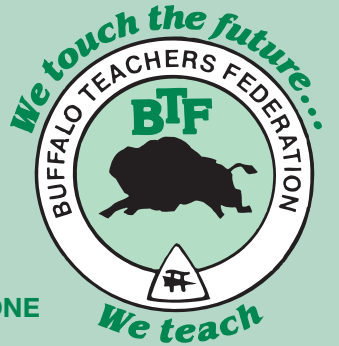


# PROVOCATOR

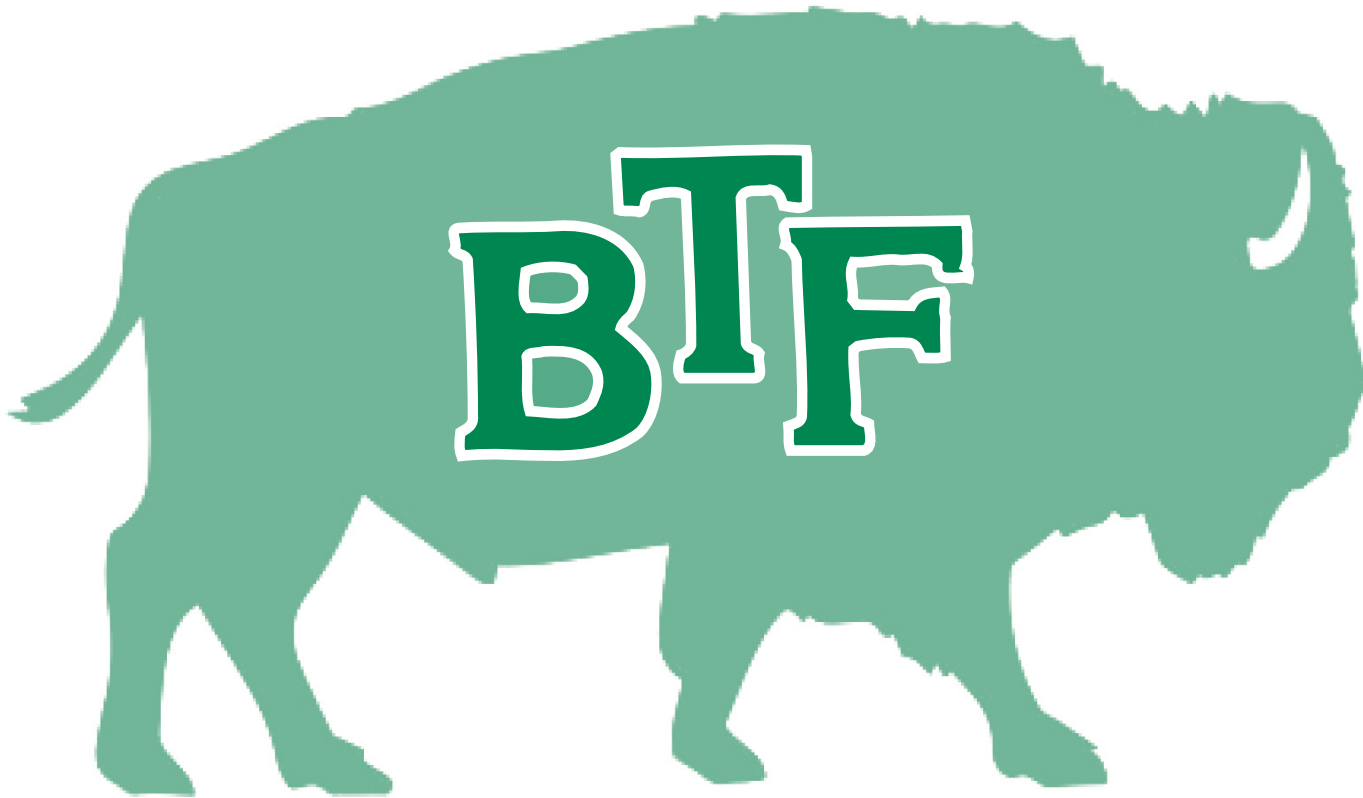
May 2021

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION VOLUME 51/NUMBER 4

DEDICATION  
SOLIDARITY  
PROFESSIONALISM  
PRIDE  
SECOND TO NONE



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# President/Vice President Candidates

## **Marc Bruno** *President*



### **Marc Bruno for BTF President**

It has been my honor serving as a Buffalo Social Studies Teacher and as a Union Representative on the local, state and national levels for nearly 20 years. I have been a proud and outspoken advocate for my colleagues throughout my tenure in the BPS. This experience and passion for advocacy is why I am determined to become the next Buffalo Teachers Federation President and to

lead our union into a new era of positive relationships with all BPS stakeholders.

Pat Foster and I are committed to revitalizing and reinvigorating the membership to face the modern challenges of teaching. As teaching has changed, so too must the BTF modernize with the times. Collectively, we must strive to meet the changing demands of our profession and as your elected leadership team, we are committed to facilitating a process of modernizing the way the BTF serves its members and deals with the District. Changing the track record from working under expired contracts for years at a time will be priority number one. We will establish a pattern of timely and successful contract negotiations so that we are finally able to be consistently compensated at a fair and commensurate rate as our colleagues in other Districts. Our members deserve nothing less.

As veteran classroom teachers, Pat and I are keenly aware

of the importance of our working conditions. Now more than ever, it is essential that the membership unite in its approach to addressing building-level issues so that we can establish and ensure equity and safe working conditions for every member in every building. To that effect, I have represented my colleagues as Building Delegate Chair in dozens of grievance hearings in front of nearly 10 Superintendents and Interim Superintendents. I have always been undaunted in my advocacy for my colleagues and as your BTF President, I will continue those efforts and will be visible, accessible and transparent.

Pat and I will utilize our wide-ranging union experience to take the helm of the BTF and positively and effectively move the membership into the Modern Era. Through our extensive experience, we have forged positive and productive relationships with both District personnel and the Board of Education. We will productively leverage this history of goodwill in all dealings on behalf of the BTF members.

We have the experience. We have the passion. We are the change you can believe in.

