

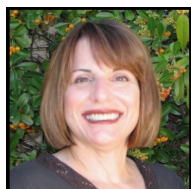


SPEAK OUT

ISSUE 4

MARCH/APRIL 2010

From the President: Barbara Shapiro



We are entering a time of significant transition. Our Assistant Superintendent

for Curriculum and Instruction, Angela Perrotto, is in her first year. Mike Doughty, principal of Thornell Road left PCS for a position in BOCES and a new principal will begin there in April. Jackie Roblin, Director of Student Services and John Schiess, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources will be retiring at the end of this school year. Several other administrators are expected to retire in the next few years. Some of our long time Board of Education members will also be leaving the Board in the next year or two. On March 17 you approved a constitutional change that will allow me (and future officers) to complete my term of office. There will be a new PD/TA President in June 2011. We must do all that we can to keep our Association strong. For me, that means focusing each day between now and next June on providing our future leaders with the support they will need, including a successful contract negotiation. It also

Changes on the Horizon

means working closely with our District administrators so that they understand our culture and history. We expect to be partners in the educational process, working together for our students.

We are facing particularly challenging times both at the state and federal level. In addition to major budget shortfalls at the state level and the federal Race to the Top federal program that has states competing for federal dollars, we are facing attempts by some to diminish the rights of educators and their unions. Others want to take away our hard earned benefits, such as our pensions. Educators around the nation were shocked at the mass firing of 88 faculty members at a struggling high school in Rhode Island. The Central Falls High School firings were applauded by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan as a model turnaround plan for school reform. Then, in a decision that will rock the foundation of collective bargaining in Rhode Island and elsewhere, the RI Superior Court upheld the local school committee's actions to cut teacher salaries and impose a 20% contribution to health insurance. The judge ruled that since the teachers' contract had expired without a settlement, the school committee was correct to impose unilateral cuts in salary and benefits. In New York State, fortunately, the 1982 Triborough Amendment to the Taylor Law prohibits a public employer from altering any provision of an expired contract until a new agreement is reached. You only have to look at the Sunday newspaper (March 21) to see

that many want the Triborough Amendment repealed and our benefits reduced.

Here in our state, NYSUT is carefully monitoring the development of upcoming regulatory changes to the current APPR (Annual Professional Performance Review) for teachers and making it clear to State Education officials that some amendments will require negotiations at the local level. The Regents Higher Education Committee gave conceptual approval to a plan that would require school districts and BOCES to include: student growth as a mandatory criterion in the evaluation of teachers; creation of four "uniform qualitative rating categories" to evaluate teachers; and timely and constructive feedback to teachers. The Regents, who are setting the new criteria as part of the state's Race to the Top application, are slated to vote on the item next month as an emergency measure, with the new APPR regulations beginning this summer. NYSUT will continue to press our concerns with SED in the coming weeks but if the changes are approved, student growth will become part of a teacher's evaluation.

A strong Association means that our voice is heard, our work is respected and our members' rights are protected. A strong Association provides service of the highest quality. A strong Association is a united Association. I promise that I will do all that I can to leave that legacy to your next President.

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Email the Editor : christine_burton@pittsford.monroe.edu

Know Your Contract: Susan Gager



As we approach the end of the year, and work to tie up loose ends, it is important to keep in mind our contractual agreements pertaining to evaluations (section 8-Professional, and section 44-SRP).

The intent of the evaluation process is to provide a means to assess job performance, to improve the quality of instruction, to support professional development, to provide opportunities for discussion of interests and concerns, and to provide a written record of feedback and follow-up.

At this time of year, we will likely be engaged in discussions with our supervisors pertaining to **Target Appraisals and Summative Evaluations**. According to our contract, non-tenured teachers must receive a

End of the Year Evaluations

target appraisal and summative evaluation, with their building principals, each year. Written forms should be received at or prior to the conference, and conferences should occur by May 1st. Tenured teachers must have a target appraisal with their principal each year, and a summative evaluation every three years. Again, written forms are to be provided at or prior to the conference. These conferences should occur between May 1st and October 15th. A common Teacher Target form is used for all professional staff members at all levels. The Summative Evaluation forms mirror our Professional Standards. Most professionals will receive the Summative Evaluation for Teachers. It is important to note that the form is slightly different for some Standards Areas. For instance, psychologists, school nurse teachers, speech language pathologists, librarians and counselors all

have different summative forms which are tailored to their unique areas. Principals have updated copies of all summative evaluation forms.

School Related professionals must receive a written evaluation from their principal or supervisor one time per year. This should occur by June 1st. A common district form has been developed for this evaluation. Additionally, each SRP will have an evaluation conference with his/her supervisor no less than once every three years.

All written evaluations are signed by both parties and filed in the employee's evaluation file.

As you wrap up the end of the year, be sure to look for the appropriate evaluations of the important work you do.

About Our Members



Congratulations to Shana and Kevin Cutaia (BRMS) and to Jennifer Butler (CRMS) on the births of their baby girls. We congratulate Linda Pilkington (MCE) as she welcomes her newly adopted son.



