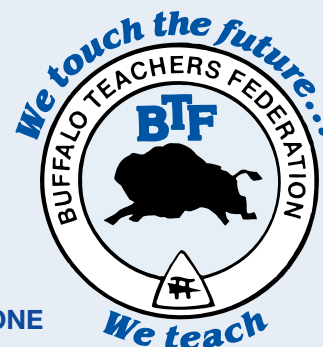


PROVOCATOR

June 2018

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION VOLUME 48/NUMBER 5

DEDICATION
SOLIDARITY
PROFESSIONALISM
PRIDE
SECOND TO NONE



BTF Holds Press Conference in Attempt to Prevent Teacher Transfer Disaster

Calling the District's teacher transfer policy "an impending disaster", BTF President Philip Rumore issued a press release on May 21, after correspondence with the District went unanswered.

"As a result of the District's lack of action and refusal to work with the BTF to correct the transfer problems, hundreds of teacher transfers will have to be redone", Rumore stated.

"The Teacher Transfer Process is a disastrous demonstration of incompetence, falsehoods, a complete willful disregard for BTF/District agreements and BTF to work with the District to correct the many serious problems that will result in having to redo the transfers of hundreds of teachers", Rumore added.

In the press release, the BTF outlined the many attempts it made to alert the District of the severe transfer problems and its effort to correct them. Those problems started almost immediately upon implementation of the process.

The District Transfer Policy got underway in May 2017 with required teacher/principal conversations during "open houses" at schools the teachers were interested in.



Above: In an effort to head off an impending transfer disaster. President Phil Rumore outlines the BTF's numerous attempts to rectify the transfer process.

Long waits, "formal interviews", requests for lesson plans and résumés, and no openings were just a few of the complaints from teachers. In addition, some of the principals sent letters to Human Resources saying teachers who inquired about certain jobs were "unqualified".

Despite the BTF's efforts to correct these problems, the process continued and culminated with the school selection process.

For some teachers, the selection process entailed being publicly rejected by principals in front of their colleagues, additional "conversations" in another room with principals while the proceedings were put on hold, and 4-5 hour waits without dinner or beverages.

Some teachers, who did not get a placement, despite their seniority, were "placed" in schools they did not want.

Despite numerous grievances and notification that the BTF would not participate in this process again, the District tried to implement it again this year.

In the May 21 press release, the BTF outlined its many attempts to rectify the problems, from June 2017-May 2018. A timeline was presented containing events and eight written communications to the District, Superintendent, and Board of Education outlining the year-long efforts of the BTF to identify and correct the serious problems to avoid the District's having to redo hundreds of teacher transfers.

The District ignored the many communications and as a result, if not corrected, will have to redo hundreds of teacher transfers.

"Hundreds of teachers have applied for transfers. Many more will because of school reductions requiring teachers to be transferred. All transfers will have to be redone if the problems are not corrected immediately", Rumore said.

In Memoriam

Tom Pisa, who lead the BTF for over 11 years through very difficult times and who went to jail for leading our strike in 1976, has, after a long illness, left us. Knowing Tom, he will be unionizing in heaven.

We owe much to Tom as much of what we have come through his efforts both as BTF President and as the President of NEA NY, our State affiliate before we merged with NYSUT.

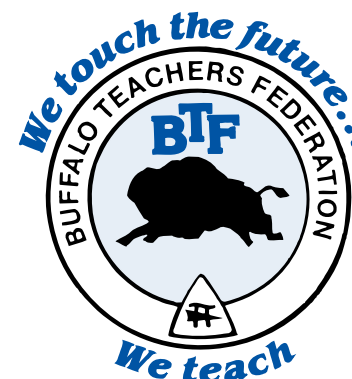
Those of us who worked with and knew Tom remember his infectious smile and kindness.

We will miss you Tom; however, you will not be forgotten. Rest at peace our friend.

Observances will be announced as they become available.



Above: After his release from prison, reporters swarm around then BTF president Tom Pisa. Pisa was jailed for calling a strike in 1976 that lasted for 13 days.





The Battle Continues

As the summer layoff approaches, remember the students are on vacation. Most teachers work during the summer. Their employment with the District ends in June. Teachers are not paid over the summer.

The Buffalo Teachers Federation will be open from 9:00 A.M. until 4:00 through the summer. If you need us, we are here.

