

THE BALTIMORE TEACHERS UNION



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May 28, 2020

BY EMAIL

Linda Chinnia, Chair
Baltimore City Public Schools
200 E. North Avenue – Room 406
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Sonja Santelises, Chief Executive Officer
Baltimore City Public Schools
200 E. North Avenue – Room 405
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: Demand for Bargaining Over Effects of School Closing and School Reopening

Dear Ms. Chinnia and Dr. Santelises:

Since schools were closed by the State Superintendent of Education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, members of BCPSS's leadership team have met and conferred with members of the BTU's leadership team on at least a weekly basis, and many times more than once per week, over the upheaval and disruption to the education and lives of Baltimore City's public school students, their parents, educators and support staff. These informal and mostly informational meetings have been extremely helpful. I very much appreciate BCPSS's willingness to keep the BTU informed and hope that these types of meetings continue into the future. However, there are issues that are arising as I write, and that will arise after the school year ends, that need to be addressed in a more formal setting with the district so that we may have agreed upon standards and rules for all schools and worksites going forward.

Please accept this letter as a demand for bargaining, under Maryland Education Article Sections 6-408 and 6-510, over the effects of schools and school district offices being closed by the State Superintendent of Schools and over the effects of the closure and reopening of schools.

With regard to the closure of schools and the end of the 2019-2020 school year, we seek bargaining over the working conditions of teachers and PSRPs with regard to principals' and managers' orders for staff to come into schools to close out their classrooms, remove their personal property, distribute computers and other materials, and, depending on the school, the packing of student's belongings and distributing those belongings to parents. We do not seek to bargain over the orders, but rather over the effects of the orders – how the orders are to be

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executed. By way of example, and not by limitation, we seek bargaining over the times that staff are to go to their worksites, the staggering of those times, the number of staff to be in a school or worksite at one time, the provision of PPE, and the steps being taken to disinfect the worksites.

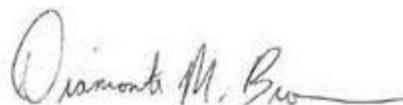
With regard to the reopening of schools, we seek to be at the table on each and every committee that the district has set up with regard to the reopening of schools. As the designated and exclusive representative of all employees in Unit I (Teachers) and Unit III (PSRPs), the BTU is the sole source from which you should be seeking input on working conditions that affect teachers and PSRPs. The BTU has broad access to its membership which provides the Union with invaluable and broad based information that can be of service to the district in its work to address the myriad of issues involved in reopening schools.

Further, with regard to the reopening of schools, we demand formal bargaining over the effects of reopening, including, but not limited to the following issues:

Premium pay for performing work that places the health or safety of bargaining unit employees in danger, alternate hours for reporting or performance of duties, PPE, social distancing, cleaning and disinfecting worksites, digital devices and internet service for employees to engage in distance teaching, and such other and further salary, wages, hours and other working condition matters as may be necessary and appropriate under existing conditions.

The BTU stands ready to bargain immediately. Please have your chief negotiator contact me as soon as possible to schedule dates and times for bargaining.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diamonté M. Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Diamonté Brown, BTU President

cc: Cristina Duncan Evans
Sandra Davis
Natalia Bacchus
Keith Zimmerman, Esq.