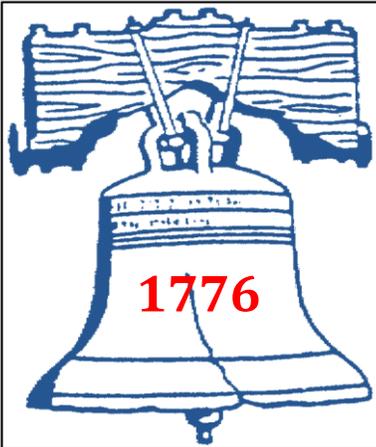


THE

The Newspaper of Local 1776
The Association of Catholic Teachers



SPIRIT

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Fax 215-568-8270 - email (act@act1776.com) - website (www.act1776.com) **APRIL 2020**



From the President's Desk

LIFE IN THE COVID-19 UNIVERSE

As our maiden voyage into virtual education enters its second month, everyone seems to be getting more comfortable with assignments by computer and lessons by Zoom and Google Classroom. You definitely jumped into the deep end of the pool and you continue to do amazing work with our students.

In these last weeks of the school year, please know how grateful everyone is, especially, the parents, for all of your hard work. Your incredible transformation into virtual educators has made all the difference.

The ACT Staff has been very busy, as well. We have, indeed, joined the virtual world, too. There are Conference Calls several times a week with Staff from the Office of Catholic Education and Human Resources. The ACT Executive Board held its April meeting on Zoom last week and will Zoom again in May. We are working on a final Senior Delegates Conference as well. The little rectangles will be even smaller for that get-together. [\(Continued on Page 2\)](#)

I had been scheduled to meet with our new Archbishop on April 20. Since a face to face was not possible, Archbishop Perez and I used the ubiquitous Zoom. The Archbishop had high praise for you and the wonderful work you are doing with the students. He was not happy that his plan to be out and about visiting schools was cut short by COVID-19. He promised to get back to his schedule when our schools reopen. I look forward to working with Archbishop Perez as we keep Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia alive and well for the future.

You have received the news that there will be no Second Semester Evaluations. We are sorry that this will impact those teachers moving toward tenure, but there seemed to be no way to conduct a proper observation and all that this entails. You will be happy to see that the results of First Semester Evaluations are in and they are "newsworthy". 97.8% of our Tenured Teachers received ratings of Distinguished or Proficient, as did 85.6% of our Non-Tenured Teachers. Well done, ladies and gentlemen.

The Association has filed a grievance regarding the suspension of the System's 4.5% contribution into your 403b Pension Plan. We will keep you updated on that.

There is still no word on Constriction numbers. It is difficult to know at this point what effect the Coronavirus will have on future enrollment. We truly hope for the best.

Negotiations have been placed on the back burner for the present. Completing the academic year and working on good recruitment numbers for next year need to take center-stage at this time.

Unfortunately, all of ACT's spring activities have needed to be canceled. These include our Luncheon for the 25 and 50 Year Teachers, the Luncheon for our Retirees and ACT Day at the Phillies. We will place them on the calendar for 2021 and hope that COVID-19 is long gone by then.

Please email Irene or me if you have any questions or concerns.

We continue to pray that you and your families stay safe and healthy.

Rita

Philadelphia City Wage Tax

ACT contacted the Office of Educational Financial Services concerning those teachers who work in a high school located in Philadelphia but who live outside the city and are currently teaching from home. City Wage Tax continues to be deducted from their pay.

OFS tells us that they are not able to do anything about the withholding at this point in time. The teachers will be able to claim a wage tax refund next year for the period of time when they were not permitted to work in the city.

If there are any questions or concerns, please let ACT know.

First Semester Evaluation Data

ACT has finally received the data for the first semester Evaluations by school administrators and it is all good news.

TENURED TEACHERS: 97.8% are Distinguished or Proficient.