During the summer we will continue our battles for:

- Transfers based on Seniority only.
- More State funding.
- The end of the APPR insult and the over testing of our students.
- The end of Receivership (we are in court)
- Preparation for negotiations that begin in January 2019.
- Fighting arbitrations and grievances
- Getting ready for the School Board elections in May.
 - All nine seats are up
- Continuing all the other battles on your behalf.

And of course battle the campaign by billionaires and union haters to divide unions once the Supreme Court rules that public sector employees don't have to pay their share of the cost to negotiate their contracts, defend them, provide improved teaching and learning conditions, etc. **In other words, be free loaders on others' backs.**

Buffalo Teachers have as always shown their solidarity and defiance of the billionaire union haters and their friends by recommitting to each other. So far, we have nineteen 100% schools twenty-two 95-99% schools and are on are way to having reached 95-99% of our members that have shown their solidarity. Buffalo Teachers are not and will never be freeloaders nor will we ever be broken by those who would destroy us.

NOT NOW. NOT EVER

Honor Roll Schools

School 3	99%
School 6	100%
School 12	96%
School 19	96%
School 27	95%
School 33	98%
School 42	100%
School 45	98%
School 59	95%
School 59A	100%
School 64	95%
School 65	100%
School 72	95%
School 76	97%
School 79	96%
School 80	100%
School 81	97%
School 84	100%
School 89	98%
School 93	100%
School 95	97%
School 131@4	100%
School 131@18A	100%
School 131@4LTE	100%
School 195	98%
School 197@39	96%
School 204	96%
School 205	97%
School 207	96%
School 208	100%
School 309	100%
School 335	97%
School 358	100%
School 359	100%
School 360	100%
School 361	100%
School 363	95%
School 367	100%
School 197@187	100%
School 910	100%
School 968	96%

BTF at a Glance

BTF President

Philip Rumore

BTF Vice President

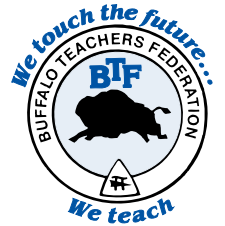
Rebecca Pordum

BTF Treasurer

Joseph Montante

BTF Secretary

Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan



BTF Executive Committee Members

Pre-K-6

Rachel Binda-Lis,
Sophia Howard-Johnson,
Trisha Rosokoff, Janine Schuster
Christopher Stephens,
Ruyvette Townsend

7-12

Dennis Brancato, Patrick Foster,
Lynn Garcia, Melissa Kenney,
M. Sue Raichilson, Chris Salamone,
Eve Shippens-Nieves

K-12

Susan Marie Baker, Nicole Herkey,
Isabella Keegan, Catherine Lipsitz,
Mark Mecca, Gregory Sawicki,
Elizabeth Spiro-Carman

At Large

Marc Bruno, Tom Gattie, Mike Mecca

BTF Headquarters Staff

Philip Rumore, *President*
Joseph Montante, *Presidential Assistant*
Rebecca Pordum, *Presidential Assistant*
Tim Connick, *NYSUT Counsel*
Deana Fox, *NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist*
Dennis Licherelli, *NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist*
Anna Geronimo, *NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist*

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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 five times during the 2017-2018 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**.

June 2018
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Circulation 4400

Letters to the Editor

BTF Thanked for Bus

On behalf of Write To Resist, thank you for your support for the MFOL Buffalo Bus for Change Now to Washington, DC.

We sent students, teachers, and parents a very important event in part thanks to the BTF.

Sharon Dobkin

BTF Honors Frank Mesiah with NAACP Gift

We acknowledge with deep appreciation your \$500 donation in memory of Frank B. Mesiah.

Mr. Mesiah served as president of the Buffalo Branch NAACP for 20 years. In addition, he served as vice president of the New York State NAACP Conference since 1985.

His legacy of leadership and dedication to the NAACP, other civil rights organizations and causes will live on and will never be forgotten.

Again, thank you for taking the time to honor this great man.

Sincerely,
Rev. Mark Blue
President, Buffalo NAACP

Retired Teacher Gets NYSUT Award for 55 Years of Advocacy

A retired BTF member, who has advocated for Buffalo teachers for 55 years, was honored May 16 during NYSUT's Western New York 31st Annual Awards Dinner.

Stanley J. Nowak, who remains active with the BTF as well as numerous local, state, and national retired teacher organizations, received a NYSUT Leadership Award.

As an in-service member of the BTF, Nowak served as a building delegate, member of the BTF Executive Committee and BTF Treasurer. He was also elected to numerous state and national conventions.

