

**CONSTITUTION**  
(As Amended November 14, 2023)

***ARTICLE I: NAME***

The name of this organization shall be THE BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION, INC.

***ARTICLE II: PURPOSE***

The purpose of this Federation shall be:

- A. To promote and foster loyalty to the highest ideals in education and to aid in bringing about the realization of these ideals.
- B. To maintain the teaching profession at a high level among the professions by:
  - 1. Upholding a high standard of qualifications for entrance into the profession; and
  - 2. Attending to the particular business and objectives for which our said Federation is formed -- to improve the material welfare and to raise the professional efficiency of the teachers, and thus to promote the welfare of the public schools; and to awaken in the public mind a sense of significance of the teaching profession.

***ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP***

The types of membership in the Federation shall be:

- A. Active membership shall include all teachers employed in or on leave from the instructional division of the Buffalo Public Schools System who have enrolled in membership and whose dues are current and paid in full. Only those teachers who devote a major part of their time to classroom teaching or allied work comparable to teaching, provided that such person shall have no power of supervising and/or evaluating teachers, shall be eligible.
- B. Associate membership shall include all teachers employed in the Instructional Division of the Buffalo Public School System less than full time who have enrolled in membership and whose dues are current and paid in full and who devote a major part of their time to classroom teaching or allied work comparable to teaching, provided that such person shall have no power of supervising and/or evaluating teachers.
- C. Student membership shall be open to those persons enrolled as students in four-year programs of teacher education in any of the Buffalo area colleges.
- D. Inactive membership may be granted by the Executive Committee of the Buffalo Teachers Federation.

- E. Honorary membership shall include those persons deemed worthy of the honor and so designated by a vote of the Executive Committee of the Buffalo Teachers Federation.
- F. A Non-Member is a person employed or newly-hired into a bargaining unit position and to whom one of the following applies:
  - 1. The person has not completed enrollment into the union
  - 2. The person enrolled into the union and has taken action to withdraw membership from the union
- G. Non-Members shall have no right or privilege to participate in any union election or contract ratification vote, nor will they be entitled to receive any NYSUT services as defined by NYSUT policies pertaining to non-membership of April 16, 2018 and September 14, 2018. A Non-Member is not considered to be “Active”.

#### ***ARTICLE IV: COUNCIL OF DELEGATES***

The Council of Delegates shall be composed of elected members from each faculty unit and other delegates as specified in the Bylaws.

- A. A delegate or alternate delegate may represent only one unit at any given time.
- B. All legislative power shall be vested in the Council of Delegates.

#### ***ARTICLE V: OFFICERS***

- A. The officers of the Federation shall be:

President  
Vice President  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
and the other voting members of the Executive Committee.

- B. The officers shall be determined by a secret ballot election conducted among the eligible voters.
- C. The Executive officers and members of the Executive Committee shall take office on July 1 following their election, except the Treasurer, whose two (2) year term shall be co-terminus with the fiscal year of the organization.

#### ***ARTICLE VI: COMMITTEES***

- A. The Standing Committees of the Federation shall be:

Finance  
Membership  
Grievance  
Instruction and Professional Development

- B. The President shall appoint the Chairs of Standing and Special Committees with the approval of the Executive Committee.

### ***ARTICLE VII: DUES***

The Buffalo Teachers Federation shall make available to its members a plan of dues payment to New York State United Teachers and its national affiliates. Such plan shall include Buffalo Teacher Federation dues as established by the Bylaws.

### ***ARTICLE VIII: BYLAWS***

The Council of Delegates may adopt such Bylaws as may be necessary for the proper conduct of the affairs of this Federation. Such Bylaws may be adopted, added to, amended, or repealed, by a majority vote of those members of the Council of Delegates present at any regularly-convened meeting, provided notice of the proposed change in the Bylaws has been presented to the Delegates, in published form, at least ten (10) calendar days preceding the meeting at which such action is to be taken.

### ***ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS***

This Constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of those members of the Council of Delegates present at any regularly-convened meeting of the Council of Delegates, provided that the proposed amendment has been read at a previous meeting and presented in published form to be posted in all buildings at least ten (10) days prior to the final vote on the amendment.

