



PCT PLEDGE

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DISTRICT BUDGET BD. OF ED ELECTIONS By PCT President Morty Rosenfeld

The PCT Executive Board has voted to support the district's 2007-08 budget, although once again we have been presented with a document that does not support our work of educating children as well as it might. Yet again, we have a budget that expresses the underlying belief that additional administration, outside consultants and new positions like behavior intervention specialist are more important than staff to reduce class size and up-to-date text books in all academic areas. Somehow, this year's zero-based budgeting process brought us more waste than last.

Yet, the officers of the PCT recommended support in that the budget before us is the best one we are going to be able to get. Not having a passed budget would be a much worse proposition. The budget will be put up for a vote on May 15.

Also elected on May 15 will be three seats on the Board of Education. Board incumbents Cathy Shapp, Cheryl Dender and Wendy Richter are being challenged by Lori Weinstein, Angel Cepeda and Gary Bettan. There will also be one seat on the Public Library Board of Trustees elected. As Stefanie Nelkens was the only person to submit a petition, she will automatically be elected on May 15th.

The PCT Executive Board, having met just after the filing deadline for office and before the candidates have taken any public positions, decided to authorize the Officers and Head SRC Reps to make whatever endorsements they think appropriate by May 10th. In this way, opportunities will exist to talk with the candidates and to carefully watch the development of their campaigns. Watch the *Pledge* and PCT Webpage for election news.

IT'S POLITICAL TIME A JOB FOR EACH PCT MEMBER

For a union to take a position in support of a school budget or candidate for the Board of Education means almost nothing. It's the effort we make to bring about passage of the budget or the election of candidates that counts.

Thanks to our very successful VOTE/COPE drive in the fall, we will have all of the money we need to

wage a successful campaign. This week, we expect to receive a check for forty percent of the money we sent to NYSUT VOTE/COPE. Those dollars will be put into the PCT/PAC account and used to finance our activities in this election cycle. **We do not use dues dollars for this political work.** All of our activities will be paid for by the voluntary contributions of PCT members.

Not even money is enough, however. We must make over 5000 phone calls to parents, active and retired PCT members living in POB and, this year, to the over 1000 NYSUT members living in our community. This is, of course, in addition to running off flyers and doing the mailings that may be necessary.

A handful of officers and building reps and staff can't do all of that. Each PCT member must play a role.

Building Reps are seeking volunteers to do this vital work. Each school has been assigned times to staff the phones in the PCT office. As usual, lists will be available for members who volunteer to call from home. The officers of the PCT are convinced that this election cycle is one of the most important in recent memory. It must come out right for our membership and for the children we teach. **The PCT needs you!**

PCT MATH COMMITTEE TELLS IT LIKE IT IS

On Wednesday April 18, the PCT Math Committee and the Officers of the PCT met with the Board of Education to discuss math education in POB. We were invited to do so by the Board who graciously provided our representatives with dinner.

The goal of the Math Committee was two-fold; to explain and advocate for the committee's proposal and to try to refocus the math discussion in our district away from specific math programs and on how to improve the math education of children.

The PCT Math Committee is not advocating a specific program. They recognize that there are gaping holes in our current approach which they recommend fixing with a four pronged attack consisting of clearly written, grade by grade curricula available to teachers and parents, traditional math texts at each grade, test prep books at each grade and continued use of the current Investigations materials. Our approach is one of making it clear what children at each instructional level are expected to know and giving our teachers all of the materials and tools they

need to ensure that students are taught and learn their required curriculum.

From the comments of most of the members of the Board of Education after the Committee's presentation and the lengthy question period, it was evident that the majority of the Board agrees with

much of what the PCT Math Committee is proposing. They appear to clearly understand the need for substantial change from what we have been doing.

To make the necessary changes will require immediate action. Curriculum needs to be written, special education issues need to be addressed and there is a need to develop an approach to math for those students, now in middle school, who do not seem to possess basic math skills.

LIBRARY UNIT GROWING MORE DETERMINED

The POB Public Library Unit of the PCT has been demonstrating to their employer and the public their on-going dissatisfaction with the treatment they receive on the job. While they had high hopes that the appointment earlier in the year of Gretchen Browne as the new Director of the library would usher in a new era in labor management relations, sadly the Board of Trustees apparently doesn't want that to happen. They continue their practice of pitting the members of our unit against the other employees of the library who do not have a union.

For years, every POB Library Association (POBLA) negotiated increase or benefit has been immediately passed on to the non-union employees who, as a result, have come to believe that unions aren't necessary. They get all the benefits and don't have to pay any dues.

This year, the Trustees outdid themselves. In addition to giving the non-union employees at the library the same salary increase POBLA members received, they gave each non-union employee an on-going gift of two dollars (\$2.00) per hour in the middle of the fiscal year.

Over 250 PCT members reside in POB. They tend to be heavy users of the library. Members are asked to stop and show support to the library people wearing buttons expressing their displeasure. Let them know that you have experienced bad treatment before but that working through the PCT your struggles were always rewarded.

MENTORING HELPING OUR NEW COLLEAGUES

Holders of Initial Teaching Certificates must, under New York State Regulation, be mentored. The job of mentoring them falls to the permanently certified teachers in the districts in which they begin to teach.

The PCT and the POB District have an agreement by which the mentoring of new teachers is accomplished. PCT teachers who volunteer and are selected by the Superintendent to mentor a new teacher are paid a stipend of three thousand dollars (\$3000). They have lunch and prep scheduled with the teachers they are mentoring as well as the ability to arrange substitute coverages ten (10) times during the year for the mentor to observe the

new teacher and for the new teacher to observe the mentor.

Mentors have no role in the evaluation of the people they are training. Their purpose is strictly to provide training and assistance with the demands of a new teaching position.

The PCT believes we have one of the best mentoring agreements in the state. Yet, we have sometimes had difficulty recruiting all of the volunteers we need.

Talk to people in your school who have participated in the mentoring program. Most will tell you that they enjoyed a truly professional experience.

If you would like to volunteer to be a mentor for the 2007-8 school year, send a note to PCT Secretary Judi Alexanderson at the PCT Office. The deadline for volunteering to be a mentor is Thursday, May 31, 2007.

ATTENTION CLERICALS NEED HELP PREPARING FOR THE STENO OR SENIOR STENO EXAM?

Members of the Clerical Unit of the PCT are invited to sign up for a PCT sponsored program to permit unit members to pass civil service promotional examinations.

If there is sufficient interest in the Clerical Unit, the PCT will offer a transcription course designed to prepare members to pass the Stenographer and/or Senior Stenographer Civil Service examinations. The course will be held on weekday afternoons most convenient to members.

CUPCT members who are interested in taking a transcription course should let the PCT Office know of their interest either by phone or email to office@pobct.org. Please indicate the day of the week you would prefer the course to be held.

IN SOLIDARITY WITH EAST MEADOW

The East Meadow Teachers Association has expressed its thanks to all of the PCT members who joined with thousands of NYSUT members to show support for their efforts to get a contract settlement.