### **MARC BRUNO**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Political Action; NYSUT Convention Delegate

## **Patrick J. Foster** *Vice President*



### **Patrick J. Foster for BTF Vice-President**

Thank you for your support over the years on the Executive Committee, Council of Delegates, and during past campaigns for executive office. With your continued support, I look forward to serving you as the next BTF vice president.

Marc Bruno and I hold a vision for change and new energy for BTF and as we speak with many of you we know this vision is mutually shared. With our communities facing unprecedented challenges, BTF needs dynamic leaders who can transform today's problems into elevating opportunities. Consistently Marc and I have done this and we have done it together with you.

For years we have spoken and passed important resolutions in the Council of Delegates, advocated for our District and school communities at Board of Education meetings and rallies, and advocated for our students and teachers when our respective schools faced restructuring.

With a combined more than forty years in the classroom, Marc and I are in tune with your daily teaching experiences and we will be visible and accessible always. We will come into buildings frequently and bring your concerns to the appropriate stakeholders.

We know you invest your trust and resources with us and we will take effective action for you. Central to our platform is negotiating a new collective bargaining agreement for our distinguished Buffalo teachers. We will resume negotiations and with the recent favorable state budget we are confident in reaching a new deal with the District.

Our plan is to present timely and advantageous agreements to the membership and to enhance the Supplemental Benefit Fund. We will add more classroom teachers to the negotiating team and reform the ratification process to be transparent, fair, and deliberate.

Relentlessly we will pursue more resources and supports for our diverse, world-class students and teachers and advance equity and justice in society. We will protect a balanced curriculum that values the arts, sciences, and humanities, and is not confined by standardized tests. Our Professional Council will have an active role in what teaching and learning looks like in today's virtual classroom and in augmenting cyber-security.

Together and activated we are a powerful collective. Emerson wrote, "The ends pre-exist in the means." The force of our union is in our activism and integrity as a membership. Marc and I look forward to collaborating with all of you to re-energize BTF!

Thank you.

### **PATRICK J. FOSTER**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Grievance; Political Action; Professional Development

NYSUT, AFT Convention Delegate

## *DON'T DELAY!*



# *VOTING BEGINS MAY 3, 2021*





## **Philip Rumore** *President*

**It is an honor to work for, fight for and represent the finest, most dedicated teachers anywhere.**

What you have done and continue to do for your students, during these stressful and dangerous times, shows a commitment few understand.

We have accomplished much together:

- Legal and public actions had many safety concerns addressed. We have many more to address.
- We obtained funding to ensure safety in our schools/sites.
- We prevented attempts to roll back critical health and safety protections (social distancing/premature student attendance, etc.).

We will work with others and, if necessary, fight to ensure safe and healthful conditions in our schools/sites. Have no doubt about that.

Once the funding we fought for arrives, negotiations will resume with the Mediator who supported delaying negotiations during the pandemic. We will be fighting for a contract not only like those around us, but better. Together, we made significant strides in our last contract despite spending years going all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. A battle we had to fight.

We fought off attempts to gut our contract e.g. raise class sizes, cut healthcare benefits, remove healthcare for retirees, provide miniscule salary increases, etc. We:

- eliminated teachers staying on Steps 15, 17, 19, 21 for two years and for Step 13, BS+40 – Dr. **We will now further reduce steps to get to maximum.**
- have teachers starting on at Step 2,
- increased MS starting salary from \$37,552 to \$44,859,
- increased MS+30 max from \$77,666 to \$96,401,
- prevented paying a percentage of healthcare – teachers in surrounding Districts pay 8-10% on average - many pay 12-15% or more.



## **Rebecca (Becky) Pordum** *Vice President*

As a thirty-year Buffalo Teachers Federation member, I am seeking your support to again serve as your Vice President. During these trying times, I believe that experience is critical. I have held many positions throughout my public school career including working as a middle school math teacher, math support teacher and as the Teacher Center Director. As a BTF officer, I served for three years as Treasurer and the past four years as Vice President.

The past two years have been challenging for students, parents and **you**, our dedicated Buffalo Public School teachers. During this time, you have taught students virtually and concurrently while attempting to keep your family and friends safe from COVID. Some of you have lost family members or close friends due to this pandemic but you still continued to work daily to educate, motivate and show compassion to your students. Our community owes each and every one of you its sincere gratitude for your dedication.

During the pandemic, we were accessible to all of our members and assisted them with a variety of issues and concerns. Many of your colleagues, and I, attended the numerous reopening committee meetings with administrators, parents and community members. We relayed your concerns regarding the safe reopening of our schools. As your Vice President, I attended the fifteen district reopening meetings as well as all eight subcommittee meetings. Although our collective voices were not always heard, we believe it was important to have our members' views represented at each and every meeting.

The current yearly costs for the most-used Traditional Plan/s -- \$9,700 single, \$21,491 family.

Some current District "Proposals":

- School year 42 to 44 weeks (4.8%).
- No retiree healthcare after July 1, 2020 – Full-time teachers pay 20% toward healthcare.
- Remove delineation of healthcare coverages.
- Co-pay for prescriptions from \$10 generic, \$25 brand name to \$25 generic and \$50 brand name.
- Eliminates waiver pool for teachers covered elsewhere.
- Personal days from 5 to 3.
- Teaching periods from 5 to 6.
- Remove Art, Music, P.E. in K-6.
- Faculty meetings 10 to 20.
- **Salary increase 1.5%!!**

With our continued undiminished solidarity, we will prevail over all attacks and challenges.

**Together, we have made significant progress; however, there is more to accomplish. With your continued solidarity and support, it will be done.**

Thank you. You are the best!

**PHILIP RUMORE**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF President; Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Negotiations; Political Action; Retirement Workshop; Supplemental Benefit Fund Trustee

NYSUT, NEA, AFT Convention Delegate; NYSUT Director

As a BTF officer, I am knowledgeable of National, State and Local educational policies. I have attended many virtual conferences as a NYSUT, AFT and NEA Delegate. Unions are at a crucial crossroad and it is my core belief that we need to be well informed in order to protect our rights as union brothers and sisters.

As the Political Action Committee Chair for the BTF, we work to back candidates who are supportive of our public school goals and initiatives. Many candidates ask for our support; however, we only support those candidates who have an interest in protecting our students' future and the health and welfare of our teachers.

