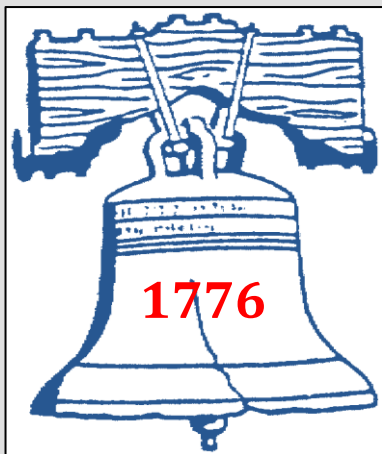


THE

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) **JUNE-JULY 2020**



From the President's Desk

GOOD FAITH BARGAINING? YOU BE THE JUDGE

On July 22, the Association and the System formally opened negotiations on a new Labor-Management Agreement. The Association's Opening Statement appears on Page 4.

The System's proposal is extremely disturbing and has dire consequences for both you as teachers and for the rights which all of us fought very hard to achieve and which we now fight even harder to retain.

The System is back for the third time to try and strip the contract of the wording that limits their managerial rights.

The System wants to be able to constrict teachers several times during the year.

The System wants to require you to update the on-line course management information for assessments and assignments at least once every 3 days.

(Continued on Page 2)

The System wants to be able to make changes to everything in Article IX if they decide there is an emergency situation. This includes the length of the school year, the number of hours in the school day, the number of professional meetings outside the school day, the number of faculty and department meetings, the number of teaching periods and whether your lunch period is duty-free.

The proposal is not clear as to whether there will be an increase in Medical rates.

There are no increases in department head or moderator stipends.

The System wants a one-year contract.

The System wants a salary freeze.

All of the above proposals fail miserably to acknowledge the outstanding work that our teachers do every day throughout the course of every school year, but, most especially, accomplished during this past spring.

The System's last proposal, Article XXI, however, is nuclear; it is meant to obliterate every right of every teacher.

ARTICLE XXI-FORCE MAJEURE 1. A “Force Majeure Event” is defined as an event or effect of an event that is unanticipated and not within the control of the System and includes the following: pandemics, epidemics, outbreaks of disease, or other public health emergencies; natural disasters or Acts of God, such as floods, hurricanes, fire; violent outbreaks, such as war, riots, or acts of terrorism; evacuations or emergencies, including at the direction of local police, fire or other public officials; or any other similar Act of God, accident, calamity, crisis, or emergency situation. The determination whether a Force Majeure Event has occurred will be within the discretion of the System. In the case of a Force Majeure Event, the System, to the extent necessary to respond to the Force Majeure Event, shall be excused from performance except for monies owed, under the Labor Management Agreement and any past practices thereunder, including any duty to negotiate changes to the Labor Management Agreement or such practices, and shall be permitted to amend policies or change work rules to respond to the crisis. Nothing contained in this Force Majeure clause shall be deemed to waive the System's right to take immediate action in the face of unforeseen exigent circumstances, regardless whether they constitute a Force Majeure.

What all of this legal language boils down to is that the System could declare anything as an emergency at any time, and, in doing so, wouldn't then have to abide by any section of the contract. Salaries could be cut, benefits could be eliminated, teachers could be laid off at any point in the year, current working conditions could be wiped out, all without warning. There would, basically, be no contract and no protection for any teacher.

As I stated to the System's Negotiating Team, if this is what the System really wants, there is no point in continuing to meet. This, alone, guarantees a strike in September.

The Association's Senior Delegates came together for a Zoom meeting on Thursday, July 23. There was quite a bit of discussion on what will be occurring over the next several weeks. Your Delegates will be sharing that with you.

The ACT Negotiating Team will keep you updated on any progress.

Please pray for God's grace and guidance for all involved in the Negotiations.

Rita

JUSTICE
AND
DIGNITY
FOR
ACT
AND ITS
MEMBERS

ACT OPENING STATEMENT

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

JULY 22, 2020

The Association is here today in good faith and will do all that we can to come to an agreement on a new Labor-Management Agreement. While it is nice to see everyone, the Association is definitely not happy to be opening negotiations, especially on July 22nd.

