

The Baltimore Teachers Union



AFT 340 AFL-CIO
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Dear Colleague,

We have been engaged in negotiations with Baltimore City Public Schools System (BCPSS) since March 23, 2016. Although BTU has engaged in good faith negotiations, the Board has basically negotiated with an ineffective and indecisive team. Our negotiations are aimed at retaining adequate healthcare, compensation, and working conditions for our bargaining unit members. The Board's unwillingness to convene a meeting with our leaders to discuss unresolved issues shows a lack of respect for educators, students, parents, and the community. In more than 40 years of negotiating with the BCPSS, there has never been as much unresponsiveness, lack of availability, or lack of collaboration from your School Board members.

This Board and Administration has demonstrated incompetence by failing to process re-certification applications, processing pay adjustments & AUs in a timely manner, abolishing and reclassifying positions, inadequately training administrators on the Student Learning Objectives (SLO) process, and failing to respond to grievances in a timely fashion. This display of incompetence not only makes the school district look bad, but has a serious impact on the students and communities we serve by severely hampering our ability to provide the high quality education our students and their families deserve.

Beyond simply reflecting poorly on our students, teachers, paraprofessionals, and school related personnel, the incompetence of BCPSS poses a serious threat to schools and communities. Our members are exposed to poor working conditions, unsafe environments, and oversized classes. Many students require special attention and aren't receiving the attention they deserve. Sadly many teachers are teaching outside their areas of certification. Moreover, paraprofessionals are pulled from the students to whom they have been assigned to serve as substitutes. Our teachers and students are also subjected to larger class sizes due to cost saving measures. As a result many teachers are losing valuable planning time, students are not receiving the attention they deserve, and discipline problems are escalating at alarming rates. This is a threat to the welfare and safety of our entire school environment and the community.

Some of our students have challenges outside of the classroom that they bring with them into the classroom. Because our contract has not been settled, it is impacting the ability of our leaders to move forward expeditiously with our quality agenda program; a program that centers on collaboration among those in the community and the classroom. Moving forward you will be hearing more from me about the next steps we'll be taking to ensure BCPSS begins to show the respect necessary and makes the changes that will give us the schools and communities all our students and educators deserve.

In Unity,

Marietta English
President