

PROVOCATOR

October/November 2020

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION VOLUME 51/NUMBER 1

DEDICATION
SOLIDARITY
PROFESSIONALISM
PRIDE
SECOND TO NONE



BTF Continues Its Fight To Keep Students and Staff Safe from COVID-19

Student and teacher health and safety in the schools has been front and center for the Buffalo Teachers Federation since the onset of the pandemic early this year.

Every step of the way, the BTF has gone to bat for students and employees of the Buffalo Public Schools. And while not everyone is listening, the BTF has heard the teachers' voices loud and clear through surveys and reports on school conditions they completed.

Currently, the BTF is appealing State Supreme Court Justice Frank Sedita's decision to uphold the District's directive that requires teachers to report two days per week to schools that may not have been properly sanitized. Sedita ruled the union did not demonstrate that an imminent threat to the health and safety of teachers exists.

Despite his ruling, teachers continue to report that sanitary and safety precautions in schools are inconsistent or non-existent. There have been reports that the District has refused to supply BTF delegates with personal protective equipment (PPE), necessary to prevent infection from coronavirus, and information on sanitation measures.

Some schools are requiring teachers to have their temperatures taken before entering the schools, others report sporadic or no temperature taking.

Some teachers have reported their rooms have not been cleaned and many photos have been submitted to the BTF verifying those claims.

Teachers from two separate schools have reported that a teacher reported to administrators that they may have been or were in contact with someone who had COVID-19 and were told not to tell anybody and/or were allowed to stay in school.

The BTF, which has already conducted several teacher surveys, continues to gather information about safety in the schools. All reports and photos, which can be used when the BTF returns to court, should be sent to lsauer@btfny.org.

In addition, the BTF filed an Improper Practice Charge (IP) against the District because it is violating the section of the contract which ensures that teachers will have a safe workplace. (Article XI A, page 20, states, "Teachers shall have safe and healthful conditions under which to carry out their professional duties.")

"We have filed an Improper Practice Charge against the District for basically telling teachers, you are not important," BTF President Phil Rumore told teachers in an email.

In addition, he said the District is essentially telling the teachers, "we don't have to follow the contract and hear grievances when required to do so."

So far this year, the BTF has filed the following grievances:

- Duplicate lesson plans
- Multiple student attendance reports
- Special Education: Unacceptable lengthy reporting/documentation
- Administrators requiring access to teachers' Schoology accounts
- District's refusal to give Wi-Fi hot spots to teachers without internet at home
- District directive to principals to not share building safety information (COVID-19) with teachers
- Excessive duties assigned to teachers while teaching remotely

"Beside filing the appeal and grievances, the BTF has joined the Buffalo Parent-Teacher Organization (BPTO) in requesting the District test all students and adults before they return to school, for the testing be on-going, for insurance companies to provide the resources for rapid coronavirus testing and for State and Federal governments to provide resources and legislation necessary to ensure that this rapid coronavirus testing is implemented.

"This is not only a matter of life and death, but of permanent respiratory and neurological (brain) damage," BTF President Phil Rumore has stated.

"Most of our parents and their children cannot afford to pay for, or have the insurance to cover, a rapid coronavirus test. Not protecting them is not only wrong, but immoral", Phil explained.

Another issue the BTF is tackling is equipment. Many teachers have indicated a second computer or monitor is necessary for remote learning so they can share their screens with the students and still be able to see their students and monitor their behavior.

The contract specifies that the District must provide teachers with equipment and supplies needed to perform their duties. (Article XI E, page 21, and Article I B, page 2).

Teachers needing a second monitor for demonstrating lessons can put in a request to "Team Dynamix," located on the Buffalo Public Schools website under Staff Resources. They will be distributed on a first come, first served basis.

However, if they are not available, the BTF advises teachers to request the equipment via email to your principal. Keep a copy. If you are denied, advise your LRS and a grievance will be filed if necessary.

While the BTF is fighting for the safe return to school, the District has yet to share its re-opening plans with parents or the BTF. Several letters, with dozens of questions to the District, have gone unanswered.

According to President Rumore, the BTF still has not "received a proposed delineated re-opening plan from the District, e.g., when, where, what, how, who, etc."

He said the District Re-Opening Committee was apparently told not to expect a date for the start of hybrid re-opening.

