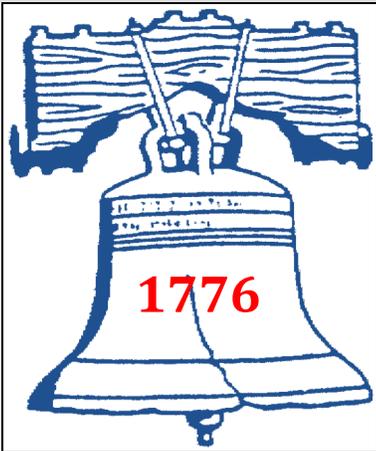


THE

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) **APRIL 2021**



From the President's Desk

The Evidence Proves It

As I have said in my previous "From the President's Desk" articles, you have risen to the challenge of a very different school year, one that hasn't been easy for anybody. I have applauded and continue to acclaim all that you have done and are doing for your students.

Now, the data from the First Semester Evaluations is further affirmation of all that you have accomplished during this very uncertain and unusual school year.

98% of tenured teachers received a Distinguished or Proficient rating and, in the case of Guidance counselors, a Satisfactory rating from their administrative evaluator. 99% of tenured teachers received these ratings from their department heads.

86.7% of non-tenured teachers received a Distinguished or Proficient rating and, in the case of Guidance counselors, a Satisfactory rating from their administrative evaluator. 86.98% of non-tenured teachers received these ratings from their department heads.

(Continued on Page 2)

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

(Continued from Page 1)

What impressive statistics! Congratulations to each and every one of you! You have worked so hard all school year, especially as you learned and navigated all the technology that helped you to educate your students under the hybrid model of instruction. I am so proud to represent you as ACT President.

Couple that with what the teachers at Hallahan and McDevitt, two schools which have a very long history and tradition in the Archdiocese, are experiencing as the impending closure looms over everything that they do and the data is even more impressive.

Speaking of the closing of Hallahan and McDevitt, there doesn't seem to be any change in the Archbishop's decision. Unfortunately, the Archbishop has decided that he will not entertain any alternative possibilities which could prevent closure.

Thankfully, because there is a very good Labor-Management Agreement that provides for job placement when a school or schools close, the lay teachers will have teaching positions in other Archdiocesan high schools come September. This doesn't make leaving their current "home" any easier, it certainly doesn't ease the anxiety and uncertainty, but it does provide reassurance that someone has their back. In this case, that someone is the Association of Catholic Teachers.

There is also no information about Constriction in the other 15 high schools. As you can imagine, this is creating a great deal of anxiety and uncertainty among the teachers in those schools.

I ask that you keep each other, especially the Hallahan and McDevitt school communities, in your prayers.

We are well into the fourth quarter. We are less than two months from the end of the school year. June 18th is getting closer with each passing day. As exhausted as you may feel, you can do this! You can make it to the finish line. Know that the Association of Catholic Teachers is here to help you remain strong as you continue to do all that you can for your students.

Congratulations once again on your accomplishments during the first semester evaluation period. I am sure that the data will be just as impressive for the second semester.

Stay safe.

Irene

**50 YEARS
OF
SERVICE**



**A
GOLDEN
ANNIVERSARY**

THE ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC TEACHERS

congratulates

Arnold Ronzoni, Little Flower Catholic High School for Girls,
who is celebrating his **50th** year of service to the
Secondary School System of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

25 Years of Service - A Silver Celebration

THE ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC TEACHERS

congratulates its members who are celebrating their **25th** year of service
to the Secondary School System of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Maureen Gillespie, Little Flower Catholic High School for Girls

Charles Keating, Bishop Shanahan High School

John Kederis, Cardinal O'Hara High School

Kristin Sheridan, Little Flower Catholic High School for Girls

Kathleen Szyborski, Archbishop Ryan High School

First Semester Evaluation Data

ACT has received the data for the First Semester Evaluations by school administrators and it is all good news.

TENURED TEACHERS: 98% are Distinguished or Proficient.

NON-TENURED TEACHERS: 86.8% are Distinguished or Proficient

Congratulations to all our hard-working teachers.