NON-TENURED TEACHERS: 85.6% are Distinguished or Proficient

Congratulations to all our hard-working teachers.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION CONCERNING SECOND SEMESTER EVALUATIONS

The Association of Catholic Teachers and the Secondary School System have mutually agreed to suspend second semester evaluations for the 2019-2020 school year. A letter was emailed to teachers from the Association concerning this agreement on April 17, 2020.

Senior Delegate Elections

The Association's Constitution and By-Laws state that each year Senior Delegate Elections are to be held in each school between May 15 and June 1. However, due to the closure of the school buildings due to COVID19, the Executive Board at its April 16, 2020 meeting has decided to postpone the Senior Delegate Elections until September 2020 when the buildings re-open for the 2020-2021 school year.

*This is a good time to once again, **thank** all of the Senior Delegates who have served the Union and their own school members so well this year. The ACT Office and the Executive Board need and appreciate your work.*



SENIORITY LISTS POSTED (for school only)

Article V, Section 1b states “On or before April 1 of each school year, the Secondary School System shall supply to the Association and shall post in each school a complete listing of all full-time teachers in that school including those on approved leaves of absence arranged according to school seniority.”
“Teachers shall have until **May 1** to call attention in writing to errors or file grievances with the local school administration concerning their positions on the seniority roster.”

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The following Legislative Report was submitted by ACT Legislative Representative, David Sommers, at the ACT Executive Board Meeting held April 16, 2020.

Pennsylvania Act 13 (of 2020): COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020 (formerly Senate Bill 751)

PUBLIC SCHOOL CODE OF 1949 -PANDEMIC OF 2020

Act of March 27, 2020 sign into law
Session of 2020
No. 2020-13

AN ACT

Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An act relating to the public school system, including certain provisions applicable as well to private and parochial schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the laws relating thereto," in professional employees, further providing for rating system and for persons to be suspended and providing for a revised rating system; and, in terms and courses of study, providing for pandemic of 2020.

Highlights:

- order to close all public, private, and parochial schools through then end of the 2019-2020 academic year (as defined by their local school calendar)
- waive the 180 instructional day requirement
- exemption from federal standardized testing requirements
- no students or teachers will be penalized for circumstances beyond their control due to the COVID-19 Pandemic
- allow for schools to devote as much time as possible to instruction

S. 3548 "CARES Act" (2020)

Title II: "Education Provisions"

Summary:

- includes \$30 Billion for education; administered through the states through local schools
- in Pennsylvania grants to purchase online learning programs , equipment, training to schools
- applications taken via Department of Education's e-grants system April 6th to April 10th time frame

PHEAA HAS EXTENDED THEIR APPLICATION DEADLINE

The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) has been reviewing the impact of COVID-19 on students as it relates to the PA State Grant Program.

In order to give students and families more flexibility during the COVID-19 pandemic, PHEAA has extend the May 1 PA State Grant application deadline by 2 weeks to May 15 for the 2020-21 Academic Year.

To apply for a PA State Grant, applicants must first complete the 2020-21 FAFSA® (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Applicants can access this form online at pheaa.org/FAFSA or fafsa.gov.



**PA STATE GRANT
APPLICATION DEADLINE
EXTENDED
TO MAY 15**

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

In conjunction with **National Women In Leadership Month**, which honors women who have successfully challenged the role of women in both business and the paid labor force, the **Association of Catholic Teachers**, along with the **Secondary School System of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia**, and **Holy Family University** sponsored a **Women in Leadership Conference** for female students attending Catholic high schools in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

The **Women in Leadership Conference** is a program focused on inspiring young women to follow their dreams and aspirations. This year the Conference was held on **March 6, 2020**. The Keynote Speaker was **Kathryn Ott Lovell**, Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, City of Philadelphia. Students attending the Conference got to hear stories of real life challenges and successes in the workforce experienced by former Catholic school graduates, **Michele Farrell**, Warden, House of Corrections, City of Philadelphia, **Jacqueline Giuffrido**, Hospital Development, Gift of Life Donor Program, **Elizabeth A. Ward**, Family Nurse Practitioner, Department of Otolaryngology, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and **Representative Martina White**, Pennsylvania State Representative, 170th District.

