



THE SPIRIT OF '76

The Newspaper of Local 1776
The Association of Catholic Teachers

1700 SANSOM STREET • SUITE 903 • PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103 • 215-568-4175 • VOLUME XXVIII

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From The President's Desk

Happy New School Year to everyone.

The 2007-2008 school year promises to be a challenging one for both teachers and the Association, especially given the fact that contract negotiations will be starting up early in the New Year. In fact, preparations have already begun.

In addition, ACT will be closely monitoring various school and System activities and procedures, including, but not limited to, the Lunch situation, the vagaries of the Dress Code and the often problematic Evaluation Procedure.

In regard to Evaluation, the first semester observation period will begin on September 25th for tenured teachers and on October 1st for non-tenured teachers. The Evaluation Guidelines clearly state that one of the objectives of the process is "to develop an ongoing positive working relationship among teachers and between teachers and administrators." Another objective is "to appraise objectively the teacher's skills and overall effectiveness" in 5 specific categories.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT. . .

As we embark on the Evaluation journey, all teachers, tenured and non-tenured, need to be aware of what can and cannot be included on the Evaluation Reports.

There were several grievances filed last school year dealing with inappropriate comments on the Report and violations of both the Procedure and the Memorandum of Understanding. For example: one evaluator sat outside the classroom and overheard the class rather than observed it. Another evaluator took exception to a teacher's comments made during a Faculty Meeting and placed a less than positive comment in the Report. The grievance resolutions removed both of these references from the evaluations.

Another problem area is the evaluator's attempt to use hearsay. The evaluation procedure is very clear: "It is understood that the Evaluation Report shall be based upon direct observations. . ." "Hearsay is not to be considered as part of the evaluation."

It is extremely important that teachers request both a pre-visit conference and a post-visit conference with the evaluator. Find out if the evaluator is looking for a particular thing or things.

Teachers should receive a copy of the entire evaluation report, not just the summative page. I know that last year many evaluators wanted the reports signed immediately. However, no teacher should sign the evaluation report without having read it carefully. Hard to believe, but there was at least one evaluator who asked teachers to sign a blank form which would be filled in later. I don't think so.

Evaluation Reports must be signed, even if you do not agree with the comments. You are able to add under your signature that you have seen the evaluation, but do not agree with its contents. Then, you are able to attach your comments to the evaluation.

If there are procedural errors, violations of the Guidelines or the Memorandum of Understanding, or factual inaccuracies, you are able to file a grievance.

A few more points to keep in mind:

"Sources of evidence. . . are to be teacher generated and not sought out by the evaluator."

"Tenured teachers' lesson plans cannot be solicited by the evaluator."

"An evaluator must substantiate an overall unsatisfactory evaluation with appropriate documentation."

Please report any irregularities to your Senior Delegate or contact the ACT Office.

Irene and I look forward to seeing all of you as we visit the schools this year. We will, especially, be seeking your ideas about the upcoming contract negotiations.



Representation May Be Crucial

Article III, Section 2 of the Labor-Management Agreement is short but extremely important. Please pay particularly close attention to what it has to say.

No teacher may be asked to attend a meeting with the school or diocesan administration without a representative of the Association being present if the teacher reasonably feels the meeting could result in disciplinary action against him/her.

Disciplinary action cannot be taken against any teacher unless the teacher has been apprised in writing of his/her right to union representation.

Should you "reasonably feel" the meeting could turn into one that involves you in disciplinary action, immediately get to your Senior Delegate for advice or call the ACT Office if you choose. Don't let a relatively minor situation turn into a major one because you decided you could "handle" it yourself.

Education Grant Application Due

Teachers who wish to apply for an Education/Study Grant under the Labor-Management Agreement (Art. XIII, Sec. 7) must do so by October 16th. The grant offers 50 percent tuition reimbursement up to a maximum of \$900 per year.

Grants are awarded on the basis of system seniority and are available to any teacher with at least one year of teaching in the System.

Forms to apply for an Education/Study Grant are posted at the local school or can be obtained through your Senior Delegate or by calling the ACT Office at 215-568-4175.

Note: Teachers may apply for an Education/Study Grant if they intend to enroll in a three credit college course to meet the requirements of Continuing Professional Education Credit under Act 48.

Additional credits?

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

You must also send proof (an original transcript) of the degree/credits to Mr. Stephen Pawlowski 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 the salary scale are:

Bachelor's Degree
Bachelor's + 18 or certification
Master's or 30 graduate credits
Double Master's
Doctorate



More Notes Of Thanks !

From: John J. Reilly Scholarship Award Winners

"Each year, the Association's Executive Board awards a \$500 Scholarship to the 9th grader in each Diocesan high school and at Holy Cross who has the highest general average as of the end of the first semester. If that student is already on scholarship, it is given to the highest student not receiving financial assistance. The \$500 Scholarship is sent to each school to be applied to the student's 10th grade tuition."

