



Pequannock Township Education Association



CHALKBOARD

February 2012

~President's Message~

Colleagues,

We have been blessed with excellent weather so far, this winter, and after the dreadful weather we suffered in the summer and fall, I am grateful. I am also looking forward to the promise of lovely spring weather!

As I write this, the nominating committee of the Morris County Council of Education Associations has prepared the slate of nominees for President, Vice President, and several Delegate Assembly positions. Ann Marie Finnen and I are on that committee, and will be presenting the information to our Representative Council and Executive Board at our February Meeting. Your Association Representatives will be bringing you this information after that meeting.

Our February meeting is our Friends of Education celebration. At that meeting, we honor those members of the community who have given their time to work with the children and staff in the district. PRIDE chairpersons Karen Schiffel and Jamie Dean always do an excellent job organizing and running the evening. We will also be preparing our own nominations for PTEA President and Vice President.

On March 22, we will have our General Membership meeting in the High School Cafeteria. We will present the Representative Council/Executive Board nominations and we will take nominations from the floor for both President and Vice President. We will vote no later than March 27 (three working days) after the meeting. We encourage all members to come to the meeting, as always. There will be food, of course, but this year, look for some new and interesting additions to our meeting.

Following our General Membership meeting, we will also be voting again for changes in our By-Laws and Constitution. We distributed the original copy and the changes that were approved by NJEA a few months ago. Although the members that voted on these changes overwhelmingly supported their passage, our original By-Laws call for the approval of the majority of the membership. Since the majority did not vote, we could not pass the changes.

Finally, also after the General Membership meeting, we will again vote for two representatives to attend the Representative Assembly of the NEA. This year's conference is in Washington, DC. Our local is entitled to elect two Delegates to attend. Laura Higley and I will both be on the ballot, but we encourage others to either self-nominate, or to be nominated to the ballot. Information can be found in the January, 2012 edition of the NJEA Reporter (page 8). It is available at the following link on the NJEA.org webpage:

http://www.njea.org/njea-media/pdf/Reporter_Jan2012.pdf?1328714474038

I look forward to seeing you all in March.

~Lee Ann

~Vice President's Message~

Ann Marie Finnen (SJG)

Dear Colleagues,

Last month I attended the overnight professional development conference sponsored by the MCCEA (our county organization). As usual, it was a fabulous opportunity to learn with and from my colleagues from around Morris County. Friday night's keynote presentation was given by Dr. Walter Farrell, Jr., renowned educator and school voucher expert. His program was enlightening, albeit a bit depressing, in its comprehensive examination of the reform movement from the early days of vouchers in places like Milwaukee to the current corporate reform models being espoused throughout our country and especially in New Jersey. I left the Hamilton Park Conference Center that Friday night empowered with data and facts, and appreciative of the knowledge I had gained.

On Saturday I attended two advocacy workshops to learn how to better represent PTEA members on a myriad of issues. My friends from other schools in Pequannock participated in workshops on behavior management, NJ's anti-bullying law, the differentiated classroom, Progressive Mathematics Initiative, English Language Learners, and more. For \$50, which included three bounteous buffet meals, there was no doubt I received my money's worth! I hope all members – teachers and ESP's – are keeping aware of the many professional development opportunities to which our membership entitles us, and taking advantage of them whenever possible.

I look forward to seeing all of you during the next few weeks, at North Boulevard for "Read to Feed," the Food Packing Event at PV on March 11, and/or at our General Membership meeting on March 22. Come out and support our school/community initiatives, and swap some gently used teacher materials and classroom supplies at the General Membership meeting.

May the second half of Winter bring all of you mild weather and professionally rewarding days.

~Ann Marie

~Teachers of the Year~

Congratulations to the following teachers for being named Pequannock Township's Teachers of the Year:

Keith Brady - Pequannock Township High School

Denise Donch - Pequannock Valley Middle School

Michele Ruggiero- Hillview Elementary School

Cathy Furia - North Boulevard Elementary School

Donna Madison - Stephen J. Gerace Elementary School

Special congratulations to Pequannock Township's District Teacher of the Year, **Keith Brady**.

~Grievance~

Ann Marie Finnen (SJG)

As you know your Association has filed a grievance with the Superintendent concerning the employment contracts for members who were hired this school year. Our negotiated agreement calls for all employees to move up a step on the salary guide in February 2012. We are disappointed in the decision by Dr. Trusheim and the Board of Education to deny new employees the step movement that was negotiated. Your Grievance Chair and your AR's will keep you informed about the progress of this grievance as well as our complaint of an Unfair Labor Practice.

Another issue that may be filed as a grievance is the arbitrary and inequitable practice in some buildings of charging teachers ¼ of a day when they need coverage for a class at the beginning or end of the day. This is a mandatorily negotiable item and therefore the parameters of dividing the day must be set in conjunction with the Association. Your PTEA President, Vice President and Chief Negotiator have had several discussions with the administration about this topic and we are awaiting an official response from the Superintendent.