It has taken us a very long time to get to the bargaining table this time around. Truthfully, with the type of year we have all had so far, plus not knowing with any certainty what the next 6 to 12 months will bring, contract negotiations could have already been concluded or, at the very least, should have been postponed so that the System could concentrate all of its energies on reopening the schools and the Association could concentrate on helping our teachers comfortably and safely return to the classroom.

Back in December, the Early Bird proposed by the Association had already been rejected by the System and it is still rejected as we were informed that the total contract was open and that pandemic proposals had been added.

When the pandemic hit, the Association proposed a one-year contract extension with a \$1,200 raise for each teacher. The System's response was that an extension wasn't possible because there was a pandemic and they didn't know what they were facing - - all the more reason for an extension.

The Association has felt for quite some time that the Union and its members were not being dealt with in good faith. I, personally, was accused of playing games. However, we believe, very strongly, that the actual game player here is the Office of Catholic Education, raising the specter of bad faith bargaining.

It is truly concerning that the System is making the health and safety of both students and teachers a bargaining chip. These issues should have been worked on months before this, so that they don't have to wait until the contract is ratified, in September, at the earliest.

It is also extremely disturbing to see that the System's proposal contains absolutely no acknowledgment or recognition of the teachers' outstanding work this past spring.

The most egregious of all is the presence of Article XXI. If this is what the System really wants, there is no point in continuing to meet. This, alone, guarantees a strike in September

It will be the Association's members, our teachers, who will ultimately determine if a new contract is acceptable.

The contract proposal the Association received from the System on Monday, July 20, 2020, is **TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE.**

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The following Legislative Report was submitted by ACT Legislative Representative, David Sommers for the ACT Executive Board Meeting held via Zoom on June 25, 2020.

Pennsylvania General Assembly:

I. SB869: September 11th Anniversary

An Act further providing for moment of silence on September 11th anniversary in all PA public and private schools.

Last action: First consideration, June 8, 2020 by the PA Senate.

II. SB1125: School District Property Tax Payment & Penalty Relief

An Act further providing for application for discounts, no penalties (with extended time periods) on local real estate taxes if voted and adopted upon by the local school board for the 2020-2021 school year.

Last action: Referred to the House Finance Committee on June 15, 2020.

III. SB1216: Temporary Teacher Certification Flexibility

For the 2020-2021 school year, waive requirements for one year; may be turned into a Level I PA Certification upon completion of satisfactory assessment(s) to Department of Education at completion of 2020-21 school year.

Last action: Referred to Senate Education Committee on June 19, 2020

IV. HB2171: State System of Higher Education Governance

Establish rules of governance and various committee membership requirements per law. This would also include student-body members accordingly.

Last action: Referred to Senate Education Committee on June 17, 2020.

V. HB2387: PA Budget/Act 1A (of 2020)

Including full school-year (12 months) education budget amount. This funding would include Act 95 Textbook money allocations to parochial schools for 2020-2021.

Last action: Act No.1A Enacted from [HB 2387](#) on Friday May. 29, 2020.

“General Appropriation Act of 2020” - enactment (effective IMMEDIATELY WITH EXCEPTIONS)

VI. Senate Education Committee Meeting

Monday June 22, 2020

-Consider SB1216; HB2171; other education business on the agenda.

VII. House Education Committee Meeting

Wednesday June 17, 2020

-Informational meeting on safely reopening schools in the fall; address COVID-19 concerns in PA public, private, and parochial schools K-12.

VIII. CARES Act Non-Public Schools Applications (Second Grant Program):

COVID-19 Health and Safety Grants for schools totaling \$157.5 million. Provide funds for schools to protect students, teachers, and staff in the 2020-2021 school year. Application deadline is July 8th, 2020 for non-public schools.

IMPORTANT SALARY INFORMATION

The last pay for the 2019-2020 school year for teachers on 12 month pay distribution will occur on Friday, August 28, 2020. The first pay for the 2020-2021 school year will occur on Friday, September 18, 2020. This year there is a three-week gap due to Labor Day occurring on September 7, 2020, and in accordance with the language in Article XII, Section 6 of the Labor-Management Agreement. "Salaries to the teachers will be paid every other Friday starting the second Friday after the start of school."

