



# THE

The Newspaper of Local 1776  
The Association of Catholic Teachers

# SPIRIT

# OF

# '76

55+ Years Strong  
1966-2016

3070 BRISTOL PIKE, BLDG. 2, SUITE 101, BENSLEM, PA 19020- 215-568-4175 - VOLUME XXXIV-NO.9  
Fax 215-568-8270 - email ([act@act1776.com](mailto:act@act1776.com)) - website ([www.act1776.com](http://www.act1776.com)) **AUGUST 2024**



## *From the President's Desk*

### **Your Union Working for You**

During the month of August, ACT is always asked to address the new teachers at the Archdiocesan New Teacher Orientation. As ACT President, I explain the history of the Union, encourage the new teachers to join ACT, and ask them to become actively involved in the Union's activities. I explain that each building has a Senior Delegate and Alternate Delegate who are the local Union representatives and the first line of communication between the teachers and the Union.

The new teachers have a lot of information to absorb during that full-day meeting, so ACT tries to convey as succinctly as possible the message that the Union is always available to help each and every teacher. The new teachers are encouraged to seek assistance from their Senior Delegate and/or Alternate Delegate. They are told that they should feel free to call the ACT Office at any time with questions they might have.

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## From the President's Desk

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When I talk with the new teachers, I explain that once they join the Union, they have, in a sense, purchased an insurance policy with the dues being the insurance premium. "You are making a very important purchase, hopefully, one that you will never need to use, but it is there. Any time you have a question, whether it be about your roster, evaluation procedures, benefits, leaves, etc., please contact the Union."

Occasionally, I think all of us need to be reminded of the fact that we are paying dues so that the Union can help us. Senior Delegates, Alternate Delegates, and the ACT Staff answer questions about many different issues every day. Your elected Union representatives are here to assist you at any time with concerns you may have.

I encourage you to seek out your Senior Delegate and/or Alternate Delegate or call the ACT Office with any problems you may be experiencing. Contact at the outset of a situation allows your elected Union representatives to be your advocates right from the start. There have been a few times when the Senior Delegate or the ACT Staff has become aware of a problem after the fact. While ACT has done and will do everything it can to resolve an issue no matter when it is brought to our attention, it is so much easier to iron out any difficulties if the full picture, i. e. all the information is available from the very beginning.

The Union is your insurance policy. Please take advantage of the policy's provisions. Communicate with your Union representatives. Let your Union work for you.

Enjoy the last few days of summer break and have a wonderful 2024-2025 school year.

*Irene*

*"Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the Fall"*



*F. Scott Fitzgerald*

## **Additional Credits**

If you received an advanced degree or additional credits over the summer, which qualifies you for payment under a different column of the salary scale, notify your school accountant immediately.

You must also send proof (an original transcript) of the degree/credit to Mr. James Molnar at the Office of Catholic Education so that the change in degree/credits can be verified.

For your records, it is highly recommended that all documents be sent via certified mail, return receipt requested.

### **The five lanes of salary scale are**

Bachelor's Degree  
Bachelor's Degree + 18 Credits  
Master's Degree  
Double Master's Degree  
Doctorate Degree

The teacher is responsible to provide timely notification to the System, with an official transcript.

Timely notification shall normally mean within one (1) year of acquiring the additional credits. Salary adjustments shall not be made retroactively for more than one (1) year.

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## **THANK YOU, WAWA!**

During the month of September, September 1 through the 30<sup>th</sup>,

**WAWA CELEBRATES BACK TO SCHOOL WITH FREE COFFEE (any size)**



**for teachers and administrators.**

Show a school ID upon checkout.

## SALARIES AND STIPENDS 2024-2025

**SCHOOL YEAR STARTING SALARY:** The starting salary for the 2024-2025 school year is \$45,000.

**SALARY:** There is a pay increase of \$2,000+\$25 per year of service over the 2023-2024 salary scale with a minimum increase of \$2,200.

**GUIDANCE DIRECTORS AND DEPARTMENT HEAD STIPEND:** Guidance Directors and Department Heads in departments with three (3) or more full-time members shall receive a stipend of \$3,425. Department Heads in departments with two (2) full-time members who were appointed before the end of the 2022-2023 school year will receive \$3,425. Those department heads in department with two (2) full-time members not appointed before the end of the 2022-2023 school year or newly appointed will receive a stipend of \$1,800.

**EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES STIPEND:** Schools with enrollment less than 800 - \$2,775; Schools with enrollment 800 or more - \$2,975.

**TV DIRECTORS STIPEND:** The TV Directors Stipend for the 2024-2025 school year is \$2,200.

## IMPORTANT SALARY INFORMATION

The final paycheck for teachers who were paid over twelve months in the 2023-2024 school year is August 30, 2024.

The first paycheck for the 2024-2025 school year will be on September 13, 2024

## ACT UNION DUES FOR 2024-2025

The Union Dues for 2024-2025 School Year are \$630.00. For those on Check-off, the deduction will begin with the September 13, 2024 pay and end with the pay of June 20, 2025.

## MULTI-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION REQUIRED

**Back-to-School reminder:** Enabling Multi-Factor Authentication adds an extra layer of security to your accounts. Staff and Administration users without multi-factor authentication enabled will be unable to connect to their school's network after September 2024. For setup assistance, please email the school tech support team at [techsupport@yourschooldomain](mailto:techsupport@yourschooldomain).

## ACT 1776 Legislative Report – Summer 2024 (June, July) Mr. John Corrigan, ACT Legislative Representative

### **Commonwealth of PA Budget (2024-2025)**

The PA General Assembly passed a \$47.6 Billion budget for the fiscal year 2024-2025 on July 11, 2024, nearly two weeks after the July 1 deadline, passing the House (122-80) and the Senate (44-5). Governor Shapiro, who originally proposed a \$48.3B plan, signed the budget into law on the same day. The budget requires \$3B in surplus cash to balance, leaving \$10.5B in reserve. The plan does not raise income or sales taxes and increases student loan interest deductions.

The budget includes 6% increase in overall spending from last year, with the increases to improve the poorest school districts and make college more affordable at state universities.

**Education.** Over \$10.5B in total funding for education is in this year’s budget, an increase of \$1B in public education funding. \$900M more for instruction and special education (9% increase) and new subsidies for school construction and tuition for private and cyber charter schools is part of the budget.

**EITC, OSTC, and Lifeline Vouchers.** The budget increases the caps for the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) to \$540M and the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) to \$90M. This is a \$75M (13.5%) total increase from last year for a total record amount of \$630M in both programs. The budget does not, however, create a private school voucher system known as the Lifeline Scholarship program.

**Commonwealth Court Decision.** The 2023 PA Commonwealth Court decision found the state public-school funding formula to be unconstitutional. The school districts who originally sued and won in court have proposed a \$6.2B plan over 5 years. The Democrats proposed a \$810M installment this year as part of a \$5.1B proposal over 7 years. After political disagreements, a first step installment of \$526M was approved for this year to address the court mandate.

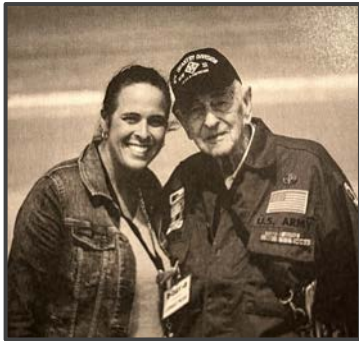
**Higher Education.** The budget sets aside an additional \$260M (13% increase) for higher education, with most of the increase going to the state-owned university system (PASSHE) and PA Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) to expand grant programs. However, the plan gives no increase in aid to Temple, Pitt, Penn State, or Lincoln to subsidize in-state tuition.

Governor Shapiro proposed a plan to combine the systems that oversee the 10 state universities and 15 community colleges with the goal of capping in-state tuition at \$1,000 for many families. The proposed plan did not make it into this year’s budget. Lawmakers did approve the creation of a new State Board of Higher Education to develop strategic plans and

recommendations for performance assessment and distribution of funds at PA’s four state-related universities: Lincoln, Penn State, Pitt, and Temple.

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## TEACHER IN THE NEWS



Bishop Shanahan Math Teacher and Department Chair, Janet Moore, traveled to France for the first time in her life. Her first trip to France would not be to see the Olympics; no, her first trip to France would be a personal journey with her grandfather, Jake Ruser.

You see, Janet's grandfather served in WWII as an Army medic with the 4<sup>th</sup> infantry Division and landed on Utah Beach on June 6, 1944.

So, in June 2024, Janet traveled with her 99-year-old grandfather, Jake Ruser, to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day, a trip made possible by Forever Young Vets, an organization based in Tennessee. The reception they received was nothing short of amazing!

