



Pequannock Township Education Association



CHALKBOARD

October 2010

~President's Message~

Colleagues,

Just a few short weeks into the school year, and my October calendar is filled! Between lesson plans, meetings, essays, and apple and pumpkin picking (my favorite "job" in the fall), I'm ready to fall into bed, regardless of what might be on TV.

One thing I will be sure to watch, however, is the upcoming Classroom Close-Up, NJ episode on NJN, with our own Yvette McBain, Morris County Teacher of the Year. The episode, which airs in December and January, will be filmed at North Boulevard School on October 18, 2010. The Vice-President of NJEA, Wendell Steinhauer, will be at NB for the taping. Wendell would love to be able to meet any members who are available to stop by during the taping's "downtime": approximately 11:45AM. I encourage any of you who have that time free to make it over to North Boulevard, for this rare opportunity.

You can see a wonderful video clip of Yvette on the NJEA website: <http://www.njea.org/news/2010-10-05/meet-new-jersey-s-county-teachers-of-the-year>. Scroll down to Morris County, and check it out!

On another note, I am honored to be one of two Morris County recipients of a scholarship to attend the NEA Northeast Regional Leadership Conference (NERLC): *Turning Hope Into Action*, in Philadelphia in January. Your Vice President, Ann Marie Finnen, and I will be attending the conference together. We are both excited to participate in an advocacy conference on the National level! You can see more information on this conference on the NEA webpage: <http://www.nea.org/grants/41091.htm>.

I would be remiss if I did not thank Amanda Schlesinger, and all the Rep Council members who hosted the New Member gathering at SJG. We had a wonderful turnout of new members, much food was eaten, and gifts and prizes were given. A wonderful time was had by all!

Finally, I hope to see all of you at the General Membership Meeting on October 20, at 3:30PM in the High School Cafeteria. Your Representative Council and Executive Board will have a great deal of information to share with you on that day.

Lee Ann

~Negotiations~

Helene Zablocki (PTHS)

The negotiations team met with the Board's team on Thursday, October 7th, from 4:00 pm until midnight. There were lengthy discussions about many unresolved issues and some agreement on a few. However, we remain apart on important points. We'll be communicating with the Board's attorney about another

date for meeting, hopefully, within the next few weeks. Check the PTEA website and your building's bulletin board for further information.

Reminder: Until we have an agreement, members will continue to provide extra help to students and write college recommendations, but will not attend after school or evening activities unless compensated.

~From Your Treasurer...~

Jeri Asaro (PV)

It is during this time of year that I must complete a yearly audit with an outside accountant who reviews all of our books from the previous year. We have four accounts, so this is always a stressful, year-long process for me -- especially since I am an English teacher and math is not my forte. Fortunately, in my old life before teaching, I ran a business, so I understand the financial reconciliation process. Thankfully, for the last six years, we have been successful with our audits. This success brings additional money to our local from the NJEA. This year, the accountant could not find even one question to ask about our finances. The audit was highly successful and ended with the auditor stating that our district is his "best" in terms of how we spend the money for our members and how we report those spendings. There are no grey areas, and it is well-organized and accurate. Hopefully, this positive report will bring in the range of \$15,000 to our local. More information to come in a few months! Thank you!

~Publicity~

Amanda Schlesinger (SJG)

Thank you to all members who filled out a survey for the PTEA on the first day of school. It has taken some time, but I have gone through all the surveys, cross checked all email addresses, and have made a list of who would like to be invited to our PTEA Facebook page. If you did not fill out a survey and would like to be invited to our Facebook page, please email me at ahsptea@optonline.net. An invitation will be sent to your Facebook page soon. Please use the PTEA Facebook page as a forum for discussion, ideas, and information pertaining to our learning community. If you would like to join, but do not have a Facebook account please create one first. Then send me an email stating you would like an invitation. Please also continue to visit our website, www.pteweb.org, for Chalkboard and other information concerning the PTEA.

~Insurance~

Laura Higley (PV/PTHS)

Good news! Deductibles for the co-pay that were taken twice (through both Horizon and CIGNA) have started to be paid. Look in your postal mail for a check from CIGNA. There continue to be some instances of claims that would have been paid by Horizon that were initially denied by CIGNA. Please be sure to contact me, laurahigley@aol.com, or your AR right away if you feel that this has happened to you. You might be entitled to a refund. The dependent age for insurance coverage has extended to the end of the calendar year that the child reaches age 23. The healthcare reform provision that allows dependents on until age 26 will be implemented at the first renewal after September 2010. Our district will renew with CIGNA on, July 1, 2011. There will be a short workshop on web access of your pension information on October 25 at 3:45 PM in the VHS room of PTHS Media Center. All you need to bring is your employee number.

~Legislative~

Lillian Keating (PV)

Governor Christie's "reform agenda" has the potential to move faster than our ability to keep you updated. For the most current information, visit the NJEA website: <https://www.njea.org/mac>. You have to log in and the directions to do so are clear on the page. All you need is your email and last four digits of your social security number. The Members Action Center has updates about all of the proposed legislation. You can also find these updates in the MAC display board located in each building. Below are some of the legislative issues that you can read about online or at the MAC in your building:

- [Cap on Sick Leave](#)
- [Christie's Ed "Reform" Agenda](#) **NEW**
- [Contract Imposition](#)
- [Executive County Superintendent Contract Approval](#)
- [Vouchers](#) **NEW**
- [Concession Bargaining Protections](#) **NEW**
- [Pensions & Benefits Attack](#)
- [2% Cap on Salaries and Benefits](#)

It is critical that we as educators and citizens vote in the next election. Be an informed voter and check out your incumbent's voting record on educational issues. If you cannot get to the polls on Tuesday, plan to vote by mail.

