



## PCT PLEDGE

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## YOU CAN'T MAKE THESE THINGS UP

By PCT President Morty Rosenfeld

Monday's Board of Education meeting in part was about the proposed budget for the 2008-09 school year, a budget that poses some difficulties owing to a projected decrease in expected state aid. One of the focal points of the budget discussion was the technology budget, proposed at \$484,130, an increase of about \$96,000. Smartboards, digital projectors, surround sound, wireless computer labs on carts all entered the discussions. To hear the presenters, one would think POB was a technology paradise where children were digesting digital lessons effortlessly.

It was with that experience in mind that I received an email from one of our members, one of the many communications I receive expressing complete frustration with the technology program of our district. It read, "It's nice to see that when I tried to read Jane's article about ID badges [currently on the PCT webpage] the district won't allow me to access it from my classroom computer because of "Blocked Content Analysis: Criminal Related." Criminal content? Huh? Jane's article explores how the most serious threats to students and staff in schools almost invariably come from within rather than from without and how we don't appear to be focused on the real threat when we discuss security. The fact that it contains words like Osama Bin Laden, shootings, massacre etc. undoubtedly set off the filter on the District's system, a filter designed by people who clearly know absolute nothing about public school curricula or teaching. In fact, they appear to know little other than pornography and violence.

This, of course, is but the latest example of a technology program at odds with knowledge and learning. Students researching topics like breast cancer will often get blocked as will those seeking information on almost any subject related to human sexuality, this in a school world in which we know that a very significant number of our teenage students are sexually active, a world in which the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases is rising alarmingly. Interestingly, these same students can go to the POB Public Library and access anything they have a mind to. The Library appears to have a greater respect for knowledge and learning.

## NEW FINANCIAL BENEFITS

### VOTE SET FOR APRIL 16

For some time, the PCT has been discussing with the Board of Education the possibility of implementing a tax sheltering plan that would permit retiring members of both the Teacher and Clerical Units of the PCT to shelter the money they receive upon retirement for their unused sick leave. The PCT is very pleased to report that those discussions have come to a very successful conclusion. Our union will be working with the District to implement a **non-elective 403b plan** in time to meet the needs of those intending to retire at the end of June.

A **non-elective 403b plan** is a tax sheltering program designed for money contributed directly by the employer (In our case our sick leave buy-out money). It will permit retiring members to shelter most if not all of the proceeds of their contractual sick leave buy-out. It is non-elective in the sense that all members of the Clerical and Teacher bargaining units **must** participate in it. **There is no choice.** Each year when members retire, whatever sick leave money they are owed will be deposited in an absolutely risk free investment account.

Should members wish to withdraw their money, they are free to do so immediately, **but the District must deposit the sick leave buy-out money directly into the non-elective 403b account.**

Because members have no choice about where the money is deposited, the IRS requires that there be a **majority vote** of the membership to establish the non-elective 403b plan. That vote will be conducted in each building by secret ballot on Wednesday, April 16, 2008. There will be separate votes for the Teacher and Clerical Bargaining Units. A YES vote will provide this year's retirees and all future retirees a powerful tool to plan their economic futures.

In addition to establishing a non-elective 403b plan, we will also be creating the opportunity for all members of the Teacher and Clerical Units to start what is known as **457 plans**. A 457 plan is essentially like having a second 403b plan. It can be used to shelter earnings beyond what is legally permitted by the rules for 403b's. The yearly limit on how much may be sheltered is the same for 457 and 403b plans. This plan is administered by New York State and provides many investment opportunities with major investment companies. The funds and their performance can be found on the web googling [New York State Deferred Compensation Plan](#) or by clicking on this link if you are reading the *Pledge* online.

PCT President Morty Rosenfeld will be holding meetings at each workplace about our new financial opportunities. There will also be an informational flyer distributed as soon as the final details of the plan are resolved and before the membership vote on April 16.

In the meantime, members with questions are

asked to contact Morty Rosenfeld by phone at the PCT Office or by e-mail at [mrosenfeld@pobct.org](mailto:mrosenfeld@pobct.org).

## PCT ELECTIONS

The PCT has received nominating petitions from Cindy Feldman, Sharon Lasher and Joan Strong for the position of PCT High School Vice-President. The election will be held on Monday May 5, 2008 at each school. All members of the Teacher Bargaining Unit are eligible to vote in this election. Absentee ballots will be available at the PCT Office from April 14 to April 18.

March 12, 2008 having been the deadline for the filing of nominating petitions for PCT office, nominations are now closed. Pursuant to the PCT Constitution, the PCT Secretary will cast one ballot for each officer position other than High School Vice-President at the May meeting of the PCT Executive Board.

## ELA FORUM STARTED

In the few meetings of the PCT Literacy Committee already held, one thing has become abundantly clear - teachers universally perceive that the students entering our schools are less linguistically able than those of only a few years ago. There is also an emerging consensus on what the causes of this circumstance is. Among these are the language depressing effects of over exposure to media and computer games, decreased parent interaction, particularly reading and an often premature emphasis on learning to read.

There is so far no consensus on what a quality school district should do to counter these societal trends. If the educational programs are no longer completely suited for the students we are meeting, how should the program be changed to better meet the needs of these students?

With that question in mind, the PCT has created an ELA online forum in the hope of involving our members in the discussion. The issues related to our ELA program are so important to the future of the District that we want to draw on all of the members for ideas.

The ELA Forum is open only to PCT members. If you have a working email address on file with the PCT, you have already received an email invitation to join. If you didn't get an invitation or you deleted the one sent to you, simply send an email to PCT President Morty Rosenfeld at [mrosenfeld@pobct.org](mailto:mrosenfeld@pobct.org). Please be sure to identify yourself in your email. In a short time, you will receive instructions by return email on how to join the forum.

This invitation system is being done to keep non-members out of our discussion. Therefore, members can feel free to identify themselves and speak their minds. Only fellow PCT members will read their comments.

## MAY 20<sup>TH</sup> BUDGET VOTE PCT WORKERS REQUIRED

On Tuesday, May 20, voters throughout New York State will be voting on their local school budgets and electing members of boards of education.

While our Board of Education has yet to adopt a budget for next year, indications are that it will be one that the PCT can comfortably support. In its current iteration, it provides for most modest improvements, something that will be uncommon in the budgets of many districts this year, a year in which we and many others are likely to receive less state aid than we had been led to understand we would receive.

Given the worsening economic conditions in our country and state, this will probably also be a year in which a more than usual number of school budgets fail. **This must not happen in Plainview-Old Bethpage.**

To ensure that it doesn't, PCT members are asked to block out time from May 17- 20. This is the period during which we will be conducting our phonebank in support of our budget and doing other political activities to make sure we have a budget.

There are over 4000 phone calls that need to be made. Your officers and building reps can't do that job for you. This is one of the times during the year that demand the collective action of each member.

Take a look at your calendar today. Locate a day and time when you can devote a few hours to this very important work. Our members' work on those days can spare us a lot of grief next year.

## SALARY INCREASE 2008-09

PCT members have been asking their officers what the raise for next year will be. Our agreement calls for the average settlement in Nassau County concluded between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2008. It will be no lower than 3.2% and no higher than 3.75%.

## HOUSE FOR RENT

Albertson, NY, Walking distance from LIRR; 3-4 bedrooms + 2 baths; washer/dryer; fenced in yard; beautiful area; available July; \$2300 + utilities; Call Valerie 516-249-5021.

Vacation Rental - East Boothbay Maine. 3 BR Cape, near the ocean, LL Bean, Freeport outlets. Call Deb Rothaug 631-351-1612.