

PROVOCATOR

April 2022

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION VOLUME 52/NUMBER 4

DEDICATION
SOLIDARITY
PROFESSIONALISM
PRIDE
SECOND TO NONE



BTF Calls on Lawmakers to Resolve Nationwide Safety Concerns in Schools

Declaring school violence a “National Crisis”, the BTF Executive Committee and Council of Delegates unanimously passed a resolution asking state and federal lawmakers to ensure safety in the schools.

“This is a national crisis”, BTF President Philip Rumore told the Council of Delegates during its March 24 virtual meeting, attended by more than 100 teachers. “We have to make sure our schools and neighborhoods are safe.” President Rumore said the fighting and safety concerns plaguing the Buffalo Public Schools is not unique to our area. He said school districts throughout the nation are experiencing the same issues.

Phil expressed confidence in Interim

Superintendent Dr. Tonja Williams’ desire to address the safety concerns, but said lawmakers need to step in.

“Once the Superintendent received the first set of safety concerns, she, as you may have read, began to take action to address them”, Phil said of Dr. Williams. “We have now forwarded the latest BTF school safety survey to the Superintendent, Board, you and media. We will be forwarding it to NYSED and the Federal Department of Education. We will continue to survey schools.”

To address the safety concerns and other pressing issues, Dr. Williams has scheduled eight meetings, called Conversations and Coffee, throughout the District. Participants will be able to meet with Dr. Williams and discuss her

goals. A complete list of the meetings can be found on the Buffalo Schools website.

President Rumore also praised the community organizations that have been patrolling the neighborhoods around the schools for helping to keep the peace. He said the BTF will continue to survey teachers and hopes to survey students about safety concerns.

He predicted if the problems are not resolved, there will be a severe shortage of teachers in the near future.

Continued - See BTF Safety Resolution on page 5

BTF Passes Resolution for District to Retract Its Insulting Contract Proposal

A resolution condemning insulting and demeaning negotiation proposals, which take away benefits provided in the current teacher contract, and offered little in exchange, was passed unanimously on March 24 by the Executive Committee and Council of Delegates.

The resolution calls for the Superintendent of Schools and Board of Education to “withdraw its March 17 contract proposal and present a new contract proposal that they believe and assert truly reflects and affirms their appreciation for the commitment and dedication Buffalo teachers have shown for our students, staff and parents during these unprecedented and horrendous times”.

According to BTF President Philip Rumore, prior to writing the resolution, the union filed two Improper Practice Charges with PERB (Public Employment Relations Board) against the District for Bad Faith Bargaining. The charges were made after the District refused to schedule bargaining sessions with the BTF for almost five months and refused to negotiate ground rules calling for the

scheduling of two future negotiating dates. He said although the case was heard in February, there still is no decision.

The BTF also accused the District of Regressive Bargaining after it withdrew a counter proposal that the BTF had agreed to. A conference is scheduled with PERB in April to discuss it.

Besides demanding the District withdraw its proposal, the resolution calls for “the BTF to take all appropriate and necessary actions to ensure that Buffalo teachers are provided with a new contract that reflects their continued commitment and dedication to students, parents and the community.

The District’s proposal offered the following:

- No salary increase for the first year of the new contract (2019-2020).
- No retroactive payment for teachers who retired prior to the ratification of a new contract.
- To increase the number of weeks teachers must work for the same salary from 42 to 44 weeks.
- That teachers required to work after the current 42 week maximum will

not be paid. Will only receive 1/200 after the 44th week.

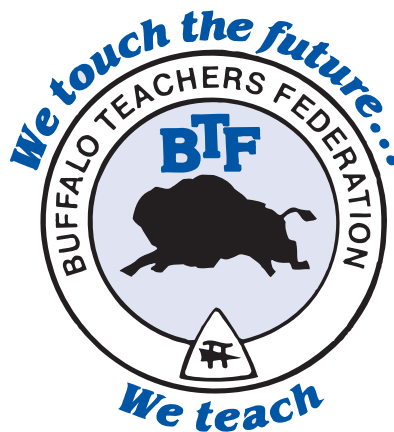
- To increase the hours of special area teachers teaching both elementary and secondary students from 240 minutes to 255.

- That teachers pay 20% toward their healthcare, despite the District’s healthcare costs going down.

