



THE SPIRIT OF '76

The Newspaper of Local 1776
The Association of Catholic Teachers

59 Years Strong
1966-2025

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From the President's Desk

The First Quarter

Now that the school year is well underway, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for the energy and commitment you've brought into the start of this school year. The first few months are always a whirlwind—new students, new schedules, and the steady rhythm of planning, grading, and guiding young people forward. It's not easy work, but it's meaningful, and it matters. These vital first two months that lay the foundation for everything our students will accomplish.

Over the past few weeks, I've had the chance to visit several of our schools, and I continue to be reminded of just how strong our teaching community is. Speaking with those that have come down to lunch, I see the same thing: educators who are deeply committed to their students and school. Each school has its own rhythm, but what unites them all is a collection of different types of teachers looking out for each other.

With the end of the first quarter on the horizon, I know many of you are balancing exams, grades, and everything else that comes with wrapping up this first stretch of the year. It can be especially demanding, but it also offers moments to pause and celebrate how far we've already come. Whether it's a small classroom breakthrough or a school-wide event, I hope you're taking pride in the work you're doing and the impact you're making.

All the best as we count down to the holidays!

James

VERY IMPORTANT!

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.



Seniority Lists Posted

Article V, Section 1a states “On or before October 31 of each school year, the System shall supply to the Association and shall post in individual schools a complete listing of all full-time lay teachers in the System including those on approved leaves of absence arranged according to system seniority and school seniority.”

“Teachers shall have until **December 15** to call attention in writing to errors or to file grievances with the local school administration concerning their positions on the seniority roster.”

TEACHER IN THE NEWS

Congratulations to **Diane Schuler**, World Language Department Head and Spanish Teacher at Conwell-Egan Catholic High School, on receiving the *Brother Lawrence Hilferty, T.O.R Faculty Service Award*.

The Award is the second that Conwell-Egan has given in honor of Brother Larry, who taught theology at the school from 1985 until 2017. The award honors a teacher for his/her dedication and commitment to the school community.

Diane was chosen because of her enthusiastic energy and her welcoming spirit that she brings to Conwell-Egan each day. Many of Diane's students describe her as a caring, creative, energetic, fun, helpful and kind teacher who brings "good vibes" to the classroom.

During this year's Open House, she was described as "incredible" by a former graduate who was attending with his son.

Congratulations, Diane!

Continue doing what you are doing: *Making a difference in the lives of our young people!*



Painting leaf by leaf

Oh, Autumn, you wash your brush

in each lake I see.

Haiku by Patricia Furstenberg

OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR THE DENTAL AND MEDICAL PLANS

October is Open Enrollment for the Medical, Dental, Disability, Life Insurance as well as the other optional insurance plans available to you as a Secondary Lay Teacher. If you don't sign up or make changes during this open enrollment period, you will have to wait until next year to do so. Please check your coverages and make sure all your dependents are listed.

For those who did make changes or who have added additional coverages, your changes will go into effect on November 1, 2025.

If you have not enrolled in a plan or wish to make changes and have not turned in your form, you need to do so as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, please call the ACT Office.

FYI: Deductions for medical and disability insurance as well as any optional insurances you may have selected will begin with the November 7, 2025 paycheck.



OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR THE ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC TEACHERS VOLUNTARY VISION PLAN

Enrollment information for the Voluntary Vision Plan through Davis Vision for the 2026 calendar year [will be emailed to all ACT Members on Friday, October 31, 2025.](#)

For teachers currently on the Voluntary Vision Plan: If you have not used the plan this year, try and do so before your benefits expire on December 31, 2025.

All ACT Members wishing to enroll or renew their coverage in the Voluntary Vision Plan for the 2026 calendar year, will need to submit a new completed application form along with payment by Friday, November 21, 2025.

RETIREMENT NEWS



Congratulations to *Michele Purcell* on her recent retirement!

Thank you, Michele, for 28 years of dedicated service to the students at Father Judge High School.



ATTENTION RETIREES

If you have moved over the course of the year, or if you plan on moving before the end of the year, please make sure to give Retirement Focus your new address so that you receive your 1099R Form in the new year.

You can contact Retirement Focus at 1-855-874-0356 or at
www.RetirementFocus.com

Happy Harvest



Happy Halloween