



PCT PLEDGE

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

**On the Web at:
[http:// pobct.org](http://pobct.org)**

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THE YEAR AHEAD

By PCT President Morty Rosenfeld

Welcome back to what I believe will be one of the most important school years our district has seen for awhile. To call the new year one of change would almost be an understatement.

We begin the year with half of the central office of the district changed. Interim Superintendent Gerard Dempsey has been on the job all summer. More importantly, he reached out to the PCT even before he was on the payroll and began what we are sure will be a cooperative relationship between the administration and our union. On the job since the middle of August is Dr. Linda Bruno serving as the Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum. She too has expressed a desire to work with us.

If last year was to a great extent about developing a plan for the improvement of math education, this year is going to be about the implementation of the plan the PCT worked so hard to bring about. Over the summer, with some difficult obstacles in their way, many of our colleagues at the elementary and middle school level worked to develop a new scope and sequence for math as well as a parent guide for each grade that informs parents of what their children are expected to learn in each grade. These documents flesh out the “blended” math instruction at the core of the PCT plan for reforming math education in our district. The new curriculum documents make clear that children are expected to know basic math facts.

These curriculum must now be brought to life in the classroom. Our students have to know the same basic math facts that their peers throughout the world know. That’s not to say that we want creative mathematical thinking stifled. **But we do want to free ourselves of the illusion that one can think deeply about math without knowing the basics.** With the implementation of these curriculum documents, we will take a giant step in renewing the community’s faith in our schools. Step two will come later in the year when we have piloted several new math texts and make a selection for the district.

This will also be the year that we continue our drive to raise the academic standards of our district. We will be forming a PCT Middle School Committee to take an in depth look at our middle school program and recommend changes to spur better state assessment results and higher academic achievement. We will be looking at class size, with a particular emphasis on the early grades to see if

we can bring about a better start in school for the district’s children. We will also be looking at our kindergarten program trying to see how it can accommodate some of the new demands made on it. We will want to look at ability grouping, responding to a growing awareness by staff and parents that attempts to teach everything to heterogeneous groups tends to impact negatively on our best and weakest students.

I’m asking each of you, at whatever level you teach, to reflect on how you might realistically raise your academic expectations for the students before you, **even though doing so may meet with some initial resistance.** I will also be asking to find some time to serve on one of the many PCT committees that will be working this year on our academic standards agenda. Our goal will be to get every PCT member making a contribution to this important endeavor.

Finally, we will also participate in the process of selecting a new superintendent of schools. Our challenge will be to use our influence to see if we can find a leader whose goal like ours is the pursuit of academic excellence.

There will be much to do, some of it complex and difficult. One thing I’m sure of, however, is that this membership is up to the task. Colleagues, I’m looking forward to what I’m sure will be one of our best years yet.

POBLA DOES PCT PROUD SCORES VICTORY

In June, PCT members working in the school district left their colleagues in the Plainview-Old Bethpage Library Association (POBLA) struggling with their employer’s decision to give non-union employees of the public library a \$2 per hour salary increase above and beyond an increase equal to that which the PCT membership at the library negotiated. The library’s message to our membership was clear. Employees who do not belong to a union do better.

Our POBLA membership was not about to accept that message. Many of them remembered what the library was like before the PCT began to work with them. Their response was the traditional PCT response. They organized to agitate for equal treatment.

Their efforts were rewarded this summer when the library agreed to pay them the \$2 per hour retroactive to January. Additionally, in what the POBLA membership hopes was determined effort to end the divisiveness that has plagued the library, full-time POBLA members have achieved full participation in our Welfare Fund.

At their meeting to ratify their new agreement on August 7, PCT officers Morty Rosenfeld, Cindy Feldman and Judi Alexanderson congratulated POBLA Co-Presidents Marilyn Stolove and Linda Prusein and the POBLA membership for their outstanding expression of PCT solidarity and their very significant accomplishment.

TRACT FACILITATOR CANVAS

The PCT has been notified by Daniel Poplawski that due to personal reasons he is resigning the position of TRACT Teacher Center Satellite Facilitator.

The duties of the Facilitator are as follows:

Organize the resources of the Satellite Center, making it an attractive, useful and welcoming environment for the staff.

Arrange for the presentation of two on site courses (one per semester) as well as additional workshops on a variety of personal and professional development topics for the benefit of the staff.

Be available for Center related activities for a minimum of four hours per week, encouraging teachers to use the facility as a meeting place, as a place for the sharing of ideas, skills and materials with their colleagues, or hosting a specific activity.

Create and maintain an accurate inventory of Teacher Center equipment.

Keep accurate records of course attendance, room usage, and expenditures.

Be an advocate for teacher centered professional development and the mission of the TRACT Center. This includes preparing and disseminating Teacher Center notices, brochures, center newsletters and articles in school wide publications.

Post and publish hours of satellite center operation.

Be responsible for the scheduling of room usage.

Maintain contact with, coordinate and oversee the duties of the district's building ambassadors.

Attend one TRACT sponsored conference.

The Facilitator will receive a stipend of \$5247 per year. Teachers interested in applying for this position should send a letter of interest to the PCT Office. **Letters should include an explanation of the skills and qualities applicants possess that would qualify them for this position.** Letters of application are due by Sept. 14, 2007.

The Satellite Center Facilitator will be chosen by the Satellite Center Policy Board composed of the PCT President, our two TRACT Policy Board Members, the Superintendent of Schools and the Principal of the Plainview-Old Bethpage Middle School or designees.

NEW MEMBER MEETING

Staff new to the Teacher and Clerical Units are reminded of their invitation to attend a meeting at the PCT Office at 4:00 PM on Monday, September 17, 2007.

Officers and staff of the PCT and Welfare Fund will be on hand to assist new staff to put their benefit packages in place and to find out about our union and the work it does for its membership.

PCT members are asked to encourage new hires to attend this very important meeting.

403b CHANGES

PCT members wishing to start a 403b account or change their contributions to existing accounts (tax sheltered annuities) are reminded that they have until Sept. 15, 2007. The next contractual deadline for changes is January 15, 2008.

LANE CHANGES

PCT members are reminded that if they completed sufficient course work over the summer to advance a lane or more on the salary schedule, they need to inform Arthur Jonas' office before September 10, 2007. So long as this notification is made, payment on the new lane is assured as soon as the official university transcript is received by the district.

NAME/ADDRESS CHANGES

If your family status changed over the summer, or if you have moved or changed your email address, please make sure you give the PCT Office your updated information immediately.

FLEX BENEFITS CHANGES IN NOVEMBER

Changes in flex benefits deductions are made through the Business Office in November for the year beginning January 1, 2008. It is not too soon, therefore, for members to start thinking of changes they may wish to make. Now is a good time to review medical expenses not covered by insurance which could be paid for with pre-tax dollars from one's flexible medical spending account.

PCT PARTY BEING PLANNED

Thursday, October 25 is the tentative date for this year's PCT Party to welcome our newest members and honor last year's retirees. The officers and staff are looking for a new and exciting location. For now, hold the date. Time and place should be available shortly.