No matter how long it takes, Phil vowed to continue to fight for the safety of all.

"We will continue to work to ensure that our schools are, and remain safe for us now and our students and staff when students return," he said.



**For Buffalo Teachers
No Challenge Too Great
To Once Again
Overcome**

Yes, some are complaining that we are being COVID-19 paranoid.

If taking action to ensure that our students, parents, staff and community remain safe and healthy is paranoia, so be it.

COVID-19 can not only cause death and long term damage to the heart and other organs, it also causes damage to the brain. It's called COVID brain fog. With it, people lose memory, the ability to concentrate and have other problems.

All it takes is one case to begin widespread contagion.

The disruption in lives has been, and continues to be, unlike that which most have never and want to never experience again.

In many ways, our students have suffered more and can be physically harmed more than others.

Everyone is under extreme stress... Especially you.

Through all the uncertainty, lack of support and unconscionable demands (by some administrators who sit in their offices), you persevere and remain dedicated to your students.

Fortunately, there are administrators who understand what you are going through and are working with you. They should be thanked. They are real leaders.

One of the things that motivates us as teachers is a challenge – whether it be a student refusing to work, being behind in their progress, or not grasping a lesson, etc., you somehow persevere.

And when you succeed and see that glimmer of understanding in a student's eyes, you know why you became a teacher.

So too now there is a challenge, one more formidable than many we have encountered.

However, as with all the challenges we have faced, we will meet and overcome this one. The gleam will not only be in our students' eyes but in our own. We will have once again prevailed.

Why, because we are Buffalo teachers and we never, ever give up.

Need The Latest Information?

call the BTF at

881-5400

or visit the web at

www.btfny.org

BTF at a Glance

BTF President

Philip Rumore

BTF Vice President

Rebecca Pordum

BTF Treasurer

Joseph Montante

BTF Secretary

Melinda MacPherson-Sullivan



BTF Executive Committee Members

Pre-K-6

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

7-12

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

K-12

Susan Baker, Amy Flynn,
Nicole Herkey, Ellen Malone,
Mark Mecca, Gregory Sawicki,
Elizabeth Spiro-Carman

At Large

Tom Anthony, Marc Bruno,
Mike Mecca

BTF Headquarters Staff

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*

[Visit Our Updated Website
www.btfny.org](http://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 six times during the 2020-2021 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

BTF Supports Center for Nonviolence

We are so grateful for your support of the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence! I am writing to update you on the status of our annual event, "Media Madness: Providing Youth Alternatives to Violence" previously scheduled for April 19.

I am sure it will be no surprise for you to hear that our program with Dr. Frederick A. Gelsey, Sr. is on hold indefinitely due to the current health crisis. We will be sure to inform you as soon as a new date for the event is chosen.

We will be happy to refund your sponsorship donation if you should so choose. Otherwise, you will receive the same benefits of sponsorship when our event takes place: complimentary tickets, recognition in our program book in the list of sponsors, as well as an advertisement.

We would like to include recognition of the Buffalo Teachers Federation, Inc. as a sponsor in our announcement that the event has been postponed. Please email your logo to me and we will include your logo in all our future communication about the event.

Thank you again for your support of the SSJ Sister Karen Klimczak Center for Nonviolence and our work. We are happy to count you among our good friends.

Wishing you and yours strength of body and peace of mind.

Vivian Ruth Waltz, director

Ujima Grateful to BTF

What a surprise to find your check in the mail during these unprecedented times.

We should be saying thank you to all the teachers and administrators creatively tackling all the new changes you are facing.

We also say thank you for supporting us and the larger Arts community. You remind us that we solve these large impactful problems by working together.

Thank you for believing in our work.
Sincerely, Lorna and Marta
Ujima Company, Inc.

TBTF Donates to Junior Achievement of WNY

We cannot thank you enough for your updated, generous and loyal gifts to Junior Achievement of WNY.

We appreciate your continued support of JA programs in Buffalo.

We are prepared and ready for what the coming year will bring. With the uncertainty, we at JA remain committed to delivering programs on Financial Literacy, Entrepreneurship and Career and Work Readiness, either in person, or through our new revised digital delivery means.