ACT WEBSITE

All teachers are asked to logon to the ACT Website (www.act1776.com) and verify your personal information. It is critical that we have your current information and that it is accurate. **It is important that we have a PERSONAL email address for you**, since Executive Board Minutes, Newsletters, and other pertinent information will be sent via email. We cannot and will not send email to a school email address.

Every teacher was provided with a username and password for the ACT Website. (New teachers will receive their logon information in an email.) If you do not have this information, please contact Ginny at the ACT Office at 215-568-4175 or email her at ginny@act1776.com and she can provide this information to you. To update your personal information, logon to the ACT Website and, in the upper right hand corner of the homepage, click on member login. Type in your username and password and then verify the information on file. Any changes made will be sent to the ACT Office automatically.

CONTACTING THE ACT OFFICE

Because the ACT Office is closed due to COVID19, and because we are working from our homes, please use email to contact ACT Staff. The email addresses are as follows: act@act1776.com, rita@act1776.com, lrene@act1776.com, and/or ginny@act1776.com.

If you do call the office, unless you leave a message in one of our voicemail boxes, which will then automatically be sent to our email, we won't know that you called.

BJ'S WHOLESALE CLUB

Members of the Association of Catholic Teachers can join BJ's Wholesale Club or renew their BJ's membership at a discounted rate. In order to get the discounted rate, you must join or renew through the Association. An application to join or renew your membership was recently emailed to members. There is also a copy of the application on our website at www.act1776.com. **The deadline to join/renew through the group is April 24, 2020**

This year due to the coronavirus, **all applications with payment should be sent directly to the BJ's Representative, Cheryl Fontana at P.O. Box 83, Downingtown, PA 19335.** Please make your check payable to BJ's Wholesale Club. If you are paying by credit card, you may email your application to cfontana@bjs.com.

TAX INFORMATION

UNION DUES FOR 2019

January 2019 – June 2019 = \$336.00
(For those who retired or resigned as of June 2019)

January 2019 – December 2019 = \$578.40

Cancellations due to the Coronavirus

25/50 YEAR CELEBRATION: Unfortunately, the 25/50 celebration scheduled for May 24, 2020 has been canceled.

PHILLIES GAME: The Phillies Game scheduled for May 17, 2020 has been canceled.

RETIREEES LUNCHEON: The Retirees Luncheon scheduled for May 13, 2020 has been canceled.

HISTORY WILL REMEMBER

*History will remember when the world stopped
And the flights stayed on the ground
And the cars parked in the street
And the trains didn't run.*

*History will remember when the schools closed.
And the children stayed indoors.
And the medical staff walked towards the fire
And they didn't run.*

*History will remember when the people sang
On their balconies, in isolation
But so very much together
in courage and song.*

*History will remember when the people fought
For their old and weak
Protected the vulnerable
By doing nothing at all.*

*History will remember when the virus left
And the houses opened
And the people came out
And hugged and kissed
And started again.*

Kinder than before.

By: Donna Ashworth

TELEMEDICINE AND YOU

As part of your Independence Blue Cross health insurance plan, you're covered for telemedicine—a convenient, low-cost option when it's not possible to visit your doctor's office. You can see a board-certified doctor by secure video, phone, or mobile app—anytime, anywhere -- who can treat non-emergency medical conditions such as:

- Colds and flu
- Ear infections
- Allergies
- Asthma
- Pink eye
- Sinus problems
- Respiratory infections
- Joint aches and pains
- Vomiting and nausea
- And more.

Plus, it's more cost-effective than visiting the ER for an illness that's not an emergency. **There is no out-of-pocket cost for Telemedicine services through MDLIVE.** Please note, if you have a PPO High Deductible Health Plan, you will pay \$40 until you reach your deductible; then Telemedicine services are covered at 100%.