Last Date to Apply for a Vote By Mail Ballot: October 26

A reason is no longer required to vote by mail. Request an official mail-in ballot and vote by mail. Faxed or emailed copies of Application to Vote by Mail are not accepted since an original signature is required. http://njelections.org/mail-in_doe.html

Election Day: Nov. 2 - Polls open 6 AM to 8 PM

Note: Information on candidates endorsed by NJEA can be found on the NJEA website in the Members Only Section under Issues and Political Action

~Important Information~

The PTEA held its annual New Member Welcome on September 30 in the SJG Library. Eight new members joined the PTEA Executive Board and Representative Council for light refreshments in a social gathering designed to welcome our new Association members as well as to provide an opportunity for them to meet and greet their colleagues from around the district. Congratulations to Michele Sarnelli (PV) for winning the door prize – a Dunkin Donuts gift card.

On Tuesday, October 5, teachers and aides from SJG and NB attended Morris County's Legislative Action Team Workshop in Rockaway at the Hilton Garden Inn. An NJEA representative was on hand to present information about Christie's proposed legislation and the overall political climate. Doug Herbert, the NJEA endorsed United States Congressional candidate in the 11th district, was also present and spoke with us. Much time was spent discussing the MAC and ways to mobilize and inform our members, as well as to generate support from the community. For the latest Legislative news, log in to www.NJEA.org.

PTEA Food Drive

The Pequannock Food Pantry is housed at the First Reformed Church on Newark Pompton Turnpike in Pompton Plains. They provide food and other essential household items to approximately 50 families in our community. Currently, their coffers are low. They have had to cut back on what they can provide to our neighbors and friends who rely on this crucial service. To help in this important effort, the Pequannock Township Education Association will be holding a food drive from October 18 until October 22. There will be a drop off location in each school building where members can leave donations during the week. On Friday, October 22, we are asking for help from as many members as possible to deliver each school's contributions to the Friendship Hall next to the First Reformed Church. Please be as generous as possible and lend a hand to make this Food Drive a huge success. Contact Ann Marie Finnen (SJG) or your AR with any questions or to help out.

PTEA Apparel Orders

All PTEA shirts and bags will be delivered during the week of October 18. Your Association leadership hopes that everyone is happy with the item(s) they ordered. As a reminder, there was no profit made from these purchases. The initiative was simply for team building purposes. Thank you to all who ordered and made suggestions for future items. We will consider another order later in the year. There are a few additional shirts available. If anyone is interested in one, please contact Ann Marie Finnen (SJG) for details.

Important information regarding your rights...

Weingarten rights guarantee an employee the right to union representation during an investigatory interview by an employer. If the interview could in any way lead to the employee being disciplined or terminated or affect his or her personal or working conditions, he or she should respectfully request that a union representative or officer be present at the meeting. Without representation, the employee may choose not to answer any questions.

The employee must ask for representation. When an administrator requests a meeting with you and does not indicate the nature of the meeting, you should say: "If this meeting could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminate, I respectfully request that my Association Representative be present at the meeting. Without representation, I exercise my right to remain silent."

Important information about your contract:

Article 16; Paragraph B.10 states: "Any question or criticism by Supervisors, Administrators, and Board Members of a teacher and his instructional methodology shall be made in confidence and not in the presence of students and parents."

Article 16; Paragraph C.8 (concerning support staff) states: "Any criticism by supervisors, administrators and Board members of an employee shall be made in confidence and not in the presence of students, parents, teachers or other employees."

Last Spring, your Association leadership met with Dr. Trusheim and discussed this contract language. He agreed with us that respect and privacy are of paramount importance when administrators feel the need to criticize their employees. If you have been reprimanded by an administrator in the presence of other people, contact your AR or a Grievance Committee member immediately.

~Upcoming PTEA/MCCEA/NJEA Events~

NJEA Fall Focus- October 19th at 4:30 at the Zeris Inn in Mountain Lakes

PTEA General Membership Meeting – October 20th at 3:30 in the PTHS Cafeteria

There will be food and door prizes!

MCCEA Cyber Bullying Workshop – October 21st at 4:30 at the Zeris Inn in Mountain Lakes
RSVP to the County Office @ 973-366-0202 or MCCEA@optonline.net by October 18th

PTEA Executive Board/Representative Council Meeting – October 28th 28 at HV

NJEA Convention – November 4th and 5th in Atlantic City

MCCEA SAM'S Club (Social Activities for Members) New Member Mixer – November 11, 2010 at Brick 46 -68 Route 46 East in Rockaway- SAM's Club considers "new" members to be educators who have been in the profession for 7 years or less. Join fellow union members for conversation, food, and drinks! RSVP: Please send an email to samsclub.mccea@gmail.com by October 30th.

MCCEA ESP Celebration – November 17, 2010 at the Zeris Inn in Mountain Lakes – All secretaries, bus drivers, aides, maintenance, and custodians are invited. Flyers have been distributed. Please see your AR if you have not received one. RSVP: November 10th to the county office at (973) 366-0202