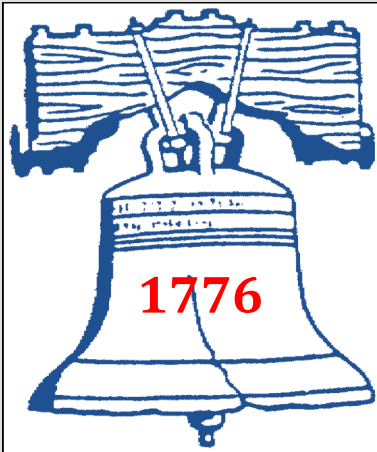


# THE

The Newspaper of Local 1776  
The Association of Catholic Teachers



# SPIRIT OF '76

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## *From the President's Desk*

### **Welcome Dr. Tesche**

On February 13, 2023, Dr. Brooke Cortese Tesche will become the new Superintendent of Secondary Schools and the Schools of Special Education.

Right after the Christmas break, on behalf of the Executive Board and the ACT Membership, I wrote to Dr. Tesche to welcome her as the new Superintendent. My letter also included a request to meet with her so that she and I, as Superintendent and ACT President, could start developing our working relationship.

(Continued on Page 2)

### **Negotiations Update**

At the General Membership Meeting on February 1, 2023, I gave the members an update on Negotiations.

The ACT 2023 Negotiating Team members—Kathleen Toenniessen-Innes, Christine Hanley Maldonado, James Vernon and myself—were introduced. I also told the members who will be representing the System. They are Brian Pedrow (Attorney, Chief Negotiator), Dr. Brooke Cortese Tesche (Superintendent), Dr. Patricia Rigby (Assistant Superintendent), Dr. David Magee (CFO, Educational Financial Services),

(Continued on Page 2)

**Welcome Dr. Tesche**

Twenty-four hours didn't even pass before Dr. Tesche called me. At the end of our lengthy conversation, we scheduled a Zoom meeting for Monday, January 16<sup>th</sup>. Our Zoom meeting lasted for 1½ hours and was very productive.

Dr. Tesche is very much aware of the challenges she is facing as she takes on her new role. She wants to learn what makes each school unique and successful as well as what each school community needs so that it can thrive going forward. Therefore, one of her top priorities will be to do school visits. During these visits, she wants to meet with and listen to small groups of teachers and students. She is looking for honesty so that she can help.

Dr. Tesche explained to me that she is coming in with a clean slate. She is starting fresh. She has no history with the System. Therefore, understanding teachers' prior experiences, her goal is to restore relationships and rebuild the trust that has been lost in the past several years.

Our January 16<sup>th</sup> Zoom meeting ended with the hope that our next meeting will be in person. Since we both want to resolve potential problems before they become major issues, Dr. Tesche and I agreed to meet regularly to discuss any matters that either one of us feels the need to address.

When Dr. Tesche visits your school, I hope you will welcome her and speak honestly with her.

Her leadership and her vision could be the new start that we all need.

*Irene*

**Negotiations Update**

Thomas Geisler (Assistant CFO, Educational Financial Services), Thomas Lynch (President, Conwell-Egan), Brian King (President, Fr. Judge) and Patricia Rooney (Principal, Bonner-Prendergast).

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding, the Association and the System exchanged proposals on February 6<sup>th</sup>. A combination of in-person and Zoom negotiating sessions have been scheduled for February 17<sup>th</sup>, March 8<sup>th</sup>, March 15<sup>th</sup>, March 20<sup>th</sup>, March 29<sup>th</sup>, and March 31<sup>st</sup>.

If a tentative agreement is reached by March 31<sup>st</sup>, then there will be a General Membership Meeting in April to vote on the contract. The goal is to have a ratified labor-management agreement in place well before the end of this school year.

In your contract surveys, you were very clear on what you want in the next contract. You definitely want a multi-year agreement as well as a percentage pay raise, not an across-the-board increase. These items as well as many others that were part of your contract surveys are reflected in the ACT Contract Proposals presented to the members. The members in attendance at the meeting amended a few of the proposals and then approved them. (The proposals from the General Membership Meeting, including the revisions, will be sent to you in a separate email.)

Additional updates will be sent to you as negotiations continue through March. Information on a General Membership Meeting will also be sent to you. Please keep in mind you will need to be present to vote.

Please keep both Negotiating Teams in your prayers as we work to bring you a contract that you will be able to ratify in April.

