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The Association of Catholic Teachers

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Fax 215-568-8270 - email (act@act1776.com) - website (www.act1776.com) **FEBRUARY 2022**



From the President's Desk

IS IT SPRING YET?

Congratulations! Now that it is almost to the end of February, more than half of this very challenging school year is behind you. You have given and continue to give of yourselves every day in order to make this school year a very successful one for you and your students. Just keep in mind that June will soon be in sight.

As you continue to put more and more of this school year behind you, I wanted to provide some updates.

Beginning on February 28th, masks will be optional for everyone in the eight suburban Archdiocesan high schools. You will finally be able to see your students' faces. Unfortunately, the seven Archdiocesan high schools in the City of Philadelphia will continue with the mask mandate. This is by order of the City's Health Department. Hopefully, the city schools will move to a mask-optional policy in the very near future and you will finally be able to see your students' faces as well.

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From the President's Desk . . .

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Since masks will be optional, if you have not been vaccinated yet, ACT is again encouraging you to do so. All of us need to work together to keep ourselves, our families, our colleagues, and our students as safe as possible during these uncertain times.

In other news, the first semester evaluation period is over. The evaluation period for non-tenured teachers closed on January 10, 2022 and all non-tenured teachers should have received their evaluations from both their department head and their administrative evaluator by January 25, 2022 at the latest. The evaluation period for tenured teachers closed on January 28th and the last day for them to receive both of their evaluations was February 11, 2022.

With all that you have done for your students in the first semester, I believe that everyone should have received a Distinguished overall rating, but definitely nothing less than Proficient.

If you have any questions or concerns about your first semester evaluation, please contact the ACT Office.

Finally, I want to tell you what is happening with the upcoming negotiations. Unfortunately, there is very little to tell you. It is now ten weeks after the Association sent a letter to the System notifying the System of the Association's intention to open negotiations for a new Labor-Management Agreement, including a request for an Early Bird Contract. The System has yet to acknowledge receipt of the Association's letter.

Therefore, I don't think negotiations for a new Labor-Management Agreement will start anytime soon. No contract can be negotiated alone, nor can the Association force the System to come to the negotiating table. Instead of doing the smart thing, which is having a new contract negotiated and hopefully ratified before the end of the school year, it appears as if the System wants negotiations to drag out all summer long and maybe even into the new school year in September.

However, ACT continues its preparations and will be ready to negotiate a new contract. Your surveys have told us what you would like to see in a new Agreement. A General Membership Meeting will be held in the next several weeks where you will have the opportunity to approve the contract proposal that will be presented to the System at the opening session of negotiations.

I will keep you updated on any developments with negotiations.

Continue to do the amazing work that you are doing.

As always, please remain safe.

Irene

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The following Legislative Report was submitted by ACT Legislative Representative, David Sommers, at the February 17, 2022 ACT Executive Board Meeting held via zoom.

I. HB951: Statutes of Limitations for Sexual Abuse Victims w/ A00786 (Amendment) *providing for language changes*

Specifics: Create a 2-year window for civil lawsuits to be filed. If under age 18 when incident/abuse occurred, add 37 years to age for eligible time period to file; if ages 18-24 when incident/abuse occurred, individuals would have until they reach age 30 to file civil action.

Last Action: Removed from the Senate Table, January 25th, 2022.

N.B. "Removed from the Table" ---up for possible consideration and may be placed on the Chamber's legislative calendar this session.

II. HB1330: Online Course Initiative

An act **providing for supplemental online courses initiative; and establishing the Online Course Clearinghouse Restricted Account.**

Last Action: Removed from the House Table, January 26th, 2022.

III. HR163: Public School Training Mandate Study

A House resolution directing the Joint State Government Commission to establish an advisory committee to conduct a study on training *mandates* on public school entities. Goal is to eliminate unnecessary, out-dated, redundant, and burdensome requirements.

Last Action: Adopted by the PA House on February 7, 2022. (200-0 vote).

IV. HB232: School District Name Change

An act allowing for and providing the manner/process to be completed for the renaming of school districts as needed per result of a merger or consolidation.

Last Action: Presented to the Governor on February 9, 2022

V. HB2045: Reading Support

Providing for teacher support in the Science of Reading Program. Professional development opportunities would be provided to aid in the certification of said teachers.

Last Action: Referred to the Senate Education Committee on January 11th, 2022.

VI. HB 1660: Temporary Emergency Provisions

When five consecutive school days (or more) will be missed due to unforeseen emergency situations, temporary provisions may be put into place for a maximum time limit of sixty days.

Last Action: Removed from Senate Table, January 26, 2022.

