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The Newspaper of Local 1776
The Association of Catholic Teachers

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



From the President's Desk

LABOR PEACE AMID THE PANDEMIC

Happy New School Year to Everyone. The 2020-2022 Labor-Management Agreement has been ratified and there is labor peace in the Archdiocesan Secondary School System.

Contract negotiations certainly didn't begin well. The System's proposal was filled with clauses the sole purpose of which was to strip teachers of their rights and weaken the ability of the Union to protect those rights at a time when they were needed most.

When the Zoom General Membership Meeting came together in 18 different locations on September 8, the Managerial Prerogative and Force Majeure Clauses had already been dropped by the System. Still very much visible, however, was the System's language for a **Constriction During the School Year**.

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Both the ACT Negotiating Team and the Association's Executive Board were not able to recommend the contract to you as long as the Constriction clause remained in play. From the moment that I presented the concept of **Constriction During the School Year** to you, the members, it was clear that a vote to accept the contract was not going to happen.

The September 8, 2020 Contract Meeting lasted almost 5 hours, with questions and concerns raised by every one of the 17 schools. No one was happy about the Constriction proposal. A motion was made to reject the Contract. The vote to reject was 3 to 1, 354 to 109.

The vote immediately placed before the membership at that point was that ACT go on strike. For over 5 decades, this Union has followed the Mantra of **No Contract, No Work**.

This year, however, there were several other issues to be taken into consideration. There was a pandemic. Enrollment was tenuous because of the economic situation caused by the pandemic. The all-virtual v. hybrid teaching models, as well as all that these entailed, were also in the mix. The numbers of the vote to strike were extremely squeaky, 226 to strike v. 237 not to strike.

A third Motion was then placed before the membership. You were asked to send the Negotiating Team back to the bargaining table and give them until Friday, September 11 to get the Constriction proposal off the table. That was an excellent suggestion.

The Association and the System met Tuesday afternoon, all day Wednesday and until 11:00 P.M. on Thursday. On Friday, the ACT Negotiating Team brought back to the membership a slightly amended salary for the first year of the contract and the dropping of **Constriction During the School Year**.

The ACT membership didn't need a lot of discussion on this proposal. A motion was made to approve the Contract. The motion to approve passed by a 6 to 1 margin, 368 Yes to 60 No.

There are many people to thank. **THANK YOU** to my ACT Negotiating Team members, [Irene Tori](#), [Theresa Lazorko](#) and [Tara Murphy](#). We had no easy task fighting to keep all that was good in the contract and all that was bad out of the contract. We did both very well. **THANK YOU** to our attorney, [Martin Milz](#), who joined the ACT Team after the Contract Rejection Vote and gave us wise counsel.

THANK YOU TO

[the 70+ ACT members](#) who joined in the demonstration at the Archdiocesan Office Building on Thursday, August 27.

[our Senior Delegates](#) who arranged the meeting places for our Zoom General Membership Meeting.

[Ginny](#) who ran off and packaged all of the contract and voting materials for both membership meetings.

[Tara Murphy](#) who met the Delegates prior to the September 8 Membership Meeting and distributed the signs we, luckily, didn't need.

[Irene Tori and Tara Murphy](#) who, on Friday morning, September 11, delivered to the Senior Delegates at their schools, the Contract Changes and Ballots needed for that afternoon's Membership Meeting.

[the Presidents and Principals](#) of the 17 Archdiocesan high schools who arranged the meeting rooms for Friday afternoon's second Contract vote.

Most of all, a tremendous **THANK YOU** to the members of the [Association of Catholic Teachers](#) who sent a very loud and clear message to the Secondary School System. You, our members, stood strong and united. This is the best of what a Union is and what a Union does.

2020-2021 promises to continue to be a challenging school year. I have no doubt at all that you will meet every challenge as it comes and do the thing you all do so remarkably – teach the students entrusted to your care.

Stay safe and have a great school year.

Rita

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.

ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC TEACHERS EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTIONS

The following Executive Board offices are open for election this year:

PRESIDENT

VICE PRESIDENT

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

TREASURER

LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVE

3 MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

**Petitions must be filed with the Nominations and Elections Committee
no later than October 20, 2020.**

A NOTICE OF ELECTION CONTAINING FULL DETAILS WILL BE POSTED ON THE
ACT BULLETIN BOARD ON OCTOBER 1ST.

