



**Baltimore Teachers Union
Presentation to Comptroller's
Workgroup 3/29/22**

T. Nathan Ferrell, BTU Member

Baltimore Teachers Union - Who we are

- The mission of the Baltimore Teachers Union is to work for the betterment of the teachers, paraprofessionals and school related personnel by organizing, supporting and enforcing the terms of negotiated agreements and by becoming a powerful, political force which influences the direction of education in the Baltimore City Public School System and improves the academic achievement of children.
- The Baltimore Teachers Union represents 7,196 members
 - 5,788 - Teachers, school counselors, social workers and related service providers.
 - 1,408 Paraprofessionals and school related personnel.

Baltimore Teachers Union - Nathan Ferrell

High School Spanish Teacher - Advanced Professional Certificate

- 2006-2015: Howard Co. Public Schools
- 2015 - Present: Baltimore City Public Schools
- 2021 BTU Teacher Contract Negotiation Team
- Model Teacher, Site Based Mentor
- Summer School Teacher and Curriculum Developer
- After School Credit Recovery Teacher



Lessons Learned from Grant Administration Process

- Traditional schools should have greater flexibility and autonomy to spend funds, similar to Charter Schools
 - Charter Schools received relief funding directly and could independently decide how to spend the funding.
 - The district decided how funds must be spent for Traditional Schools
- District determined how to spend grants independently without input from stakeholders (BTU, Parent and Community Advisory groups, Student groups.)

Successes, Challenges and Failures

- **Successes:**

- Additional staff at schools
- Credit recovery options for students
- Health and Safety Coordinator at every school for COVID-19 testing

- **Challenges:**

- Emergency funding is used to hire contractors and temporary employees who are not eligible to be members of BTU.
- Rushed hiring, poor training and inadequate onboarding for additional staff

- **Failures:**

- No COVID-19 hazard pay or retention bonuses for existing staff
- School support staff (PSRP) continue to be underpaid
- Persistent substitute teacher shortage
- Every school does not have a nurse
- Every student does not have a laptop or device
- Schools do not have adequate skilled staff to address emotional and behavioral needs of students stemming from the pandemic.

How the money was spent

Baltimore City Schools is responsible for managing, allocating and tracking all relief funds.

What has happened:

- Lack of clarity in spending breakdowns
- Failure to share information in a timely manner
- The first comprehensive look was shared with the BTU and the public on 1/18/22. [See attached documents.](#)

The BTU has fought for:

- Transparency with the public on use of funds
- Timely information sharing on how funds are used
- Improved communication and engagement with community partners.
- Publishing disbursement reports and spending audits in addition to budgets

Our Assessment of Overall Use of Funds

- Current impact of funds focus on academic programming outside of the school day as a response to “learning loss.”
- District delays in communicating budgets and spending guidelines with school leaders resulted in shorter timelines and rushed spending
- Lack of spending to hire mental health staff to provide counseling and therapeutic services to students
 - Failure to effectively staff school sites for the behavioral and emotional needs of students impede any efforts at academic initiatives.
- Funding has not been used to improve capacity at BCPSS office of Human Capital and staffing operations.
 - District struggles to hire qualified candidates and instead relies on contractors, consultants and temporary staff to meet hiring needs.

Our Recommendations

- Funds should be earmarked to provide retention incentives / commitment bonuses
- Ensure funds are used so that every student has access to a computer.
- Immediately improve wages for School support staff (PSRP)
- Recruit, train and retain substitute teachers, using federal funds
- Provide clarity around the timeline of funds as it relates to staffing models.
- Sustainability plan for new hires and positions created as a result of relief funds.
- The BTU would like to work directly with the Office of the Comptroller to share information and assess district spending of relief funds.