



PCT PLEDGE

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VICTORY

By PCT President Morty Rosenfeld

If there is a single message in our recent election for the Board of Education it is that the electorate wants change. One could see the mood of the public changing for some time. In fact, early in the year when the officers of the PCT had one of their bi-monthly meetings with the Board of Education, we told the Board that there was a looming political crisis which while it was then focused on math had much broader implications. It was, we told them, a manifestation of a declining public confidence in our schools, something which frightened us and which we urged them to address immediately for the welfare of the district.

Our warning was not taken seriously either by the Board of Education or the Superintendent of Schools. The PCT was forced to look elsewhere for allies in managing the change that was surely to come and that was sorely needed. Thus began the search for candidates for the Board and our support for Lori Weinstein, Gary Bettan and Angel Cepeda whom we came to learn shared many of our concerns. What followed was one of the best political action operations this union has ever mounted. With great candidates advancing ideas very similar to our own, candidates who were out in the community working hard, discussing ideas for change, we were able to utilize our political skills to mobilize a broad majority for change. Put simply, a majority of the public said that they are tired of being invidiously compared to the Syossets and Jerichos. They want a return to excellence in Plainview-Old Bethpage. They want better scores on the state assessments. They want their kids challenged to the extent of their abilities. They want higher academic standards with teachers and students motivated to pursue excellence. Most importantly they want an end to the educationist fads that have had us more preoccupied with how we teach than what the children in front of us are learning.

I deeply believe that we will look back on this period as a pivotal moment in the district's history. The political climate of POB is conducive to reclaiming our proud history of excellence. The effort to reclaim it will not be

easy even with broad support of the goal. No doubt there will be starts and stops. Yet, if we will all permit ourselves to believe we can have high standards, that the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools, building administrators, teachers, support professionals and parents will support higher expectations for their children even though that support may bring some initial discomfort, I have no doubt that we can make Plainview-Old Bethpage the school district it deserves to be.

PCT/PAC & VOTE/COPE

When the SRC Reps approached the membership in the fall asking them for a \$35 contribution to NYSUT VOTE/COPE, members were told that their voluntary dollars were needed to fund both the political activities of the merged state union and the PCT in that neither organization used members dues dollars for that purpose.

When the fund-raising drive began, having a Democratic majority in both houses of Congress was almost more than could be hoped for. Having New York Congressman Charlie Rangel as the Chair of the House Committee on Ways and Means was just a plan, not a reality. So, too, was our goal of changing the direction of our school district.

Union political action at the state and local level has accomplished both objectives, all of it done with the voluntary contributions of PCT members and their brothers and sisters across the state and nation. In our recent Board/Budget election, the thousands of phone calls done from the PCT Office on the extra phone lines that were installed for that purpose and thousands of first class letters sent to union members in POB were all financed by the 40 percent of PCT members' VOTE/COPE contributions that came back to the local to finance our political efforts.

This year's political action operation had an additional dimension. Now that the PCT belongs to the one state education union in New York, we gained access to the approximately 1500 NYSUT members from other locals who reside in POB. Our outreach to them was certainly a very significant factor in the winning margins of our candidates.

The success of all of our political efforts this year will hopefully inspire members to give even more generously to VOTE/COPE next fall.

PCT & PTA COUNCIL MEET

On Thursday, May 17, officers of the PCT

and PTA Council met for several hours in the PCT Office to discuss issues of mutual interest and to seek to deepen the relationship between our two organizations.

High on the PCT's agenda was building support for our goal of raising the academic standards of our district. The PCT presented our view that parents must be a vital part of this effort in that without their support elected members of the Board of Education, teachers and administrators would be reluctant to do the things that will be necessary for POB to again become a district of excellence.

Among the PTA's issues was their concerns for the disparity in the educational opportunities in our two middle schools and their broad dissatisfaction with American Education Week activities.

The entire meeting was characterized by an atmosphere of good will that permitted participants to speak frankly, even about controversial issues where the two organizations have broadly different views.

The meeting concluded with an agreement to schedule a series of these meetings for the next school year.

BOARD TO APPOINT INTERIM SUP'T

The PCT has been advised that at their meeting on May 21, the Board of Education will appoint Dr. Gerald Dempsey as Interim Superintendent of Schools.

Dr. Dempsey is the former superintendent of Farmingdale. He is currently finishing a year as Interim Superintendent in Roslyn.

BOARD NIXES TAX SHELTER

The PCT has been talking to the District about taking advantage of provisions of the IRS Code that would permit retiring employees to shelter more of their sick leave pay-out than can be accomplished with conventional 403b accounts. There was agreement at the administrative level that we should move forward with a plan. All that remained was to get the approval of the Board of Education. The matter was put on their agenda for their last meeting.

The PCT having been given no insight that this was a controversial subject was of the belief that Board approval would be forthcoming. We were surprised, therefore, to learn that the Board refused to approve the plan. Their stated reason was that it is

expected that the IRS is going to change the regulations governing these deferred compensation plans, and they wished to wait to see what the IRS was going to do.

PCT President Morty Rosenfeld has been in touch with the President of the Board and requested that they reconsider their decision. Many other districts have implemented such plans, motivated in part by the fact that school districts save the payroll taxes that they are obligated to pay. It remains to be seen if the Board will reconsider.

SRC ELECTIONS

SRC elections are being scheduled in each of the schools of POB. SRC Reps are in on the front lines of union work and, while often under-appreciated, are, nevertheless, a vital part of the structure that protects our members on a day to day basis.

Members interested in serving the membership by becoming an SRC Rep should express their desire to stand for election to the Head reps in their building.

SRC elections will be held on a building by building schedule between May 15 and June 10.

ROSENFELD RE-ELECTED

At the recent NYSUT convention held in Washington D.C., PCT president Morty Rosenfeld was re-elected to the Board of Directors of our state organization. The term is one year.

PCT TO UPDATE DISCOUNT CARD

Former PCT Treasurer Andrew Paskal has volunteered to undertake an update of the PCT Discount Card, a union benefit that provided discounts to members at local businesses.

If you know business people in town who would like to participate in our program, please let Andrew know by dropping a note to him care of the PCT Office or by email to APASKAL@JUNO.COM.

MAINE RENTAL

E. Boothbay 3 BR cape available. Near ocean, sleeps 6-8. Call Deb Rothaug at 631-351-1612.