Education Grant Application Due

Teachers who wish to apply for an Education/Study Grant under the Labor-Management Agreement (XIII, Sec.7) must do so by **October 22nd**. The grant offers 50 percent tuition reimbursement up to a maximum of \$2000 per year for undergraduate coursework, \$2500 for Master's Degree coursework, and \$3000 for Doctoral Coursework. **The grant can also be used as reimbursement for successfully passing the Praxis Series exams in a teacher's area of certification.** Teachers who have received a study grant for two (2) consecutive years are not eligible to receive for the following 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.

You should apply for the grant if you are taking courses in the fall of 2020, or anticipate taking courses in the spring or summer of 2021.

Forms to apply for an Education/Study Grant are posted at the local school. A form is also posted on the ACT Website homepage at www.act1776.com.

Additional Credits?

If you have received an advanced degree or additional credits over the summer, which qualifies 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/credit to Mr. James Molnar 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 salary scale are

Bachelor's Degree

Bachelor's +18 or Certification

Master's or 30 Graduate Credits

Double Master's

Doctorate

The teacher is responsible to provide timely notification to the System, with an official transcript. Timely notification shall normally mean within one (1) year of acquiring the additional credits. Salary adjustments shall not be made retroactively for more than one (1) year.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



The following Legislative Report was submitted by *ACT Legislative Representative, David Sommers, at the ACT July/August Executive Board Meeting held on August 26, 2020 via Zoom.*

Pennsylvania General Assembly

- I. **Senate and House Education Committees Joint Hearing (August 19th, 2020)**
 - A. Secretaries of Health and Education participated answering questions from lawmakers (House and Senate)
 - B. Discussion on the metrics for opening schools; percent population of a given county
 - C. State will provide “guidance” not “mandates”
 - D. Negative impacts of virtual learning discussed; i.e. lack of child abuse reporting; depression; anxiety
 - E. Lawsuits and litigation issues unresolved; future legislation tbd
 - F. Lack of equality for PA students, i.e. special needs; technology
 - G. Unlikely in-school testing to be provided by the state; lack of rapid-test kits availability

II. Pennsylvania 2020-2021 Fiscal Year Budget (Education highlights)

- A. \$12.8 billion state education investment
- B. Same financial level of spending as last year; full year of education funding passed into law
- C. \$200 million in federal funds for COVID-19 health and safety needs
- D. \$6.74 for “Basic Education” funding and general operations
- E. \$1.18 billion for “Special Education” funding and operations
- F. This budget provides monies for our parochial school Act-95 textbook funds, busing, nurses, school security grants, etc.

III. PA House Education Committee (August 20th, 2020).

- A. **HB 2787: Sports and Activities**
Act allowing individual schools, districts the right to hold athletic, sports, and extracurricular activities during the upcoming school year.

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LEGISLATIVE REPORT

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

B. HB 2788: Right to Repeat Grade Level

Students would be allowed the opportunity to provide an “option year” of education in an attempt to make up for any lost educational opportunities due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

C. SB 1216: Teacher Certification Requirements Relaxation

An act providing for special provisions regarding teacher certification for the 2020-2021 school year including waiving of various requirements.

IV. SB1243: Face Mask Requirements for in School Use

The act would allow school districts to not require face masks, face coverings for students.

**Last Action: Referred to the Senate Education Committee on August 12, 2020.

V. United States Senate Bills

S. 4317: Safe to Work Act

*Introduced on July 27, 2020 and referred to the Judiciary Committee.

**The bill would provide safeguards for healthcare facilities, business, and schools from unfair lawsuits from the COVID-19 pandemic.

S. 4432: Support Children Having Open Opportunities for Learning (SCHOOL) Act

*Introduced August 4th, 2020 in the HELP Committee (Health, Education, Labor, Pensions)

**The bill would provide funds to follow each eligible child for the school of their choice; this could be used for tuition for a nonpublic school

*******Noteworthy:**

United States Supreme Court Ruling: “Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue (6/30/2020)

*Victory for school choice advocates

*Court ruled in favor by a 5-4 decision

**The ruling states excluding religious schools from student aid programs is unconstitutional. Citing a violation of the *Free Exercise Clause* of the U.S. Constitution, the high court ruled in favor of the families. States can no longer exclude religious schools from choice and voucher programs funded by tax payer monies.

CONTRACT CHANGES

2020-2022

ARTICLE IV

Tenure

System policies given to teachers online on a secure Archdiocesan web site

ARTICLE VII

Transfer Policy

- 1e. If constricted teacher doesn't contact new principal and schedule an interview within two weeks of constriction, teacher goes back on the Constriction List.
- 2a. No voluntary transfers honored after July 30th.

