



THE

The Newspaper of Local 1776
The Association of Catholic Teachers

SPIRIT OF '76

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

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From The President's Desk

HAPPY NEW SCHOOL YEAR

As our teachers and our students settle in, we wish everyone a happy and healthy school year, most especially, the many teachers displaced by Constriction or school closings, as they adjust to their new surroundings.

As of mid-September, there are still 40 teachers without permanent positions. Twenty-seven (12 Social Studies, 5 English, 4 Fine Arts, 4 Guidance, 1 Business and 1 Health/Physical Education) are laid off. Thirteen teachers have taken hybrid (long-term substitute) positions.

Of importance this school year, the Association and the System signed a Memorandum of Understanding concerning the use of **Grade Connect**. The pertinent paragraphs are as follows:

The current use of **Grade Connect** for the posting of actual quarter and actual semester grades with comments will remain in effect during the 2010-2011 school year.

Both the System and the Association encourage the use of **Grade Connect** for the posting of student assignments with due dates as well as the posting of assessment grades in a timely fashion.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT. . .

The new Pope John Paul II High School has opened its doors for business. From all indications things are going well. Enrollment is 900 +. Formal dedication was held on September 19th.

With all the positive activity at the newly opened school, there was one unfortunate occurrence. Four retired teachers who formerly worked at Kennedy-Kenrick and St. Pius X were told that they would not have Service Period Assistant positions at the new school. Under the contract, teachers who retire early are able to work at their former schools for up to 19 hours a week at the rate of \$13.00 an hour. These four teachers had each given over 40 years of service and were highly respected and revered members of their school communities. Their termination, but the way, was done by letter on the last day of their school year, with no discussion of any kind.

Even though these four individuals were no longer represented by the union, the Association felt it extremely important to grieve what we considered to be inequitable treatment. The Association argued that since Cardinal Rigali and the Office of Catholic Education had both referred to the new high school as a "relocation" of the campuses of Kennedy-Kenrick and Pius and, since the teachers from the two schools had moved directly to the new school, not onto the Constriction List, the Service Period Assistants should be able to move to the new school as well.

The System argued that the Association did not represent the Service Period Assistants; therefore, the terms of the Labor-Management Agreement did not apply to them. Even if they were covered, the Diocesan Appeal Board ruled that they were not discriminated against under any of the 7 listed areas of discrimination. What a lose-lose situation; the four teachers could have provided a wealth of assistance to the faculty and students of Pope John Paul II. At its August Meeting, the ACT Executive Board expressed its upsetment with how these former teachers were treated. The Board was "extremely appalled by the System's unchristian treatment of the service period assistants who were serving at St. Pius X and Kennedy-Kenrick."

This brings front and center the importance of union representation and the protection afforded by the Labor-Management Agreement. As you know, 2010-2011 is a negotiating year. Contract language will be "on the table." ACT will be bringing its best and brightest to the negotiations process. We will also need the solidarity of our union membership as we work with the System to maintain the contractual language that provides protected and productive working conditions and to better our teachers' economically.

As the years progresses, you will receive more information about contract negotiations. Most important will be the Contract Survey you will be asked to complete so that your Negotiating Team can go to the bargaining table with the issues you want discussed.

Again, happy new school year. See you at the General Membership Meeting.



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.

Executive Board Election

In November of even numbered years, officers, other than Area Vice Presidents, shall be elected. Filing of petitions to run for an office (President, Vice President, Executive Secretary, Treasurer, and Legislative Representative, and three Members-at-Large) must be submitted no later than October 20th. Senior Delegates have received and have posted the notice of elections and the particulars of the process on the ACT Bulletin Board. If you are interested in running for an Executive Board office, please check the ACT Bulletin Board. If you have any questions, see your Senior Delegate or call the ACT Office at 215-568-4175.

Seasonal Flu Shots and the H1N1 Flu Shot

Independence Blue Cross will reimburse members up to \$25 for the seasonal flu shot and/or the H1N1 flu vaccine if a member receives the vaccine at a nontraditional location like a worksite, grocery store or community center. A member may have to pay an up-front fee, but may file a reimbursement form to IBC. Reimbursement forms may be downloaded from the ACT website at www.act1776.com or you may call the ACT Office and one will be mailed to you.