Thank you for all your hard work during this challenging time for all our teachers, students and schools.

Lisa Roy, Sr. Dev. Manager
Junior Achievement of WNY

Teacher Thanks BTF for BPO Tickets

I just wanted to extend a big thank you for the BPO concert tickets for myself and children! Even though they vary in age, (eight, five, and two years old), they all enjoyed themselves! It was actually my youngest's first time.

I thank you again on behalf of my entire family.

Sincerely,
Erin MacVittie, School #27

BTF Gets Award for Community Service

Congratulations on the selection of your local as a NYSUT Community Service Award winner.

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

You and the delegates from your local are invited to join me for a group photo during the 2020 NYSUT Representative Assembly (RA) in Albany.

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

In Solidarity,
Andrew Pallotta
President

(Editor's note: Due to the Coronavirus, the April 2020 RA was conducted virtually.)

BTF Donates to PBS

Thank you for your gift of \$120 to WNEB PBS! Your generous contribution is already at work bringing vibrant and essential public broadcasting across WNY and Southern Ontario.

Especially, in these unprecedented times, your support assures that our broadcasts on television and radio reach over three million households. You help make it possible for us to bring critical NPR and local programming on WBFO. WNEB PBS can bring daily reporting from the PBS NewsHour team on our health and economic crisis and WNEB Classical can bring peaceful and relaxing classical music.

All of this is available to our community because of your generosity.

Thank you for all that you do and stay safe!

Sincerely,
Colleen Miller, Senior Director
Leadership & Legacy Giving

BTF Donates \$250 to Carrousel Museum

I wanted to personally thank you for your donation to the museum.

Your generosity is greatly appreciated during this uncertain time. Your donation helps us to continue preserving the nostalgia of the carousel and amusement rides.

Warm regards,
Megan Hahin, Executive Director
Herschell Carrousel Factory Mus.

Say Yes Camp Benefits from BTF

Thank you so much for the Buffalo Teachers Federation's generous gift to the Say Yes Buffalo Summer Camp 2020. This gift will help us recruit experienced and knowledgeable site staff and will help us equip those staff with skills specific to the Summer Camp context.

Year-over-year our campers have been more likely than their non-camper peers to improve or maintain their reading and math skills over the summer. We are eager to continue that track record this year.

We are grateful for your support; the important work we are doing for our area's young people and families – and our entire region – would not be possible without donors like you.

Sincerely,
David Rust, Executive Director

Sick Bank Renamed To Honor Dennis Licherelli

The BTF Sick Bank has been renamed The Dennis A. Licherelli Sick Leave Bank in honor of the long-time NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist, who passed away June 27.

A resolution to rename the Sick Bank was proposed by BTF President Philip Rumore and approved unanimously by the Executive Committee.

The resolution stated in part, "Dennis Licherelli was instrumental in its (the Sick Bank) implementation and dedicated his life to the well-being of Buffalo teachers from 1970 until his passing."

A plaque will also be placed in a prominent place in the BTF office honoring Licherelli's service to Buffalo teachers.

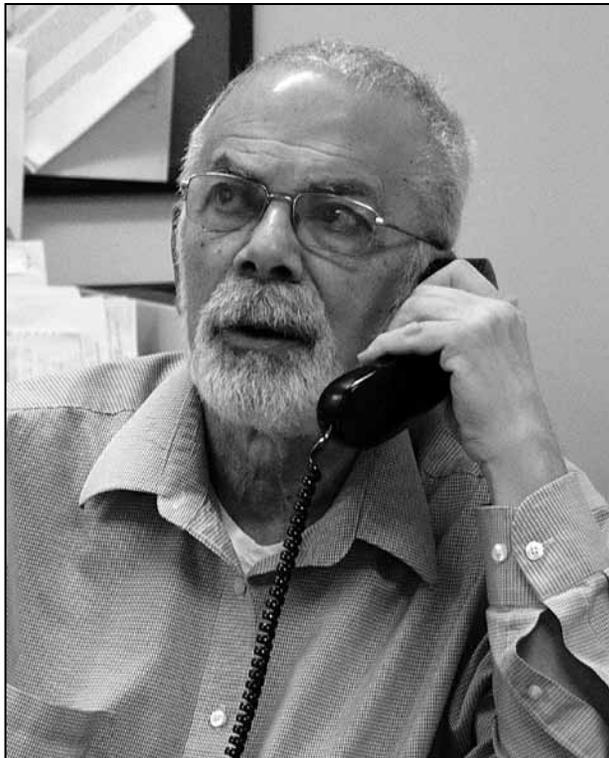
For many, many years, teachers relied on Dennis Licherelli to answer questions about the BTF bargaining agreement, meet with principals alongside teachers, and represent teachers in grievances with the District. His expertise and laid-back demeanor made him a favorite among teachers and administrators.