Since his retirement, he has been elected as a retiree member of the NYSUT Board of Directors, member of the NYSUT Retiree Advisory Committee and was elected the first president of NYSUT Retiree Council 44. Stan Nowak is also an FAA Certified Flight Instructor.

BTF Supports 6th Annual History Bee

Thanks for your support for our 6th Annual History Bee for 8th grade students.

Due to the ice storm April 15, the Bee was postponed to May 12. The first place winner this year was from City Honors School.

Because of sponsors like you, the winner received a laptop computer and three other contestants each won a tablet computer. All contestants also got a bag of gifts.

Thanks again!!

Jim Lee
Forest District Civic Association

Foundation Thanks BTF

On behalf of the Alex Pichette Memorial Foundation, I would like to thank you for your donation.

This Foundation relies on the generosity of donors such as yourself and is grateful for your support.

I am very proud to be part of the union that supports its members in so many different ways!

Thank you once again!

Sincerely,
Mary Pichette

Below: The president of the AFT Black Caucus, Wendy Walker-Wilson, presents a check to Olmsted High School senior Dayonna Johnson.



Scholarship Awarded

Dayonna Johnson, a senior at Frederick Law Olmsted School 156, was the first winner of the Outstanding Student award sponsored by the Black and Latino Caucuses of the American Federation of Teachers. The scholarship, which is expected to be presented annually, was for \$1,000.

The award was presented during the Spring Soirée, a fundraising dinner hosted by the Caucuses. It was held in April at the Lafayette Hotel just prior to the NYSUT Representative Assembly. BTF Member Desiree Breckenridge Barnes was one of the organizers.

Dayonna plans to attend Daemen College in Amherst to study psychology.

SS Teacher Nominated for Prestigious Award

A Social Studies teacher who is on special assignment as coordinator of the department, has been nominated for the prestigious Harris History Teacher of the Year Award.

Richard S. Pyszczek, Jr. was nominated for the Award by the Fenimore Art Museum, which administers the annual National History Day program in New York State. Pyszczek has been the BPS lead teacher of the National History Day program for many years. He is also president of the Niagara Frontier Council for Social Studies.

The Teacher of the Year award is sponsored by James F. Harris and is awarded to one middle and one high school teacher annually. It recognizes the important role teachers play in the lives of students.

"The nominees for the Harris History Teacher Award have shown a dedication to teaching that goes beyond the classroom," Dr. Cathy Gorn, National History Day executive director explained. "We congratulate Mr. Pyszczek on his nomination."

The two national winners will be announced on #NationalHistoryDay, June 14, 2018.



Above: Standing with President Phil Rumore, Stan Nowak proudly displays his NYSUT Leadership Award.

Retirees Honored by BTF; Thanked for Helping Children, Sticking with Union

Thirty Buffalo teachers, clocking 722.9 total years in the classroom, were honored May 22 during the annual BTF Retirement Dinner at Salvatore's Italian Gardens in Depew.

Before presenting each retiree with a framed certificate marking the occasion, BTF President Philip Rumore thanked them for touching the hearts and minds of Buffalo students and for sticking with the union.

"You haven't got a clue how you've affected that child's life, and the lives of his/her children and the lives of generations", Rumore said.

"And I want to thank you because we wouldn't have what we have in our contract, if we didn't stick together", he added.

Rumore likes to tease the retirees that he "talked to New York State and they are not accepting any retirements."

But after the laughter subsides, he informs them that the benefits they retire with are the benefits they retain for the rest of their lives.

"If you ever get charged more for something, call us", Rumore told the crowd. "You are part of us. We are together forever. If you have any questions when you retire, pick up the phone and call us."

The retirees and the number of years they served are:

Redahlia Riggins	34.5
Laura J. Dierken	33
Elizabeth Gonzalez	33
Joanne Kessler	32
Laurie Sanderson	32
Brenda Chiles-James	31.6
Denise Chapman-Acosta	31.5
Susan Guerrero	30.5
Genevieve DeCarlo	30
Kathleen Emhof	29
Susan Kersten	29
Benita Lopez-King	29
Cynthia Davis	28
Charles Carey	27
Rosemarie Flowers	27
Susan Carriero	25
Patricia Tower	25
Nadine Hirsch	24
Gail Lutz	22
Kathleen Page	22
Elizabeth Pope	22
Beverly Williams	20.5
Stephanie Geyer	20
Isabella Keegan	20
Mary Scheely Johnson	20
Alan Welka	19
Diane Fatta	18.9
Judith Graf	18
Darlene White	17
Lawrence Ronald	15
Brenda Graves	11



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. 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.