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## **BYLAWS**

### ***ARTICLE I: Membership Fees and Assessments***

- A. Membership Fees

1. An Active member enrolling in the United Teaching Profession shall pay annual dues as determined by the Council of Delegates of the Buffalo Teachers Federation.
  2. BTF local dues shall be \$309.90 plus State and National Affiliate dues.
- B. An Associate Member shall pay half the local dues plus the Associate Member fees of the state and national affiliates except for those members paid at an hourly rate whose dues shall be as follows:
1. Nine (9) hours or more per week, 36% of the local dues plus one half (1/2) dues and fees of the state and national affiliates.
  2. Less than nine (9) hours but three (3) hours or more one-quarter (1/4) dues and fees.
  3. Less than three (3) hours no dues.
- C. A Student Member shall pay \$2.00 annual local dues and also be a member of state and national affiliated organizations.
- D. An Inactive Member shall pay \$10.00 annual dues.

## *ARTICLE II: Building Delegates*

- A. Apportionment: Each faculty unit shall be entitled to one duly elected Delegate for the first 20 active and/or Associate Members or part thereof, and one additional Delegate for each additional 20 such members or part thereof. Additional Delegates may be elected immediately after the required number of memberships have been certified by the BTF office.
- B. Each unit is entitled to elect a number of Alternate Delegates equal to the number of Delegates to which it is entitled. Each Alternate Delegate may attend all meetings and functions as does a regular Delegate, except for voting privileges. Alternates shall be listed in a ranked order and in the event of absence of any Delegate, that vote shall be cast by the highest ranking Alternate present. An Alternate shall assume the duties of a Delegate during any time that Delegate is serving as an acting administrator.
- C. Election of Delegates and Alternates shall take place in the following manner:
1. Any BTF member who is on the payroll of the school is eligible to vote.
  2. For all elections, notice shall be posted on the BTF bulletin board at least one (1) week prior to the election meeting.
  3. The election shall be held annually on a Friday (or a day when all eligible voters are normally present) during the month of May at a meeting called by the Delegate Chairman.
    - a. The May 2005 BTF Building Delegate, Alternate, and Building Committee elections at Schools 27, 28, 80 @ 63, and 80 @ 24 are postponed until September 2005; any election already held at any of those schools is nullified; and the Building Delegates, Alternates, and Building Committee members from those schools for the 2004-2005 school year will remain in office until the September 2005 Council of Delegates meeting. Except as may be necessary to comply with this

subparagraph 3A, the September 2005 election will comply fully with the provisions of the BTF constitutions, by-laws, and policies.

- b. For the 2020-2021 school year that is scheduled to end on June 25, 2021, the term of office for the Delegates, Alternates and Building Committee members is extended until January 31, 2021 or until new elections are held prior to that date.

Election for Delegates, Alternates and Building Committee members will be held as follows:

- i. The BTF members on the school payroll may vote by secret ballot to extend the terms of all Delegates, Alternates and Building Committee members previously elected and who wish to continue to serve.  
Said term of office will continue until the close of school on the day of the June 2021 Council of Delegates meeting.
- ii. Any vacancies will be filled as follows:
  - A. The current Delegate Chairperson will seek a volunteer to be the Elections Chairperson to conduct the election.
  - B. The name of the volunteer will be submitted to the BTF members electronically and in writing in their school mailboxes.
  - C. If there are no objections from a majority of the BTF members, one week after an Elections Chairperson has been selected, nominations for vacancies for Delegate, Alternate and Building Committee members shall be held. Said nominations will be forwarded to the Election Chairperson. Members can self nominate for said position(s). Nominations will be forwarded to the Elections Chairperson prior to January 8, 2021
  - D. Elections for positions will be held prior to January 31, 2021.
  - E. BTF members who are solely reporting virtually will be permitted to vote via email to the Elections Chairperson, proxy to another member, or by mail received one week after balloting commences.
  - F. Said term of office will continue until the close of school on the day of the June 2021 Council of Delegates meeting.
- iii. Nothing herein precludes using the above procedures or the standard procedures as outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws from being completed virtually using the virtual voting program provided by the BTF. The procedures for the use of said program will be provided to all teachers by the Buffalo Teachers Federation.