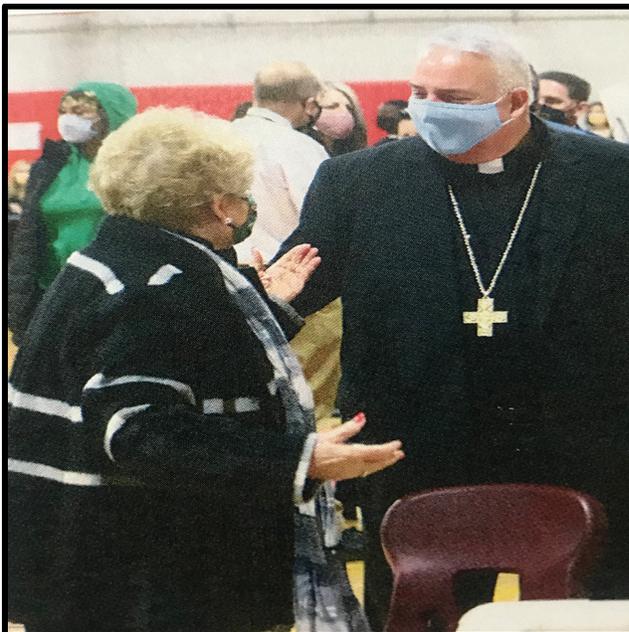


SENIORITY LISTS POSTED (for school only)

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.”

Area Vice Presidents' Executive Board Election

There is a contested election in the Northwest Area. Schools in the affected area will receive ballots no later than May 1, 2021. Elections are to be held in the affected schools, and the ballots are to be returned to the ACT Office no later than May 15, 2021. The results will be posted in each school as well as on the ACT Website and in the May 2021 edition of *The Spirit of '76*.



The Association's *President Emeritus*, Rita C. Schwartz, chats with Archbishop Nelson Perez at a March 31 COVID Vaccination Clinic for Teachers hosted by Archbishop Ryan High School in partnership with Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education, Faith in the Future, and independent schools.

(picture from Catholicphilly.com)

The Association of Catholic Teachers wishes to thank all those who were involved in getting our teachers their COVID vaccinations.

+ Rest in Peace +

+ *Mary Lorenzo Brelsford, Archbishop Ryan High School* +

+ *Alexander Lushnycky, retired, Cardinal O'Hara High School* +

Senior Delegate Elections

(May 15th – June 1st)

Teachers need an Advocate. *Do you have what it takes to be a Senior Delegate?* If Social Justice in action, teacher dignity and respect are issues that you find important, and, if you would like to work with these issues, then consider running for Senior Delegate at your school.

Responsibilities Include:

1. Act as a liaison between your members and administration.
2. Provide representation for your members in situations where any member reasonably feels that disciplinary action may occur.
3. File grievances to settle issues of opposing interpretations of the contract.
4. Encourage members to become familiar with and support the contract.
5. Conduct meetings at the local level.
6. Attend all meetings to represent your school.
7. Encourage your members to attend general membership meetings.
8. Keep the Executive Board informed of local issues.
9. Be responsible for conducting all union elections in the school.
10. Be responsible for the ACT Bulletin Board.
11. Distribute information from the ACT Office to the teachers.
12. Perform duties assigned to you by the Executive Board.
13. Be responsible for signing up new members and maintaining the good standing of present members.

Senior Delegates received a stipend of \$250 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.*





LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The following Legislative Report was submitted by ACT Legislative Representative, David Sommers, at the ACT Executive Board Meeting via Zoom held on March 24, 2021.

1. The American Rescue Plan: The federal stimulus relief bill totals \$1.9 trillion in aid to assist with the effects of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Included in the relief bill is the \$1,400 individual stimulus payment for those who qualify by income level.

Proposed additional stimulus including \$130 billion for K-12 schools for increased staffing; improvements/modifications to ventilation systems; PPE purchases; extended learning opportunities for students academically left behind. There is an additional \$5 billion for individual governors to spend on elementary and high schools, if they desired.

Pennsylvania will receive an estimated \$5.1 billion for K-12 schools.

Last Action: Signed into law on March 11, 2021.

2. HB416: Seizure Recognition & First Aid Training: PA House bill regarding school health services, providing for seizure recognition and all related first aid training related thereto.