Don't wait until you're sick — activate your account now!

You have three ways to register :

- Download the MDLIVE app on your smartphone
- Visit mdlive.com/ibx
- Call 1-877-764-6605.

If you call MDLIVE to register your account, inform the representative that you work for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

How to activate your MDLIVE account

You're just a few steps away from video access to local board-certified providers. Be sure to have your Independence Blue Cross ID card on hand when you activate your account.

Step 1: Get started

- Go to mdlive.com/ibx and click Activate Now.
- Include the three character alpha-prefix that precedes your member ID (e.g. ABC2345678901)

Step 2: Access your account

- Complete your profile and security settings. When the Sign-Up Completed page appears, click Access your account.
- A welcome email will be sent from MDLIVE. Verify your email address by clicking Verify Email.

Step 3: Add account details

Add dependents:

- Click My Account, then Family Members. Click Add Family Member for each family member you wish to add.
- An email will be sent to each dependent for verification.
- Each dependent will need their own account created before they conduct a consultation. Set your

Primary Care Provider (PCP):

- From the Dashboard menu, click My Health, then My Providers.
- Click Add Provider, fill in all requirements, then click Add.

Select a pharmacy:

- From the Dashboard menu, click My Health, then My Pharmacy.
- Click Select Pharmacy to search the network.
- The pharmacy can always be updated based on the member's location at the time of the consult.

Avoid long waits and eliminate the cost of unnecessary visits to the ER or Urgent Care. Activate your MDLIVE account today! If you call MDLIVE to register your account, inform the representative that you work for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. This plan complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

Fitness Reimbursement Program now includes virtual subscriptions

Members can now get up to \$150 back when they work out regularly? We've partnered with GlobalFit to enhance our gym reimbursement program to now include virtual subscriptions for at-home workouts. Virtual subscriptions approved for participation include Peloton, MyFitnessPal, Nike Training Club, Polar, and many more trackable activities. Members are able to combine current fitness facility workouts with virtually tracked workouts to meet the required 120 completed workouts. Once completed they can get reimbursed up to \$150 to help cover their membership and/or virtual subscription fees. If you have questions about submitting workouts outside of a fitness facility, please call 1-800-590-8880 or email support@fitbucksrewards.com for more information.

Learn more about our reimbursement program: <https://reimbursements.ibx.com/ibc>.

Staying Physically Fit and Active While at Home is Possible!

Independence Blue Cross has provided this list of complimentary digital resources, to enable you to keep healthy during this time.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>HOW TO ACCESS</u>
IBX Insights	'How to Stay Physically and Mentally Active at Home'	https://insights.ibx.com/stay-physically-mentally-active-home/?sf232543984=1 https://insights.ibx.com/category/well-being/
IBX Well-being	Online seminars and well-being videos available Achieve well-being	https://wellbeing.ibx.com/get-started-physical/ https://www.ibx.com/ - log into your account and go to the Achieve Well-being section to begin your wellness journey
GlobalFit	Offering a digital resource library containing workout videos and educational materials that you can use to stay happy, healthy, and safe.	https://www.globalfit.com/interstitial/digital-resource-library
EXOS	Offering daily livestream physical offerings as well as recordings on YouTube.	https://www.exosathome.com/ https://www.youtube/user/athletesperformance/playlists
American Heart Association	'Move More Together' Join livestream or check out a list of prerecorded workouts. Be part of a community that is moving through the tough times together. Daily tips to keep your family active.	https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/fitness-basics/move-more-month https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness/getting-active/daily-tips-to-help-keep-your-family-active
YMCA	You can take group exercise classes for all ages right in your own home at no charge for a limited time!	https://ymca.org/on-demand#/

*Remember to leave the earth
a better place than you found it.*



Happy Earth Day 2020