At this point in time, it is critical to have a leadership team that has the knowledge and experience to advance our goals. I am respectfully asking for your continued support and vote of confidence in our team!

**REBECCA (BECKY) PORDUM**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Vice-President; Presidential Assistant; Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Communication/Technology; Community Engagement; Educators of Special Education; Ethnic Minority Involvement; Negotiations; Political Action; Public Relations; Social; Women's; Teacher Center Policy Board

NYSUT, NEA, AFT Convention Delegate; NYSUT Policy Committee

# Secretary Candidates



## Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan **Secretary**

If the past pandemic year has taught us anything, it is that we need to be cautious and diligent. BTF has fought cautiously and diligently to protect our students and our teachers from harm. We cannot settle for incomplete and reckless reopening plans. Our Union has fought to protect our students and teachers with ongoing action research detailing building conditions and Covid positivity rates. When teachers who have comorbidities were denied accommodations, our Union fought back. When teachers became overwhelmed with hybrid learning models, our Union documented our concerns to the administration. We will soon be negotiating our new contract. The district has many demands of its teachers, while teachers requests have not been heard, or heard and ignored. As the secretary of BTF, I have documented again and again our struggles with practices that inhibit our ability to teach. I appreciate your solidarity and thank you for your vote.

### **MELINDA MACPHERSON-SULLIVAN**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Secretary; Executive Committee; Buffalo Teacher Center Director

BTF Committees: Communication/Technology; Political Action; Teacher Center Policy Board

NYSUT, NEA, AFT Convention Delegate; NYSUT Teacher Center & Women's Committees; NEA State Delegate; NYSTRS Delegate



## Christopher Ricci **Secretary**

While so much has evolved over the past few years, some things have remained constant. Consistency is indeed important but there is a dangerous line between it and stagnation. Our unions approach to handling issues we are confronted with has indeed grown stagnant. From negotiations to COVID, our stale approach is yielding the same results: nothing. As a strong union leader, I cannot bear to sit back and continue to watch our teachers be vilified while also being compensated in the bottom half of WNY. We must seize this opportunity and begin moving towards a new future as a Union.

My plan is to be a big part of the aforesaid future and I am confident that new leaders will be elected who share a similar vision. As Secretary, I will strive to make sure that the BTF becomes the Union we NEED it to be: one that promotes our many accomplishments, successfully negotiates with the District, and most importantly, one that empowers ALL members to help create one of the strongest unions in the nation.

Please feel free to reach out to me at [chrisricci78@gmail.com](mailto:chrisricci78@gmail.com). I would be happy to chat anytime.

### **CHRISTOPHER RICCI**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Delegate Chair

BTF Committees: Building; SBMT

# Treasurer Candidate



## Joseph Montante **Treasurer**

It has been my honor to serve as the BTF treasurer and chair of the Finance Committee for the last four years. During that time, I have continued the tradition of transparency the Federation has always demonstrated with its funds. If the BTF's finances were not in order or if expenses exceeded income, we would not be able to perform the services our members need and deserve. I am happy to report that over the past two years we have brought you:

- balanced budgets with no dues increases
- monthly financial reports before the Executive Committee and Council of Delegates
- continued accountability commensurate with accounting standards for reimbursing elected delegates to conventions
- an expected surplus in this year's budget
- annual publication of the CPA audit report of BTF finances

In addition to serving as your treasurer, I also work full time at the BTF office as a Presidential Assistant. In that capacity, I have managed the Extended Pay Plan for over 2000 teachers, helped many with various problems, and served as managing editor of the *Provocator*.

This union is important to me and I am asking for your vote as BTF treasurer. Trust in my record of experience, integrity, and accountability.

### **JOSEPH MONTANTE**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Treasurer; Presidential Assistant; Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Communication/Technology; Finance Chairperson; Grievance Chairperson; Membership; Negotiations; Political Action; Social; *Provocator*; Retirement Workshop

NYSUT, AFT Convention Delegate; NYSUT Pension Committee; NYSTRS Delegate



## Online voting May 3-17



# Executive Committee Candidates

## PreK-6 Elementary (6 to be Elected)



### Trisha Rosokoff

In the blink of an eye, our entire profession changed! This has been one of the most stressful, challenging school years we have ever faced. So many changes, so much uncertainty, but through it all Buffalo teachers have remained resilient during these unsettling times.

I have been a BPS teacher for 23 years and have taught at the International School #45 for the past two decades. I have been a member of the Executive Committee since 2014.

For too many years, our working and learning conditions remained subpar and were not a priority for the district. BTF has always fought for safe and healthy schools. This past year the fight has been relentless, as I experienced firsthand by serving on the Reopening Committee and the Health and Safety Committee. We continue to bring all of your concerns to the district.

I have also been an advocate for our English Language Learners by serving on NYSUT's ELL Committee. Last summer, I enjoyed doing outreach with our newest union members while working the NYSUT 2020 MOI. Helping teachers, fighting for our rights on issues we face, and keeping our union strong are my priorities! Thank you for your support and vote!

#### **TRISHA ROSOKOFF**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Membership; Vote-Cope; District Committee of Stakeholders; Re-opening; Health & Safety Subcommittee

NYSUT, AFT Convention Delegate; NYSUT English Language Learners Subject Area Committee; SED/NYSUT Commissioner's Teachers Advisory Council; NYSUT MOI New Membership Outreach; NYSTRS Delegate



### April C. Hall

I'm a third grade teacher at HHE, BPS#80. Over the past two years I've had the honor to serve on the Executive Committee. I've been able to delve deeper into the workings of our Union and its representation of our members and the students we serve. One of our focuses has been COVID-19 and its impact on our precious schools and

families. Safe working and learning conditions are more significant now than ever before. The Executive Committee is currently making overarching efforts that will resolve to safe and healthy school environments amidst the ongoing pandemic. Safety is Always our first Priority. I'm also a member of the Ethnic Minority Involvement Committee. The goal is to heighten minority teachers' awareness and importance of unionism. To encompass the work and opinions of others, underrepresented and marginalized groups is key to forward and upward mobility. I'm fortunate to be a part of Interview Teams, SBMTs and NYSUT Leadership Conventions. Each experience provides insight on how a large district such as ours operates, and promotes the necessity of being a part of a Great Union! Nomination for reelection to serve on the Executive Committee, is a milestone. I look forward to being your VOICE!!