Dear Ms. Schwartz,

On behalf of the entire Bonner Prendergast community, I would like to thank the Association of Catholic Teachers scholarship fund for the very generous donation of \$500.00 toward David Onimus' tuition for the 2007-08 school year.

Thank you again for partnering with us in our mission of Catholic education in the Augustinian tradition. Your generosity and continued support enables our students to leave us well prepared to further their education.

May God reward you for your kindness.

Fraternally in Christ and St. Augustine,

Rev. Augustine M. Esposito, O. S. A., Ph. D.
President

Dear Rita,

Please accept our grateful appreciation for ACT's scholarship of \$500.00 for the 2007-08 Annual Appeal. Your gift was applied to Jessica Cuning's 10th grade tuition fee. As the Lansdale Catholic High School community implements our strategic plan for the future, your financial and spiritual support allows our school to continue with its mission of truly being 'A learning community, teaching values for life, through a formative Catholic education.'

Lansdale Catholic High School did not provide you with any goods or services in whole or partial consideration for your contribution to the Annual Appeal. In the words of our late Pope John Paul II, 'Few efforts are more important for the present and future well being of the Church and of the nation than efforts expended in the work of education.' May our Patroness, St. Therese of Lisieux, continue to intercede for us, as we do our very best to meet the needs of all our region's students. Have a restful remainder of the summer!

Reverend Joseph L. Maloney
President

Mr. James W. Casey
Director of Institutional
Advancement and Alumni Affairs

Dear Ms. Schwartz,

As the new school year begins, I would like to thank you and the Association of Catholic Teachers for the \$500 scholarship you awarded to me for my freshman class rank. I cannot tell you how good it makes me feel to be recognized for my efforts. This money will help me and my family a lot, and I am glad that I am able to contribute to my family by using what God gave me. I will continue to strive to be the best that I can be and take full advantage of my education. Thank you again, and I hope you will excuse the tardiness of this letter.

Sincerely,
Christina L. Giuffrida
Archbishop Carroll

Alert on Changes in Status

Have you informed both your school office and the ACT Office of any changes in your marital or family status? Most importantly, have you been sure to include any new dependents on your health and dental plans?

Don't wait until that person needs to use the plan. Please inform the ACT Office and the local school administrators of your changes.

Make sure when supplying the information to your school that you put the information in writing and put a date on it before signing. It could mean a considerable financial outlay on your part or a huge wait in time until the changes can be made if you don't take care of these things TODAY.

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ATTENTION LONG-TERM SUBSTITUTES

Long-term substitutes hired prior to November 1, 2007 for the **full school year** are eligible to obtain dental benefits. The premium will be borne by the teacher. The rate for single dental coverage is \$19.85 per month. The family rate is \$50.60 per month. If you are interested in the dental plan, please contact Ginny Crowther at the ACT Office at 215-568-4175 for an enrollment form and additional information.

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DENTAL CARDS - MEDICAL CARDS - VISION CARDS

Any teacher in need of additional dental cards for college-aged students away from home should send an email to Ginny at nacst.nacst@verizon.net.

Any teacher in need of additional medical cards for college-aged students away from home should email Ginny at nacst.nacst@verizon.net.

Any teacher in need of additional vision cards for college-aged students away from home should send an email to Ginny at nacst.nacst@verizon.net.

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MEDICAL OPEN ENROLLMENT

Open enrollment for the Medical plans will occur during the month of October. Plan and rate information should be in the schools shortly. New teachers will need to select one of the following two plans: Personal Choice 20/30/70 or Keystone HMO. All other teachers may change their medical plan during the open enrollment period. The plan selected will go into effect on November 1, 2007.

IMPORTANT MEDICAL INFORMATION

FLU SHOTS

GETTING A FLU SHOT AT THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Flu shots are covered under both the Personal Choice and Keystone Health Plans. The flu shot is covered at a 100%, however, the doctor may charge a copay for the office visit.

GETTING A FLU SHOT AT A LOCATION OTHER THAN THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE

If you get a flu shot outside of a doctor's office, such as the local supermarket or drug store or even at an area school, Blue Cross will reimburse you the amount paid up to \$25. To get reimbursed, you will need to submit a Flu Shot Reimbursement Form and include your receipt. (keep a copy for your records) You can get a Reimbursement Form from your Senior Delegate.

Please note: When submitting a claim for reimbursement, you may get an Explanation of Benefits stating that they applied the \$25 allowance towards your out-of-network deductible. If this happens, you will need to follow up with Blue Cross and ask them to reprocess the claim correctly since flu shots are covered without having to meet any deductible obligation.