Last action: Recommitted to the House Appropriations Committee on March 17, 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. If you do not have this information, please contact Ginny at the ACT Office at 215-568-4175 or email her at gabby@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.

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. An application to join BJ's or renew your membership was emailed to ACT members on April 20th. There is also a copy of the application on our website at www.act1776.com. **The deadline to join/renew is May 4, 2021.**

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.

2020 TAX INFORMATION

Union Dues for 2020

January 2020 – June 2020 = \$348.40
(For those who retired or resigned as of June 2020)

January 2020 – December 2020 = \$563.84

YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINES, ANSWERED

In the face of COVID-19, every question, answer, and vaccination is important. That's why we're addressing uncertainties you may have about receiving a COVID-19 vaccine with facts from the CDC. We hope this will help alleviate your concerns and arm you with the knowledge you deserve. Because we know every chance to keep our future safe and healthy is crucial.



Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?

No. You have to be exposed to the novel coronavirus to get COVID-19. The currently authorized vaccines teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19.

I've already had COVID-19. Do I still need to get vaccinated?

Health experts recommend the COVID-19 vaccine even for people who have had a COVID-19 infection. Although infection likely provides some immunity to reinfection, we don't know yet how long natural immunity lasts. So, it's important to still get vaccinated even if you've had COVID-19 to reduce the risk of reinfection—to protect yourself and others around you.

Once I receive the COVID-19 vaccine, will I be immune for life, or will I need to receive future COVID-19 vaccinations?

At this time, it's still unknown how long immunity from the COVID-19 vaccine will last and whether it will need to be administered more than once, or even on a regular basis, like the flu shot.

Will a COVID-19 vaccine alter my DNA?

The COVID-19 vaccine will not alter your DNA, and none of the approved vaccines interact with your DNA. The approved Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines are messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines; they contain a bit of RNA (ribonucleic acid) that teaches the cells of the body how to make a protein that causes the immune system to make COVID-19 antibodies. The Janssen COVID-19 vaccine (Johnson & Johnson) is a viral vector vaccine that uses a modified version of a different virus (the vector) to deliver important instructions to our cells that trigger our immune system to begin producing antibodies and activating other immune cells to fight off what it thinks is an infection. At the end of the process, our bodies have learned how to protect us against future infection with the virus that causes COVID-19. Viral vectors cannot cause infection with the virus used as the vaccine vector.

Will the vaccine work for everyone?

The COVID-19 vaccines currently available were proven to be highly effective across diverse races and genders. So, across the U.S., every family and neighborhood can expect the same effectiveness and protection.

Do I really need to get both shots?

If you receive a two-dose vaccine such as the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine or the Moderna vaccine, getting both doses is crucial to the vaccine working. The first shot starts to build immunity; the second boosts the immune response. By getting both shots, we protect not only ourselves, but those around us. The Janssen COVID-19 vaccine (Johnson & Johnson) is a one-dose vaccine that takes about 2 weeks to produce protective antibodies after injection.

It seems like the vaccine was approved quickly. Is it as safe as other vaccines I've gotten?

COVID-19 vaccines have gone through the same rigorous safety assessment as all vaccines before being authorized for use in the U.S. by the FDA. When it comes to safety, you can be assured there have been no shortcuts. The unprecedented speed of the COVID-19 vaccines was due to multiple factors, including past research into these types of vaccines. COVID-19 is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Research was already underway to prevent past coronavirus diseases such as SARS and MERS, and that experience helped jumpstart work on our current vaccines.

If I get the vaccine, are there any side effects?

After vaccination, some people may develop a fever, muscle aches, headache, and/or fatigue. These side effects are related to the activation of the immune system. In most persons, they last 1-2 days and don't require treatment.

If I am allergic to eggs, should I still get the COVID-19 vaccine?

The current COVID-19 vaccines do not contain eggs or any animal products. However, those with a history of severe allergic reactions (i.e. anaphylaxis) to eggs or any other substance are encouraged to remain after vaccination for 30 minutes for observation. You should alert the vaccination team when you go for your appointment.

Are the ingredients safe?