4. The Chairman of the meeting shall be elected by the BTF members within the faculty prior to the election of new Delegates and Alternates.
  5. The names of new Delegates and Alternates shall be forwarded to BTF headquarters no later than June 1.
  6. The term of office will commence at the June meeting and will terminate at the close of the school day of the following June meeting.
  7. Vacancies in the ranks of Delegates or Alternates must be filled by the same procedures.
- D. Responsibilities include:
1. The Delegate Chairman shall be the Chairman of the BTF Building Committee.
  2. The Delegates shall be responsible for conducting the affairs of the Federation within their respective buildings.
  3. Delegates shall communicate to the Council of Delegates the wishes, opinions and reactions of the members they represent.
- E. Recall -- BTF membership on any faculty shall have the power of recall of any Delegate or Alternate if:
1. Two-thirds (2/3) of the faculty members sign a petition stating that it is their belief that the Delegate or Alternate is not representing them or is inadequately or ineffectively carrying out the duties of a Delegate or Alternate.
  2. Such Delegate or Alternate is given the opportunity at a meeting of the BTF membership within that faculty to answer any or all charges being brought against him. Such meeting shall be chaired by the President, or his designee from the officers of the Federation.
  3. After such meeting, a new petition is circulated which shall require the signatures of two-thirds (2/3) of the BTF membership to reaffirm belief that the representative should be recalled.

### ***ARTICLE III: Building Committee***

(See also Article II, 3(A).

The Building Committee shall consist of the Building Delegate Chairman and two (2) additional teachers selected or appointed in a manner to be determined by the Federation.

They shall represent the interests of the Federation before the administration of their respective schools.

Said Committee shall be responsible for disseminating the results of all official meetings of the Committee.

### ***ARTICLE IV: Council of Delegates***

- A. Delegates and Alternates from the various faculty units shall compose the Council of Delegates of the Buffalo Teachers Federation.
- B. The dues of all duly elected Delegates and Alternates must be paid before they are seated in the Council of Delegates.
- C. Forty Percent (40%) of the membership or sixty percent (60%) of the faculty units of the Council of Delegates shall constitute a quorum.
- D. The Council of Delegates shall hold not less than five (5) meetings during the year. In an election year, one of these meetings shall be the March meeting and one shall be the May meeting. The President shall call a meeting of the Council of Delegates at the written request of twenty (20) Delegates, each representing a different faculty unit.
- E. Duties:
  - 1. The Council of Delegates may initiate action with respect to all non-fiscal policies and procedures of the Federation.
  - 2. It shall direct the Executive Committee to develop policies which will accomplish the aims and goals of the Federation as established by the Council of Delegates.
- F. Each teacher training institution in the Buffalo area shall be entitled to one (1) non-voting Delegate.
- G. Committee Chairmen shall serve as non-voting delegates with the exception of those chairmen of committees representing special groups formerly having affiliate status whose interest is not represented through any other unit of representation or those chairmen of committees who represent other special groups of teachers which would have been eligible for affiliate status. These chairmen shall serve as voting delegates.
- H. The privilege of the floor for the purpose of discussion shall be available to any member with the permissions of the chair.
- I. A Parliamentarian for the Council of Delegates shall be appointed by the President. Said Parliamentarian shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

### *ARTICLE V: Officers*

- A. Officers
  - 1. The members of the Executive Committee shall be the President, Secretary, Treasurer, the retiring President, Ex-Officio, and twenty-three members elected from the following categories:
    - Pre-K – 6 -- Elementary Classroom Teachers 6
    - 7-12-- Secondary Teachers 7
    - K-12 -- (Refer to A.2) 7
    - At-Large 3

The professional staff shall serve as non-voting members.

- 2. The seven representatives in the K-12 category shall include:

Teachers of Art, Music, and Physical Education, Librarians, Teachers of Children with handicapping conditions (Learning Disabilities, Mentally Retarded, etc.), Remedial Teachers. Teachers who work with referred students (Attendance Teachers, Guidance Counselors, Psychologists, Social Workers): All other teachers not named or described in any other category or sub-category.

Teachers named or described in a K-12 sub-category may be candidates only in the K-12 or At-Large categories.