Retired teachers become members of NYSUT Retiree Council #44 and join more than 200,000 NYSUT retirees. As a retiree, you can still take advantage of the many benefits that NYSUT offers its members.

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

There will be a September luncheon to welcome new retirees as well as a holiday luncheon and a retiree conference in the spring. These events provide the opportunity to network with retirees as well as to keep up to date on member benefits, current

legislation, and any other issues pertinent to retirees.

There are a variety of activities that retirees can engage in. RC #44 members can volunteer at The Teacher's Desk, participate in the Making Strides Walk, make phone calls to support NYSUT endorsed candidates, to name a few.

There are also workshops and trips the Retiree Councils offer to members. You can keep informed of these events through our RC #44 newsletter that you will receive during the year and by following us on our Facebook page.

Retirees do not pay dues to belong to NYSUT. RC #44 has a voluntary participation fee that is collected each year.

However, upon retirement, you are no longer an NEA member unless you join as a lifetime member. There is a one-time \$250 payment. This will enable you to continue to enjoy all the benefits of membership.

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

BTF Releases Auditor's Report

2016-2017



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INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

The Executive Officers
Buffalo Teachers Federation, Inc.

We have audited the accompanying balance sheets of Buffalo Teachers Federation, Inc. as of August 31, 2017 and 2016, and the related statements of activities and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditors' Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditors' judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Buffalo Teachers Federation, Inc. as of August 31, 2017 and 2016, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Lumsden & McCormick, LLP

February 16, 2018

BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION, INC.

Balance Sheets

August 31,	2017	2016
Assets		
Current assets:		
Cash	\$ 354,205	\$ 283,684
Receivables, net (Note 2)	125,379	198,804
Prepaid expenses	26,125	27,522
Investments (Note 3)	3,588,962	3,354,557
	<u>4,094,671</u>	<u>3,864,567</u>
Property and equipment, net (Note 4)	116,790	72,854
	<u>\$ 4,211,461</u>	<u>\$ 3,937,421</u>
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current liabilities:		
Current portion of accrued post-retirement health care benefits (Note 7)	\$ 18,500	\$ 32,600
Accounts payable	13,439	1,864
Accrued expenses	98,695	114,791
Deferred revenue	17,000	17,000
Payable to affiliate (Note 6)	557,075	557,075
	<u>704,709</u>	<u>723,330</u>
Accrued post-retirement health care benefits (Note 7)	1,439,381	1,692,789
Net assets - unrestricted	<u>2,067,371</u>	<u>1,521,302</u>
	<u>\$ 4,211,461</u>	<u>\$ 3,937,421</u>

See accompanying notes.

2

BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION, INC.

Statements of Activities

For the years ended August 31,	2017	2016
Revenue:		
Member dues	\$ 3,319,523	\$ 3,222,814
Investment income (Note 3)	344,653	236,867
Rent	122,252	121,212
Advertising and other	27,892	18,050
Total revenue	<u>3,814,320</u>	<u>3,598,943</u>
Expenses:		
Per capita dues	2,178,218	2,100,300
Personnel (see page 9)	955,319	811,636
Activities and programs (see page 9)	182,004	201,220
Other administrative (see page 10)	357,500	254,078
Total expenses	<u>3,673,041</u>	<u>3,367,234</u>
Excess of revenue over expenses	141,279	231,709
Post-retirement health care benefit obligation (Note 7)	404,790	(478,679)
Change in net assets	546,069	(246,970)
Net assets - beginning	1,521,302	1,768,272
Net assets - ending	<u>\$ 2,067,371</u>	<u>\$ 1,521,302</u>

See accompanying notes.

3

BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION, INC.

Statements of Cash Flows

For the years ended August 31,	2017	2016
Operating activities:		
Change in net assets	\$ 546,069	\$ (246,970)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash flows from operating activities:		
Depreciation	11,277	11,248
Bad debts expense	80,000	-
Net gain on investments	(233,062)	(150,335)
Changes in other operating assets and liabilities:		
Receivables	(6,575)	90,983
Prepaid expenses	1,397	(6,540)
Accounts payable	11,575	(19,143)
Accrued expenses	(16,096)	2,985
Deferred revenue	-	17,000
Accrued postretirement health care benefits	(267,508)	530,711
Net operating activities	<u>127,077</u>	<u>229,939</u>
Investing activities:		
Purchase of property and equipment	(55,213)	(20,462)
Purchase of investments	(11,860,248)	(7,804,939)
Proceeds from sale of investments	11,858,905	7,666,044
Net investing activities	<u>(56,556)</u>	<u>(159,357)</u>
Net change in cash	70,521	70,582
Cash - beginning	283,684	213,102
Cash - ending	<u>\$ 354,205</u>	<u>\$ 283,684</u>

See accompanying notes.

