



LOCAL 1776

Association of Catholic Teachers

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The Spirit of '76

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Dear ACT Member,

Labor Day is only a month away and that means so is the start of the 2020-2021 school year. In order for the school year to open on time, however, several things have to come together.

As you know, contract negotiations did not begin until July 22. There have been three sessions since proposals were exchanged. The Association and the System have read through the contract once but little progress has been made. The entire twenty-one-article document is open for negotiations. There are the usuals covering salary and benefits and they need attention. However, there are three major proposals from the System that, if they remain in the document, make a ratification vote all but impossible. Management Prerogative (Article I, Section 8) and Force Majeure (Article XXI) are Toxic Bookends. Stuck in-between is Article IX, Section 14, a clause that nullifies significant working conditions under Force Majeure.

You can go to the ACT website where you will find the contract proposals that the Association presented to the System on July 22nd. Please read through the proposals since many of them pertain to teacher concerns surrounding the new teaching environment.

Our next bargaining session is set for Wednesday, August 12.

One of the major challenges the Association is tackling is how the ACT membership will be meeting to hear the System's "best and final offer" and vote to accept or reject that offer. The Executive Board has a few different models under consideration and we will be talking with the Senior Delegates to come up with the option that works best for our members while keeping everyone safe.

Reopening Plans from all 17 schools have been submitted to the System and ACT has begun receiving copies from the school presidents. You will be meeting with your local administrators to hear how your school will reopen and carry out education with strict health and safety procedures. You should also read the Plan document. ACT will be sending you a survey to see what your concerns are as you approach the hybrid way of teaching. We also want to know what will make it less stressful for you.

One of the new additions to the classroom this year, classroom cameras, produced a large number of questions and concerns. The ACT Staff met with Bill Brannick, K-12 Director of Technology, in a classroom containing a working camera to see how it operated. We also had many questions from you about what the cameras can do and cannot do.

First, and foremost, the camera is a live-streaming device. It has no storage capability. It is controlled by the teacher. Only the teacher can make a recording of the class, and any recording will be at the teacher's discretion. The camera's sole purpose is to allow the teacher to zoom with the A/B student group, whatever group is learning remotely that day. The teacher determines whether the camera is on the teacher, the smartboard or the chalkboard.

The next few weeks will be very important ones for every teacher in the Secondary School System as well as for the Union that represents them.

As always, ACT will keep you, our members, updated on any progress at the negotiating table.

I ask for your continuing prayers for the Association's and the System's Teams.

Rita