To “compensate” for the concessions, the District offered the following salary package:

- 2019-2020 – 0% salary increase.
- 2020-2021 – Only “Teachers employed by the District at the end of the 2020-2021 school year, who continue to be employed by the District as of the date of ratification of this Agreement shall receive a one-time bonus in the amount of 5% of their annual salary as of the date of ratification of this Agreement.”
- 2021-2022 – Effective upon ratification of this Agreement, teacher and psychologist salaries shall be increased by 4%.

Continued - See Negotiations on page 5



Bright New Days Ahead or More Insults and Lack of Support

In just a few weeks, Interim Superintendent, Dr. Tonja Williams, has made some much-needed changes at City Hall, begun to address security issues, begun to visit schools, held open houses for community input, opened lines of communication with the BTF (e.g. scheduled monthly meetings with me), as well as other actions of which you have been apprised.

Yes, Dr. Williams has many more issues to address:

- School Safety
- The lack of understanding and compassion for the excruciating pressures that teachers are enduring and an appreciation for that dedication
- The lack of administrative support
- Unaddressed acts of violent and disruptive behaviors in our schools

And of course, the insulting and reprehensible contract proposals made, as well as the months of delayed negotiations which were apparently made while Dr. Kriner Cash was Superintendent.

There are many, many more serious issues that Interim Superintendent, Dr. Tonja Williams must address.

We wish her well and stand ready to work with her in order for there to be *Bright New Days Ahead*.

Dr. Williams, shall we begin?

To be forwarded to Dr. Tonja Williams, Interim Superintendent

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

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Rachel Binda-Lis, April Hall,
Sophia Howard-Johnson,
Trisha Rosokoff, Janine Schuster,
Ruyvette Townsend

7-12

Dennis Brancato, Lynn Garcia,
Mike Jeffers, Melissa Kenney,
Rich Nigro, M. Sue Raichilson,
Eve Shippens

K-12

Susan Baker,
Desiree Breckenridge-Barnes, Amy Flynn,
Nicole Herkey, Ellen Malone,
Mark Mecca, Gregory Sawicki

At Large

Tom Anthony, Mike Mecca, Brian Meyer

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Philip Rumore, *President*

Joseph Montante, *Presidential Assistant*

Rebecca Pordum, *Presidential Assistant*

Tim Connick, *NYSUT Counsel*

Jenna Burke, *NYSUT Labor Relations*

Specialist

Matthew Kibler, *NYSUT*

Labor Relations Specialist

Robert Mueller, *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 2021-2022 school year as a service to BTF members and interested parties in the community. Subscription price is included in BTF dues.

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

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Letters to the Editor

Mayor Thanks BTF for Program Support

Thank you for supporting my 20th Anniversary of Reading Rules! Kid's Summer Reading Challenge. Your generosity made a positive difference in the success of this high-impact program for youth in Buffalo.

I am pleased to announce that more than 22,000 students, in grades K-12, have worked on improving their literacy proficiency skills since I established Reading Rules 25 years ago in an effort to help slow the summer learning slide.

Your continued support has enabled generations of students to become Champion Readers who qualify to receive free children's books, backpacks filled with school supplies, educational scholarships, academic prizes, laptops, Kindles, bicycles, restaurant gift certificates, and passes to cultural institutions.

BTF Supports Event for Cariol Horne

Thank you for your generous gift in the amount of \$500 to the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence for a Silver sponsorship of our April 24th program.

We are grateful that you have chosen to support our program with Cariol Horne. Cariol is a former Buffalo police officer who was the inspiration for the Duty-to-Intervene law passed by the City of Buffalo in 2020. Cariol's personal story is a testament to the power of one person to create a more just and peaceful community.

With your gift you recognize the importance of working to eliminate violence and join with many other supporters of the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Non-violence to make this happen.

Thank you again for your generosity!
Warm regards,
Vivian Waltz, Director

Variety Club Thanks BTF

Hello Friends at BTF. Thank you very much for your generous donation to the 60th Annual Variety Kids Telethon!

On behalf of all of us at Variety and all the children we serve, we are so very appreciative and thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

We look forward to your continuing support of the 2023 Annual Variety Kids Telethon!

Thank you again,
Jessica Ritch, Development Dir.
Richard Goldstein, Executive Dir.