4

Notes to Financial Statements

1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies:

Organization:

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

Cash:

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

Receivables:

Receivables from member loans and the Federation's affiliate and national and state organization are stated at the amount management expects to collect from outstanding balances. An allowance for doubtful accounts is recorded based on management's assessment of the collectability of individual account balances and historical trends. Amounts outstanding after management has used reasonable collection efforts are written off through a charge to allowance for doubtful accounts and a credit to receivables.

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.

Use of Estimates:

The preparation of financial statements in conformity 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.

Subsequent Events:

Management has evaluated events and transactions for potential recognition or disclosure in the financial statements through February 16, 2018, the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

2. Receivables:

	2017	2016
Affiliate (Note 6)	\$ 45,799	\$ 26,659
National and State Organization	76,546	90,346
Member loans	81,090	80,640
Interest	1,944	1,159
	205,379	198,804
Less allowance for doubtful member loans	80,000	-
	\$ 125,379	\$ 198,804

3. Investments:

	2017	2016
U.S. Government securities	\$ 2,471	\$ 3,206
Common stock	959,178	800,477
Mutual funds	1,259,071	1,190,361
Corporate bonds	39,636	31,024
Certificates of deposit	935,181	970,203
Money market	393,425	359,286
	\$3,588,962	\$ 3,354,557

Investment income is as follows:

	2017	2016
Interest and dividends	\$ 111,591	\$ 86,532
Net gains	233,062	150,335
	\$ 344,653	\$ 236,867

4. Property and Equipment:

	2017	2016
Land	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
Building and improvements	458,122	433,322
Office furniture and equipment	182,386	180,325
Computer	104,636	76,284
	770,144	714,931
Less accumulated depreciation	653,354	642,077
	\$ 116,790	\$ 72,854

5. Short-Term Borrowings:

The Federation has available a \$100,000 bank demand line of credit with interest payable at prime plus 3.5%, secured by substantially all assets of the Federation. The line is subject to the usual terms and conditions applied by the bank for working capital financing, and is subject to review annually. There were no amounts outstanding under the line at August 31, 2017 and 2016.

6. Transactions with Affiliate:

The Federation receives rent (for the use of a portion of its building) from Buffalo Teachers Federation, Inc. Supplemental Benefit Fund (SBF), a tax-exempt, health and welfare organization. This rent totaled \$17,000 for each of the years ended August 31, 2017 and 2016.

The Federation also remits payment of certain SBF personnel and other expenses for which it is reimbursed. Amounts owed to the Federation from SBF at August 31, 2017 and 2016 included in receivables were \$45,799 and \$26,659.

During 2001, the Federation received \$917,075 to pay for SBF benefits and any future Federation legal, consultant and administrative costs in connection with a back pay settlement pursuant to the provisions of a teachers' contract settlement. Amounts due to SBF under this settlement totaled \$557,075 at August 31, 2017 and 2016.

7. Post-Retirement Health Care Benefits:

The Federation provides postretirement health care benefits to all retirees who attain age 55 with fifteen years of service. Effective September 1, 2016, future retirees will contribute annual amounts ranging from \$300 to \$900 depending on insurance coverage. It is the Federation'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 at and for the years ended August 31, 2017 and 2016 is as follows:

	2017	2016
Accumulated postretirement benefit obligation (APBO)	\$ 1,457,881	\$ 1,725,389
Accrued postretirement benefit obligation (benefit liability)	1,457,881	1,725,389
Accumulated adjustment increase to net assets	(636,868)	(232,078)
Benefit cost	146,470	71,788
Benefits paid	9,188	19,756

At August 31, 2017 and 2016, the following items included as adjustments to net assets available for benefits had not yet been recognized as components to benefit cost:

	2017	2016
Net (gain) loss	\$ (636,868)	\$ (232,078)

	2017	2016
Weighted-average assumptions used to determine benefit liability:		
Yearly health care premium increases	6%	6%
Discount rate	4.00%	4.25%
Yearly retiree contribution increase	10.00%	N/A
Weighted-average assumptions used to determine net periodic benefit cost:		
Discount rate	4.25%	4.25%

Expected future annual benefit payments:

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023-2027
	\$ 18,500	19,000	19,500	19,900	20,300	229,600
						\$ 326,800

For 2017, a 1% increase in the trend rate for health care costs would have increased the APBO by approximately \$476,000.