#### **APRIL C. HALL**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Ethnic Minority Involvement; Interview Teams; SBMT

NYSUT Leadership Convention; NYSTRS Delegate



### Sophia Howard-Johnson

The COVID pandemic has certainly called upon all of us to grow stronger together in resiliency. Coping and adapting to the challenges in our work as Educators. I am a proud educator of more than 28 years of teaching in the classroom. Very early in my career, I served as Building Delegate Chairperson, SBMT, and Building Committee. Since 2013, I have served as a member of the Executive Committee and I'm prepared to continue working as a member of the Negotiations Team working to protect and defend our collective bargaining agreement. You have a peace of mind knowing that our experienced team will fight to preserve salaries, health benefits and safe working conditions that are well-deserved! A Sick Bank Trustee, I ensure that members suffering health illness continue to receive wages as they recover. Co-chairing the Minority Ethnic Involvement Committee gives me the opportunity to engage fellow minority teachers. Serving on the Political Action Committee enables us to form alliances with candidates that support our views advocating for school funding and teacher support in the political and legislative arena. In solidarity always I will continue to serve, engage and fight for your contractual rights!

#### **SOPHIA HOWARD-JOHNSON**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Building; Ethnic Minority Involvement; Negotiations; Political Action; Sick Leave Bank Trustee; Teacher Center Policy Board

NYSUT, NEA, AFT Convention Delegate; NYSUT Committees: Early Childhood; Women's "Sisterhood"; NYSTRS Delegate



### Janine Schuster

Even with 32 years of experience as a teacher, this past year has truly presented some of the most difficult challenges! I'm currently teaching Pre-K at B.E.S.T. #6 where I've also taught Kindergarten and Third Grade for most of my 20 years in BPS. Perseverance through adversity enables me to face and solve future problems.

Before I was elected to the Executive Committee of the BTF, I was a building delegate and delegate chair. My Executive Committee position allows me to advocate for the entire BTF membership. My focus has primarily been my participation on the Teacher Center Policy Board and the BPS Professional Learning Team, both of which offer us our professional development opportunities. We are in constant need of continuing education to be prepared for the myriad of changes we face within our daily teaching. This year is a perfect example with all the technological changes due to teaching during the pandemic!

I would be honored to continue to work for you on the Executive Committee to help get you the professional development you need and I will also continue to work on the BTF Finance Committee, Educators of Special Education Committee and serve as a delegate for the NYSUT Convention.

#### **JANINE SCHUSTER**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Educators of Special Education; Finance; Teacher Center Policy Board; BPS Interview Team; NYSUT Convention Delegate



## **Rachel Binda-Lis**

I am a first grade teacher at Roosevelt #65. Prior to being elected to the Executive Committee, I served as the building delegate chair and was an active member of our building committee also. For the past 12 years, I have been privileged to represent PreK-6 teachers. 11 of those years I have been the co-chair of the Public Relations committee as well.

Proudly, I represent the Buffalo Teachers at both State and National Conventions; as a voting delegate.

My commitment to teachers has ALWAYS remained the same. I will represent YOU to the best of my abilities, and work toward amicable relations between the board and teachers; which will strengthen appropriate and positive morale toward teachers... both current and retired!

I will continue to help build a community among the shareholders in the Buffalo Schools. I was elected to the Executive Committee (PreK-6), 12 years ago. I thank you for allowing me to work in this capacity. My purpose is to continue to bring the concerns of Elementary teachers to the board, administration, our community, and to the parents! I remain excited, and look forward to serving YOU in the next term! Thank you in advance for your support.

### **RACHAEL BINDA-LIS**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Communication/Technology

NYSUT, NEA, AFT Convention Delegate; NYSUT State Delegate to NEA; NYSUT Civil & Human Rights Education Issues Organization Committee; NYSTRS Delegate



## **Ruyvette Townsend**

First, I would like to thank you for allowing me to serve you these past years. I have worked in this district for the past 27 years. I am currently a second-grade teacher. I enjoy working as Co-Chair to the Public Relations Committee where I help to make BTF visible in our communities. While working as Co-Chair to the Ethnic Minority Committee I have been a voice in informing our black and brown skin members of the importance of being actively involved in the union. I am trustee for the Supplemental Benefit Fund. And I am active in many other committees and areas to help us reach our goals. I attend many conferences and trainings on the local, state, and national levels allotting me the knowledge to answer your many questions.

Our team has been carefully working to secure a healthy environment for the students and staff in our district. As we continue to work our way through these trying times, I ask that you put your vote behind me once again and vote for me to retain my seat on the Executive Committee.

I will continue to support our fight for no percentage healthcare, and other issues at hand.

### **RUYVETTE TOWNSEND**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Ethnic Minority Involvement; Grievance; Political Action; Public Relations; Supplemental Benefit Fund Trustee; Teacher Center Policy Board; Rep/NAACP

NYSUT, NEA, AFT Convention Delegate; NYSUT State Delegate to NEA; NYSUT Committee of 100; NEA Black Caucus; NYSTRS Delegate

# **Executive Committee Candidates**

## **7-12 Secondary (7 to be Elected)**



## **Eve Shippens**

Twenty-twenty was a crazy year. Pandemic. Civil unrest. People without food or income. My family was not unaffected. My daughter was out of work for months. My dad was hospitalized for a mental health crisis. My ex-husband died of covid complications. But we did better than many families because I am a union worker. My income is stable,

I have good insurance, and I have job security. All workers deserve these same protections. My passion is to revive the labor movement so that working conditions improve for all workers.

I have been teaching Science in Buffalo since 2001. About 11 years ago, I became a Building Delegate, and later Delegate Chair. I currently Co-chair the BTF Community Engagement Committee, am a member of Executive Committee and PAC, and am a Delegate to NYSUT and AFT. I also serve on the NYSUT Human and Civil Rights Committee and am a member/coach for the Member Organizing Institute that has done member to member campaigns about the Con Con and Sticking with Our Union.

I'm running for re-election because I want to continue to fight for our union values and workers' rights for all!

