



rochester teachers association

Representing teachers • school instructors • substitute teachers • home/hospital teachers • preschool teachers • retired teachers

September 19, 2020

To: Members of the RCSD Board of Education

On behalf of the 3200 members of the Rochester Teachers Association, I urge you to vote against the recommendation to layoff 221 members of the Board of Education Non-Teaching Employees (BENTE) members as of October 16, 2020.

BENTE has provided the District a detailed and flexible plan to help our students and our community. The plan called for opening elementary schools, instead of recreation centers, for remote learning. It would also engage BENTE members in home food delivery and reaching out to students and families through home visits. This is both necessary and extremely important.

The RCSD administration has rejected this thoughtful and comprehensive plan - despite the fact that the New York State Department of Budget recently announced that they are reversing course on the withholding of state aid to school districts. The Governor's budget director said Wednesday that New York State will wait until after the November elections to determine whether it'll be necessary to slash spending and therefore it is "premature" for school districts to lay off school workers.

Food service, school security and other BENTE members are, overwhelmingly, city residents and among the hardest working and lowest paid employees of the Rochester City School District. Their service and loyalty to the District and to our students should be rewarded, not recklessly dismissed. To deny them income and health benefits during this pandemic is cruel and heartless. And to punish them for the District's own mismanagement of the budget is patently unfair.

On September 24th, please vote "NO" on these proposed cuts and retain the essential BENTE workers who know our community so well and whose services to our students and their families are needed now more than ever.

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Local 616 - Affiliated with the New York State United Teachers, the American Federation of Teachers, and the National Education Association