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BTF members and dependents welcome as always.
Most services are covered in full. Co-insurance, deductibles & non-covered services are the responsibility of the member.



BRTA Keeps Retirees Active

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 week-long cruises, day trips to various locations within a 100-mile radius, overnight trips outside New York State, and theater trips to Erie, PA, Toronto and 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 \$1,500 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 \$12 per year.

For more information contact Linda Parada, membership secretary, at 875-3392 or online at www.BRTA.biz

Time to Make Changes to Sick Leave Bank

Attention ALL teachers!

It's that time of year again when you can join or change your sick leave bank enrollment.

Requests to enroll, change, or withdraw must be in the BTF Office no later than 5 p.m. **June 22.**

To enroll or change your days, complete both the purple enrollment card and the grey authorization card. Teachers previously donating one day who failed to change their contribution in 2011 must re-enroll if they want to be members of the Sick Leave Bank

program.

Teachers wishing to terminate membership must withdraw by written request. These requests must be mailed by certified return receipt requested only!!

BTF cannot accept faxed copies of withdrawals or enrollments. See your building delegate or contact the SBF Office for Enrollment cards.

The Sick Leave Bank Trustees are: Dennis Brancato, Sophia Howard Johnson and Melissa Kenney.

Teacher Transfer Timeline

May 2017 - June 2017: BTF, although having concerns about its implementation, agrees to try a new District-proposed Teacher Transfer Procedure for one year only.

June 2017: A grievance is filed; 27 major problems and violations of the one-year agreement and contract listed.

September 2017: District asks to have the new, but slightly modified transfer procedure tried again. Teachers overwhelmingly say NO! Not all of the problems were corrected.

October 3, 2017: Superintendent was advised of teacher rejection of problem-plagued "new" one-year transfer policy. A copy of the June 2017 grievance delineating all problems is attached. The October 3, 2017 correspondence in reference to District proposed new transfer procedure MOU states: "...when all grievances have been resolved with the teachers being made whole, then feel free to forward an MOU that addresses all of said issues."

December 20, 2017: Jamie Warren, Associate Superintendent of Human Resources, calls BTF to discuss re-implementing the new transfer policy. She is advised that all the issues in the June 2017 grievance still, as per our October 3, 2017 correspondence, had not been resolved. Despite, this, she again calls to discuss the "new" transfer process!

March 22, 2018: Warning, that use of the Portal for transfers violates contract. BTF offers to work with District to prevent this one issue (there are many more) from causing the re-doing of transfers.

May 3, 2018: BTF receives a copy of District "BPS Teacher Transfer Process Information." District Document states:

- "Open Houses ... to have a professional conversation with building administrator or their representative and must occur before you can transfer to a school".
- The "Portal" can be used to apply for a transfer.
- "Teachers must meet with principals of schools they are interested in transferring to for the next school year," even though the email to teachers from the District dated May 3, 2018 states, "At this time, vacancy information is not available."

May 4, 2018: BTF correspondence to Superintendent notifying him of our many

correspondences and of the looming transfer disaster and the District's constant written efforts to secure agreements on the issues prove that they know our approval is necessary.

- BTF Correspondence to teachers stating they cannot be required to attend "Professional Conversations". Our contract states in Article XIV K (pp 23-33), "If an assignment or transfer is given a teacher, the teacher shall have the right, upon request, to discuss such transfer or assignment before it becomes final directly with the immediate director or supervisor. If requested, the associate superintendent for Instructional Services shall attend such discussion." In addition to Professional Conversations being a violation of our contract, they are a waste of time, i.e. there may no longer be a position available at the school when transfers occur, as teachers accept transfers new openings occur, teachers have afterschool programs and responsibilities, etc. Finally, we remind teachers, who, as per Human Resources, applied for a transfer through the Portal and not as per the BTF contract, that their transfer request can be challenged by a teacher who applied as per our contract. We sent correspondence to the District on March 22, 2018 indicating our willingness to, for those teachers, allow them to apply as per the contract.