He retired from the LRS position in December 2018, but continued to work in the BTF Supplemental Benefits office.

In May 2019, Dennis was honored by NYSUT for his service during its 32nd Annual Awards Dinner.

Dennis began his career as a

Chemistry teacher at East High School. In 1970, after holding several union positions, he became one of the first six UNISERV Directors in the country. Permanently assigned to the BTF, he presented more than 100 arbitrations on behalf of Buffalo teachers. He also helped start the Supplemental Benefit Fund and served on several contract negotiating teams, including the current one, settled after 12 years. Dennis is survived by his spouse of 44 years and a brother.



Above: Dennis Licherelli takes a call from a BTF member.

Grant Secured for Computer Equipment



Paul Gennuso, left, and Assistant Principal Kathleen Carpenter, center, receive the equipment from Rich Cundra, who made the delivery on behalf of his wife Julie, an employee of Amazon.

An Amazon grant for 12 computer monitors and six printers has been awarded to Paul Gennuso, a Physical Education teacher at Makowski School.

Gennuso, who has been teaching for 26 years, has been a teacher at #99 for the past seven years. He said he was approached by Amazon for a recommendation of a school in need of technology.

"I told them our situation at the school and they decided that we should receive the equipment," Gennuso explained.

He said the equipment the school received is valued at about \$2,000 and will be distributed to teachers who need a second monitor to teach remotely or do not have a printer.

"The biggest benefit of this shipment will be for the teachers. It is so much easier to teach virtually with a second screen hooked up to your laptop.

"In addition, most teachers do not have printers in their classrooms, so the addition of these, plus the possibility of more equipment, will certainly help," said Gennuso.

He said there may be additional items coming to the school if Amazon has a surplus to donate to schools.

Deceased Teachers Remembered

The Buffalo Teachers Federation remembers the following active and retired members who have recently passed away. Some also later served as administrators.

Marlene Ann Badger
Clydean Bass Amaker
Michael Bogner
Mary Ann Bruno
Judith Clarke
Michael Collopy
Anthony Coppola
Patricia Curtin
Florence Flakes-Rozier
Donald Flansburg
Frances Gerspach
Cornelius Gyssels
Maxine Hare
Shirley Harrington
Lorna Hill
Kevin Hogan
William Hulme

Noreen Igoe
Peter Juliano
William Klein, Sr.
Joseph Konwicki
Yolanda Kothen
Jeanette Licata
Dennis Licherelli
Rosalind Licherelli (BTF)
Maureen Lindner
Patricia Malican
Marjorie Marcy
Christine Maricle
Jean McNamara
Ralph Monahan
Joseph Murray
John Paananen
Joseph Palmeri

Charles Peszynski
Lori Przykuta
Rose Poliachik
Kathy Roth
Joseph Rubino
Esther Mae Rudolph
Vincent Scamacca
Margaret Songin
Sybrnee Thompson
Catherine Torre
Richard Voit
Linda Wiatrowski-Wall
Cherry Williams
Patricia Winkler
Linda Wueller
Jerome Yavno

If you know of a teacher, whose name is not listed, please send their name to Lsauer@btfny.org or Sumhauer@btfny.org

Tech Issues, Inadequate PD, & Poor Attendance Plague the School Year

Teaching during a pandemic has been a challenge for most teachers, but everyone is doing their best to provide the most rigorous education they can for their students.

Some teachers were willing to share their experiences, but several asked not to be identified because they feared retribution from their administrators.

One of the most common complaints among the teachers is having to work from school twice a week. Several teachers indicated that taking their teaching materials back and forth was needless work and some opted to work from school every day so they wouldn't have to maintain two classrooms. Others didn't like working alone and felt isolated and out of touch with colleagues. Many complained that their classrooms are not being cleaned and cleaning supplies have not been provided.

