



PCT PLEDGE

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POLITICAL ACTION EVERYONE CAN UNDERSTAND

By PCT President Morty Rosenfeld

As I write this, the PCT is preparing for the general membership meetings of all our units at which we will formalize our demands for a new contract to replace the one expiring on June 30, 2009.

As recently as February 25, at our bi-monthly meeting with the Board of Education, we attempted to impress upon them the advantages to both sides of coming to an agreement to extend the existing contract and avoid the inevitable disruptions of a full round of negotiations, a negotiations that would be taking place in the midst of an economic crisis. To date, the Board has expressed no interest in working out an extension with us.

While the economy seems to bring us worse news each day, there have been some bright spots that directly impact our district and its ability to fund its academic program and an equitable settlement with the PCT. While we do not know the exact dollar amount as of this writing, we do know that we will directly benefit from the federal stimulus legislation by approximately 1 million dollars over the next two years. In Albany this past weekend for a NYSUT Board of Directors meeting, I learned that Governor Paterson has announced that he will use part of the state's federal stimulus money to restore all of his proposed cuts to his education budget.

Although the state was in the midst of implementing a plan that would have increased state aid to schools, it now seems clear that we will at least have what we had last year and will, therefore, have enough money to maintain the existing staff and programs and finance a settlement with the PCT. In short, the District will have no economic reason for not coming to an agreement with us.

If ever there was a year when union members could see the result of their political action efforts, this has certainly be that year. Beyond any doubt, the federal stimulus package created with substantial input from the NEA and AFT will spare the jobs of thousands of people working in public education and will prevent the erosion of vital educational programs across the country.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all PCT members for their VOTE/COPE contributions and the thousands of faxes we have sent to our elected leaders urging them to do the right thing by our nation's schools.

If there ever was a time when it was clearer that we should have a national merger of the NEA and AFT, I'd like to know when that was. Times like this have a way of putting into perspective those issues that have prevented us from speaking with one powerful voice for the teacher and support professionals of our nation. Relative to the great economic issues facing us today, the cultural differences between the two national unions seem infinitely more amenable to compromise.

TRACT TEACHER CENTER NEWS

Congratulations to Daniel Poplawski, Sherri Winick, and Paula Engel who received TRACT mini grants for "Recycled Glass Slumping" and "Operation Montserrat," respectively.

In-service courses offered in Plainview beginning the second week of March:

Interactive Smartboard Lesson Planning
Designing Lessons using Google

To apply, go to: www.nassautract.org to register and for a full listing of courses offered at other sites. Cost is \$35 for one in-service credit.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Since the advent of required staff development in our district, the PCT has been working to try to make this training interesting and meaningful to the work we do in the classroom. Our efforts have enabled us to have our own members lead sessions, on-line course work and other improvements.

Another opportunity for improvement is at hand, but members have been slow to take advantage of it. Recognizing that the school day provides little opportunity for teacher interaction, and further understanding that staff interaction is often the best staff development, the District has agreed to accept collegial circles as an alternative staff development vehicle.

A collegial circle is a group of teachers getting together and holding a professional discussion on an issue related to their work. Thus, for example, say a group of K-Center teachers wanted to explore some answers to the perplexing question of how to deal with students who come to them less linguistically able than they used to, a teacher might step forward to facilitate that group and propose a reading list for discussion. We could even get our colleagues at the public library to obtain the materials for us. In this example, participants would receive hour for hour staff development credit, they could hold the discussions either before school, after school or even during their lunch period. Even beyond the convenience is the likelihood that they could be engaged in an interesting activity that could potentially make their professional life more rewarding.

Members having questions about starting a collegial circle, should contact PCT Vice-President Cindy Feldman at the Kennedy High School Library, 937-6382.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

PCT members are reminded that our union is attempting to collect private e-mail addresses for every member. It is our goal to use electronic communication more and more to both speed delivery of our communications and control our costs.

If you have not been receiving regular notices about political action and updates to PCT publications, that means we do not have a working e-mail address for you. Please send an e-mail to pobctorg@pobct.org with your address.

MENTORING 2009-10

Teachers willing to be mentors to new staff members are asked to send their names to PCT Secretary Judi Alexanderson at the PCT Office.

Mentors are expected to work with new teachers, helping them to adjust to POB and the demands of the classroom. Our contract provides time for the mentor to observe the new teacher and *vice versa*. Those who have participated in this program report that they enjoyed the experience.

Mentors receive a contractual stipend of \$3000 for the year.

INFINITE CAMPUS COACHES

The District has informed the PCT that it wishes to continue to have Infinite Campus Coaches for the second year of the introduction of the student management system. Coaches help members in their buildings learn how to use the various utilities of the system.

The stipend for being an Infinite Campus Coach is \$1000. Watch for a canvass for Assistant Superintendent Art Jonas.

RETIREMENT DEADLINE & RETIREMENT INCENTIVES

Teacher members considering retirement at the close of the year are reminded that in order to be guaranteed to receive their entitlement to one day's pay for every three days of accumulated sick leave by July 15, 2009, their letters of resignation must be received by the Personnel Office no later than the close of business on May 15, 2009. Remember, members are always entitled to the money, but if they want to guarantee payment of it by the District by July 15, they have to meet this deadline. Absent meeting the deadline, the District has the right to not pay the money until the following July.

The PCT has received many calls asking about the possibility of a retirement incentive this year. Here's what the PCT knows.

We know that both the Teacher and Clerical Units will have demands for a retirement incentive in our negotiations with the District. As to where that

demand will go, it is impossible to tell at this time.

As in most years, there is also talk in Albany of a legislative retirement incentive. As to the odds of the passage of such a bill, it's difficult to know at this time. In normal times, it is difficult to predict what the legislature will do. These days, it's almost impossible. They're even talking about having the rich pay their fair share. In that environment anything is possible.

WELFARE FUND REMINDERS

1 -Members can download and print dental and excess major medical forms from the PCT webpage at pobct.org.

2 - The yearly maximum dental benefit is currently \$2000.

3 - Dental claims that are not signed by our member will be returned for an original signature.

4 - If you use a Guardian dentist, there is no out-of-pocket expense to you for covered services up to a yearly maximum of \$2000. **Don't give a plan dentist any money.** Our latest advice is to go to the dentist with your car keys and driver's license. Leave your money home.

5- Our excess major medical insurance works in conjunction with the Empire Plan. If Empire does not pay for a service, the excess major medical plan won't either.

REMINDER

TEACHER GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING - Thursday, March 12, 2009. JFK High School Auditorium 4:00 p.m.

PCT HELPS THE UNEMPLOYED

The Plainview-Hicksville Food Pantry would like to thank Mattlin Middle School 5th graders as well as the PCT for their generous support. Special thanks to PCT members Peter Pluschau, Lance Homan, Meryl Menashe, Mike Wyler and Glenn Rubin. To donate food/paper goods call Tom Syrett at JFK High School.

FOR SALE

Graduate credits for sale - 3 from Hofstra & 1.5 from C.W. Post. Contact Annmarie LeBlanc @ 586-4617.

One Bedroom East Islip Co-op. Call Debra Saffran at 631-650-0699.