ARTICLE VIII

Teacher Assignments

- 4b. Three year requirement for provisional teachers to acquire competency will have an additional year to acquire competency in any school year in which there are COVID related issues.

ARTICLE IX

Duties and Activities

3. Use online course management programs to instruct and interact with students. Video conferencing used as necessary to meet the needs of the students. Update information for major and minor assessments, and rubric based performance assessments every five (5) days.

ARTICLE XVI

General Teaching Conditions

6. Two new teacher orientation meetings each year. First before start of school year, second at the end of the first semester.

Memoranda of Understanding

Pandemic

Revised Flexible Instructional Days

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IN MEMORIAM



Robert Kane
1957-2020

“Lotta gas left in the tank!” These were words Bob Kane spoke at the end of his interview for a position at Archbishop Ryan. We needed a geometry teacher; he seemed like the perfect candidate, having taught geometry for many years in the Philadelphia public schools at Penn Wood Jr/Sr High School before retiring from that system. I asked him how long he thought he would continue teaching and that was his response. Lotta gas left in the tank.

Bob lived up to that statement. When he joined Ryan’s Math Department, he did so with enthusiasm and great energy. He was a dedicated, knowledgeable teacher and a great motivator of students. He would tell me teaching wasn’t a job because he loved it and was lucky to do it. When I visited his classroom, it was not unusual to see Bob using the SMART Board on one wall, the chalkboard on the other, and some kind of handout or manipulative to illustrate the geometry concept, all while quickly moving from student to student to check in and address any concerns they had while doing their practice. Lotta gas left in the tank.

A couple of weeks after Bob arrived at Ryan, I noticed his picture on the school website with some of the fall athletes. I asked him how that happened and he explained that he was after school working and when he left, the team was practicing on the back fields. Bob wandered over to see what was going on as the yearbook photographer was there taking candid shots. Some of the guys who were in his classes called him over, and the next thing he knew the picture was taken and he was on the website. I found out later that Bob was an avid sportsman, loved the Philly teams, and was a longtime coach in his pre-Ryan days. Lotta gas left in the tank.

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Bob was a wonderful colleague. He was always volunteering to help out with anything the Math Department needed. He was willing to share his stories, insights and teaching experiences with the younger teachers when they needed someone to talk to. Bob was always upbeat, friendly, encouraging, and interested in his colleagues. He had a great sense of humor and would leave you with a smile. This was so much a part of his caring personality that it was evident even when he was still learning his way around the building. Lotta gas left in the tank.

Unfortunately, Bob found out he had colon cancer and had to go out on sick leave to battle it. I would call him and he would be just as positive about what was going on with his treatments. Now Bob's stories would be about his doctors, nurses, and his daughter's wedding, which he was thrilled to attend with a full head of hair! He always made sure our conversations included asking about his colleagues at Ryan. Bob had a great love for the school even though he wasn't there that long and he often told me to tell everyone he was grateful he had the chance to work with them and he appreciated all the prayers, love, and support they gave him. For those of us who were privileged to work with him, he will be sadly missed. Bob, you truly did have a lotta gas left in the tank. Thank you for sharing it with us.

*Written by: Victoria Gradel,
Math Department Chair
Archbishop Ryan High School*

ACT UNION DUES FOR 2020-2021

The Union Dues for the 2020-2021 School Year are \$565.60. For those on Check-off, the deduction will begin with the September 18, 2020 pay and end with the pay of June 18, 2021.

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.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

OFFICE HOURS: During the last several months, ACT Staff has been working from home due to COVID19. The ACT Office is now reopened. The hours are Monday through Thursday 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM, and Friday, 9:00 AM – to 4:00 PM.

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. You can also visit the ACT Webpage and logon to your personal page to update your information.

IF YOUR PERSONAL EMAIL ADDRESS HAS CHANGED, PLEASE NOTIFY THE ACT OFFICE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

INSURANCE CARDS - If you are in need of a new dental, medical or vision card, contact Ginny at ginny@act1776.com.

FREEDOM CREDIT UNION – The Freedom Credit Union offers teachers and their families a wide range of financial opportunities. For more information visit the credit union's website at www.freedomcu.org. The phone number for the Freedom Credit Union is 215-612-5900.



A SPECIAL
THANK YOU
TO OUR
PHOTOGRAPHER,
CARL TORI,
ABP. RYAN
HIGH SCHOOL.

WELCOME BACK!



***WE WISH YOU A
HAPPY, HEALTHY, AND SAFE
SCHOOL YEAR.***