One teacher said her biggest problem has been interference from parents during her classes. Others have described the District's technology as "a mess" and cited the lack of training teachers and students received. And of course, student attendance has been a bigger problem remotely than it is during a regular school year.

Here's what some of the teachers had to say:

Janine Schuster, a Pre-K teacher at School 6, said teaching and interacting remotely "is quite challenging."

Before school started, she visited each of her students and brought them supplies

for the school year. But since the start of school she has acquired 10 additional students.

"There was no way I could start without meeting my children first. I safely visited each child in front of their home and brought them a goodie bag with treats and basic school supplies, homemade dry erase boards, a Pre-K Work Packet, a folder loaded with urgent information and a lot of children's books that were just gathering dust in our storeroom.

"I was able to meet so many family members! Most of all, I was able to emphasize, in person, how important it is to help their children start formal schooling on the right foot. Doing this was my personal decision and has made a big difference in our online interactions".

Maria Baker, who teaches CTE-Business at the Academy School #131, agrees that teaching remotely is challenging. She said the students often need help with technology and many of their district laptops have not been updated.

"For some of my students, remote learning is working fine; some are more focused than they would be in school. For others, you can sense their frustration when the computer doesn't react the way they expect it will. I also have disengaged students who are just not attending the online instruction hours.

"There is a lot of time spent trying to reach students and parents for follow up," Maria added.

"Overall it's been okay. I am concerned about what a hybrid situation will

look like. I think all remote is more manageable and provides more learning opportunities than having to teach the material to 2-3 groups of students," Maria said.

Virginia Eberle, a Special Education teacher at School 6 said her students are also having a hard time.

"I am going to be honest... it is very difficult for the SPED kiddos! I have about four kids (out of eight) who show up every day and try to follow the schedule and are doing work. This is because they have parental support! The other four come and go as they please and usually don't show up in the PM session or fall asleep.

"It is so frustrating for me and other teachers as well. I hate lugging all my supplies needlessly into school for my 2 days! I love my kids and I try motivating them with lots of breaks and positive reinforcement. I bring things to their house and now will be mailing them gift cards!!!!

It is a tough time for all of us, but it's what needs to happen to keep everyone safe. I have now set up two monitor screens to help keep an eye on my kids when I am sharing my screen."

Anthony Viola, who teaches Algebra 2 at Emerson High School, says he doesn't feel prepared this year because of his unfamiliarity with the technology.

"I feel less prepared to teach, because of the new technology, than I ever have. We should have been prepared sooner and longer on how to use the technology. The younger teachers are light years ahead of me. Every day, something new goes wrong or won't work properly," Anthony explained.

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Joe is the Husband of BTF member Barbara Polino Frandina



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BTF Releases Auditor's Report 2018 - 2019



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INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

The Executive Officers
Buffalo Teachers Federation, Inc.

We have audited the accompanying balance sheets of Buffalo Teachers Federation, Inc. as of August 31, 2019 and 2018, and the related statements of activities and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

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

Auditors' Responsibility

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

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

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

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Buffalo Teachers Federation, Inc. as of August 31, 2019 and 2018, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Lumsden & McCormick, LLC
February 6, 2020

BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION, INC.

Balance Sheets

August 31,	2019	2018
Assets		
Current assets:		
Cash	\$ 518,802	\$ 481,659
Receivables, net (Note 2)	179,727	129,356
Prepaid expenses	24,549	26,443
Investments (Note 3)	3,609,186	3,589,188
	<u>4,332,264</u>	<u>4,226,646</u>
Property and equipment, net (Note 4)	103,529	120,031
	<u>\$ 4,435,793</u>	<u>\$ 4,346,677</u>
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current liabilities:		
Current portion of accrued post-retirement health care benefits (Note 7)	\$ 20,000	\$ 9,600
Accounts payable	10,835	17,110
Accrued expenses	95,137	93,350
	<u>125,972</u>	<u>120,060</u>
Accrued post-retirement health care benefits (Note 7)	1,725,842	1,100,074
Net assets without donor restrictions	<u>2,583,979</u>	<u>3,126,543</u>
	<u>\$ 4,435,793</u>	<u>\$ 4,346,677</u>

See accompanying notes.