A special thank you to school teachers, educators, libraries, parents, and caregivers for joining my mission to encourage this summer's participants to read 10 books and write 10 book summaries between June and August 20, 2021.

I am also grateful to all the sponsors and in-kind donors who provided support for this year's special Reading Rules! Kids Summer Reading Program Virtual Awards Ceremony posted on August 28 on the City of Buffalo website and live streamed on my Facebook page and the City of Buffalo's YouTube channel.

Thank you again for investing in this empowering literacy program for our city and region's youth, and for inspiring students to improve their reading and writing skills this summer.

Sincerely,
Byron W. Brown
Mayor, City of Buffalo

PAL Youth Benefit from BTF Donation

The Police Athletic League of Buffalo, Inc. would like to thank you for being a \$1,500 Bookworm Sponsor of Reading Rules!, Mayor Bryon Brown's Kid's Summer Reading Challenge & Virtual Awards Ceremony for Champion Readers.

We appreciate the benevolent donation you made to this significant literacy program for PAL youth in grades K-12 who practiced improving their reading and writing skills between June and August. We are pleased to report that 2,000 youth achieved the goal of completing Challenge I and Challenge II of Reading Rules so they could qualify to win academic prizes, bicycles, laptops, and Kindles along with receiving a Reading Rules diploma and invitation to attend Mayor Brown's Virtual Awards Ceremony.

We are grateful for strong community partners like you who help make a positive difference in the lives of at-risk youth who are living at or below poverty level in Buffalo, and benefit from participating in Reading Rules.

Thank you again for your ongoing support and commitment to helping today's readers become tomorrow's leaders!

Sincerely,
Judy Sperry
Development Director

NYSUT Lauds BTF on Service Award

Congratulations on the selection of your local as a NYSUT Community Service Award winner in conjunction with the 2020 NYSUT Representative Assembly. We regret that, due to a production delay, we are only now presenting you with this distinguished award. We were, however, honored to recognize your local and other award winners during the 2020 RA proceedings.

The selection of the Buffalo Teachers Federation as a recipient recognizes your local's contribution to community service during the 2019 calendar year.

Please accept the enclosed award plaque in recognition of your dedicated service to your community and our union. We are very proud of you and your work.

On behalf of the Officers and Board of Directors, congratulations for this outstanding effort and dedication to community service.

In Solidarity,
Andrew Pallotta
NYSUT President

BTF Donates to Say Yes Summer Camp

I am pleased to share with you a full report on the 2021 Say Yes Buffalo Summer Camp Initiatives. The challenges that 2021 presented, including high levels of unfinished learning and heightened mental health needs for students, required a big and bold response.

I am proud we were able to meet the needs of the moment, serving 1,376 Pk-6 grade BPS students at 31 sites across the City of Buffalo. The program was well-rounded, incorporating evidenced-based academic curriculum, social-emotional learning, physical activity, healthy meals, and family linkages to a wide array of services and supports. As you will see in the report, students and families benefited immensely.

None of this work would have been possible without our partners and funders. Your investment made a difference for so many students and families during an extremely trying time. Thank you for seeing value in our initiative; we greatly appreciate your support.

Sincerely,
Dan Cross-Viola

BTF Retirement Dinner Planned for May 18

After a two-year absence, the BTF is planning a dinner to honor its retirees.

The annual BTF Retirement Dinner, traditionally held for current retirees, was last held in May 2019. It was cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, the teachers who retired in 2019 and did not attend that dinner, as well as those who retired in 2020 or 2021, have been invited. A letter announcing the event went out to these retirees.

In addition, teachers who are retiring in 2022 are invited and encouraged to

attend.

Retirees will receive a framed certificate and dinner. Retirees may bring a guest for a nominal cost. Photos of retirees will be featured in the June issue of the Provocator.

The retirement dinner will be held at Salvatore's Italian Gardens, 6461 Transit Road, Depew, on Wednesday, May 18, beginning at 5:30.

Any retiree wishing to attend should forward his/her name to Sierra Umhauer, BTF, 271 Porter Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201, by May 4.

Buffalo Teacher Center Continues to Serve

The Buffalo Teacher Resource Center, located on the third floor of East High School, 820 Northampton Street, has been a viable and effective influence in the Buffalo City School District since 1978. The Center has expanded its activities each year to meet the increased demands put on it.

The programs and services offered respond to the needs of teachers and students. There are a number of services available at the Teacher Center as well as staff facilitators to help you with the equipment or answer questions.