### **EVE SHIPPENS**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Community Engagement; Political Action

NYSUT, AFT Convention Delegate; NYSUT Human & Civil Rights Committee; NYSTRS Delegate



## **Lynn M. Garcia**

Teachers face unprecedented challenges, attacks to our tenure rights and our unions continue. We must continue to build bridges with our parents and community groups to ensure our students have the schools that they deserve, including the needed resources. I continue to work with many others to build coalitions needed to accomplish this work.

We need to advocate for a legitimate teacher evaluation system, not one imposed by Albany. We must work to end high stakes testing that hurt our students and unfairly label our schools as failing.

As a member of the BTF Executive Committee, I put my NYSUT training into action. As PAC co-chair, I work to elect pro education candidates. As a member of BPTO, I work to promote the positive things that are happening in our schools. As a delegate to the NEA RA, I serve as Vice-Chair of the NEA Women's Caucus.

I appreciate the support you have given me in past elections. It has been my honor to represent you in these positions. I am asking once again for your support to continue this important work. If re-elected, I will do my best to represent the voice of secondary educators.

### **LYNN M. GARCIA**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Communication/Technology; Political Action; Women's Empowerment; Teacher Center Policy Board; Vote Cope; Council of Delegate Co-Secretary

NYSUT, NEA, AFT Convention Delegate; NYSUT State Delegate to NEA; Women's Committee; NEA Woman's Caucus Vice Chair; NYSTRS Delegate

*7-12 Secondary continued on Page 7*



## Sue Raichilson

I am a Riverside CTE/Business teacher and have served on the BTF Executive Committee for many years. I have been actively involved on many BTF committees as well as NYSUT, NEA and AFT. Currently, I am the Retirement Workshop Chairperson, a Trustee of the Supplemental Benefit Fund, and Secretary to the BTF Council of Delegates.

I am also a NYSTRS Delegate, Delegate to the NEA Annual Representative Assembly and the AFT Convention, NEA Women's Caucus Northeast Coordinator and an Alternate to the NEA Board of Directors.

During my tenure, I have fought vigorously for all our members, stood strong and united against those who have tried to threaten our union, contract and profession. Throughout this pandemic we have been and are constantly being challenged professionally and personally without losing sight that our students' academic progress, as well as their personal and emotional well-being are at stake. We must remain strong and even more united than ever for them and for all our teachers. I am committed to all of you, our dedicated, hard-working Buffalo teachers. Please allow me the privilege to continue to fight for our students, our union and our profession. Thank you.

### SUE RAICHILSON

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Retirement Workshop; Social; Supplemental Benefit Fund Trustee; Secretary to the Council of Delegates

NYSUT, NEA, AFT Convention Delegate; NYSUT State Delegate to NEA; Committees: Women's; Career and Technical Education; NEA/AFT Committees: Board of Directors (NYS Alternate); Women's Caucus Steering; Women's Caucus (Northeast Coordinator); NEA Caucus Member: APIC; Hispanic; African American; LGBTQ; Peace and Justice; NYSTRS Delegate



## Rich Nigro

I grew up in Buffalo's Black Rock neighborhood in a large blue-collar family of humble means. As a boy, I remember my father talking about his union membership at the plant. He spoke of the importance of sticking together. He told me that the, "...Strength of the union comes from its member's solidarity." As a kid, I didn't really understand the notion of solidarity, but, I understood it enough to

realize that there is strength in numbers – especially when those numbers have each other's backs.

I began my career with the BPS as an English teacher in 1998. Now, in my 23rd year of teaching, I have a thorough understanding of what solidarity means. I have served as building Delegate, Delegate Chair, Building Committee member, and SBMT member. As an Instructional Technology Coach, I've had the privilege of working with and learning from some of the best teachers spanning grades Pre-K-12.

This nomination has given me the opportunity to give back to and further strengthen OUR union and fight to ensure the continuation of our hard-earned benefits. I look forward to representing my BTF family. Thank you for your confidence and your vote!

### RICH NIGRO

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Committees: Building; SBMT



## Chris Salamone

I am running for re-election as a 7-12 representative on the Executive Committee, a position I have held for the past 8 years.

I have been actively involved in the BTF for 24 years and currently serve on the Political Action Committee, Community Involvement Committee and as editor of the *Provocator*, the official BTF newspaper. I am a delegate to the NEA, the AFT, NYSUT, and NYSTRS. I am also a member of the NYSUT Women's Committee.

I have worked on the BTF Election Committee, served on interview teams, and worked on election campaigns and organization committees. I am a graduate of the NYSUT Leadership Institute and the Member Organizing Institute. I have attended NYSUT Summer and Winter Leadership Conferences and the BTF's annual Leadership Workshop for many years.

In my spare time, I am the treasurer of the Buffalo Parent Teacher Organization, a Support Group Facilitator for NAMI, and instructor for their Family to Family course.

A lifelong resident of Buffalo, me and my three children are graduates of BPS.

With contract negotiations coming up again, we need an experienced Executive Board to represent our interests and maintain our benefits. I would appreciate your vote!

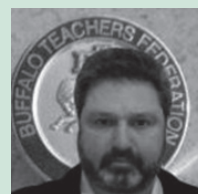
### CHRIS SALAMONE

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Community Involvement; Political Action; *Provocator* Editor; Leadership Workshop

NYSUT, NEA, AFT Convention Delegate; NYSUT Leadership Institute; Member Organizing Institute; Summer and Winter Leadership Conferences; Women's Committee; NYSTRS Delegate



## Dennis Brancato

It is an honor to have **served for many years as your voice on the BTF Executive Committee** and the Council of Delegates. Teachers' concerns remain at the center of my service on the Council and Executive Committee. Concerns vary by

teachers' circumstances, positions, and stages of life and career. **All teacher concerns matter, and I represent everyone. Every teacher in our union is important.** As a trustee for the SLB, a Grievance Committee member, and an Executive Committee member, I work hard to protect our teachers, make sure our teachers receive their benefits, and continually improve working conditions for all BTF members. This includes special committee work for protecting BTF teachers using TEAMS.

