buffalo teachers and that must be addressed in the Reopening Plan. They have been drawn from hundreds of teacher responses asking for their concerns/issues/questions.

They are listed in general categories some of which overlap each other. There will be more; however, these need to be addressed now.

Students

- Specifically, how will students with underlying illnesses that would make them more susceptible to or harmed seriously by contracting the virus be accommodated?
- Where will students keep their supplies? Books, pencils, paper, sweaters, coats, etc.
- How will the District ensure that all students have the necessary equipment and internet service training?
- Who will be making home contacts to reach students who do not “attend”?
- Who will be reaching out to parents to determine their needs and their children’s needs e.g., internet access and devices?
- How will student safety be assured on the school buses? There must be a bus aide on each bus.
- What are the procedures for students on medication?
- Will iPads be provided for Pre-K – 2 students?
- What is the procedure if students are not toilet trained?
- How will students be assured that Metro buses are sanitized?

Students with Special Needs

- How will students with special needs be scheduled on an alternating schedule? Will they be on an alternating schedule?
- What will be the social distancing for special education classes e.g., 12:1:1 6:1:1?

- How will students with each category of special needs be accommodated? e.g., students that have to move around.
- How will special education teachers teach 1/2 of their students at home and 1/2 in school at the same time? This appears to be the case in the current plan.
- How will students at School #084 be accommodated?
- How and when will teachers be provided with time and resources to complete all the required new and old documents?

Parents' Concerns as Forwarded to BTF

- If a parent/guardian believes that sending their child (children) to “in-person” school will present a serious health threat to their child (children), themselves or family members, is it correct that they have the option of virtual instruction for their child/children?
 - What is the procedure for exercising that option?

Buildings

- How are building heating/cooling/water systems going to be inspected and maintained to ensure infected air is not recirculated: Who will be performing these inspections and how will staff be notified of the results?
- Student bathrooms – only cleaned 2x daily? (Central office - 3x?)
 - Most have no warm/hot water. What happens then?
 - They should be cleaned each time used. Will they?
- P. 31 – modifications will be made if there is a conflict with healthcare safety guideline. What does this mean?
- P. 43 – How will and who will check to ensure that all HVAC systems have MERV II ratings – classroom/offices?
- What immediate action will be taken when there is improper ventilation in a classroom e.g., windows that don't open, filthy heating cooling equipment?
- How will inadequacies be reported and actions taken? How will staff be notified of said actions and inadequacies?
- What will be done if students or staff are allergic to the sanitizer – some are apparently allergic to some alcohol formulations and some scents e.g., those with asthma?
- How will classrooms be sanitized between classes?
- Other districts are providing deep cleaning, fogging and other sanitizing equipment. Will the District also be doing the same? If so, exactly what and how many will be provided for each school/site?
- How and how often will handrails, elevators, door handles, etc. be sanitized?
- What immediate action will be taken when a classroom/school cooling/heating system malfunctions?
- “Trash liners will be changed as needed?” How? When? By whom?
- Student classroom/bathrooms must be remembered and sanitized.
- What is the procedure for cleaning shared student bathrooms? How often will it be done?

Protocol – General

- What is the delineated procedure if a student/staff member is suspected of having or identified as being infected?
- How will critically important and required temperature checks be provided for students and staff upon entering the school/site? By whom?
- How and when will temperature checks be performed?
- What is the procedure if the nurse is absent?
- What is the procedure if a student vomits or relieves themselves in a classroom?
- How will testing be done?
- What are, who is on the response teams?

Protocol – If Covid Identified Person

- What is the protocol if a student or staff member arrives with a temperature?
- What is the procedure for sending a student home? How will they be transported? What if a parent won't pick them up?
- Who will monitor the "isolation" room?
- Who will escort students to the "isolation" room?
- What is the delineated protocol if a student's sibling or parent is identified with the virus?
- What is the procedure for teachers who report to multiple buildings if a student is suspected of having or is determined to have the virus, e.g. a student in school "A" with whom the teacher was exposed is suspected of having/has the symptoms of the virus. Does the teacher report to school "B" or if it is so determined after the teacher has started at school "B", what are the procedures?

Protocol – If Violation

- What is the delineated and prompt procedure if a student violates any of the safety guidelines/protocols? Unlike now, if a student misbehaves, either no one comes to the room or the student is sent to the office. Since this is a serious safety issue, it must be addressed quickly and appropriately to ensure the safety of all.
- P. 42 – What happens if a parent refuses to sign the document that states they will keep their child/children home if ill. Note: Many families do not have thermometers, etc.

Masks

- Must be mandated, not voluntary.
- Who will be providing masks for students, staff and "visitors"?
- How will they be distributed to students, staff and "visitors"?
- How many and what type of masks will be provided to each student, staff and "visitor"?