May 8, 2018: BTF correspondence to the superintendent, Jamie Warren, and Board of Education of "Imminent Transfer Disaster". Including:

- False statements by District
- The use of the Portal has not been agreed to and therefore cannot be used; BTF's willingness to work to correct the problem is ignored.
- In violation of guaranteed privacy of teachers requesting a transfer, teachers' names were made available.
- BTF is asked to agree to a memorandum of understanding implementing issues we have previously rejected.

Despite these correspondences with the District, it has not notified teachers of the following:

- Teachers are not required to attend or sign in at open houses.
- Those teachers who have applied via the Portal should not have, but must apply correctly as per the BTF/District contract. No attempt has been made to work with the BTF to allow this.

BTF Members Will Set Education Policy This Summer During Two National Conventions

Buffalo teachers will be represented this summer when the BTF's national affiliates conduct their Representative Assemblies.

The National Education Association (NEA), headed by President Lily Eskelsen Garcia, will conduct its annual meeting June 30-July 6 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT), headed by Randi Weingarten, will hold its biennial convention July 12-17 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

President Philip Rumore and Vice President Rebecca Pordum were elected as delegates representing the BTF. Nine other BTF members will attend the NEA Representative Assembly as elected delegates for New York State United Teachers.

The BTF delegation was among 27 candidates statewide who applied for 35 NEA state delegate seats. A call for nominations for the seats was printed in the 2018 NYSUT RA Campaign and Election Procedures.

Because there were only 27 candidates for 35 positions, the election was deemed uncontested.

The BTF delegates are:
 Desiree Breckenridge-Barnes
 Lynn Garcia
 Sophia Howard-Johnson
 Rachel Lis
 Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan
 Sue Raichilson
 Chris Salamone
 Cathy Stearns
 Ruyvette Townsend

Twenty BTF members will attend the AFT Representative Assembly. They were elected delegates to the convention through a district-wide election.

According to the Election Committee, there were 496 ballots received for the delegate election. Five of those ballots were invalid. In addition, there were 353 valid ballots for the Successor Delegate race.

The elected delegates include BTF officers:

Philip Rumore, President
 Rebecca Pordum, Vice-President
 Joseph Montante, Treasurer
 Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan, Secretary

Also elected were:
 Dennis Brancato
 Patrick Foster
 Tom Gattie
 Lynn Garcia

Nicole Herkey
 Sophia Howard-Johnson
 Melissa Kenney
 Mark Mecca
 Michael Mecca
 Sue Raichilson
 Trisha Rosokoff
 Chris Salamone
 Greg Sawicki
 Cathy Stearns
 Eve Shippens
 Ruyvette Townsend

Also elected, in an uncontested match were two successor delegates who will attend the RA if a delegate is unable to fulfill his/her obligation. The successors are Claire "Weegee" Rosart and Saveria Rosario.

Delegates for both conventions will attend committee meetings, propose new policies and changes to old policies and vote on education resolutions.

The election committee consists of BTF members Janine Williams, chair, Brian Hilton, and Kim McCullough-

Gabel. BTF members who assisted in the tallying of the votes were Brian Barrey Jr., Kilissa Cissoko, Jeanne Cummings, Sam Fritz, and Roslynn Gaumer.

BTF retirees Teri DiPasquale-Mahar, Sara Rodland, and Barb Russo, also helped count the ballots.

Teacher Named Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction


Joseph Bella, a CTE teacher at Frederick Law Olmsted School, was recently selected as a Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction by the National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS).

Every year, student members of NSHSS are invited to nominate the educator who has made the most significant contribution to their academic career.

Mr. Bella was nominated for his outstanding dedication and commitment to excellence in the profession and for helping his students to grow and develop as scholars, leaders, and citizens.

NSHSS recognizes academic excellence at the high school level and helps to advance the


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 - Suzanna C.G.

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Joe is the Husband of BTF member Barbara Polino Frandina

goals and aspirations of high-achieving millennials through unique learning experiences, scholarships, internships, international study, and peer networks. The BTF is proud to have Joseph Bella among its members.



Above: Well-respected at Olmsted, Joseph Bella poses with a group of his Green Technology students.

NYSUT Delegates Unanimously Approve BTF's Opt-Out Resolution During RA

A resolution to protect students who opt out of taking standardized tests from retribution, was approved unanimously by delegates of the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) Representative Assembly (RA).

The resolution was recommended by BTF President Philip Rumore during the annual RA, which was held in the Buffalo Convention Center April 27-28.

"In New York, we do not have any law or regulation prohibiting opting-out and thus, parents have the right to make decisions about what is best for their child", Rumore wrote in the resolution.