Yes, the currently authorized vaccines were shown to be very safe in large studies. Researchers have studied vaccines for decades, and they've found that our bodies recognize parts of the virus (not live virus), and then can build a response (antibody) to protect us from the disease. This means the vaccine helps our bodies remember how to fight the virus if we're infected in the future.

*Grandfathered accounts are not required to waive cost sharing.
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Will the COVID-19 vaccine cause infertility?

The COVID-19 vaccine, like other vaccines, works by training our bodies to develop antibodies to fight against the virus that causes COVID-19, to prevent future illness. There is currently no evidence that antibodies formed from COVID-19 vaccines cause any problems with pregnancy. In addition, there is no evidence suggesting that fertility problems are a side effect of ANY vaccine. People who are trying to become pregnant now or who plan to try in the future may receive the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available to them. Consult with your fertility or pregnancy care team if you have additional questions.

Why do I have to wear a mask even after getting the vaccine?

The current vaccines protect against severe illness and death from COVID-19. It takes several weeks for the full effect of the vaccines to develop and provide you protection from illness. In addition, we only have early information on whether the vaccines prevent virus transmission from person to person.

Why do I need the vaccine if everyone around me is getting it?

Herd immunity and community protection is the ultimate goal, right? Yes, but that's achieved when a large portion of our entire population has been vaccinated. Current estimates are that at least 85% of our population will need to be vaccinated for COVID-19. Many adults have medical conditions that will prevent them from getting the vaccine even if they want it. So, it's up to us to keep them protected by doing our part and getting the vaccine for them.

Is the vaccine free?*

Yes. The COVID-19 vaccine will be available at no cost for Independence Blue Cross members. Don't forget to bring your member ID card when you go to get your vaccine.

For more information about COVID-19 topics and how the pandemic can affect you and your family, visit www.cdc.gov/COVID19.

You can also contact your local health department or physician's office for additional COVID-19 vaccine information.

You may also visit the [IBX COVID-19 webpage](#) or contact your local health department or physician's office for additional COVID-19 vaccine information.



Toothbrush Safety During COVID-19

HOW TO HELP PROTECT YOUR FAMILY WHEN YOU'RE SICK

COVID-19 is a new disease and we're still learning how it spreads. The virus is thought to spread when infected people cough or sneeze, and possibly by touching contaminated surfaces.¹ It may also be found in a person's saliva.² So when you're sick and you brush your teeth, germs end up on your toothbrush, too. And if it's stored in a shared toothbrush holder, germs can spread to other people in your household.

Not everyone who has COVID-19 shows symptoms, so it's important to practice proper toothbrush hygiene even if you think you're fine. Be extra careful if you have family members who are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, such as older adults and people with serious underlying medical conditions.

Here are tips to help keep your family healthy, whether you have a cold, the flu, and especially if you contract COVID-19.

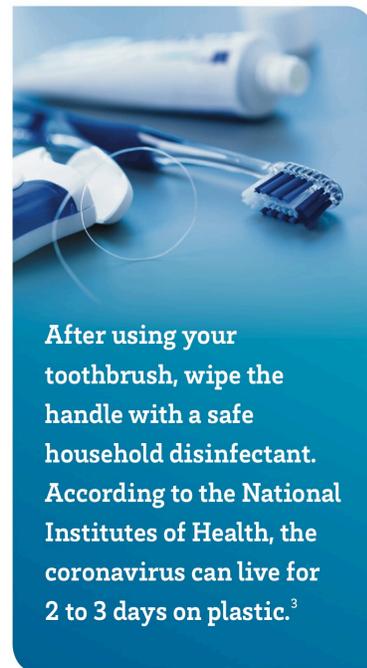
Social distance your toothbrush

If you've been exposed to COVID-19 or think you may be sick, isolate your toothbrush just like you'd isolate yourself from the family. Avoid side-by-side storage—instead keep your toothbrush by itself, upright in a cup or other toothbrush holder, by your bedside table or in another separate area.

Wash your hands before brushing or flossing

Never touch your mouth or brush and floss your teeth before first washing your hands thoroughly. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.² You can also use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.² Make sure to wash your hands after brushing and flossing, too.