Classroom Set-up

- With some class sizes 30-35 students, it will be impossible to social distance in all classrooms. What are the delineated specifications for the usable size of a room and the number of students in a room of each size.
- Will there be a delineated classroom set-up and class roster for each teacher in each school? When?
- Pre-K & K use tables and manipulatives – how will tables and manipulatives be kept clean? Will desks be provided for social distancing?
- Will carpeting be removed in early grade classes? – Milk spills, food, etc.?
- Where will students keep their supplies, books, sweaters/coats?
- Will areas be taped in classrooms, hallways, etc. like it is being done in other school districts and stores?
- Will plexiglass dividers be provided?

Scheduling – (also see Instruction)

- Exactly how are students/teachers to be scheduled with the 3/2 schedule? Give examples for each. What happens if a student arrives on the wrong day?
 - Elementary – Pre K, Kindergarten, 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-12.
- How will parents keep track of the days of attendance if the 3/2 schedule is adopted?
- It appears that some teachers will be in schools. If in school, how can they also provide distance learning? i.e. answering questions from both.
- Languages other than English (LOE) was not covered. How will these students/teachers be included?
- How will teachers, such as school counselors, attendance teachers, social workers, psychologists, etc., be scheduled as they work with many students in many classes/schools?
- How will multiple students in the same home (some in the same grade) but in different schools be accommodated?
- When and how will “virtual office hours” be accomplished?
- How will movement in each building be determined and delineated?

Instruction

- The 2 days one week, 3 next week is unacceptable for parents, daycare, and teachers who might have to live teach and virtually teach at the same time. It also does not allow for a deep cleaning day during the week. It makes no sense.
- When will teachers receive the curriculum documents for instruction? For record keeping?
- When and how will all teachers in each tenure area be trained on the use of equipment and programs?
- How will planning time be incorporated into the schedule, e.g. preparation periods?
- What is the procedure if a student arrives on the wrong day?
- Will students be bringing their devices to and from school? If so, how will this be monitored for safety?
- How will science labs be implemented and materials sanitized?
- In the current model or others, how can teachers teach and take attendance both virtually and in person at the same time?

- Will there be afterschool programs? If so, how will they be implemented?
- Will there be AIS Reading and Math support?
- Superintendent Cash discussed student projects and teaching. Could he explain? Give some examples.
- There is no clear explanation of the cohort model? What is it? What are the details?
- The bilingual section is incomplete.
- The multilingual section is vague and unclear.
- How will pacing guides be adjusted?
- How is a teacher going to keep a contact log daily and teach, correct work, etc.?
- How will instruction packets be distributed and returned?
- Can teachers have the option of using Google Classroom (e.g. in Jr. High)?
- 4, 5 and 6 year olds gravitate towards each other, hug, put fingers in their mouths, etc. How can we expect them to keep their masks on? How can they be comforted when they cry or are afraid? What are the District's suggestions?

Meals

- Exactly how will students be fed?
- Who will monitor when they must take masks off?
- Where will they eat?
- By whom and when will eating areas be sanitized?
 - Not teachers. It cannot be a teacher's duty.

Parents "Sign-off"

- What will be the procedure for obtaining written parental agreement for recording their children? How will it be provided to each teacher?
 - What if a parent refuses to sign a permission to video tape their child?

Additional Important Issues

- What is the procedures for reporting concerns?
- To whom will teachers, parents, staff, send feedback to the District (RE: problems/concerns.)
- Will all concerns be made known to staff?
- Will the District be posting videos in various languages to assist parents and students on the use of media?
- Exactly how will safety on school buses be accomplished and what will happen if a student violates procedures on the bus?
- How will student work be corrected? Will teachers handle papers?
- What will happen if a teacher is absent? Are there sufficient substitutes?
 - Since we are social distancing students, the students cannot and should not be sent to other classrooms nor should other teachers be pulled from their assignments.
- Large schools need more than one (1) nurse. Will they be provided?
- The document says the District will provide water bottles and filling stations - when and how?
- Will gloves be provided to staff? If so, how many and how?

- Will students not wearing a mask be allowed on the school bus?
- What are the plans for “Shelter in Place”, “Fire Drills”, etc.?
- What is the procedure if a classroom is too hot for masks? Many have no air conditioning or air circulation?
- What is the procedure for parents and others entering the building or to see a teacher?
- Exactly how will the loading and unloading of school buses be implemented?

Teacher Concerns

- If a teacher believes that “in-person instruction/service will present a serious health threat to themselves or their family members, what is the procedure for their providing virtual instruction/service?
- Please confirm that if a teacher has to self-quarantine as a result of a coronavirus occurrence in their class/school workplace, the quarantine period will not be deducted from their sick time nor will they suffer any loss of pay or benefits.

Buffalo teachers request an expedited and written response to their concerns/issues/questions.

PR:su