FSA Expense Eligibility

(Health Care)

Those of you who enrolled in the Health Care Flexible Spending Account for this year could never have predicted that Independence Blue Cross would institute a no pay co-pay for generic prescriptions for all of 2007. If you were like me, my family determined the funds to be deducted based on having to pay for all prescriptions.

For some of us, the question now becomes "How do I deplete the funds prior to December 31st so I don't lose that money?" Below is a listing of eligible expenses for the Health Care Flexible Spending Account. Maybe you will find something you haven't considered as an expense before now. I decided to upgrade the prescription in my sun glasses (submitting the difference between the Vision plan coverage and the cost of new glasses) and have begun to purchase additional supplies of allergy/cold medications as well as contact lens solutions.

Take a look at how much money remains in your account and determine if that will be just enough to cover you for the rest of 2007 or will you have left-over funds. If you think you will have funds remaining in the account, you may want to consider purchasing some of the eligible items on the list. You certainly don't want to lose that money.

Irene Tori
ACT Staff

Drugs

- Both prescription and over-the-counter drugs that treat a medical condition
- Insulin

Vision Care

- Optometrist or ophthalmologist fees
- Eyeglasses
- Contact lenses and cleaning solutions
- Prescription sunglasses
- Corrective eye surgery (such as radial keratotomy)

Dental/Orthodontic Care

- Dental care
- Artificial teeth/dentures
- Cost of fluoridation of home water supply advised by dentist
- Braces, orthodontic services (only those incurred within the active plan year)

Treatments/Therapies

- Weight loss programs prescribed to treat a medical condition
- X-ray treatments
- Smoking cessation programs
- Treatment for alcoholism or drug dependency
- Acupuncture
- Vaccinations
- Physical therapy (as a medical treatment)
- Speech therapy
- Occupational therapy

Insurance*

- Deductibles and copayments for health care plans (medical, dental, vision)
- Coinsurance (the percentage of charges not paid by your health care plan)
- Amounts over usual and customary limits

* Ineligible--premiums/contributions for insurance coverage

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Lancer's Local

Issues or contractual items of interest to Holy Cross H. S. (Delran N.J.)

The faculty wishes Dennis Guida well as he begins his term as principal.

Block scheduling has been implemented.

This is a negotiating year for Holy Cross. The faculty is in the process of choosing its Negotiating Team.

REMINDERS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS AWAY FROM HOME

1. Always carry your current Personal Choice ID Card.
2. In an emergency, go directly to the nearest hospital.
3. Call BlueCard Access at 800-810-BLUE (2583) or access the National BlueCard PPO online provider directly through www.lbxpress.com to find BlueCard PPO providers.
4. Always use a BlueCard PPO doctor or hospital to make sure you receive the highest level of benefits.
5. Call IBC for prior authorization, if necessary. Use the pre-authorization phone number on your ID card, since it is different from the BlueCard access number shown above. If in doubt whether a service is covered or requires pre-authorization, call the Member Services telephone number on your ID card.

BORDERS WALDENBOOKS

Educator Savings Days

September 26- October 2

25% off list price of books, CDs, DVDs, and more.

Current and retired educators save on purchases for personal or classroom use. Just bring proof of educator status.

UNION DUES - 2007-2008

\$466.20

\$23.31 for 20 Pays

(Starting September 28th)

SERVICE FEE - 2007-2008

\$372.96

\$20.72 for 18 pays

(Starting October 26th)

ACT School Visit Schedule 2007-2008

NAME OF SCHOOL	ACT VISITOR	DATE	DAY
Bonner-Prendergast	Rita & Irene	October 23	Tuesday
Kennedy-Kenrick	Rita	October 30	Tuesday
St. Pius X	Irene	November 7	Wednesday
Archbishop Wood	Rita	November 13	Tuesday
Lansdale Catholic	Rita	November 27	Tuesday
Bishop Shanahan	Irene	December 5	Wednesday
North Catholic	Rita	December 11	Tuesday
Archbishop Carroll	Irene	December 12	Wednesday
Neumann-Goretti	Rita	December 18	Tuesday
Conwell-Egan	Irene	December 19	Wednesday
Holy Cross	Irene	January 9	Wednesday
Cardinal Dougherty	Rita	January 15	Tuesday
Hallahan	Irene	January 16	Wednesday
Bishop McDevitt	Irene	February 6	Wednesday
Cardinal O'Hara	Rita & Irene	February 12	Tuesday
Little Flower	Rita	February 19	Tuesday
Father Judge	Irene	February 21	Thursday
Archbishop Ryan	Rita & Irene	February 26	Tuesday
St. Hubert	Rita	March 4	Tuesday
Roman Catholic	Irene	March 5	Wednesday
West Catholic	Irene	March 12	Wednesday
Bonner-Prendergast	Rita & Irene	April 1	Tuesday