National Association of Catholic School Teachers John J. Reilly Memorial Scholarship

The National Association of Catholic School Teachers established the John J. Reilly Memorial Scholarship to help defray the cost of a college education for outstanding children of NACST members. During their senior year of high school, \$4,000 awards are made to two students, \$1,000 in each of their four years of college study.

All sons, daughters and stepchildren of all active NACST members are eligible to participate in this scholarship provided they are in good standing in their senior year of high school. [An application Form was emailed to all ACT Members.](#) There is also an Application Form posted on the ACT Website at www.act1776.com.
Deadline for submission of all applications is March 21, 2022.

ACT WEBSITE

All teachers are asked to logon to the ACT Website (www.act1776.com) and verify your personal information. It is critical that we have your current information and that it is accurate. It is important that we have a **PERSONAL** email address for you, since Executive Board Minutes, Newsletters, and other pertinent information will be sent via email. We cannot and will not send email to a school email address.

Every teacher was provided with a username and password for the ACT Website. (New teachers will receive their logon information in an email.) If you do not have this information, please contact Ginny at the ACT Office at 215-568-4175 or email her at ginny@act1776.com and she can provide this information to you. To update your personal information, logon to the ACT Website and, in the upper right-hand corner of the homepage, click on member login. Type in your username and password and then verify the information on file. Any changes made will be sent to the ACT Office automatically.

VOLUNTARY TRANSFER, TEACHER SWAP, TEMPORARY TRANSFER APPLICATIONS

Teachers interested in applying for a voluntary transfer, teacher swap, or temporary transfer should file their application **no later than April 1, 2022**.

Applications will be posted in the schools on March 1, 2022.

2021 TAX INFORMATION

Union Dues for 2021

January 2021 – June 2021 = \$350.09
(For those who retired or resigned as of June 2021)

January 2021 – December 2021 = \$586.73

FSA REMINDER

If you were a participant in the 2021 FSA Program, please remember that all monies in your account should be exhausted by December 31, 2021. Any funds that remain in your account after December 31, 2021 will be lost. However, this does not mean that all your eligible expenses have to be submitted by December 31, 2021. You have 90 days after the close of the calendar year in which to submit eligible expenses for 2021. All eligible expenses for 2021 must be submitted by March 30, 2022.



TEACHER IN THE NEWS

In November of 2021, Chester County Daily Local did a front-page story on Bishop Shanahan Math teacher, John DeSantis, and his dog, *Ingrid*. And, on January 18, 2022, John and Ingrid were in the news again, this time on 6abc's Action News. Since then, John and Ingrid's story has been featured several times on 6abc's show, *LOCALISH*.

The story is about a Rough Collie named Ingrid who John adopted in 2019, when her previous owners were unable to keep her due to her health problems and the need for two expensive medical procedures to correct them. This is where John stepped in, adopting Ingrid and nursing her back to good health and later, enrolling her in dog training classes. It had always been a dream of John's to have a dog that could serve the community, but he knew it would have to have the proper disposition and training.



After completing five levels of training, Ingrid was certified as a therapy dog, and John now spends his free time traveling with Ingrid to nursing homes, senior centers, schools, and random pop-ups throughout Chester County. They can often be seen visiting Camilla Hall, home of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic began, so many schools and living facilities have reported anxiety issues among their students and residents. John and Ingrid have been very busy visiting these facilities. Their visits help to alleviate the stress and anxiety caused by boredom and social distancing due to confinement and the pandemic. John and Ingrid enjoy visiting and comforting those suffering from anxiety and will continue to do so free of charge (no donations are accepted) as long as Ingrid is healthy and happy doing so.

You can see John and Ingrid's story on LOCALISH, by visiting the following 6abc page:
<https://abc.com/therapy-dog-animals-pets/11516010/>

Happy Retirement!

The Association of Catholic Teachers congratulates *Gerard Nejman* on his retirement from the Secondary School System. Jerry taught for *forty-six* years at Archbishop Ryan High School. Best wishes for a happy and healthy retirement, Jerry!

ADVENTURE AQUARIUM

ACT Members are entitled to discounted tickets at the Adventure Aquarium in Camden, when they order their tickets online using a special passcode.

If you will be visiting the Adventure Aquarium in the near future, email Ginny at ginny@act1776.com and she will give you the passcode needed to receive the discount.

Mermaids are coming soon to the Aquarium. They will be there every Thursday through Sunday, February 24, 2022 through March 13, 2022. This is a popular attraction, so order your tickets early!

The Aquarium is celebrating 30 years. In celebration of their 30th year, they are giving free admission to visitors on their birthday. You must go on your actual birthday to receive free admission and you must show proof that it is your birthday. You must get your ticket at the ticket window for free admission.

+ Rest in Peace +

“And May Perpetual Light Shine Upon Her”



Patricia Palermo, retired, Cardinal O'Hara High School