



Buffalo Teachers Federation, Inc.
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President, PHILIP RUMORE

June 16, 2023

Dear Colleague:

Early Voting for the 2023 Primary Elections will be held from June 17th through June 25th. For a list of early voting sites [click here](#). Primary Day is **June 27, 2023**.

While we know most teachers take the time to vote, if every teacher voted, we would make the difference in many elections. The BTF is already viewed as a political force as most of the candidates we support are successful. However, if every teacher who received our letter voted in support of our candidates, we would become the major force locally – especially in area elections.

The Political Action Committee interviewed candidates who requested BTF endorsement and recommended candidates to the Executive Committee and the Council of Delegates who voted on their endorsements.

The following candidates have a Primary Race and the Council of Delegates has voted to endorse:

JOHN BARGNESI, JR. – Erie County Legislator District 4

John Bargnesi started his political career in the Town of Tonawanda serving sixteen years as a Council Member. He is now seeking his second term as an Erie County Legislator. **John** has a personal connection to our Buffalo Public Schools. His late father was a BPS principal, his mother is a retired BPS teacher and his wife is an active BTF member teaching Art for the past twenty-seven years.

John discussed school safety and stated that the Evolve scanners are a start but more is needed to ensure the safety of our children, teachers and staff. **John** will involve teachers, students and community members in a discussion that will help to identify additional needs and methods necessary to curb occurrences of violence in our schools.

BRYAN BOLLMAN – Lovejoy District Council Member

Bryan Bollman recently worked for former Common Council member Richard Fontanta. During his tenure with the councilmember, he made contacts with community leaders that enabled him to assist the Lovejoy residents when the COVID pandemic hit. Since then, **Bryan** strives to improve the parks, invest in a senior center and convert a former library to a resource center.

Bryan is currently on the Common Council's Finance and Education Committee. As the education chair he has met with Dr. Williams, discussing the safety and security in our schools. They discussed the need for more security guards, wand of visitors and cameras around the outside of the schools to allow for a safer learning environment. **Bryan** will also work to arrange internships for our high school students to

provide them with work-related skills. **Bryan** is also open to supporting more investment in our schools from the Common Council.

KATHRYN FRANCO – University District Council Member

As a former Buffalo Public School student and daughter of two educators, **Kathryn Franco** continued her education and has a background in social work. When working as a substitute teacher for BPS, **Kathryn** was able to gain firsthand knowledge of many of the issues that our students face on a daily basis. Students having access to adequate housing, fresh food and safe environments are necessary for them to succeed.

If elected, **Kathryn** would engage the residents in her district to participate in the budgetary process and prioritize the spending for the University District community. Strengthening the relationship between the school board and the Common Council is also a major goal for **Kathryn**.

EVE SHIPPENS – North District Council Member

Eve Shippens is a current BTF Executive Committee member teaching Science at East Community High School #309. As a graduate of the Buffalo Public Schools, **Eve** has been active as both a teacher and a parent advocating for families and their ability to have a first-rate quality of life. Working at the local, state and national level, **Eve** participates in many organizations that aim to promote social justice for all citizens.

A major goal for **Eve** is to bring additional resources into the North Council District. Stating that all stakeholders in the community must work together to enhance the quality of life, **Eve** will focus on issues that directly impact students. Lack of affordable housing, inadequate supply of quality food and the need for quality healthcare affect the children and their ability to learn. She stated that there must be a collaborative effort and that all community resources need to be utilized.

INDIA WALTON – Masten District Council Member

As a former Buffalo Public School student, **India Walton** will advocate for increased funding to the Buffalo Public Schools. India worked as a nurse at Highgate Heights and saw firsthand the need for an increase in mental health services, training in conflict resolution and the use of restorative practices. To help children become better learners, **India** would focus on the root causes of some behavioral issues such as lack of nutritional food and adequate housing. Expanding tutoring programs in the schools will also be a priority for **India**.

India referenced the many local traumas that occurred in the last two years in Buffalo and the need for additional community resource centers to assist the residents in her District. She would also advocate to establish a snow removal program for the city.

As you go to the polls, please vote for our endorsed candidates. Their positions and records indicate a pro-teacher advocacy. Every vote counts. Your support and that of your family and friends is critical. You can make the difference on whether pro or anti-education candidates get elected.

Sincerely,



Philip Rumore, President



Rebecca Pordum, Political Action Committee