Throughout the year, courses, workshops, and book studies are offered to teachers. Topics and titles vary. Previous topics addressed include: Using Adobe, Remote Learning, English Language Learners, Student Engagement, Using Google, the New Science Curriculum, Step up to Writing, and many more. Courses are held both online and in person. The current course catalog, available on the BPS Teacher Center webpage, <https://www.buffaloschools.org/Domain/79>, gives a complete description of the offerings.

These courses are an economical way to earn credits, which can be used to enhance your professional portfolio or boost your salary. Earning credits in increments of ten, beyond a Bachelor's or Master's degree, will increase your salary. In general, Teacher Center courses provide one (1) District credit, pending Board of Education approval.

Workroom services include black/white and color copiers as well as book binder combs for those special class projects. There are also cold and hot laminating machines. You can create and print posters and use Cricut and Variquest cutters.

All services are available at nominal fees and if you need help using any of the

machines, facilitators are on site to help. The Workroom is open Monday through Thursday, 3:30-6:30 PM and Saturday, 9:00-11:30 AM.

So far this school year, the Teacher Center has offered 45 courses, which were attended by approximately 900 teachers. More courses are scheduled so don't miss out!

If you are looking to improve your skill set in a specific area, need help with advancing technology skills, or just want to learn, please go to the Teacher Center webpage (above). The website can also be accessed via the BPS homepage, under Departments. You may also call the Teacher Center Director, Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan, at (716) 816-4675 or email her at MHMacPherson@buffaloschools.org

BTF Donates \$2000 to Variety Club Telethon

Once again, the BTF and Buffalo teachers opened their hearts and donated \$2,000 to the 60th Annual Variety Club Telethon.

Due to the pandemic, the Telethon, which benefits the Oishei Children's Hospital, was produced and presented from the Variety Club Headquarters in Lancaster, March 5 & 6. The presentation was streamed LIVE at wgrz.com.

Because of Covid-19, donors, again this year, were limited to two presenters. The BTF, usually represented by a number of teachers, was represented by President Philip Rumore and Vice President Rebecca Pordum.

Teachers Support District Decision to Lift Mask Mandate

Nearly 75% of the teachers who responded to a survey conducted by the BTF approve of the District's decision to discontinue its mask mandate.

The survey was conducted after members of the School Board and District asked how teachers felt about lifting the mask mandate.

About half of the teachers polled, 1,628, responded to the survey.

The results of the teachers' survey to lift the mask mandate are as follows:

- I support the District's decision to lift the mask mandate in the Buffalo Public Schools, leaving it as an individual decision as to wear or not wear a mask. 1,198 votes or 73.59% of participants.

- I do not support the District's decision to lift the mask mandate in the Buffalo Public Schools, leaving it as an individual decision as to wear or not wear a mask. 318 votes, or 19.53% of participants.

- I have no position on the District's decision to lift the mask mandate in the Buffalo Public Schools, leaving it as an individual decision as to wear or not wear a mask. 112 votes, or 6.88% voters.

The results of the survey were sent to Interim Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Tonja Williams.

BTF President Phil Rumore said that teachers will be surveyed periodically or as conditions merit another survey.



ABOVE: Appearing at Variety Club Headquarters in Lancaster, BTF Vice President Rebecca Pordum and President Phil Rumore present a \$2000 donation on behalf of the BTF.

BTF Safety Resolution

(Continued from page 1)

The resolution approved by the Council of Delegates follows:

MOTION: WHEREAS: Violence, anger and disruptive behaviors are harmfully infecting our students/children, and

WHEREAS: It is critical that we realize that the resulting and too-often fatal incidents in our schools and on our school grounds are occurring across the United States, and

WHEREAS: This is a National Crisis involving the well-being of our children that must immediately be addressed by the President and Congress of the United States as well as other relevant agencies.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the BTF will take the following action(s):

- Seek through correspondence, email, petitioning and other appropriate methods, the support of NYSUT, NEA, AFT, our State and Federal legislators, and all other critical people and organizations, to ensure safety in our schools (which extends into the communities) for the following:
 - o Earmarked Federal funding for school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, school attendance teachers, etc. with a defined caseload, e.g. 120/1.
 - o Earmarked Federal funding to provide sufficient security personnel who will also be trained to gain the confidence of students to relate any concerns.
 - o Earmarked Federal funding for community organizations that have experience working with students to prevent acts of violence and disruption.
 - o Earmarked Federal funding to provide metal detectors for any District / School that needs them, without taking away from students' other educational needs/programs.
 - o De-escalating techniques for all staff and parents.
 - o Other critical school security needs identified by a school district.