*Irene*

## **2023 ACT EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS**

Irene Tori	President
Kathleen Toenniessen-Innes	Vice President
Thomas Imburgia	Executive Secretary
Adejola Garrett	Treasurer
John Corrigan	Legislative Representative
Thomas McKeever	Area Vice President (Central)
Anthony Perrucci	Area Vice President (Northeast)
Eric Wahl	Area Vice President (Northwest)
David McQuiston	Area Vice President (Southwest)
Michael Campellone	Member-at-Large
Christine Hanley-Maldonado	Member-at-Large
Bridget Mierzejewski	Member-at-Large

## **2022 TAX INFORMATION**

### **Union Dues for 2022**

January 2022 – June 2022 = \$384.54  
(For those who resigned or retired as of June 2022)

January 2022 – December 2022 = \$621.18

## **2023 ACT SENIOR DELEGATES**

James Vernon – Bonner/Prendergast	Tom Imburgia – Cardinal O’Hara
Anthony Polselli – Archbishop Carroll	Eric Wahl – Pope John Paul II
Christine Hanley-Maldonado – Conwell-Egan	James Flannery – Roman Catholic
John Masluk – Saint Hubert	Glen Galeone – Archbishop Ryan
John Cramutolo – Father Judge	David Sommers – Bishop Shanahan
Michael Clymer – Little Flower	Bridget Mierzejewski – West Catholic
Melissa Hart – Lansdale Catholic	Joe Webb – Archbishop Wood
Peter Ferris – SS Neumann-Goretti	

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The following Legislative Report was submitted by ACT Legislative Representative, David Sommers, at the ACT December Executive Board Meeting held on December 15, 2022.

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## **I. Legislative Pay Raise**

Pennsylvania state lawmakers received, as of December 1st, a 7.8% pay increase. This amounts to an average increase of \$7,400 a year. The raise is the largest increase in over twenty-five years. The salary per year ranges from \$102,844 to \$117,271 depending upon leadership, caucus, and chair positions accordingly.

## **II. Report on Opioid Abuse**

The Pennsylvania Joint State Government Commission issued the "Report of the Opioid Abuse Child Impact Task Force" document on November 28, 2022.

For more information please refer to PA Act 2 of 2022 legislation.

# VOLUNTARY TRANSFER, TEACHER SWAP, TEMPORARY TRANSFER APPLICATIONS

Teachers interested in applying for a voluntary transfer, teacher swap, or temporary transfer should file their application **no later than April 1, 2023**.

**Applications will be posted in the schools on March 1, 2023.**



*The Association of Catholic Teachers would like to thank our dedicated teachers for their commitment to Catholic Education and for all they do each and every day to provide a faith-filled, excellent education to their students. Know that you are making a difference in the lives of these young people.*

## ACT WEBSITE

All teachers are asked to logon to the ACT Website ([www.act1776.com](http://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](mailto: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.

## INSURANCE INFORMATION

**Dental Plan:** As of January 1, 2023, you and each of your family members have \$1,000 in dental benefits to use for covered services in calendar year 2023. A list of your dental benefits is listed on the ACT Website at [www.act1776.com](http://www.act1776.com).

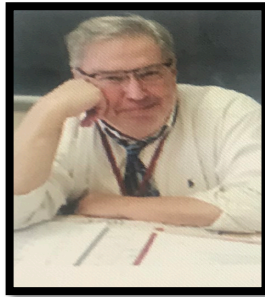
**Medical Plan:** A reminder that you will need to meet your annual \$100 individual deductible and/or \$200 family deductible for calendar year 2023. You may begin receiving bills for services requiring that a deductible be met before payment can be made. **These services include the following:** Outpatient laboratory and pathology, home health care and/or hospice, skilled nursing, chemotherapy, radiation, dialysis, outpatient Private Duty Nursing, and physician/surgeon charges that require a deductible.

**Voluntary Vision Plan:** For those who signed up for the Voluntary Vision Plan, your benefits became effective on January 1, 2023. You should have received a vision card in the mail. If you are in need of ID cards for the vision plan, please contact Ginny at [ginny@act1776.com](mailto:ginny@act1776.com).

## FSA REMINDER

If you were a participant in the 2022 FSA Program, please remember that all monies in your account should have been exhausted by December 31, 2022. You have 90 days after the close of the calendar year in which to submit eligible expenses for 2022. All eligible expenses for 2022 must be submitted by March 30, 2023.

# IN MEMORIAM



## Doug MacMaster 1957-2022

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Doug MacMaster started in our system when he was hired as a long-term substitute at Archbishop Ryan in 2016. Doug was subbing for a member of the Social Studies department who had suffered a major medical emergency. Doug was no stranger to Catholic education as he had previously taught at Mercy Tech, and at Gwynedd Mercy Academy. Regardless of his many years of experience, Doug found himself in a challenging position. He had to sub for a popular, long time faculty member who had almost passed away. Her students were very upset and concerned for her. Those kids did not want a new teacher; they wanted their teacher back. They were understandably scared and confused. Mr. MacMaster sensed this immediately and did all that he could to comfort his new students, to reassure them, and to, ultimately, win them over, all while being very sensitive to their concerns for their ailing teacher. Doug was ultimately hired as a permanent teacher at AR.