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS

The *pre-opening of school* Professional Development Days (Article IX) for the 2020-2021 school year will be two out of the three days from September 1 to September 3, 2020.

NACST AWARDS JOHN J. REILLY SCHOLARSHIP TO ACT FINALIST



Congratulations to Timothy Purcell, son of Michele Purcell, Guidance Director at Father Judge High School. Timothy was one of two recipients of the 2020 NACST Scholarship. The other recipient was from Cleveland, OH. Timothy, who will be attending Penn State University Park in the fall to study Business in the Schreyer Honors Program will receive \$1,000 per year for four years toward his college education.

(Pictured above is Michele Purcell with her sons, Matthew on the left and Timothy on the right.)

Matthew, who was awarded a NACST Scholarship in 2019, studies Civil Engineering at Notre Dame University.

TEACHER IN THE NEWS

Congratulations to **Patrick Shanahan** who recently retired from Roman Catholic High School as a BCIT teacher. Not only did Pat retire from teaching, but he also retired from a 34-year coaching career.

Coaching tennis at Roman Catholic for the last twenty-one years, Pat's teams made three appearances in the Philadelphia Catholic League finals between 2008 and 2011. During his career, he also coached at Neumann-Goretti for nine years as well as LaSalle University for four years. Pat had a passion for keeping tennis alive in the city schools.

Pat spent his entire career convincing basketball and soccer athletes to sign up for the tennis team in the spring. Learning to play tennis against a brick wall, Pat, himself, played tennis as a spring sport while attending St. John Neumann High School in the late 1970's. In fact, as a junior at St. John Neumann, his team won the Philadelphia Catholic League Southern Division; the school had gone 0-10 for the previous 8 years. Nonetheless, the school was going to drop the sport the following year because they did not have a coach. Pat and his teammates sought out to find a coach so tennis could remain a sport at St. John Neumann, and they were successful! From that point on, Pat's mission has been to save the sport of tennis in the city schools, and to convince basketball and soccer players to come out for the team in the spring.

Pat felt that tennis was known as a country-club sport where wealthier areas produced better players, but he also felt that was because those players were exposed to the sport at a much younger age. He knew that if city kids were raised with tennis, they, too, would be great players. One of Pat's star athletes at Roman was quoted in the Inquirer saying, *"Roman was never known as a tennis school, but Coach Shanahan made us competitive but also made it enjoyable."* *"The thing that always stuck with me was that he never wanted anything in return. It was always about the experience for us as players."*

Pat was looking forward to coaching his final season at Roman, especially since his son Tai, a senior at Roman, was set to play his final season as well. Unfortunately, Pat's career came to a bittersweet end due to COVID19 cancelling all spring sports.



The Association of Catholic Teachers congratulates both
Pat and Tai
on their successes in the sport of tennis.
Best wishes to you both in all your future endeavors!

Important Medical Information from Independence Blue Cross

Because the situation with COVID-19 continues to evolve, Independence Blue Cross has extended coverage for the benefits listed below.

Pulse oximeters are small, portable devices that monitor oxygen levels in the blood and pulse rate. Independence Blue Cross will cover consumer-grade pulse oximeters that are prescribed by your in-network doctor and purchased through an in-network supplier for members who have been diagnosed with, or are recovering from, COVID-19. **Member cost-sharing will be waived through July 31, 2020.**

Treatment will be covered. Independence will waive cost-sharing for in-network, acute inpatient treatment of COVID-19 and any associated emergency room (ER) visits received between March 30 – December 31, 2020.

Cost-sharing will still apply to all post-acute care (e.g. skilled nursing, rehabilitation, and long-term care facilities), outpatient treatment, prescription drugs, ambulance transportation to a post-acute setting, and out-of-network care.

Get care from your doctors at home. The CDC recommends avoiding exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19. If available, you are covered for telemedicine appointments with your primary care physician (PCP) or specialist. Ask your doctor if visits by phone or video are an option.