Show Your Solidarity!

To show solidarity during contract negotiations, the BTF will sponsor a Solidarity Rally before the next Board of Education meeting on April 20.

Since meeting dates and times tend to change, more information will be provided closer to the event.

In addition, teachers are asked to wear BTF logo items or stickers every Wednesday when the Board has either official meetings or work sessions.

Delegates should have stickers in each of the buildings. If not, stickers and other logo items are available at BTF Headquarters, 881-5400.

Did You Know...?

That persons other than Board of Education Personnel shall be allowed to enter classrooms only with prior consultation with the classroom teacher. This means that parents and other non-Board people cannot just show up at your door.

This provision can be found in Article XI, I of the collective bargaining agreement.

Negotiations

(Continued from page 1)

- 2022-2023 – 0%
- 2023-2024 – Effective July 1, 2023, teacher and psychologist salaries shall be increased by 5%, or 3.94% if the parties agree to include a form of step compression.
- 2024-2025 – Effective July 1, 2024, teacher and psychologist salaries shall be increased 2.5%.
- 2025-2026 – Effective July 1, 2025, teacher and psychologist salaries shall be increased by 4% or 2.94% if the parties agree to include a form of step compression.

For step compression, the District offered:

- Effective July 1, 2023, Step 16 will be eliminated from the teacher salary schedule (but reduces salary increase to 3.94%).
- Effective July 1, 2025, the new Step 16 will be eliminated from the teacher salary schedule (but reduces salary increase to 2.94%).

BTF Weighs in on Proposed Changes to Buffalo Board of Education

A proposed state law to increase the number of Buffalo Board of Education members from 9 to 11 and give city officials some power in school decision making, was discussed at the March 24 BTF Executive Committee and Council of Delegates meetings. Both bodies voted to oppose this change.

Another proposed law, to decrease the number of signatures on nominating petitions required to run for the Board of Education, did receive the BTF's support.

Both laws were proposed by NYS Assemblyperson Crystal Peoples-Stokes.

The first proposal, known as A3043, would increase the current size of the school board by two additional members. One of the additional members would be appointed by the mayor and the second would be approved by the Buffalo Common Council. The remaining nine members would be elected by the voters as they currently are.

The second proposal, known as A9423, would reduce the number of signatures school board candidates need to be on the election ballot.

If approved by the State Assembly and Senate and signed by the governor, the number of signatures would be reduced from 1,000 to 400 for At-large candidates.

It would also reduce the number of signatures to run for one of the six district seats from 500 to 200.

All candidates for the school board, including incumbents seeking re-election, must file petitions. Candidates will circulate petitions April 19 to May 31.

Six of the current school board members are up for re-election. Hope Jay who represents the North District and Board President Louis Petrucci, Park District, have indicated they will not seek re-election.

For the first time, this year's election will be held on Election Day, November 8, instead of during May as it has been for many years. The date change, also sponsored by Assemblyperson Peoples-Stokes, was passed in 2019 reportedly to save money and boost low voter turnout in May elections.

BTF Visits Hospitals to Celebrate Read Across America Day

Despite Covid restrictions that limited the BTF's annual celebration of Dr. Seuss's birthday and *Read Across America Day*, a couple of Cats in Hats were able to visit area hospitals.

In previous years, BTF President Phil Rumore, and a small army of retired teachers, visited a number of schools to read to children. Others went to local hospitals to deliver newborn babies and their moms a gift.

The BTF's involvement in *Read Across America Day* continues the long and proud tradition of BTF programs aimed at the Buffalo Public School children and local community, according to President Rumore.

Read Across America Day is a national event sponsored by the National Education Association (NEA), of which the BTF is a member. It is aimed at spreading the message that reading is important, fun, opens the door to achievement, and is a crucial building block towards making the joys of reading an integral part of every child's life. The annual *Read Across America Day* always coincides with the late Dr. Seuss's birthday.

