



Pequannock Township Education Association



CHALKBOARD

April 2010

~President's Message~

Colleagues,

It is my sincere hope that all of our members and their families who have been affected by the flooding in February are getting on with their lives as best as they are able. It was a long winter, and I am glad spring is finally here.

In February, several of your colleagues rallied and lobbied for your pensions and benefits. We made trips to Mountain Lakes and East Brunswick for meetings and to Mendham and Trenton to rally. We tried to convince the Senate and Assembly that the legislation they proposed would be damaging not only to education, but to your livelihood.

Although we managed to change some opinions in the Assembly, a majority of the legislation was passed - some of it with no amendments or arguments.

The legislation with the most immediate impact is the one which will require every one of our members to take a 1.5% salary cut, effective July 1, 2010, to "contribute" to health benefits. Although many of our members already contribute to their health care benefits, this deduction from your salary will be *on top* of that payment. The local newspaper insinuated that the PTEA was not cooperative when approached about ways to save the district money, so I find it interesting that this information was not in any newspaper article, nor did the BOE share it with the public, during the school budget presentations.

Colleagues, I want to let you know that despite what the press has reported about our profession, I feel there are few more noble endeavors than the journey to educate a child. Our members, from our Custodial/Maintenance employees to our Advanced Placement teachers, are professionals, who spend their days working to ensure that the children in this district are safe during the school day and that they leave us at the end of their school careers as productive, well-rounded individuals.

I thank you all for your dedication to your students.
Have a happy and healthy spring.

Lee Ann



Lillian Keeting (PV), Ann Marie Finnen (SJG), Traci Cepero (PV), Janelle Heise (PV)

~PRIDE~

by Karen Schiffel (SJG) and Jamie Dean (NB)

Lt. Ed Leonard, Lisa Donnelly, Linda Vedovino, and Lisa Czubachowski were honored as the 2010 PTEA Friends of Education. Congratulations to them!

Julia Ann Blahut, a 4th grader at North Boulevard won the MCCEA Poster Contest for her age group (3rd-5th grade). She will be honored on Monday, April 19, 2010 at the Rockaway Mall at 7pm and also at the May Board of Education meeting. Congratulations to Julia!

~Negotiations~

by Helene Zablocki

The PTEA Negotiations team met last Thursday, April 15th, to exchange proposals with the Board of Education. We discussed a few items from both proposals. Several more dates were scheduled for continuing talks. The meeting began at 6:30 pm [7:30 pm with the Board] and ended at 11:15 pm.

~Legislative~

by Lillian Keeting, (PV)

It's almost impossible to look at a NJ newspaper without seeing an article about Christie's attack on public education and its effects on taxpayers, teachers, students and the rest of the school community. Each district is coping in its own way with this drastic loss of funding. One lengthy bill, the Pension Bill, has been passed through all the branches of the state government. This bill has 16 provisions, most of which are directed at new employees. Current school employees will be affected by the requirement that we contribute 1.5% of our base salary toward our health benefits. For a more complete summary of this complicated bill, check it out on www.njea.org.

Two other relevant bills are also being introduced. The first is the Voucher Bill (S1872) which would divert \$360 million in tax dollars to private and religious schools. The second bill would require New Jersey workers to live in New Jersey. As it now stands, this legislation would give current non-resident employees 30 months to move into NJ, and new hires would get four months to find a NJ home.

Please take seriously every request to contact your legislator to oppose these bills. It takes all of our combined voices to be heard in Trenton. Each one of us must communicate our views to our representatives to affect any change and to be part of the democratic process.

~Publicity~

by Amanda Schlesinger

Please remember to check the PTEA website (pteaweb.org) for the most current information concerning the PTEA.