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.ibxpress.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.

A FREE PRAXIS PREPARATION PROGRAM FOR K-12 TEACHERS TO BECOME HIGHLY QUALIFIED IN MIDDLE LEVEL AND/OR SECONDARY MATHEMATICS

The Math Forum@ Drexel University is offering a series of on-line professional development courses that will prepare you to pass the Mathematics Praxis II. Thanks to funding from the PA Department of Education, there is **no charge to you** to participate in this program. For each of these courses, **The Math Forum @ Drexel University will provide you with the textbook and technology needed for the course including a graphing calculator and Geometer's Sketchpad.** Continuing Professional Credit will be awarded for each completed course as you prepare for the Mathematics Praxis II exam of your choice. When you have completed the five courses (four for the middle level Praxis II), **The Math Forum @ Drexel University will pay your registration fees for the Praxis II.**

For more information, contact

Dr. Ellen Clay
215-895-2238
e-mail: m2m@drexel.edu

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 15th. The grant offers 50 percent tuition reimbursement up to a maximum of \$1800 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 accountant immediately.

You must also send proof (an original transcript) of the degree/credits to Mrs. Theresa Ryan-Szott 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

UNION DUES - 2010-2011

\$511.70

\$25.59 for first 19 deductions;

\$25.49 for 20th deduction

(Starting October 1st)

SERVICE FEE - 2010-2011

\$409.36

\$22.74 for 18 pays

(Starting October 29th)

MEDICAL OPEN ENROLLMENT

Medical Open Enrollment will occur during the month of October with benefit changes going into effect November 1, 2010. By the second week of October, teachers should receive information (comparison sheet, rate sheet, payroll deduction, co-pay changes) on the two medical plans being offered--Personal Choice or Keystone HMO.

Lancer's Local

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

The faculty wishes Senior Delegate, Walt Walsh, well as he recovers from surgery.

UNION DUES
2010-2011
\$512.40
\$51.24 per month



Another Note 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 Lea Millio's tuition for the 2010-11 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.

Sincerely in Christ,
Reverend James P. Olson
President

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.

REMINDERS

ADDRESS CHANGES -- If you are in the process of moving or have already moved to a new address, don't forget to call the ACT Office with your new address and phone number. It is extremely important that we have your current address so we can update your records and keep you informed of openings as they occur.

DENTAL AND VISION CARDS -- If you are in need of additional dental and/or vision cards, please call the ACT Office at 215-568-4175 or e-mail your request to nacst.nacst@verizon.net.

MEDICAL CARDS -- If you are in need of additional medical cards, please call the Office of Catholic Education at 215-587-3689 or contact the ACT Office.

RETIREMENT INFORMATION -- The ACT Office has put together some medical information (rates, comparison sheets and contract provisions) for teachers who are considering retirement in the near future. If you are considering an early retirement or if you will be reaching the age for normal retirement, call the ACT Office at 215-568-4175 for your retirement packet. You may also email your request to nacst.nacst@verizon.net.

ACT School Visit Schedule

2010-2011

NAME OF SCHOOL	ACT VISITOR	DATE	DAY
Bonner-Prendergast	Rita & Irene	October 26	Tuesday
Carroll	Rita	November 2	Tuesday
Conwell-Egan	Rita	November 9	Tuesday
Hallahan	Irene	January 6	Thursday
Holy Cross	Rita	December 14	Tuesday
St. Hubert	Rita	February 1	Tuesday
Fr. Judge	Rita	February 8	Tuesday
Lansdale	Irene	November 4	Thursday
Little Flower	Irene	December 2	Thursday
McDevitt	Rita	January 11	Tuesday
Neumann-Goretti	Irene	December 15	Wednesday
O'Hara	Rita & Irene	November 16	Tuesday
Pope John Paul II	Rita & Irene	October 19	Tuesday
Roman	Rita	January 18	Tuesday
Ryan	Rita & Irene	February 15	Tuesday
Shanahan	Rita	November 30	Tuesday
West Catholic	Rita	February 22	Tuesday
Wood	Irene	December 9	Thursday