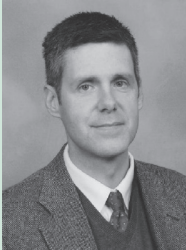
My union experiences include serving as the Senior Sick Leave Bank Trustee, BTF and NYSUT Leadership Workshops, serving as a NYSTRS Delegate, serving as NYSUT Convention Delegate, and serving by appointment as Sergeant-at-Arms for the NYSUT Representative Assembly. Locally, I represent BTF at the NYSUT district meetings and WNY Area Labor Federation (WNYALF) meetings. In these activities, **I represent you. It would be an honor to continue to represent you for the challenges ahead.**

**Please vote for Dennis Brancato for 7-12 Executive Committee**

### DENNIS BRANCATO

2019-2020, 2020-2021

NYSUT Committees: Political and Legislative Action; Educational Issues; Election District Meetings; AFT Political Action/Legislation



## **Steve Zatlukal**

I have had the honor to serve with respected professionals in the BTF as delegate chair/ delegate/alternate for many years. Always appreciative of the dedication and support the Buffalo teachers offer, I would like to join the Executive Committee. I support a strong inclusive union that reinforces the bond between teachers, families, and the community. Working to motivate students, staff, and community to be engaged in workers' rights and participating in political engagement and social justice, I support a stronger contract that benefits everyone from new teachers to retirees. Going forward I believe our union should focus on improving our community image and contract negotiations that enhance worker protections regarding evaluations, discipline, pay commensurate with surrounding school districts, working conditions, professional autonomy, and improved dental coverage. I have worked in a variety of school settings and capacities and am aware of the needs and concerns of vocational, bilingual, special education, academic and encore teachers and will bring these concerns to the table.

### **STEVE ZATLUKAL**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Delegate Chair

Participation: rallies, election phone calls



## **Melissa Kenney**

Thank you for allowing me to be your 7-12 voice in union matters. My love and knowledge of the union has only grown stronger over the years. There are so many moving parts in the district that we must continue to work together to keep the strength and integrity of our union in place.

I have 23 years of experience in BPS, as well as being a graduate, has shown why there is a need to stand up for our contract and our rights. We need to work together to protect our contractual rights.

My credentials show that I have served in several capacities to advocate for our membership. I always speak up in meetings to the Directors and Associate Superintendents when district policy makes no sense for teachers or students. I have advocated for a shorter timeline on the district policy of make-up work for students as this causes students to fall farther behind and causes even more of a burden on teachers to grade the late work. Unfortunately, this fell on deaf ears.

Thank you all. I look forward to you allowing me to continue to be your voice in making a difference for each of us.

### **MELISSA KENNEY**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Communication/Technology; Sick Leave Bank Trustee; Teacher Center Policy Board; Grading Committee with the District

NYSUT, AFT Convention Delegate; NYSUT English Language Arts Committee

# **Executive Committee Candidates**

## **K-12 Encore, Special Ed, other... (7 to be Elected)**



## **Ellen Malone**

My name is Ellen Malone, and I am a part-time hourly teacher at School 46, the Adult Learning Center (ALC). I am honored to have served on the Executive Committee for the past two years. The ALC, also known as the Adult Education Division, offers High School Equivalency, English as a Second Language, Post-Secondary Career Training and Computer Literacy to adults 16 and over, including many parents of BPS K-12 students, both day and evening. Many of our teachers offer classes at BPS Community Schools. It is vital that the Adult Education Division teachers continue to have representation on the Executive Committee during negotiations.

Most of our instructors are part-time hourly teachers and hold temporary status under our contract. ALC teachers face distinctive challenges under our current and previous contracts. It is way past the time for our status and work rules under the contract to change and become more aligned with contract and probationary teachers, especially health insurance, steps and work rules. For the past two years, I have introduced the BTF leadership and Executive Committee to our challenges and explained how the District's proposals may affect our teachers.

I work as a Career Advisor for the Adult Learning Center.

### **ELLEN MALONE**

2019-2020, 2020-2021



## **Mark Mecca**

Mark Mecca is a school psychologist with the Buffalo Public Schools for the past 18 years. He is currently at School #197 MST. Mark has been on the executive committee for the past eight years. Prior to that Mark was a BTF delegate and delegate chair at school #197 MST. Mark has served as a delegate to the New York State Teacher Retirement System (NYSTRS), New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) convention and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) convention in the past. Additionally Mark has served as a coordinator of BTF's Vote-

Cope campaign and Mark has served for the past six years as an elected school board member in the Williamsville Central School District which is the 2nd largest school district in Erie County next to the Buffalo City School District. Mark is once again proud to run with Team BTF! Please consider voting for him!

### **MARK MECCA**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

NYSUT, AFT Convention Delegate; NYSTRS Delegate





## Gregory Sawicki

I would like to thank you for past support electing me, since 2015, to serve on OUR BTF Executive Committee. It has been an honor to serve. The experience, cohesiveness and actions of the Executive Committee have kept our Union as strong as ever. Our continued strength and solidarity has helped us overcome many of the difficulties the current pandemic has presented.

I am a very active member of the Executive Committee, extending my union passion and experience to make a difference for ALL OF US. I also serve: on the Teacher Center Policy board, as a NYSUT delegate, an AFT Delegate, a NYSTRS delegate, and on a NYSUT Special Area subcommittee (Special Education). I volunteer at phone banks and work polls during election season. I attend the BTF leadership workshops and NYSUT leadership training events.

I have attended EVERY Council of Delegates meeting since 2011 and have only missed two Executive Committee meetings since my original appointment in 2014. I promise to continue working hard for ALL of US.

I humbly ask you for your vote this year, so that I can continue to be a strong advocate for EVERY BUFFALO TEACHER's best interests.

### GREGORY SAWICKI

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Educators of Special Education; Retirement Dinner; Teacher Center Policy Board

NYSUT, AFT Convention Delegate; NYSUT Special Education Subcommittee; NYSTRS Delegate



## Amy Flynn

The Buffalo Teachers Federation remains one of the strongest unions there is. I am proud to be one of the people who work to keep it strong. Though I am an experienced BTF Executive Committee member, I have not forgotten my roots as a Delegate Chairperson, SBMT member, or Federation Building Committee leader. While fighting for all BTF members on the Executive Committee, my building level experiences of successfully standing up for our teachers prove valuable as I stand up for all teachers at the district level.

