



## **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 DISTRICT AT A CROSSROADS**

**By PCT President Morty Rosenfeld**

With negotiations concluded, we need to reflect on where we were before the Board of Education turned the process into a public spectacle which empowered community elements anxious with the state of the economy and angry about a national economic agenda apparently more concerned with the welfare of Wall Street tycoons than middle class taxpayers struggling to meet their financial responsibilities.

Prior to that fiasco, our district had embraced a reform effort focused on teachers taking greater responsibility for the academic program. Working through PCT recruited committees with former Assistant Superintendent Linda Bruno, management and labor honestly discussed the shortcomings of our curriculum and ways in which it could be significantly improved. Summer curriculum projects were designed and developed with the result that no fair-minded person would deny that we made very significant progress particularly in math and English.

More and more, my job as PCT President entailed explaining and encouraging the changes our committees were proposing to a membership that was justifiably suspicious that, like many reform efforts of the past, this attempt would fail for lack of support from the Board of Education.

Whether as a result of Linda Bruno's departure, the bitterness on both sides growing out of negotiations or both, the climate has clearly changed. As recently as the last meeting of the Board of Education, Superintendent Dempsey and Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Jill Gierasch reported to the Board on the educational initiatives the district has been exploring pursuant to the Board's goals. All were top-down and management conceived, management led efforts, the kind that have failed year after year both here and across the country.

The powers that be are going to have to decide very quickly where our district is going. Do they wish to try to resume the effort to truly professionalize teaching by having practitioners increasingly take control and responsibility for their work, or do they wish to try to bludgeon us into accepting our roles as data driven drones?

One path leads to creativity, excitement and professional growth. The other to resistance and

mediocrity.

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD ADOPTS ELECTION CALENDAR**

The terms of all current PCT officers expire on July 1, 2010. The PCT Constitution provides for officer elections every two years. The positions to be filled are as follows:

### **PCT Offices**

- PCT President
- PCT Elementary Vice-President\*
- PCT Middle School Vice-President\*
- PCT High School Vice-President\*
- PCT Secretary
- PCT Treasurer

\*The Instructional Level Vice-Presidents are elected by all active teacher members of the PCT. All other officers are elected by the membership of all units of the PCT.

### **Clerical Unit**

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Only members of the CUPCT are eligible to vote for these offices.

### **Substitute Unit**

- Chairperson
- Secretary/Treasurer
- Alternate

Only members of the SUPCT are eligible to vote for these offices.

### **Public Library Unit**

- President

Only members of POBLA are eligible to vote for this office.

In accordance with the Constitution, PCT Secretary Judith Alexanderson presented the following election schedule which the Board adopted:

February 8, 2010 - Nominating petitions for the Teacher Unit signed by at least 25 PCT members due by 5:00 P.M. at the PCT Office. Clerical Unit petitions require 10 signatures of CUPCT members. Blank nominating petitions are now available at the PCT Office.

March 1, 2010 -100 word candidate statements due at the PCT office by 5:00 P.M. These statements will be published in a special election edition of the *Pledge*.

March 5, 2010 - Absentee, Public Library and Retiree ballots mailed along with election edition of the *Pledge*.

March 26, 2010 - All mail ballots must be postmarked by this date.

April 7, 2010 - Election held in all buildings. All mail ballots must be received by this date.

The PCT Executive Board additionally appointed the Head Building Reps of each school to constitute the Election Committee. The Election Committee will conduct the counting of the vote.

In the event that there is only one candidate for an office, the PCT Constitution provides that the PCT Secretary shall cast one ballot at the Executive Board meeting following the date of the election.

## **VOTE/COPE DRIVE COMPLETED**

Once again, PCT members recognized the importance of participating in a vigorous political action program by increasing the PCT's contribution to VOTE/COPE, NYSUT's political action fund.

This year's total of \$17,421 is almost \$1700 more than we raised last year. Since joining NYSUT through our state merger, the PCT has increased its VOTE/COPE contribution each year.

## **RACE TO THE TOP**

Race to the Top (RTTT) is a so-call reform initiative of the Obama administration. Billions of dollars of new federal education money is offered to states who submit competitive proposals for reform agendas. For a state to even have its proposal considered, it must pledge adherence to four concepts which include "recruiting, developing, retaining and rewarding effective teachers and principals" and "building instructional data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practice." Thus to qualify, states, and through them local school districts and their unions, are asked to pledge that they favor merit pay systems and the evaluation of teachers on the basis of student test scores.

The PCT having long had policies against either of these requirements of the RTTT, PCT President was obliged to refuse to sign a memorandum of understanding our district was asked to sign. In doing so, he joined many other local union presidents who believe the whole approach of the RTTT is wrong-headed and bound to waste taxpayer money.

## **PCT SAFE DRIVER COURSE**

The PCT is once again offering its safe driver course that can entitle participants to a ten percent reduction in their liability insurance coverage and the removal of up to four violation points from one's license.

The course will be held on March 22 and 23 from 4:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. in the Kennedy High School Library.

Tuition for the PCT Safe Driver Course is \$25.00 payable by check made out to PCT and sent to the PCT Office. There are only 40 places available, so act quickly.

## **RETIREMENT SEMINAR?**

It's usually this time of year when the PCT begins to get requests to run a retirement seminar. At our seminar conducted by PCT president Morty Rosenfeld, topics discussed range from the decision to retire to Medicare and Social Security.

Members of any of our bargaining units interested in attending a retirement seminar are asked to notify the PCT Office of their interest. The tentative date for the seminar is Thursday, February 25, 2010 at 4:00 P.M. at a place to be determined.

## **NYSUT LAUNCHES FINANCIAL PLANNING BENEFIT**

NYSUT has entered into a relationship with Stacey Braun Associates, a financial planning firm, to provide members with financial consultations with certified financial planners. Financial planners sell their financial advice. **They do not sell investment products and therefore have no personal interest in steering their clients to any investment other than one they think best given the client's need and risk tolerance.**

SRC Reps will be seeking to ascertain whether PCT members would like our union to investigate offering this benefit on a group basis. If you think this would be a good idea, make your thoughts known at your SRC meeting.

## **CREDITS FOR SALE**

One (1) Adelphi credit. Contact Frank Buck at (516) 349-4767.