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BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION, INC.

Statements of Activities

For the years ended August 31,	2019	2018
Revenue:		
Member dues	\$ 3,500,212	\$ 3,493,272
Investment income (Note 3)	87,210	535,243
Rent	126,822	123,936
Advertising and other	13,455	7,939
Total revenue	<u>3,727,699</u>	<u>4,160,390</u>
Expenses:		
Program	3,210,991	3,106,875
Management and general	426,469	437,559
Total expenses	<u>3,637,460</u>	<u>3,544,434</u>
Excess of revenue over expenses	90,239	615,956
Post-retirement health care benefit obligation (Note 7)	(632,803)	443,216
Change in net assets	(542,564)	1,059,172
Net assets - beginning	3,126,543	2,067,371
Net assets - ending	<u>\$ 2,583,979</u>	<u>\$ 3,126,543</u>

See accompanying notes.

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BUFFALO TEACHERS FEDERATION, INC.

Statements of Cash Flows

For the years ended August 31,	2019	2018
Operating activities:		
Change in net assets	\$ (542,564)	\$ 1,059,172
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash flows from operating activities:		
Depreciation	24,059	25,111
Net (gain) loss on investments	89,838	(389,205)
Changes in other operating assets and liabilities:		
Receivables	(50,371)	(3,977)
Prepaid expenses	1,894	(318)
Accounts payable	(6,275)	3,671
Accrued expenses	1,787	(5,345)
Deferred revenue	-	(17,000)
Payable to affiliate	-	(557,075)
Accrued postretirement health care benefits	636,168	(348,207)
Net operating activities	<u>154,536</u>	<u>(233,173)</u>
Investing activities:		
Purchase of property and equipment	(7,557)	(28,352)
Purchase of investments	(11,029,412)	(9,089,738)
Proceeds from sale of investments	10,919,576	9,478,717
Net investing activities	<u>(117,393)</u>	<u>360,627</u>
Net change in cash	37,143	127,454
Cash - beginning	481,659	354,205
Cash - ending	<u>\$ 518,802</u>	<u>\$ 481,659</u>

See accompanying notes.

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Notes to Financial Statements

1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies:

Organization:

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

Cash:

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

Receivables:

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

Investments:

Investments are stated at fair value based on quoted prices in active markets.

Property and Equipment:

Property and equipment is stated at cost, net of accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is provided over estimated useful lives using the straight-line method.

Income Taxes:

The Federation is a 501(c)(5) organization exempt from taxation under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Functional Expense Allocation:

The financial statements report certain categories of expenses that are attributable to program and supporting functions. Some expenses require allocation on a reasonable basis that is consistently applied. The allocated expenses include personnel and related benefits, occupancy and office, public relations, and professional fees, which are allocated based on employee responsibilities and occupancy.

Reclassification:

The 2018 financial statements have been reclassified to conform with the presentation adopted in 2019.

Use of Estimates:

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported in the financial statements and accompanying notes. Actual results may differ from those estimates.

Subsequent Events:

Management has evaluated events and transactions for potential recognition or disclosure in the financial statements through February 6, 2020, the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

2. Receivables:

	2019	2018
Affiliate (Note 6)	\$ 102,783	\$ 39,002
National and State Organizations	73,681	71,478
Member loans	80,790	80,965
Interest and other	2,473	17,911
	<u>259,727</u>	<u>209,356</u>
Less allowances for doubtful member loans	80,000	80,000
	<u>\$ 179,727</u>	<u>\$ 129,356</u>

3. Investments:

	2019	2018
U.S. Government securities	\$ 1,258	\$ 1,755
Common stock	1,218,997	1,160,424
Mutual funds	1,438,328	1,459,269
Corporate bonds	69,962	36,096
Certificates of deposit	520,907	444,997
Money market	359,734	486,647
	<u>\$ 3,609,186</u>	<u>\$ 3,589,188</u>

Investment income is as follows:

	2019	2018
Interest and dividends	\$ 177,048	\$ 146,038
Net gains (losses)	(89,838)	389,205
	<u>\$ 87,210</u>	<u>\$ 535,243</u>