- B. A quorum shall be necessary to conduct business. One-half the membership, including at least two of the following officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, is required.
- C. The Executive Committee shall meet within two weeks of its election. Future meetings shall be called by the President or at the written request of at least eight of its members.
- D. Duties of officers:

The President shall:

1. Be the chief executive officer of the Federation
2. President at all meetings of the Council of Delegates and the Executive Committee.
3. Appoint the chairmen of all standing and special committees
4. Be an ex-officio member of all committees
5. Assume ultimate responsibility for the supervision of the professional and non-professional staff.
6. Serve as the first Delegate to the conventions of all affiliate bodies.

The Vice-President shall:

1. Assume the duties of the Presidency in the absence of the President.
2. Become the President of the Federation should that office become vacant.
3. Carry out those duties and responsibilities as delegated by the President.
4. Be an ex-officio member of all committees of the Federation.
5. Serve as the second Delegate to the conventions of all affiliate bodies.

The Secretary shall:

1. Keep an accurate record of all meetings of the Federation.
2. Issue notification for all scheduled meetings
3. Maintain the constitution, By-Laws and other official papers of the Federation.
4. Serve as the third Delegate to the conventions of all affiliate bodies.

The Treasurer shall:

1. Hold and disburse the funds of the Federation.
2. Prepare an annual budget, and prepare the books for auditing.



3. Serve as a member of the finance committee.
4. Shall preserve a financial report at the meeting of the Council of Delegates.
5. Serve as the fourth Delegate to the conventions of all affiliate bodies.

The Executive Committee Members shall:

1. Be Delegates-at-Large and shall have all privileges of members of the Council of Delegates.
2. Make recommendations to the Council of Delegates for its approval.
3. Execute and carry into effect all such policies as have been approved by the Council of Delegates.
4. Approve all personnel policies and practices and authorize the hiring of staff.
5. Approve the budget recommended by the Treasurer and Budget Committee.
6. Approve all contracts entered into by the Federation.
7. Purchase surety bonds equal to such funds as shall be in the custody of the Treasurer and other officers of the federation. Such bonds shall be taken in the names of the Treasurer and President having custody of such funds.
8. Determine the procedure for election of Delegates to affiliate organizations.
9. Carry out other such duties as the Council of Delegates shall determine.

Flagrant violation or dereliction of duties shall render the officers subject to recall.

- E. Upon certification by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Committee that an officer of this Federation has failed to fulfill the duties of his office, the Council, after hearing a full bill of particulars, may vote to remove that officer. The accused officer shall have the opportunity to answer any and all charges before the vote. A three-fourths (3/4) vote of the Council of Delegates shall be necessary for removal.
- F. An officer who serves as an acting administrator shall automatically render his office vacant.
- G. Whenever an officer's name appears on any official list for a position which would exclude him from membership in the BTF, his office shall be declared vacant.

#### ***ARTICLE VI: Special Committees and Task Forces***

- A. Special Committees/Task Forces shall be established by the President after consultation with the Executive Committee. They shall deal with a particular problem; and will serve until the conclusion of the assigned task; or until disbanded by the President.
- B. The Chairman of all special committees/task forces shall be appointed by the President. The Chairman of each special committee/task force shall choose the members of that committee.
- C. When a committee is formed to reflect the concerns of a specific group of teachers from several faculties, these teachers may recommend candidates for the committee chairmanship to the President.

- D. Final reports of special committee/task forces shall be submitted to the Council of Delegates orally, and/or to the Secretary in writing.  
The Executive Committee may call for interim reports from each special committee/task force.

### ***ARTICLE VII: Standing Committees***

- A. The standing committees shall be charged with the responsibility for the internal affairs of this Federation.
- B. Each standing committee shall choose its own officers, except for the chairman, who shall be appointed by the President.
- C. Membership on all standing committees should, to the greatest degree possible, reflect a cross section of the general membership of the Federation.
- D. The chairman of each standing committee shall be responsible for selecting the members of the committee. There shall be at least five (5) members on each standing committee. The chairman shall fill, with the approval of the committee, all vacancies that exist on his committee.
- E. The Finance Committee shall set up all rules and regulations governing the payment of all bills, have the accounts of the organization audited once a year by a Certified Public Accountant, publish such audit for each delegate and consult with the Treasurer in the preparation of the annual budget. For audit purposes, the fiscal year shall be from September 1 to August 31 of the following year.
- F. The Membership Committee shall be responsible for all membership drives and the processing of all questions regarding membership.
- G. The Grievance Committee shall be responsible for the processing of all grievances that arise as a result of any contractual arrangements between this Federation and the Board of Education, or the application of Board of Education policies.
- H. The Instruction and Professional Development Committee shall be responsible for furthering the professional growth of teachers through the serving as BTF representatives to the Professional Council by three (3) members appointed by the President; developing in-service programs and/or conferences for teachers to increase our capabilities for teaching in a multi-cultural urban environment and recommending methods of implementation for educational policy approved by the Council of Delegates.
- I. Reports of standing committees shall be submitted to the Council of Delegates orally and to the Secretary in writing. The Executive committee may call for reports from the standing committees.

