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The Association of Catholic Teachers

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Fax 215-568-8270 – email (act@act1776.com) - website (www.act1776.com) **SEPTEMBER 2021**



From the President's Desk

THE START OF ANOTHER SCHOOL YEAR

Welcome to the 2021-2022 school year. I am sure that you are very happy to have all of your students in the classroom every day with you. While your work day won't look exactly as it did in March, 2020 prior to the shutdown, it will definitely be more "normal" than the school year just ended.

I know the opening days have been very hectic. Getting back into the routine always is. However, if you haven't given your vaccine card to the principal to be photocopied, please do so as soon as you can. All copies of vaccine cards will be kept in a secure file and will only be used for contact tracing should there be identified COVID cases at school. Proof of vaccination, along with mandatory masking and the other preventative measures that are currently in place, may not require you to quarantine.

(Continued on Page 2)

Also, if you have not been vaccinated yet, I encourage you to do so. We all need to work together to keep ourselves, our families, our colleagues, and our students as safe as possible during these uncertain times.

Finally, I want to thank you in advance for all you have done already, are doing every day, and will do throughout this school year to make it a successful one for you and your students. The ACT Office is always here to help and support you as you navigate another unusual school year. Please call Ginny or me at any time.

Irene

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.

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 15th**. 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 2021, or anticipate taking courses in the spring or summer of 2022.

Forms to apply for an Education/Study Grant are posted at the local school and on the Educator's Portal. 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 18, 2021 via Zoom.*

1. Irene has been attending CAPE meetings, an organization that advises private schools on the use of COVID monies.
2. **HB1705: Property Tax Pension Obligation Disclosure**
The bill would create the Property Tax Pension Obligation Disclosure Act, which would require a school board to calculate and publish unfunded pension, and other post-employment benefit obligations per \$100,000 of assessed residential property within said school district. Additionally, the bill would require the State Real Estate Commission to update the seller property disclosure form to include this calculation.
Last action: August 4, 2021 vote to re-refer this bill to another committee.
3. **Senate Education Committee Meeting:** Friday, August 6, 2021, 1 PM—A public hearing on COVID-19 policies and guidance for schools with the Departments of Health and Education.
Details: Discussion on how PA Schools will open for the 2021-2022 school year; vaccination requirements and mandates; mask recommendations and requirements; learning loss; mental health of primary and secondary students during the COVID-19 Pandemic.
3. **Middle School Civics Requirement (New Jersey)**—Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, for students in grades 6-8 to complete at least one course in *Civics* or *United States Government*. The course would fulfill the Social Studies graduation requirement for middle school students.

The bill was signed into law in July. Pennsylvania has had a civics course requirement since the 2020-2021 school year.
4. **Act 66 of 2021 (Formerly SB664):** Additional year of Education--Applied to the 2021-2022 school year, with the goal of managing learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic disruptions; virtual learning; lack of in-person school days.

The bill was signed into law on June 30, 2021. Due date was July 15 for parents/guardians to apply online to allow for necessary arrangements to accommodate students in their districts.
5. **HB1532: Teaching Racial and Universal Equality Act**—Curtailing CRT concepts and divisiveness in Pennsylvania schools and government; teaching racial and universal equality.

“Our schools should be teaching that every individual is equal under the law and that no individual should ever be labeled superior or inferior simply due to their race or genetic

(Continued on Page 5)

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

(Continued from Page 4)

makeup, nor be held responsible for actions taken by others with similar traits. Such teachings interfere with our constitutional duty to support and maintain a thorough and efficient system of public education to serve the needs of the Commonwealth.”

(From the legislative *Memorandum*)

Last action: Referred to House Education Committee on June 7, 2021.

6. **HB951: Statues of Limitations for Sexual Abuse Victims w/ A00786** (Amendment) *providing for language changes*

Specifics: Create a 2-year window for civil lawsuits to be filed. If under age 18 when incident/abuse occurred, add 37 years to age for eligible time period to file; if ages 18-24 when incident/abuse occurred, individuals would have until they reach age 30 to file civil action.

Last action: Removed from the Senate Table, June 25, 2021.

“Removed from the Table”—up for possible consideration and may be placed on the Chamber’s legislative calendar this fall.

ACT President Emeritus in the News



ACT President Emeritus and longtime NACST President, Rita C. Schwartz, recently organized the St. Rose of Lima elementary teachers in Freehold, NJ. A Consent Election was held, and the teachers voted to form a Union. Rita and the St. Rose of Lima Negotiating Team (pictured above) are currently negotiating their first contract.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

OFFICE HOURS: 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.

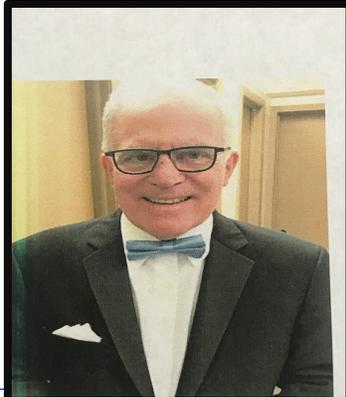
FREEDOM CREDIT UNION – The Freedom Credit Union offers teachers and their families a wide range of financial opportunities. For more information visit the credit union's website at www.freedomcu.org. The phone number for the Freedom Credit Union is 215-612-5900

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.

IN MEMORIAM



William Keane
July 7, 2021

William "Bill" Keane, former Cardinal O'Hara High School English teacher

After teaching, Bill worked tirelessly to improve the care of people living with dementia and to change the culture of healthcare. He worked for many health-care and aging service organizations, and he served on the Board of Directors of the National Alzheimer's Association and the Pioneer Network. He was one of the founders of the Delaware Valley Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. Bill passed away on July 7, 2021 from dementia. He was laid to rest on September 11, 2021.

"Bill will be remembered as a passionate advocate, teacher, and a kind and gentle soul."

**"EDUCATION is the most POWERFUL
weapon which you can use
to change the World."**

-Nelson Mandela-

WELCOME BACK!



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