4. Property and Equipment:

	2019	2018
Land	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
Buildings and improvements	463,417	458,122
Office furniture and equipment	182,386	182,386
Computer equipment	135,250	132,988
	<u>806,053</u>	<u>798,496</u>
Less accumulated depreciation	702,524	678,465
	<u>\$ 103,529</u>	<u>\$ 120,031</u>

5. Short-Term Borrowings:

The Federation has available a \$100,000 bank demand line of credit with interest payable at prime plus 3.5%, secured by substantially all assets of the Federation. The line is subject to the usual terms and conditions applied by the bank for working capital financing, and is subject to review annually. There were no amounts outstanding under the line at August 31, 2019 and 2018.

6. Transactions with Affiliate:

The Federation receives rent (for the use of a portion of its building) from Buffalo Teachers Federation, Inc. Supplemental Benefit Fund (SBF), a tax-exempt, health and welfare organization. This rent totaled \$17,000 for each of the years ended August 31, 2019 and 2018.

The Federation also remits payment of certain SBF personnel and other expenses for which it is reimbursed. Amounts owed to the Federation from SBF at August 31, 2019 and 2018 included in receivables were \$102,783 and \$39,002.

7. Post-Retirement Health Care Benefits:

The Federation provides postretirement health care benefits to all retirees who attain age 55 with fifteen years of service. Employees who retire after September 1, 2016 contribute annual amounts ranging from \$300 to \$900 depending on insurance coverage. It is the Federation's practice to fund these benefits as incurred. The measurement date used to determine the benefit obligation is August 31st of each year.

The status of the postretirement health benefit plan at and for the years ended August 31, 2019 and 2018 is as follows:

	2019	2018
Accumulated postretirement benefit obligation (APBO)	\$ 1,745,842	\$ 1,109,674
Accrued postretirement benefit obligation (benefit liability)	1,745,842	1,109,674
Accumulated adjustment increase to net assets available for benefits	447,281	1,080,084
Benefit cost	12,123	103,301
Benefit paid	8,758	8,292

At August 31, 2019 and 2018, the following items included as adjustments to net assets available for benefits had not yet been recognized as components to benefit cost:

	2019	2018
Net gain	\$ 447,281	\$ 1,080,084

	2019	2018
Weighted-average assumptions used to determine benefit liability:		
Yearly health care premium increases	6.00%	6.00%
Discount rate	3.50%	4.00%
Yearly retiree contribution increase	3.00%	10.00%
Weighted-average assumptions used to determine net periodic benefit cost:		
Discount rate	4.00%	4.00%

Expected future annual benefit payments:

	2019	2018
2020	\$ 20,000	
2021	20,500	
2022	20,900	
2023	44,000	
2024	45,400	
2025-2029	242,500	
	<u>\$ 393,300</u>	

Time for Cancer Checks

Public employees are now eligible for a paid leave, not to exceed 4 hours of absence, for cancer screening of **any** kind.

An amendment was passed in 2018 that expanded the existing Civil Service Law which previously covered breast and prostate cancer screenings only.

The law allows each employee to take four hours annually without charge to accruals.

The Cancer Screening Verification Form, available on the district's website, must be completed by the medical provider and turned in to the school clerk.

Did You Know...

That jury duty or other service required by law, court order, or other governmental authority beyond the control of the individual and necessitating absence from duty, shall be at full pay and shall not be deducted from accumulated sick time allowance or personal leave allowance?

This provision can be found on p85 of the Contract and is in Article XXXI, C.

Welcome New Members

The following 78 teachers have joined the Buffalo Teachers Federation this school year. Welcome to the union!

Rose Adasme-Kozak
Jennifer Aldrich
Marissa Austin
Allison Barlog
Daniel Bittinger
Sarah Bradley
Brian Bridges
Chelsey Broderick
Travis Brown
Julianne Casilio
Elizabeth Claflin
Thomas Cordaro
Edna Jean Crane
Juliana Curtis
Kristen D'Alessandro Mullen
Lauren Dougherty
Tara Faria
Sydney Favors
Madeline Ferguson
Ivah Denise Hagner
Kami Halgash
Daniel Hinckley
Tara Hudson
Jacob Hyzy
Bridgette Jackson
Jacob Jay