### ***ARTICLE VIII: Nominations and Elections***

- A. Nominations and Elections
1. Candidates for election as officers of this Federation shall be nominated at the March Council of Delegates meeting, or by a letter of intent signed by two

members of the Council of Delegates. Such letter must be sent by certified mail to the BTF offices within ten (10) business days following the March Council of Delegates meeting.

2. Candidates for election to the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer must be probationary or contract teachers.
3. A BTF officer who is serving full time with the BTF and who is on leave of absence (from the District) shall be permitted to retire from his/her teaching position, complete the term and maintain eligibility for re-election.
4. A member may only be a candidate for one office.
5. Nominations for President and Vice President shall be submitted jointly.
6. Candidates for any Executive office shall be an active member who shall have maintained continuous membership in the BTF for the entire year in which they are nominated.
7. No member whose name appears on an eligible list for any position which would make him ineligible for membership in the Buffalo Teachers Federation shall be eligible to be a candidate for office.

B.

1. The procedures of election of officers shall be conducted by an Elections Committee composed of a Chairman and no less than six (6) members appointed by the President in consultation with the Executive Committee. Their decision in all matters concerning procedures and arrangements shall be final.
2. The Elections Committee shall be appointed by the December 15th preceding the elections. The committee shall report to the Council of Delegates by the February meeting the procedures for nominations, and at the March meeting the procedures for campaigns and elections. Their final report shall consist of the results of the balloting for each office to be submitted at the May Council of Delegates meeting.
3. The members of the Election Committee shall be ineligible for election to any office of the Federation during the time they are serving.
4. No faculty unit shall be represented by more than one member on the Election Committee nor can more than six (6) members be from a single unit of representation as specified in Article V of these By-Laws. There shall be at least one representative from each of the areas of representation on the Executive Committee.

C.

1. The terms of all officers shall be concurrent.
2. Election of officers shall be by a referendum of the active and associate membership. The total active and associate membership shall be entitled to vote for each office.
3.
  - a. A majority of the valid ballots cast for the offices of President and Vice President, shall be necessary for election.

- b. A plurality of the valid ballots cast for each office shall be necessary for election to all other offices.
- D. When vacancies occur on the Executive Committee, the following procedures shall be followed:
  - 1. The secretary shall announce the vacancy at the next Council of Delegates meeting.
  - 2. The President shall recommend to the Council of Delegates an individual to fill the vacancy. Such recommendation shall be confirmed by a majority vote of the Council of Delegates.
- E. Vacancies in the office of Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be filled in the following manner:
  - 1. The President shall recommend to the Executive Committee an individual to fill the vacancy.
  - 2. Upon approval of the Executive Committee, said recommendation must be confirmed by a majority vote of the Council of Delegates.
- F. Slate box voting shall be prohibited in all BTF elections.

***ARTICLE IX: Parliamentary Authority and Procedure***

- A. Except as otherwise provided in these By-Laws, all business meetings of the Federation shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised.
- B. The Order of Business for Council of Delegates meetings shall be:

- Call to Order
- Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
- Communications
- Report of Treasurer
- Report of President
- Reports of Standing Committees
- Reports of Special Committee/Task Force
- Old Business
- New Business

The starting time of regular meetings shall be 7:00 p.m.

- C. All motions except those to accept the report of a committee and other business relating to committee reports, will be made during that portion of the meeting relating to New Business.
- D. All motions made must be submitted to the Secretary, in writing, at the time they are offered.

***ARTICLE X***

Voting on a new Collective Bargaining Agreement (Contract) must be by paper ballot by the members present at the contract ratification meeting.