~PRIDE~

Karen Schiffel (SJG) and Jamie Dean (NB)

Happy, happy, happy! Happy New Year! HAPPY that the GIANTS are the SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONS, and happy to be reporting to all of you about some of the great things that are happening with PRIDE! Since it is February, it must also be Friends of Education time. We would like to thank those of you who submitted nominations and share that this year's recipients are Erica Bulger, Karen Kamp and Rob Singer. We will celebrate with them later this month to thank them for all that they have done for the students. March brings us to that CRAZY CAT and Dr. Seuss. Remember to encourage our students to read, read, read. There's nothing like a good book and Oh, All the Places You'll Go! Spring will soon be here, and our Little Leaguers will be in full swing! With the crack of the bat and the roar of the crowd, the Association is proud to be sponsoring two teams this year! We will also continue to have our sign displayed at Washington Park field #2. Another Chili Cook-Off is also in the planning stages. Will you be Pequannock's next Chili Champ? Look for more details to come. Finally, we would once again like to remind you to think about items for the Mall Project in April. We need contributions from each school. Please see your ARs if you have student work of any kind that you would like displayed.

Upcoming PTEA Apparel Sale!

Your PTEA will once again be working with Initial Encounter to bring you embroidered apparel items bearing the PTEA logo.

Look for order forms in your mailbox by the end of February.

Note: this is not a fundraiser. All items will be sold without profit for the Association.

PTEA General Membership Meeting

Please make plans now to attend on March 22 at the high school. Important information will be shared, nominations will be taken for PTEA President and Vice President and we will hold our first Teacher Supply Exchange. Look for information in your mailboxes and from your AR's about swapping gently used materials, classroom supplies etc.

Refreshments will be served.

North Boulevard's 2nd Annual “Read to Feed”

On Thursday, February 23, North Boulevard School will once again sponsor this reading marathon to benefit the Community Food Bank and our local food pantry. Students, their families and community members will participate all day long. The All Purpose Room will be transformed into a reading lounge where there will be non-stop reading, a book swap for adults, raffles, a café and more! Donations will be accepted for the Pequannock Food Pantry. The PTEA is proud to support this activity and we encourage all members to lend their support. Volunteers are needed from 3-9 pm. Many of you have already signed up to read or help in other ways. It’s not too late – see your AR or contact Kimberly Meyerson or Yvette McBain for additional information.

Fight Against Hunger at PV School

The community of Pequannock Township will take part in a Fight Against Hunger Food Pack Event on Sunday, March 11 at PV School. Volunteers of any age are needed to help pack food for local community food banks as well as for children of Haiti. Please consider signing up to help. Visit www.alwayspositive.org to learn more about this event and to register as a volunteer. There are over 300 two hour slots to fill; PTEA members and their families can make a difference in our community!

NJEA/MCCEA Pension Workshop

This is a general overview on pension calculations, health and life insurance, cost of living increases, etc. THIS PRESENTATION IS NOT A PERSONAL PENSION CONSULTATION. You can schedule a personal consultation by calling the NJEA UniServ Office at 856-782-1225.

Location: Zeris Inn, 372 Rt 46 East, Mountain Lakes, NJ 07046

Date: Thursday, February 23rd

Time: 4:30-6:30pm

Cost: \$10 registration charge and light refreshments served

Deadline is February 17th - no walk-ins permitted!

For questions, contact Linda Harvey at the MCCEA office @ **973-366-0202** or email at MCCEA@optonline.net

~Upcoming Dates~

February 23 – Read to Feed at North Boulevard; 3-9 pm.

February 23 – NJEA/MCCEA Pension Workshop at Zeris Inn

March 8 – PD Workshop on PLC Team Building at Zeris Inn
(call the county office at 973-366-0202 to register)

March 11 – Fight Against Hunger at PV Middle School

March 22 – PTEA General Membership Meeting at the High School

SAVE THE DATE: MCCEA Retirement Dinner on May 30 at the Meadow Wood Manor. More information will be forwarded soon to all retirees.

~Legislative~

Please continue to visit NJEA's Legislative page at <http://www.njea.org/issues-and-political-action> for the most up-to-date information concerning evaluations, tenure, pension, benefits, vouchers and much more. Scroll down to the boxes in the middle of the page and click on the Take Action link. Once there, you can contact your legislators, sign petitions, sign up for alerts, and learn more about legislative issues.

~Member News~

Traci Cepero and her husband, Armando, welcomed their daughter, Audyn Gray, to their family on February 1, 2012. Audyn weighed 9lbs 1oz and is Traci and Armando's first child. Congratulations!