Continued ...



After using your
toothbrush, wipe the
handle with a safe
household disinfectant.
According to the National
Institutes of Health, the
coronavirus can live for
2 to 3 days on plastic.³

Disinfect the handle

After using your toothbrush, wipe the handle with a safe household disinfectant. According to the National Institutes of Health, the coronavirus can live for 2 to 3 days on plastic, and it is possible for someone to get the virus from touching contaminated surfaces.³ The CDC recommends using a diluted household bleach solution, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants.⁴

Don't contaminate the toothpaste

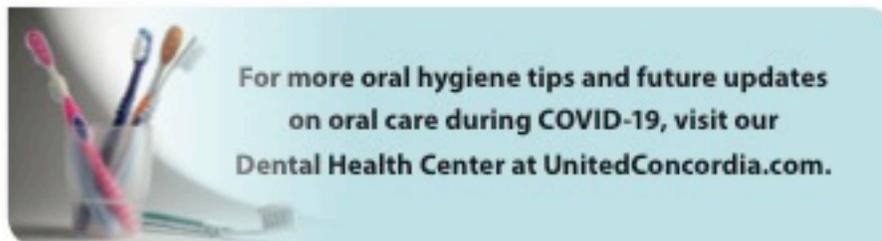
Be careful if you share a tube of toothpaste with someone else. Don't touch the tip of the tube directly onto your toothbrush. Squeeze a bit of toothpaste onto a Q-tip or piece of wax paper, then apply it to the bristles. Remember, you only need a pea-sized amount.

Never share a toothbrush

Toothbrushes can still have germs on them even after being visibly rinsed clean.⁵ Though adults know better, make sure the kids aren't grabbing for the wrong brush. Try color coding or writing each child's name on his or her brush to help prevent swapping bacteria. Keep a watchful eye on youngsters during brushing—they don't always have the best hygiene habits and could innocently spread germs.

Trash your toothbrush after being sick

Make sure to replace your toothbrush with a new one so you don't risk getting sick again. If you use an electric toothbrush, just replace the head. Even if you're healthy, the American Dental Association recommends replacing your toothbrush every 3 to 4 months or sooner if the bristles look worn out.⁶



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1. Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19); [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov); March 2020.
2. Consistent Detection of 2019 Novel Coronavirus in Saliva; Oxford University Press; February 2020.
3. New coronavirus stable for hours on surfaces; [nih.gov](https://www.nih.gov); March 2020.
4. How to clean and disinfect; [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov); March 2020.
5. Toothbrush Care; [ada.org](https://www.ada.org); 2020.
6. Toothbrushes; [ada.org](https://www.ada.org); 2020.

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Manage Your Benefits Anywhere, Anytime



MY DENTAL BENEFITS

Create your **MyDentalBenefits** member account to easily manage your United Concordia Dental coverage online.

Most benefit inquiries can be handled conveniently online using our simple, self-service member portal. Create a **MyDentalBenefits** account to better manage your insurance coverage!

Use your **MyDentalBenefits** account to:

- ✓ Check claim status quickly
- ✓ See what your plan covers and how much we'll pay
- ✓ Print ID cards
- ✓ Find a dentist
- ✓ Evaluate your oral health with *My Dental Assessment*

After your plan's effective date, you are able to create your account. Here's how:

- ✓ Go to **UnitedConcordia.com/MDDB**
- ✓ Select **Member**
- ✓ Enter the **ID number** found on your insurance card and **your birthdate**. You can also use the Social Security Number of the contract holder in place of the ID number.
- ✓ Each dependent (spouse, children aged 14 years or older, or in some states, domestic partner) covered by a United Concordia dental plan must create an individual **MyDentalBenefits** account.



Use your mobile device to access **MyDentalBenefits** on-the-go and manage your coverage at any time.

The Plan complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

English	ATTENTION: If you speak English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call 1-800-332-0366 (TTY: 711).
Español (Spanish)	ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, le ofrecemos de ayuda lingüística gratuita. Llame al 1-800-332-0366 (TTY: 711).
繁體中文 (Chinese)	注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1-800-332-0366 (TTY: 711)。



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



Happy Earth Day 2021