I am committed to the BTF and to my colleagues in all schools; together, we are the BTF! My dedication on the BTF Executive Committee has evolved into representing BTF on joint BTF-District committees, such as the District Reopening Committee and the

Special Education Opening Committee. On these committees, we fought for all teachers and all students.

We continue to stand strong as a union when we stand behind every BTF member. We stand shoulder to shoulder with newly hired teachers, veteran teachers, and our retired colleagues. It would be an honor to continue to serve you on the BTF Executive Committee. Please vote for Amy Flynn for K-12 Executive Committee. Thank you.

### AMY FLYNN

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Building; Educators of Special Education; Finance; District Re-opening; Special Education Opening; SBMT; Federation Building Leader



## Susan Baker

My name is Sue Baker, having been an Executive Committee Member for a number of years I have decided to run for reelection. I am particularly concerned about K-12 Itinerant & Encore teachers. I plan to be your voice at the table concerning issues revolving around various compliance &

accomodation issues. I am grateful for the opportunity to represent and serve you!

### SUSAN BAKER

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee



## Nicole Herkey

Nicole Herkey is a Reading teacher at BPS #93 and has been in the district since 2007. She was appointed to the BTF Executive Committee in April 2016 and was elected in May 2017. She is currently the Chairperson of the Social Committee, serves on Grievance Committee, and PAC (political action committee). Nicole participates in various Union

activities such as Breast Cancer Walk, Variety Club telethon and the Labor Day Parade. She has participated in numerous phone banks-BTF endorsed political candidates, Buffalo BOE candidates, Vote No to the Con Con, as well as phone calls to BTF members during the Union recommitment campaign over the summer. When COVID first hit in 2020 she reached out by phone to fellow NYSUT members to see if there was anything the Union could do to help during these trying times.

Nicole attended the NYSUT Member Organizing Institute (MOI) in May 2018. During the summer of 2018 she worked as a member organizer and visited fellow NYSUT members' homes to obtain signatures recommitting to our Union. Nicole has also attended yearly BTF delegate chair trainings, NYSUT leadership trainings, and in July 2018 Nicole was selected to attend NYSUT Leadership Institute in Albany, NY.

### NICOLE HERKEY

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Grievance; Political Action; Social

NYSUT, AFT Convention Delegate



## Desiree Breckenridge-Barnes

Desiree Breckenridge-Barnes M.S.E.D, S.D.A. for the Executive Committee K-12

Together she will Advance with the Team as One. The promise to Advocate, listen and Assistance in planning for Growth & Sustainability in the Diversity of Future Teachers of tomorrow. Reflect, Refocus, Repurpose our engagement in the community

around us with a positive voice. To establish a Bridge

Significant contributions As a Team member of the Union.

- she has served as a Building Delegate
- NEA/AFT/NYSUT/Convention Delegate
- Committees Community Engagement, Ethnic Minority Involvement
- Women, Sexual Orientation Trans Gender committee (SOGI)
- Serving on the National Board of Black Educators,

Cradle Beach for students with special Needs

- Uncrown Queens, BPS Big Sister Little Sister Program
- Social Justice concerns Intergenerational of Faith, Aids Alliance and the Homeless Program
- Member of the NAACP, Life member of Alpha Kappa Sorority Inc.
- She continues to Volunteer for the Varsity Club telethon, Reading Literacy, and the Juneteenth Festival

### DESIREE BRECKENRIDGE-BARNES

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Committees: Building; Community Engagement; Ethnic Minority Involvement; Retirement Dinner

NYSUT, NEA, AFT Convention Delegate; NYSUT State Delegate to NEA; NYSUT Committees: Women's; Sexual Orientation TransGender (SOGI); NEA/AFT Committees: Minority Affairs; Women's; PAC

# At-Large Teachers (3 to be Elected)



## Brian Meyer

Helping teachers and students is my passion. I would humbly ask that you please vote for Brian Meyer to represent you on the executive committee. As an instructional technology coach for almost 15 years, it's likely we've worked together previously at some point. I want to help change the narrative of teacher-as-enemy in the public's eye. I am hopeful to be involved on our behalf as we progress toward a new contract. I want to see changes in how the BTF handles dental and vision claims. It would be an honor to have your vote for this position. I look forward to being Your New Voice.

### **BRIAN MEYER**

2019-2020, 2020-2021



## Michael Jeffers

Fairness and equity. This is what I fight for. This is what I demand. I made this statement several years back, and I still stand behind it today. If anything, the pandemic has made it even more difficult for educators and our union today than when I wrote that statement four years ago. We must maintain a united front. We must continue to rack up all the small victories we can. We must push back and refuse to accept less than we deserve. We must push our vision of the future. Always looking ahead, while leaving no one behind. I will work diligently for those who need our help immediately, as well as for those who do not yet know why they need our help.

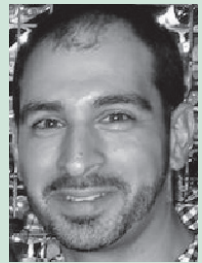
### **MICHAEL JEFFERS**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Building Delegate Chair

BTF Committees: SBMT; Vote Cope

NYSUT Convention; Member Organizing Institute



## Tom Anthony

I have taught in BPS for 15 years. From 2006 to 2013 I taught at International Prep. During the 2013 - 2014 school year, as Instructional Technology Coach. During the 2014 - 2015 school year, I taught at Futures Preparatory and Middle Early College HS. I have been at MECHS ever since. Also, I served as a BTF delegate or alternate at I Prep from 2007 to 2014. I served on the Executive Committee for 5 years. I also served as a NYSUT RA Delegate from 2011 - 2016, 2019 - 2021 and attended RA conventions in Buffalo, Washington D.C., and Albany. I am a member of the NYSUT Educational Technology Committee. I attended the BTF Leadership workshop in 2015 and 2017. I attended the NYSUT Leadership Workshop in 2019. I am the chairman of the BTF technology committee, where I am working to create better communication throughout BTF. Our committee has created a new web page to keep our members informed as well as updated our Facebook page and Twitter. My goal for BTF is to increase member involvement and help negotiate a fair contract.

