



PCT PLEDGE

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MYP STUDY NEEDS TEACHER LEADERSHIP

By PCT President Morty Rosenfeld

If the 2009-10 year of study of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program (MYP) is to be productive, either in building a consensus to move forward with the implementation of the program or take a different direction in our middle school reform efforts, it will be essential for the Board of Education to approve the appointment of IB Coordinators at both middle schools for next year.

While the PCT Middle School Committee working closely with Assistant Superintendent Linda Bruno has learned quite a bit about the program this year, if we are to enlarge the participation of teachers in the process of learning about the program, we must have a person leading that learning effort in each building. Having sent members of the committee out for IB training, having visited two schools that run the IB Middle Years Program, having brought two IB coordinators from these schools to meet with staff, we need to start to think more substantively about whether this program is a good fit for our middle schools.

To do that requires more than a once a month PCT Middle School Committee meeting. There needs to be on-going school-wide discussion of the program. Such discussions require a teacher leader in each school who has the time to get fully knowledgeable about the program, to hold professional discussions of the programs, to answer questions, to seek desired information, to recruit people for and to schedule IB training sessions - in short to lead a real investigation of the program and its suitability for the middle schools of Plainview-Old Bethpage.

Without engaging as much of the staff as possible in the exploration of the IB program, it's hard to understand how a year of study will yield any more than another year of study. From my perspective, the promise of IB has always been the possibility for teachers to take more professional control of their work, to work collaboratively to create a unified academic program. For that to happen, there must be teacher leadership from the inception, and that means IB coordinators from the start.

NEGOTIATIONS

The PCT has now held general membership meetings for all of its school district units to ratify demands for the negotiations leading to successor agreements to those expiring on June 30, 2009. Our

ratified demands are the *de facto* instructions of the membership to our negotiating committee.

With these meetings concluded, the next step in the process would normally be the contacting of the District's chief negotiator and the construction of a schedule of negotiations sessions. However, given the very unusual economic environment, the Negotiating Committee at its March 30th meeting took a decision to communicate with the Board of Education their belief that both our union and the District would be better served by quickly agreeing to an extension of our current agreements and the negotiation of a retirement incentive tied to health insurance to cushion the economic impact of such a settlement on the POB community. Seeking to maintain the focus of the PCT and the Board on our common reform efforts, the letter to the Board President concludes with: "Since the PCT first made its proposal to extend our existing agreements, the revenue picture of the District was admittedly dim. It has since improved substantially. Between the federal stimulus legislation and a state aid package significantly greater than in the Governor's original budget proposal, the District can now confidently approach the 2009-10 fiscal year with a better revenue picture than could have been imagined even weeks ago. Hopefully, this will permit the Board of Education to rethink our proposal and conclude as we have that both labor and management would be better off continuing to devote their energies to our mutual efforts to improve the academic programs of our District."

The sour economy, the teacher bashing of *Newsday*, the failure of Albany to do anything to provide relief from the regressive property tax and the omnipresent envy of public employees appear to be creating a mind-set among boards of education that no one facing the expiration of a contract wants to be the first to conclude an agreement and become the Island's trendsetter, especially until budgets are passed in May. At least that was the view expressed by locals up for negotiations in NYSUT Election District 19 at a recent meeting. The only thing clear at this point is that someone will have to go first.

While we continue to hope for a speedy agreement to extend our existing contracts, preparations for more protracted and difficult negotiations go forward. At a meeting of our Head SRC Reps prior to the holidays, our building leaders were instructed to begin forming solidarity committees in their buildings. The goal of this endeavor is to tighten our organizational structure in each workplace so as to provide the best possible support to our Negotiating Committee. As a significant portion of our current active membership has not been through a full-scale negotiations, we want to be sure that we have a mechanism in place to train our newer members for the part they have to play in the process. Members will be hearing more about solidarity committees at their next SRC meetings.

COMPLETING A LEAVE REPLACEMENT ASSIGNMENT?

PCT members who are in regular substitute positions replacing a tenure track teacher who is on leave are reminded that unless they have been told they have a job in the district for next year, their assignments end, usually at the end of the school year. While they will, of course, be considered for any opening that may occur, the reality is that they ought to be looking elsewhere for employment for the fall.

NYSUT, the PCT's state organization, has just launched a new service through its website for those seeking employment in education in New York. The service includes listings of openings in the various areas of the state. Members can access the service at www.nysut.org/careers.

HARPLE RESIGNS DUGAN APPOINTED TRUSTEE

At their meeting of March 26, 2009, the trustees of the PFT Welfare Fund accepted the resignation of PCT Trustee Lauren Harple who stepped down prior to spring break during which she was married. The trustees took notice of Harple's years of service to the fund and expressed their best wishes for the new direction of her life.

At this same meeting, the Welfare Fund Trustees installed PCT Treasurer Kevin Dugan to replace Harple. Dugan was appointed to the post by the PCT Executive Board at their March 17, 2009 meeting.

The Board of Trustees of the PFT Welfare Fund is made up of three members appointed by the PCT Executive Board and three members appointed by the Board of Education.

BOARD AGREES TO PERMANENT NURSE SUB

For some time, PCT Nurses have reported the potentially dangerous situation where one or more of them is absent and a substitute nurse cannot be found.

Seeking to find a solution to this problem, earlier in the year the PCT invited Nurse Coordinator Andrea Spector to attend one of our bi-monthly meetings between the officers of the PCT and the Board of Education to educate the Board to the severity of the problem and to suggest a plan for its remediation.

When the first meeting failed to produce a plan both sides could support, our nurses went back to the drawing board to find a different solution. When Andrea returned with the officers to a second meeting with the Board, she came armed with a new plan developed by our nurses, to provide a permanent substitute nurse, a person who will come to work everyday and be assigned to wherever she is needed.

While this is not a perfect solution to the problem, it will surely obviate some of the extreme situations

we had this year when as many as three nurses fell ill on a single day. The plan is but the latest example of imaginative solutions to problems that can come from unleashing the talents of the people who actually do the work.

EXECUTIVE BOARD APPROVES ELEMENTARY REPORT CARD COMMITTEE

At several meetings of the PCT Executive Board this year, elementary members have voiced concerns that the report card they are using no longer aligns very well with the curriculum changes we have made, particularly in math and English Language Arts.

Aware too of some parent concerns with the current elementary report card, the officers of our union recommended to the Executive Board and the Board concurred that an Elementary Report Card Committee be formed to address these concerns of both teachers and parents.

PCT members interested in working on this committee should inform the PCT office of their interest. The goal is to have a few meetings to address the malalignment of the curriculum and the report card and to suggest whatever other changes are necessary in light of our efforts to raise the academic standards. The Report Card Committee is not meant to require a major commitment of time for those thinking of volunteering.

CREDITS FOR SALE

Adelphi credits. Contact Michele Macedonio at 937-2785.

CREDITS WANTED

Hofstra credits wanted. Contact Fran Ferrucci, K-Center or 631-807-8455.

Adelphi or Hofstra credits wanted. Contact Andrew Paskal, 672-1608 or at Stratford.

FOR SALE

Two bedroom Farmingdale condo. Call Jackie D'Arco 586-4611.

Timeshare - Cabo San Lucas. Willing to sell one week or trade (November 1- May 1, except Christmas week). Call Sue Rachell 694-5424.