



PCT PLEDGE

Plainview-Old Bethpage
Congress of Teachers
303 Sunnyside Boulevard - Suite 90
Plainview, New York 11803
(516) 349-1310

Visit our WebPage
[http:// pobct.org](http://pobct.org)

Volume XXXIV, No.7 March 12, 2007



ACADEMIC STANDARDS

By PCT President Morty Rosenfeld

On Monday, March 5, Dr. Brooks and I took the first small step on the long and difficult road to raising our district's academic standards. Over the course of the next month or so, we will be speaking to the faculty of each school demonstrating the commitment of labor and management to the cause setting a process in motion to broaden our expectations for the students of our community.

We will never raise the bar for our students unless you and each member of the PCT decides to do so and unless you are supported in your efforts by the district's managers and the Board of Education. **I ask you to believe that we can demand more of our students and have our supervisors and parents support our efforts to get children to achieve more.** I ask you to believe that Plainview-Old Bethpage can be about the pursuit of excellence again.

That's not to say there won't be obstacles. We all know there will. What I hope we can believe, more and more each day, is that working together, united in the effort, **we can** raise our district's academic standards and restore some of the pride in our district I fear we have lost.

I'm often asked, "Why is raising academic standards a union or labor issue?"

I believe that education unions must develop an agenda to counteract the erosion of the public's confidence in our schools. While it is worse elsewhere, there are troubling signs of dwindling public confidence in Plainview-Old Bethpage. As I write this, over eight hundred citizens have signed an e-petition calling for changes to our math program. Does anyone want to suggest that they are happy with what they are getting? Go and read some of their comments.

As union members we have to stand for quality and high standards. It's not just an ethical obligation. It's plain old self-interest. A public who do not have confidence in their schools don't support them, and those schools lacking public support decline further earning even less public confidence. We must not let that happen in Plainview-Old Bethpage. I ask you to begin thinking about supporting the PCT by helping it lead the struggle to raise the district's academic standards.

PCT MATH COMMITTEE MEETS CONSENSUS BUILT

On March 1, the PCT Math Committee, comprised of the teacher members of the District Math Committee plus representatives from each of the schools, met for the latest of a series of meetings to hammer out the position the PCT needs to provide a better math education to our students and allay the fears of many parents that their children are not developing basic math skills. Some urgency has been lent to this process by the advent of a parent group that seeks to remove the Investigations program for our district.

The PCT Math Committee has come up with a series of recommendations which they believe will both improve math instruction in the district and calm parental fears that their children are being left behind. The Math Committee recommends:

- 1 - Clearly written curricula be developed, aligned with New York State standards and made available to staff and parents in each grade, k-8, delineating what students are required to know prior to the yearly state assessment and by year's end. These curricula should combine the development of basic mathematic concepts as well as higher order mathematical thinking exercises.
- 2 - Retain the current edition of Investigations.
- 3- Immediately establish a professional committee with representatives from each building to recommend the purchase of traditional math materials to be supplied across the grades in each building.
- 4- Purchase a test prep booklet for each student in each grade to provide review materials to better prepare our students for the state assessments.

The PCT Math Committee believes that if all of their recommendations are adopted, we will be able to ensure that all children in a grade will be taught the same concepts and that their teachers will have access to the same library of resources to facilitate math instruction. Additionally, each teacher, whether new or experienced, will know what they are minimally expected to teach and the materials necessary to do so without having to spend inordinate amounts of time searching for materials, often being encouraged to pirate copyrighted materials.

Parents will have the deserved comfort of knowing that their children know basic math facts and processes and will be better able to appreciate some of the more interesting aspects of the Investigations program.

CLERICAL UNIT MEETING

In response to many requests from the membership of the CUPCT, many of whom are fairly recent members, the PCT will conduct a benefits meeting on Thursday, March 29, 2007 at 4:00 P.M. in the Choral Room of Plainview-Old

Bethpage Middle School.

Participants will be taken through a comprehensive review of all of our contractual benefits from health insurance to the many Welfare Fund coverages. Come and ask questions. Make sure you are getting all you are entitled to from your union negotiated benefit package.

RETIREMENT WORKSHOP HELD

On Wednesday, March 7, 2007, the PCT held a retirement workshop for members of the Teacher and Clerical bargaining units. Over thirty people attended this session.

Conducted by PCT President Morty Rosenfeld and Secretary Judi Alexanderson, the workshop focused on the steps that should be followed in making the decision to retire. Participants were taken through the calculation of the contractual pay-out for accumulated sick leave provided for in both the Teacher and Clerical contracts.

Participants also learned of the attempts by the PCT to have the District put in place a deferred compensation plan in addition to our existing 403b plan that would enable those retiring to shelter most of the proceeds of their sick leave buy-out.

WATCH OUT FOR MAY 15

If you are a member of the Teacher Unit, are thinking of retiring and you missed the workshop, make sure you are mindful of the May 15 contractual deadline to inform the District of your resignation for purposes of retirement if you wish to ensure that your sick leave buy-out is paid to you in July.

If you have any retirement questions, please contact the PCT office.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

In recent times, the PCT has attempted to use e-mail more and more to bring information to our membership in a timely fashion. This proved particularly useful in our last round of negotiations when after each negotiating session, members received a summary from the Negotiating Committee.

One of the problems with e-mail, however, is that members seem to frequently change their e-mail addresses. There is also a problem with ISPs like AOL whose spam filters appear to catch the mass mailings that our union does.

If you did not receive an e-mail on Friday, March 9, 2007 asking you to send a fax against the Governor's proposal to lift the cap on charter schools, the PCT either does not have a current e-mail address for you or you have a spam filter blocking these important

communications.

To get us a working address, simply send an e-mail to office@pobct.org.

If you didn't get the e-mail, NYSUT has asked all of their locals to do some cyber-lobbying against charter schools. Simply go to nysut.org, click on "NYSUT Launches Statewide Media Campaign." On the right of the page you will be taken to, you will see "Take Action." Click on this and you will be taken through a simple process of sending a fax to your legislators to oppose the lifting of the cap on charter schools.

PCT OFFICE HOURS

During the spring break, the PCT Office will be **closed** Monday, April 2, Thursday April 5, Friday, April 6 and Wednesday, April 11.

NO COMMENT

CREDITS FOR SALE

Hofstra credits call Lynn Davis at 791-6835. 3 Adelphi credits \$1500 contact Tracey Idone at 481-9005.

FLORIDA CONDO FOR RENT

1 Bedroom beachfront Highland Beach, FL. Call Toby Epstein 454-6719.

NO COMMENT