Aubrey Johnson
Yegetanesh Johnson
Breonna Kiblin
Olivia Kyser
Abigail LaPlaca
Ebony Little
Maurice Little
Julie Luce
Andrew Maben
Jade Massimi
Cristina Mata
Elisabeth McLaughlin
Michael Mills
Miriam Monfiston
Spencer Mummery
April Musielak
Caitlin Orgek
Douglas Pashley
Monica Paul
Julie Pernick
Melissa Peters
Keri Peyton
Cameron Pfohl
Allison Piekarski
Rebecca Poremba
Jordan Price

Bailey Radel
Hilda Ramos
Adam Reich
Haleigh Reinhardt
Sharae Robinson
Marcus Rosten
Daniel Roustum
Lourdes Sanchez-Hayes
Angelique Santiago
Lena Scapillato
Amber Schiele
Katherine Sehr
Kristen Smigielski
Melissa Smythe
Tara Strade
Corey Talford
April Tapper
Annamaria Todaro
Stephanie Tomasello
Molly Towey
Intefada Wardia
Harrison Watkins
Savannah Wells
Justyna Wilkinson
Delshawn Wray
Jackson Yerrick

A Look at a Teacher's Day

What a year 2020 has been for teachers across our region, in fact, all across the country and the world! How do they transform from in-person learning to remote? As teachers, we look into the eyes of our students, hoping to see the recognition of understanding. Can you do that remotely? Teachers adapt, learn to use the technology, ask questions, prepare lessons, and all in a completely foreign setting.

There is no touch to soothe the fears of little ones who are missing mommy and daddy. There is no eye contact with the teens that struggle with their identity and may need a reassuring word. There is no after-class explanation of a difficult concept for the high schooler who hopes to ace the exam. They are all remote in the truest sense of the word – distant, isolated, inaccessible, excluded. But teachers rally. They talk to each other and learn the best ways to engage in this new format. They adapt the lessons and adjust the material to fit this challenging time.

The weather was very hot one day last week, so the physical therapist working remotely with a special education student asked grandma if the child could do her therapies in the pool, knowing that an adult was there to supervise. Of course, this was an unusual circumstance, but the adaptation was a welcome engagement that the child could not have enjoyed on the floor of the family room. Teachers do that: they adapt, they challenge, they engage, they excite, they care!

On social media, in the past 6 months, parents realized how difficult teaching could be, especially since it was no longer in person. Cute posters and messages appeared, applauding teachers and what they do every day in the classrooms. In recognizing the many ways teachers care for their students every day, now is the time to show kindness, patience, and gratitude. As difficult as it may be for you to navigate the technology, it is equally, or perhaps more difficult for your child's teacher to do that as well, and now without the in-person feedback that is so essential in education. Make no mistake, computers will never replace a master teacher. Just ask the millions of moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas, aunties and uncles doing their best to fill in during this stressful time in our world.

As retired teachers, we applaud all of you!

(Submitted by Vincenetta Ventresca O'Donnell, member, Western Zone, Retired Educators of New York)

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BTF Supports Black Lives Matter Movement

After the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25, people of all backgrounds took to the streets in American cities to protest racial injustice in our country. To support the Black Lives Matter movement, the BTF organized a rally June 11 in Martin Luther King, Jr. Park.

The rally was kept small due to the coronavirus pandemic and physical distancing constraints. About 150 teachers, family members, and supporters came out to protest not only the senseless murder of George Floyd, but to call attention to racial issues locally.

Speakers at the rally included BTF President Phil Rumore, NAACP Buffalo President Rev. Mark Blue, NYSUT Regional Director Mike Deely, and the presidents of other BPS unions. Those included PCTEA President Aaron Armstrong, BCSA President Crystal Barton, TAB President Freddie Smith, and BEST President JoAnn Sweat.

While all the speakers stressed the need to end racism, one of the most moving speakers was Hutch Tech graduate Windy Singo, who spoke passionately about the need for change in this country.



Looking to call media attention to racial injustice, BTF President Phil Rumore gives an interview to a reporter.



Speaking with great emotion, Hutch Tech graduate Windy Singo pleads for an end to racial injustice.



Wearing face coverings and observing physical distancing requirements, the crowd listens as NAACP President Rev. Mark Blue speaks.