As part of the celebration, BTF retiree Stan Nowak and Canisius Professor Emeritus David Greenman delivered small gift bags to mothers of every child born in Oishei's Children's Hospital, Sisters of Charity Hospital, and Mercy Hospital. The bag contained a Dr. Seuss book and story character, BTF coffee mug and pen, and a *Read Across America* brochure detailing the event and its importance.

Included in the bag was a note to the mothers "from" their newborn.

The note said:



ABOVE: Before heading out to local hospitals, David Greenman and Stan Nowak meet at the BTF office to collect the gift bags for newborn babies.

Dear Mom:

Today is the biggest day of my life. It is the day I was born!

A whole world of living awaits me, and the Buffalo Teachers Federation, hoping to help me prepare for the joy of learning has provided me with my first book. This activity is part of *Read Across America*, a celebration of the birth of Dr. Seuss. Please, please Mom, read this book to me as often as you like. I have so much to learn! Feel free to read more and more often from a variety of books because, as you know, children will do better in their schoolwork when the family reads to them.

Someday, you will be so surprised to hear me read to you. I can't wait to make you proud of my accomplishment. Thank you, Mom. You had better rest now for you will have to save your energy for a lifetime of shared reading experiences.

Love, Your New Baby

Council of Delegates Meeting Notes

A 43-week calendar for the 2022-2023 school year, which closely aligns with the BOCES calendar and provides a winter break in February, was approved March 24 during the BTF Council of Delegates meeting.

The approval allows the BTF to have the District create an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) between the two parties to work outside the contractual 42-week school year for the upcoming year. That MOU will then be presented to all teachers.

Another calendar presented by the District follows the contract's 42-week school year, but does not have a February break. The District does not need BTF approval to adopt this calendar.

In other business, the Council of Delegates:

- Said the BTF has filed a grievance regarding the new Executime payroll system. A list of problems and concerns was sent to the District. Among the problems reported were teachers being charged twice for absences and having to do the work that school clerks have done in the past.
- Agreed to send \$5,000 to the Red Cross to help the people of Ukraine. The BTF has been working with NYSUT to arrange a method for our members to assist the more than 3 million refugees that have been forced to flee Ukraine and the Ukrainians who have continued to remain in their country.

The link below will enable you to donate as a BTF member to the NYSUT Disaster Relief Fund. All donations will be credited to BTF and will go directly to the American Red Cross to assist the Ukrainian people during this time of war. <https://nysut.cc/btfreief>

- Announced the April 28 and June 16 Council of Delegates meetings will be held in person for the first time since the beginning of the Covid pandemic. Both meetings will be held at 7 PM at the Grapevine, 333 Dick Road in Depew.

Welcome New Members

The following 30 teachers have joined the Buffalo Teachers Federation since the last printing of the *Provocator*. Welcome to the union!

Robert Amberger
Emily Blidy
Edwin Bradley
Jessica Chapman
John Clay
Natalie Corbine
Linda Cruz-Velasquez
Natalie DuBois
Chelsea Ebert
Heather Eckstrom

Titania Funderburk
Kaitlyn Gaik
Taylor Grayson
Vanessa Harris
Elise Herold
Catherine Horucy
Melissa Houghton
Austin Iheke
Edward Lonergan
Arielle Mendelson

Marcy Mickelson
Stephanie Moslow
Morgan Nicholson
Melissa Perez
Kevin Richert
Tiffany Rogers
Tracy Rosenhahn
Monet Simpson
Fredreca Worthy
Audra Zasada

**I'm Sticking
With Our
UNION**

Eva Doyle Thanks BTF for Promoting African American History Through Book

Eva M. Doyle, a renowned historian of African and African American History, retired Buffalo teacher, and writer, recently dedicated her column in the Buffalo Criterion, a weekly Buffalo newspaper, to thanking the BTF.

The following is her column:

A Special 'Thank You' to the Buffalo Teachers Federation

This columnist would like to thank Phil Rumore and the BTF for their recent purchase of 100 copies of the Eye on History book. Phil Rumore is the president of the BTF. The books were delivered to the Buffalo Public Schools for our students to have another resource to learn more about African and African American History. As a retired teacher and longtime community educator, I feel that is very important for our students and teachers.

