



PCT PLEDGE

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POLITICAL ACTION IS FOR YOU

By PCT President Morty Rosenfeld

If you've every wondered about the importance of political action, recent events in Albany should make you wonder why you didn't make a larger contribution to VOTE/COPE this year. Faced with a proposed education budget that would have gone back on the promise of more state aid to public schools, our lobbyists in the capitol put on the full body press. To POB this massive effort meant almost an additional 8 million dollars. This alone would have been a wonderful union victory, but there was more difficult political action work to do in Albany this spring.

While it didn't get too much attention, New York City Chancellor Joel Klein and the New York State School Boards Association attempted to amend the tenure law in a way that would have required school districts to consider the state assessment results of probationary teachers in the process of either granting or denying them tenure. Thus while we were working like hell to get more money for our schools, the focus of New York City and the School Boards Association was on changing the tenure law in what can only be described as a preposterous manner. In the end, the tenure law remains unchanged thanks to NYSUT's efforts.

Finally, we learned yesterday that the attempt to establish a state mandated cap on property taxes has also been defeated. While it cannot be argued that the property tax is a good way to finance public education, simply capping the amount that communities can raise to finance their schools would have insured that schools would get less money. Can anyone seriously imagine a state whose revenue projections grow worse each day making up the shortfall a property tax cap would bring? Once again, your political action dollars contributed to VOTE/COPE made this victory possible.

Our work in Albany is not finished, however. Judi Alexanderson and I will team up with hundreds of NYSUT activists in Albany on Tuesday, May 13 to again lobby our elected representatives. We'll be trying to see if we can improve the funding situation for our state university and community colleges who did not fare as well as we had hoped in the recent budget deliberations. We will also be working our 55/25 bill that would allow tiers 3 and 4 members to retire at age 55 and 25 years of service without penalty. We will be talking about improving the COLA on our pensions. There will be much for us to do.

LOCAL POLITICAL ACTION

By now, I trust that all PCT members have informed their SRC Reps of their participation in our phone bank operation to take place between May 17-20.

The PCT Executive Board has voted to support POB's 2008-09 school budget as well as the candidacies of Debbie Bernstein and Ginger Lieberman for seats on the Board of Education. At our next Executive Board meeting, the officers will be asking for a vote of support for the budget of the POB Public Library as well.

With the economy in the state it's in, this is predicted to be a difficult year for school budgets. We must make every reasonable effort we can to ensure its passage by the community. You say you can't come to the PCT Office to make calls, we have some for you to do from home. There are about 4000 parent phone calls to make. Additionally, there are almost 1700 calls to local NYSUT members who have been extremely supportive of our political efforts. Some union work can't be done by building reps and officers. It requires that we all pitch in. Let your building rep know that you are ready to make your contribution to the effort.

ROSENFELD RE-ELECTED TO NYSUT BOARD

At the NYSUT Representative Assembly on April 12, 2008, PCT President Morty Rosenfeld was re-elected to the Board of Directors of our state organization for a three year term to represent Election District D made up of former NEA/New York locals in the eastern half of the state.

With this election cycle, the former NEA/New York local unions now have representation on the Board proportionate to their membership in the merged state union. In 2011, the entire state will be redistricted pursuant to the merger agreement. That will be the last step in the almost flawless process of putting the two state unions together.

FELDMAN & DUGAN CONDUCT COMPUTER SURVEY

The District having declared its intention to purchase a new computerized, web based student management system, the PCT questioned the administration about the adequacy of the District's computer network to support the convenient and productive use of the new system. The District's goal for next year is to be able to use the system to record student attendance at all levels.

After some back and forth with the administration defending its network and union representatives suggesting that there were many classrooms with inadequate or no teacher computer access, Superintendent Dempsey suggested and the PCT agreed that a survey be undertaken to determine what if any barriers exist

to the implementation of the new student management system.

PCT High School Vice-President Cindy Feldman and Treasurer Kevin Dugan and Assistant Superintendent Art Jonas have been surveying the computers in every classroom in the District, talking to teachers in the process to determine their needs relative to using a web based student management system.

Feldman and Dugan have a very clear objective in representing the PCT in this survey project. The PCT wants to be sure that the new computer system makes the clerical chores of teachers easier. Unfortunately, we have had too many experiences where technology has been introduced only to make work more difficult. Watch the *Pledge* for the results of the survey.

403b/457 WORKSHOP FOR RETIREES BEING PLANNED

Now that the PCT membership has ratified the agreement with the District for members to participate in a non-elective 403b and 457 plans, our union is working with Assistant Superintendent Ryan Ruf to put together a workshop for those about to retire in June. With only two months before the end of the school year, putting these benefits in place for our retirees has to be a priority.

After the retirees have been taken care of, we will be scheduling meetings for active members to learn about starting 457 plans should they wish to.

RETIREMENT DEADLINE

Teacher members considering retirement are reminded of the contractual deadline of May 15 to ensure that they receive payment for their accumulated sick leave in July. Retiring members need to send a letter of resignation for the purpose of retirement on June 30, 2008 to Assistant Superintendent for Personnel Art Jonas. Remember, that once the Board of Education acts on your letter of resignation, **they don't have to give it back to you if you change your mind.**

MENTOR APPLICATIONS DUE

PCT members wishing to serve as mentors to beginning teachers should submit a request in writing to PCT Secretary Judi Alexanderson at the PCT office.

Those who were mentors this year and who would like to continue to serve, need to inform Judi of their wishes.

Mentors are paid a stipend of \$3000.

WELFARE FUND DENTAL

Effective January 1, 2008, the Welfare Fund changed the company that administers our plan. **None of the benefits in our plan changed.** The only changes are that members now through Guardian have a much larger network of dentists to pick from where there should be no out of pocket expenses and, of course, Guardian now writes the checks for us.

While the Welfare Fund was experiencing some start-up problems with the new administrator, the staff reports that most of the issues have been resolved.

To find a dentist in your area who is a paid provider (no out of pocket expenses) or to check if your dentist belongs, do the following:

- 1- Go to the PCT web site at pobct.org.
- 2 - At the lower left hand side of the page, click on Guardian Preferred Network.
- 3 - Where it says "Select a Plan," click on "PPO."
- 4 - Enter your zip code and click "Continue."
- 5 - Where it says "Choose a Network," click "DentalGuard Preferred."

WE'RE PLANNING NEXT YEAR'S PARTY

With last year's PCT party at FOUR such a tremendous success, we wanted to be sure we were able to hold our annual event there again. Members were filled with praise for the food, wine and atmosphere, many taking the time to tell us that they wanted the party at FOUR again.

The PCT is happy to announce that our fall party will be held at FOUR on **Thursday, October 23, 2008 from 4:00 -7:00 P.M.** That date will not conflict with staff development or any school event. An effort has been made to clear the school calendar to the extent possible to allow for maximum participation. Mark your calendars today!

CREDITS WANTED

Hofstra credits needed. Contact Fran Ferrucci at the K-Center or 631-807-8455.