### **TOM ANTHONY**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Building; Communication/Technology

NYSUT Convention Delegate; Educational Technology



## Michael Mecca

My name is Michael Mecca: I am seeking reelection for a fourth term to the Executive Committee in the At-Large category. If reelected, I would bring my extensive experience to the Executive Committee. During my career as a Buffalo teacher, I have gained wide-ranging union experience by serving for most of my 26 years as BTF Delegate Chair, delegate, alternate delegate, Building Committee Chair, and most recently with the Executive Committee. I also have gained extensive union experience by serving you on the BTF Finance Committee, BTF Membership Committee, as a NUSUT convention delegate, an AFT convention delegate, and as a NYSTRS delegate. This is a difficult time for educators, regardless of experience or tenure area. As a teacher of over 25 years and an active BTF member, I bring experienced leadership with a background including my union experience, and teaching experience in both Junior High and as a High School teacher. I am optimistic that you will vote in this election and find that an experienced, team oriented individual like myself is worthy of your consideration for Executive Committee. Thank you, and please vote for Michael Mecca.

### **MICHAEL MECCA**

2019-2020, 2020-2021

BTF Executive Committee

BTF Committees: Building; Finance; Membership

NYSUT, AFT Convention Delegate; NYSTRS Delegate

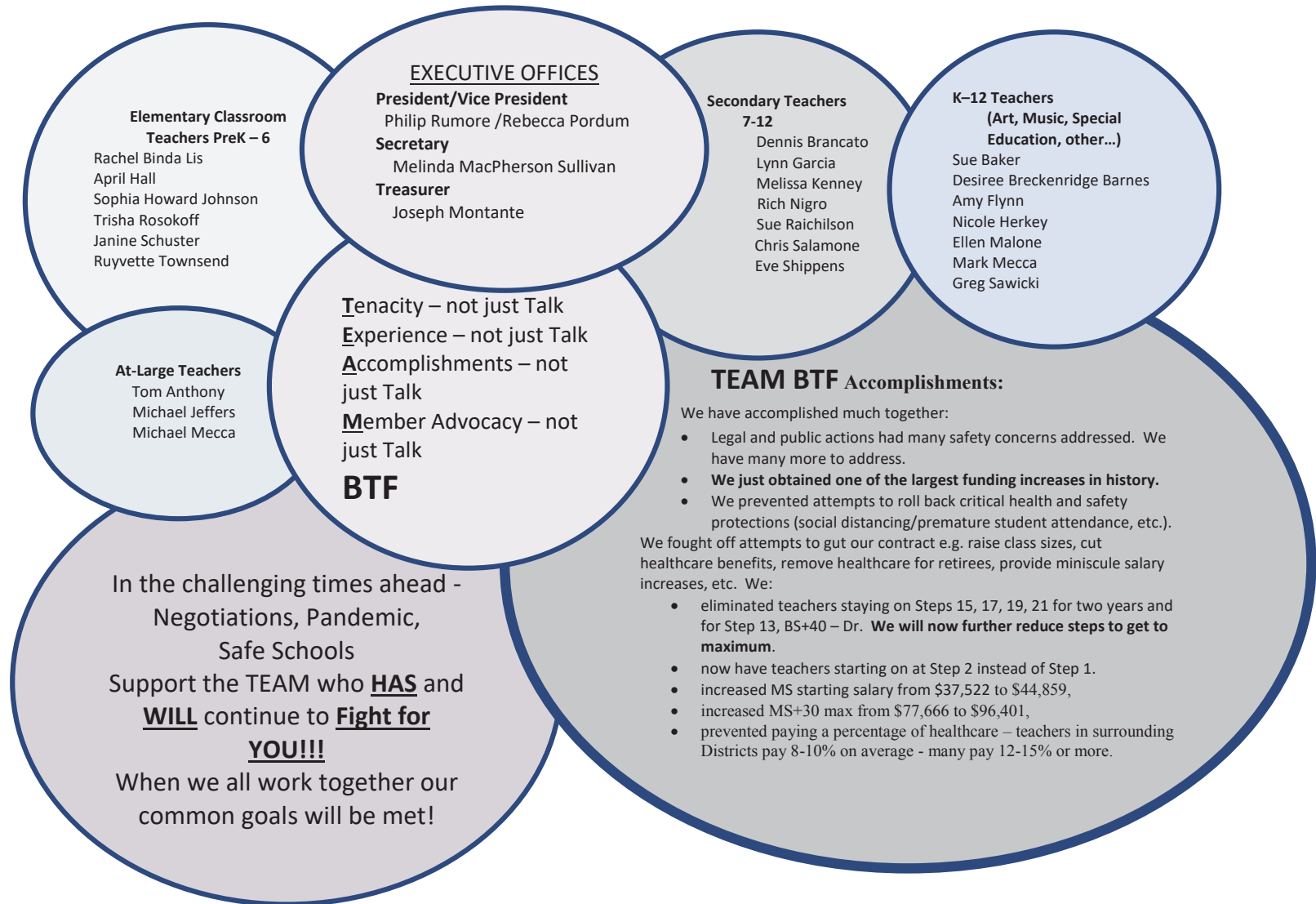
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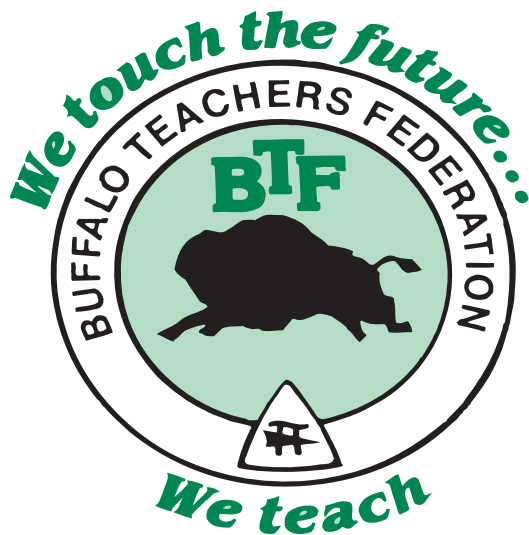
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