



PCT PLEDGE

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FAREWELL

By PCT President Morty Rosenfeld

I had hoped that my last communication to you as PCT President would be to announce agreement on a new contract. That's not to be.

As I reported to you a few weeks ago, progress was being made, albeit agonizingly slow. That progress has stopped.

The thorny issues I reported on remain, with the Board's position having hardened. Only the health insurance buy-back has been resolved, that one by court decision, not negotiations. Still remaining are staff development, elementary extra help, OT/PT, nurses and clerical longevity, welfare and substitute teacher issues. On Monday, the PCT submitted very reasonable proposals that would have resolved all issues and which at the very least should have invited counter proposals that would have narrowed the gap between the parties. Worse than the issues themselves and the failure of the Board to move on them are threats that have entered our conversation, threats in the face of very reasonable offers of compromise on all issues.

For the first time in many years, we appear to have a Board of Education, egged on by a superintendent of schools who is totally indifferent to the needs of our members and who is sporting a new contract of her own, who seem to want to provoke a confrontation with our union. They appear to think it in the interest of the community to test Nina Melzer and the other PCT leaders. They apparently want to believe that my retirement will weaken your resolve.

While it is a stupid ploy, it's not unheard

of. I remember being challenged when I first took office. The membership rallied around me then as I am absolutely sure you will around Nina, the other officers and our Negotiating Committee. Because you know as I do, if you give into threats, you send a message that you are a victim waiting to be preyed upon.

The shame is that with good will and some leadership on management's side of the table, these matters could all be easily resolved. I hope that when two new Board members take their seats in July, the dynamic of the Board will change. I know Ronelle Hershkowitz will not want a confrontation with the PCT. While I don't know Susan Stewart well, I know she ran on a platform that promised a new direction for the district. Surely she didn't mean that direction to be making war on the District's teachers.

Allow me to say again, how sorry I am to end the school year and my tenure as your president on this unhappy note. Until July 1st, I will continue to seek an amicable settlement of all outstanding issues. Nina and our Negotiating Committee will be available to negotiate over the summer. They have already begun the planning for the opening of school should we not have a contract.

On July 1st, it will be Nina's turn to lead us. I will be available to do whatever she asks of me. In normal circumstances, it's difficult to assume the leadership of a union that's been led by another for over thirty years. Nina's task has just gotten even harder. She can't succeed without you behind her. You can't succeed without rallying around her and making it clear to those with the temerity to threaten us that you will not be moved by threats, that you are people of substance who stand strong for their union. When you do, you will not fail.

On a personal note, many of you have expressed your frustration with my insistence that there be no farewell party for me and Judi. Throughout my years as a union officer, I've tried to teach those who worked closely with me to be careful of making our union a personal thing. "It's not about you," I've said thousands of times. "It's about the union." Parties don't fit well with that view

of our roles as union leaders.

Sneaky devils that you all are, however, you found a way to express your appreciation of our efforts anyway. Your overly generous gifts and expressions of appreciation for our efforts will be long remembered as will the many experiences we have shared in our ongoing struggle to defend public education and the professionalism of our membership. There is nothing left to be said but THANK YOU!

STEP PLACEMENT GRIEVANCE

Sixteen members of the PCT will be receiving retroactive pay in their final check for having been inappropriately placed on steps when they were hired. The settlement represents over \$70,000 in back pay for these individuals. The agreement settling this grievance gets our members paid back to September 1, 2015.

HEALTH-BUY-BACK

In light of the Appellate Division reversing itself and declaring the New York State Civil Service Department's rule outlawing health insurance buy-backs of the Empire Plan impermissible to individuals covered by a spouse elsewhere null and void, the Board of Education has agreed to pay the monies it has been holding since the challenged rule came into effect. Those payments will be made during the month of July. The members who are due the buy-back have missed 6 of the payments due them, amounting to over \$25,000 to people who bought back family health.

While our court case was wending its way through the system, NYSUT had a bill introduced in both houses of the legislature making buy-backs legal. The bill is on Governor Cuomo's desk awaiting his signature. Even though we won our case and will be getting the money owed our members, we hope the Governor signs the law. Our legal victory was a narrow one, one which invites the Civil Service Department to try to make a new rule and requiring us to challenge it in the courts again.

The PCT will be watching carefully what

the Governor does with this bill.

MENTORS 2016-17

Each year, we appoint mentors for the coming academic year, one for each school. Mentors are expected to work with new hires mandated to have a mentor and other teacher members who require assistance with some aspect of their work. The 2016-17 mentors are as follows:

JFK – Tracey Gonzalez
MMS – Eric Brooks
PMS – Joe Morello
OB – Nancy Klein
Pas – Michele Macedonio
Pky – Debra Lovett
Strat – Rose Torres

SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

During the months of July and August, the PCT/Welfare Fund Office will be open Monday through Thursday from 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

*WISHING
EVERYONE*

A

WONDERFUL,

RESTFUL

SUMMER

*The Officers and Staff of
the PCT.*