He was a passionate father, husband, teacher, coach and friend. He was a good athlete when he was a young man, playing both soccer, and hockey in college. He also skied, played and coached tennis, and had a passion for traveling. Doug had many interests and passions, but his obsession was listening to music and going to concerts. A few years before he passed he took his kids to see The Who. He told me that was on his bucket list. Doug was a true fan of classic rock music. He and I shared a favorite band, The Grateful Dead. **He was a Deadhead.** As Doug walked past my classroom on his first day at Archbishop Ryan, he wandered into my room after seeing some of the Grateful Dead imagery I had scattered around. He immediately identified himself as a fellow Dead Head, and then we started just telling each other stories about seeing the Dead, about music, and about life in general. Not long after that, Doug started referring to me as his Dead Head brother. He was right, I was. A brotherhood had been formed and we became close friends.

Doug always had a story about just about everything, and it usually topped any story that anyone else had. Some people embellish, and even make up stories to make themselves more interesting; we caught on right away that this was not what he was

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## IN MEMORIAM . . .

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doing. He was telling us the truth about a really cool, and interesting life, and he was unassuming about it. He wasn't trying to stand out, or to top us, he was just a guy that truly led a very interesting life and knew how to tell a good story. We all loved hearing Doug's stories at Ryan. He was good at telling them.

One of Doug's most endearing traits was his generosity. Up until I met Doug, I never received a Christmas gift from a coworker before, none of us in the Social Studies department had, but a day or so before break Doug showed up with something for all of us, and what he had for everyone was thoughtful and personal, not just something he picked up. He gave me a Grateful Dead book that year, the year after I got a Grateful Dead calendar. My son Ryan was lucky enough to have Doug for homeroom his senior year. He would often show up to homeroom with a few dozen donuts and a couple of boxes of coffee from Dunkin Donuts, for no reason other than he was a nice guy. Doug was at Ryan when my wife had our son Finn. Finn was born on the last day of the school year, so I didn't see most of my coworkers until the next September. On our first day back, Doug gave me a gift for my newborn son, his first Grateful Dead shirt that was still way too big for him.

Doug was a big guy with a big heart. He greeted everyone with a smile, and a kind or interesting word or two. He was friendly and kind to all that crossed his path. His students adored him. Doug taught freshmen during his last year at Ryan. Those freshmen are now seniors. Since Doug's passing, many of those kids have stopped in to see me to let me know how upset or sad they were at Mr. Mac's passing. Many have said that he was their favorite teacher. The girls on the tennis team, which Doug coached, were devastated when they heard the bad news that Coach Mac had passed away. Doug will be sorely missed by many. He was a great guy who was always positive, always friendly, and always volunteering to help with something. I wish I had more years working with Doug. Doug was a happy guy who smiled often. He loved his family, his job, and his music. I will end this tribute to my Deadhead brother with a smile on my face as I think about him, with lyrics from our favorite band. *"Cat on a tin roof, dogs in a pile, nothin' left to do but smile, smile, smile. Now he's gone, he's gone, Lord he's gone, he's gone."* May the four winds blow you safely home, my friend.

*Written by: Bill Finnegan  
Archbishop Ryan High School*

# IN MEMORIAM

## Doug MacMaster

Many of us that worked with or knew Doug MacMaster knew how special he was. He had more interesting life experiences than almost anybody and his caring heart, jovial demeanor, and ability to tell a story made all of our lives better in the otherwise rough past few years.

Doug often spoke of his time living all over the world: in Australia, in Canada, and in England. Doug loved the Bagpipes celebrating his beloved Scottish heritage. Yet Doug was also known for his love of the Grateful Dead. Doug knew and shared fascinating details about Buddhism, American Political History, the Environment and the Economy. Doug always had a story from which all could learn.

Doug always had loving stories about his family too. He was beaming a year or two ago when talking about his Daughter's wedding. He was proud when telling vibrant stories about his son's adventurous and honorable service in the Marines. He was thrilled to share the adventures of how his younger children are thriving in High School and College endeavors.

Doug came to Roman in the Fall of 2020, a veteran teacher already, constricted from Archbishop Ryan, bringing his stories to share. In his short time at Broad and Vine, Doug got involved with many other people's life stories too. He helped with the Yearbook, coached our Tennis team, and led the Student Ambassadors. He engaged all of his students each day and showed them he cared. Upon his passing, the students made a book with over 80 pages of stories sharing many anecdotes about how he was always there for them from practice to the classroom to needing a listening ear.

Doug was a walking story and shared his love of life with everyone. He made this story-sharing his art form and we were lucky at Roman to share in his life story for a short time.

*Written by: James Flannery  
Senior Delegate  
Roman Catholic High School*

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***“Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom”***

***Marcel Proust***





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MEM-0411-1220

“Peace begins with a smile.” ~ Mother Teresa

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On the Road to Victory!



Go Eagles!

Wishing everyone a happy and safe Super Bowl Weekend!