During their trip to Utah Beach on June 6, 2024, Mr. Ruser was interviewed by ABC News Anchor, David Muir. Muir, the Anchor for World News Tonight, has been interviewing World War II veterans and sharing their stories on the ABC news program. Janet's students even got to watch David Muir interview her grandfather from their classroom. *A week prior to Muir's interview, Janet's students got to meet Mr. Ruser in person and ask their own questions.* What a formidable learning experience for these students.

What impressed Moore the most during her visit to France was the gratitude of the French people and the fact that children learn from an early age to honor and respect the American soldiers and to be thankful for what they did during the war. Everywhere they went people stopped and asked for autographs and to be photographed with her grandfather. And, children and adults alike thanked her grandfather for his service.

While Janet got to attend the welcoming reception, the ceremonies commemorating the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day at Normandy American Cemetery, and visit the D-Day Experience, a museum that simulated the war experience for soldiers, the best part of the trip was *"the opportunity to spend time hanging out with the vets who ranged in age from 96 - 102. We had dinner with them every night, and they just shared their stories. I learned so much from them."*

During the trip, Janet's grandfather got to spend time with current veterans from the 4<sup>th</sup> infantry Division and he got to meet with Belgian soldiers who brought jeeps and tanks leftover from WWII, which they used to take the vets out for a ride around town.

What a remarkable story!

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**The Association of Catholic Teachers**  
on behalf of all its members  
would like to thank **Jake Ruser** for your military service.  
*The Greatest Generation*

**Grow PA Scholarships.** The budget allocates \$25M for Grow PA Scholarships. A new scholarship program gives college students in an “approved course of study” like nursing or education up to \$5,000 per academic year. Students must stay and work in PA after graduation for 12 months per grant received. It also creates a scholarship program to attract out-of-state students and includes \$36M increase in the Ready to Succeed Scholarship program.

**Career and Technical Education (CTE).** \$30 million increase in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming and equipment for the nearly 40 newly approved apprenticeship programs. Also, \$2M in first-time state funding is allotted for nursing apprenticeships.

**Solar Schools.** The budget establishes a new program to help schools pay for solar energy projects. The \$25M grant program administered by the Department of Community and Economic Development helps to pay for equipment, permitting fees, and other related costs.

### **Education Highlights**

Over \$1B increase in Pre-K to 12 education funding.

Over \$35M increase for PASSHE (PA State System Higher Education) schools.

Over \$140M for grants and scholarships to make higher education more affordable in PA.

\$20M for student teacher stipends (100% increase) in the Educators Pipeline Support Grant Program – providing \$15,000 stipends to eligible student teachers in PA.

Over \$38M to support teachers and address Pennsylvania’s teacher shortage pipeline.

\$7M to support dual enrollment opportunities for high school students allowing them to take advanced courses for college credit.

\$16.5M increase in anti-violence and after-school programs.

\$100M increase in special education funding.

\$32.7M increase for Pre-K programs.

\$3M investment to provide menstrual products in schools.

\$50M increase (\$480M total) in school safety, security, and mental health to improve student health and wellness, fix toxic schools, and create safe learning environments.



## Congratulations to our Newest Retirees!



*The Association of Catholic Teachers wishes to congratulate the following teachers on their retirement from the Secondary School System of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia:*

*Alexis Carlin, West Catholic High School (17 years)*

*Eileen DeStefano, Monsignor Bonner – Archbishop Prendergast High School (49 years)*

*James Greene, Father Judge High School (49 years)*

*Deborah Lynch, Lansdale Catholic High School (25 years)*

*Ann Tracey-Lyman, Little Flower Catholic High School for Girls (31 years)*

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## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

**OFFICE HOURS:** Beginning September 3, 2024, the ACT Office will return to its normal schedule. **The hours of operation will be Monday through Thursday, 9:00 to 4:30, and Friday 9:00-4:00.**

**ADDRESS CHANGES** – If your address has changed over the summer, or if you will be moving in the near future, please contact the ACT Office so that we can update our records. You can contact Ginny at [ginny@act1776.com](mailto:ginny@act1776.com).

**INSURANCE CARDS** - If you need a new dental, medical or vision card, contact Ginny at [ginny@act1776.com](mailto:ginny@act1776.com)



**ENJOY THE REMAINING DAYS OF SUMMER**



**The ACT Executive Board and Staff**  
**wish you and your family**  
**a happy and safe Labor Day Weekend!**