The resolution also said Buffalo school building administrators took degrading, destructive and hurtful actions against students whose parents have chosen to opt-out their children from New York State standardized tests.

The lengthy three-page resolution had previously been approved unanimously by the BTF Executive Committee and Council of Delegates. A copy was also sent to the New York State Board of Regents.

The resolution calls for:

- regulations/laws that prohibit singling out and denigrating students whose parents opt out of New York State 3-8 standardized tests
- stopping administrators from trying to dissuade parents from opting-out their children from standardized tests

The resolution outlined at least 18 complaints registered by Buffalo teachers who reported abuse in almost every school. Some of the complaints included:

- principals calling parents who opted-out to get them to reverse their decision
- principals telling faculty members that opt-outs were illegal and students would still have to take the tests even if their parents sent a note to opt-out
- principals promising pizza parties for students who took the test and telling them to keep his offer secret

The resolution also condemns administrators for "inflicting psychological harm on children by singling them out and preventing them from joining the rest of their class at ice cream socials, special events, roller rinks, chances to win bicycles and other prizes tantamount to child abuse."



1. To officially open the RA, the JROTC from Hutch Tech presents the colors.

2. At a meeting of ED 44, Lucille Emmi, Lynn Garcia, Tom Gatti, Mel Holden, Isabella Keegan, Sue Raichilson, and Claire Rosart study the list of resolutions.

3. As the RA gets underway, President Phil Rumore welcomes some 1400 delegates to Buffalo.



Open Your Door & Be Part of the Conversation!

Representatives of New York State United Teachers, (NYSUT), including 11 BTF members, are coming to your neighborhood and may be knocking on your door soon.

The "door knockers" are participating in NYSUT's state-wide Member Organizing Initiative (MOI) in which trained representatives visit NYSUT members at their homes. Forty members from the Western New York District trained for two days at NYSUT Regional office in Williamsville and are visiting members' homes in their own neighborhoods.

MOI representatives have photo identification tags and are distributing "I'm sticking with my union" buttons to members who are home, and leaving door hangers where they are not.

The home visits are a throwback to the beginning of NYSUT when members met at kitchen tables to share philosophies and plan actions. It allows members to meet face-to-face to discuss issues affecting the union.

In addition to sharing personal histories with their colleagues during these visits, the MOI representatives are also asking members to become active on a local, state or national level. Activities include becoming a MOI representative, phone banking, and serving on various committees.

MOI representatives are also discussing the *Janus v. AFSCME* Supreme Court case

which could affect the collection of union dues.

While most people have indicated familiarity with the case, many have not heard about it or its potential consequences.

If Janus should win, some anticipated consequences include door knockers and media campaigns attempting to get people to "opt out" of their union, and freeloaders who get the benefits of the union without paying dues.

The MOI conversations are necessary for the continued benefits of a collective bargaining unit. When MOI representatives knock on your door, invite them in and let them know you are Sticking With Your Union!



Above: After completing their training, BTF members are ready to start their door knocking campaign.

Extended Pay Plan Questions & Answers for the 2018-19 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 2019 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 2019. Assuming there are no difficulties, payroll deductions occur from 20 paychecks during the 2018-19 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 may receive your summer payments as paper checks mailed directly to the address that is on file with the BTF. There is also a direct deposit option. (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 pay warrants. The minimum deduction per pay warrant allowable is \$40. You may increase this amount in \$5 units (i.e. \$45, \$50, \$55, \$60, etc.).

Option 1: One check or direct deposit issued during the summer recess. Formula: to determine the exact amount of the summer check or 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 check or direct deposit would total exactly \$2,000.

Option 2: Two checks or direct deposits issued during the summer recess. Formula: to determine the amount per check or 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 checks or direct deposits would each total exactly \$1,000.

Option 3: Four checks or direct deposits are issued at two-week intervals during the summer recess. **Formula:** to determine the amount per check or direct deposit under **Option 3** multiply the amount deducted each paycheck times

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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 checks or direct deposits would each total exactly \$500.

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

A. Currently more than 1,700 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 secretary at the BTF Office (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 his secretary 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 check 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. Please consider this benefit. You will need to complete the third card of the Extended Pay Plan card. 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.

***Special Note:** If you receive paper checks, please be aware that they are only payable for 60 days after the date of issue, as stated on the front of the check. Also be sure to update your address to be sure that your payments arrive on time.

Extended Pay Plan Dates Set

Extended Pay Plan disbursement date for the summer are:

- July 13
- July 27
- August 10
- August 24

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