Well Visits: Independence will cover preventive well visits through telemedicine through December 31, 2020. Visits require audio and video capabilities.

Specialist Visits: If your specialist offers telemedicine visits, you will pay the cost-sharing for a specialist office visit based on your health plan. Specialist visits include urgent care, Nutrition counseling, physical therapy (video required), occupational therapy (video required), and speech therapy.

Talk to a doctor 24/7: Schedule a same-day appointment with a doctor 24/7 with MDLIVE. If you have symptoms of the virus, MDLIVE doctors can assess your condition and help determine necessary next steps, all from the comfort of your home at no cost to you. Independence will waive copays for primary care telemedicine visits until December 31, 2020.

No pre-authorization for inpatient admissions: Independence will not require pre-authorization for the services listed below received between April 1-July 31, 2020:

- Acute in-network, in-patient admissions for any diagnosis from the emergency room.
- Transfers from an in-network, inpatient facility to in-network long-term acute care, rehabilitation, or skilled nursing facilities or other in-network, acute inpatient facility for any diagnosis.
- In-network transportation between facilities.

Note: Facilities are still required to notify Independence.

Visit [ibx.com](https://www.ibx.com) for the latest information about care and services available for COVID-19.

CONGRATULATING OUR NEW RETIREES

Congratulations to the following teachers on their retirement from the Secondary School System: **Christine Amato** (St. Hubert), **Marjorie Arakelian** (Bishop Shanahan), **Sharonmarie Biasini** (Abp. Ryan), **Arlene Brickman** (Abp. Ryan), **Barbara DeLaurentis** (Abp. Wood) **Joseph Dolan** (Msgr. Bonner-Abp. Prendergast), **Thomas Emore** (Little Flower), **Andrea Gosselin** (Bishop Shanahan) **Mary Lou Graham** (Lansdale Catholic), **Helene Hoffsommer** (Abp. Carroll), **Grace Kane** (Msgr. Bonner-Abp. Prendergast), **Terrance Kane** (Roman Catholic), **Terese Lewis** (St. Hubert), **Maria Mannato-Kane** (John W. Hallahan), **Mary Anne Nies** (Bishop Shanahan), **Joanne Quintile** (John W. Hallahan) **Dominic Rapino** (SS. John Neumann & Maria Goretti), **Patrick Shanahan** (Roman Catholic), and **Eric Yanez** (Abp. Carroll).

Best Wishes for a Happy and Healthy Retirement!

IN HONOR OF

Flag Day
June 14, 2020

Independence Day
July 4, 2020

Let Freedom Ring



God Bless America

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, irene@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.

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 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.

To All Our Fathers



We hope that all our members who are fathers had a wonderful Father's Day.

IMPORTANT SUMMER INFORMATION

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 log-on to your personal page to update your information.




IF YOUR PERSONAL EMAIL ADDRESS HAS CHANGED, OR WILL CHANGE OVER THE SUMMER, 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.

COLLEGE TUITION BENEFIT FOR FAMILY MEMBERS

United Concordia has partnered with Sage Scholars, who has partnered with over 400 colleges and universities in the United States, to offer a College Tuition Benefit to teachers and retirees who are enrolled in the United Concordia Dental Plan through the Association of Catholic Teachers Health and Welfare Fund. Teachers and retirees who are covered under the above-mentioned dental plan are eligible to receive 2000 Tuition Reward Points upon registering into the College Tuition Benefit Program. Once registered, you will continue to receive 2000 Tuition Rewards Points for each year that you are enrolled in the dental plan. One point equals \$1; therefore 2000 points = \$2000. Points can be used toward a family member's undergraduate college tuition. The family member can be your child, grandchild, niece, nephew, or godchild. To be eligible for the College Tuition Benefit, you must be enrolled in the United Concordia Dental Plan, and you must register for the Sage Scholars College Tuition Benefit.

Save Money on College

-  Earn Tuition Rewards® points
-  Redeem them for tuition discounts
-  400+ participating colleges & universities

Sign up in *MyDentalBenefits* on or after your plan's effective date.

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Have a Safe and Happy Summer



On behalf of all of the students
whose lives you make better –

Thank You!