While teaching in the Buffalo schools for 30 years, it was always my goal to have more resource materials for our

school community to advance the study of African American History. This was the primary reason that I created the African American Curriculum Resource Center at the Campus West School. The Curriculum Resource Center was equipped with numerous books, African artifacts, posters, films, teacher guides and materials to help teachers in their classrooms when teaching African American history. The Center lasted for 10 years, from 1994-2004, until I retired. It was the first one of its kind in the history of the Buffalo Public Schools! It was a model for the entire district.

The book "Eye on History, the Golden Collection," is a book for the entire community. It includes little-known facts about Black history. For those who would like to do further research, there is a bibliography of more than 30 books for additional reading. On February 28, I presented a reading to approximately 150 students by Zoom from a section of the book. I

also read from my first book entitled, "Buffalo's Black Community". This was an opportunity for students to also learn what goes into writing a book and how to do research.



ABOVE: Eva Doyle is a renowned historian of African and African American history.

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Joe is the Husband of BTF member Barbara Polino Frandina



Joe Frandina
Optician

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BTF members and dependents welcome as always.
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Bilingual Salesperson

Lisa Kankolenski

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Howard Hanna
Real Estate Services

Lisa is a BPS teacher and proud member of the BTF.



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BTF Safety Survey Gets Disturbing Results

Discipline in schools is not dealt with at all, or is ineffective. Teachers' rights regarding discipline issues, outlined in the BTF collective bargaining agreement, are consistently violated and there is a lack of security in most District buildings.

These and other disturbing concerns were reported in a School Safety Survey conducted by the BTF between March 10 and 15.

"In addition to the shooting and knifing at McKinley High School, recently, in our schools, in just one week, an elementary school student was attacked with a knife by another student and a teacher at another school was severely injured (her face lacerated) by a student", BTF President Philip Rumore explained.

"These, in addition to the very disturbing and serious concerns raised in our School Safety Survey, require immediate action by the District and an investigation by the New York State and US Departments of Education", Phil continued. President Rumore said the violence and lack of security seen in Buffalo schools is being experienced across the country.

"We believe that Interim Superintendent, Dr. Tonja Williams, is working to correct the security issues that have been identified. We look forward to continuing working with her to ensure that our schools are safe. However, it is critical that we realize that dangerous and too-often fatal incidents in our schools and on school grounds are occurring across the United States.

The violence, anger and disruptive behaviors of some adults are harmfully infecting our kids.

This is a National Crisis involving the well-being of our children that must immediately be addressed by the President, Congress and other relevant agencies", Phil concluded.

Meanwhile, Interim Superintendent

Dr. Tonja Williams has stated that school safety is her number one priority. Speaking to parents during an early Saturday morning meeting of the Buffalo Parent Teacher Organization (BPTO), Dr. Williams made her goals clear. The March 19 meeting, conducted in the library of East High School, was attended by participants both in person and virtually.

"Once the safety issue is handled, everything else will fall into place", Dr. Williams said.

The Interim Superintendent expressed safety concerns for students, teachers and staff in light of several incidents in which students, teachers, and a security guard were injured.

The first such incident, at McKinley High School, made national news and led to the resignation of Kriner Cash and subsequent appointment of Dr. Williams.

She reminded attendees at the meeting that while the recent incidents were tragic, the majority of students are not violent. Those students who act out are dealing with underlying issues that must be addressed.

To read the entire School Safety Survey, scan the code:



Ethnic Minority Engagement Committee to Meet Again in April

The BTF Ethnic Minority Engagement Committee, designed to create a professional network and build solidarity among minority teachers, is seeking members to benefit from its community.

The Committee, Co-chaired by Sophia Howard-Johnson and Ruyvette Townsend, also provides mentoring and support for new teachers. All BTF teachers are invited to join.

"In order to be able to educate our students, we as minority teachers need a space where we can connect together, strategize how to build resiliency on the job and empower each other", Howard-Johnson explained..

Participants in the committee's meeting March 16 discussed concerns and obtained valuable information on educational issues and coping with classroom problems.

Some of the activities planned this year include motivational speakers, discussions about our contract, volunteer work within the community and participation in the Juneteenth and Hispanic Day parades.

The Ethnic Minority Committee's next meeting is Wednesday, April 27 from 7-8 PM on Zoom.

For meeting information, contact Sophia Howard-Johnson at sophiahoward15@yahoo.com or Ruyvette Townsend at ruyvette@yahoo.com.

Visit Our Updated Website

www.btfny.org