We extend our condolences to Susan Daniels ((TR) whose father passed away. We extend our sympathy to Kat Cramer (JR) on the passing of her grandmother (Tom Cole's mother). We would also like to extend our condolences to Rick Voss and Mary Ellen Blanchard (MHS) whose fathers both passed away. Our sympathy is extended to Marilyn Berkebile (SHS) on the passing of her mother.

A Vote for Our Future!

The current budget proposal by the governor leaves Pittsford with a \$1.9 million short fall. This is large, but not insurmountable. Fortunately only about 17% of Pittsford's overall School Budget is comprised of State aid. Most districts state aid is significantly higher and as much as 70% in some cases.

In the past, schools have looked at the governor's proposals for cuts and assumed that the State Legislature would put money back into the school budgets. This year is drastically different. Not only will the State Legislature not be putting money back, but they may be making further cuts as New York is billions of dollars in debt. According to Darrin Kenny, Deputy Superintendent for Business, the governor's proposal is a best case scenario.

We should be able to tighten our belts once more and stave off further cuts to programs and staff if the school budget vote goes favorably.

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Health and Safety: Linda Khalil



In response to PDTA requests, the District Health and Safety Committee has spent the last

few months reviewing products and guidelines for cleaning supplies which would be available for safe use within the classroom. Recommendations have been forwarded to the Superintendent for review. In addition to cleaning products, the issue of fragrances and their impact in the workplace was also forwarded to the committee.

Indoor air quality problems in schools can affect the health of students and staff, including those with asthma. Most IAQ issues in schools relate to facility issues in cleaning, ventilation or construction. However some issues are actually occupant created. This occurs when air quality is affected by products staff or students wear or bring into school. These might include perfumes, colognes, cosmetics, lotions, soaps, deodorants, hairspray cleaners, and air fresheners/plug-ins.

Today there are more than 4000 chemicals which are used to make fragrances and several hundred can be used in just a single product. That is why perfumes, with their low levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), can contribute to indoor air pollution. Other cosmetics may use solvents such as ethanol, formaldehyde, and methanol. Solvents evaporate quickly, and get into the air easily. This is especially true if the solvent is sprayed or misted-on like aerosol cans of hairspray. Exposure to perfumes and other fragrances may cause irritation which can mimic symptoms of allergies. Sensitive individuals may experience eye, nose,

and throat irritation. Persons with respiratory sensitivity may have asthma symptoms. Because chemical induced irritation is different from



typical allergic reactions- it does not respond to allergy medications. The only way to prevent symptoms is to avoid the irritant.

Finding fragrance free products can be challenging because of labeling confusion. Some products that are advertised as being "scent-free" may have more VOCs in them than un-

scented products. That is because these VOCs are used to mask the smells.

Everybody does not react in the same way to these chemicals, which makes concerns or policies about fragrances or other scented products a challenge to address in the workplace. If you experience sensitivity to fragrances within your work area, sharing your concerns with co-workers is a good place to start. If you would like to improve your personal workspace air quality you can:

- ◆ Limit your use of perfume or aftershave in the work setting.
- ◆ Limit use of hairspray. Mousse or gel tend to have less VOC's than aerosols.
- ◆ Use non-aerosol deodorants and antiperspirants such as solid, cream or roll-ons.
- ◆ Do not bring air fresheners, Plug-ins or cleaning products to school.
- ◆ Know what chemicals are in the products you are using.

Resources used: aft.org, www.epa.gov/iaq/schools, greencleaning.ny.gov

Real Estate Offer for PDTA Members

A local real estate company in business since 1911 is offering a cash benefit to PDTA employees and their family members who buy or sell their homes through one of their agents. Benefits range from \$150 to \$1,250 and can be earned through both the sale and/or purchase and can be combined to take full advantage of this offer! For more information contact: **Beatrice Dunwoodie** at 716-912-5355

Negotiations Update: Bret Burrows

ATTENTION: Please read and respond if interested by Friday, April 9, 2010.

As we move into the final year of our current contract, it is again time to assemble a team of smart, dedicated, and committed individuals to do the work of representing our membership in contract negotiations.

Being a part of the negotiating team can be very rewarding. The negotiations process is exciting, interesting, and at times-a little frustrating. Settling a contract takes a lot of hard work, but it is also an opportunity to make Pittsford Central Schools a better place for both staff to work and students to learn.

We believe that an effective team must have representatives from each building and must include Teachers,

SRP's, and Auxiliary staff. A balance in level of teaching experience, gender, subject, and negotiating experience will help make our team strong.

These are uncertain times and there is no way to predict exactly how much of a time commitment will be required. It is likely that there will be some late nights and weekends.

If you are an open-minded, creative problem solver, who works well with others, you could be a great asset to our team. If you would like to be considered as a negotiating team member, please call me at x1311 or e-mail me at bret_burrows@pittsford.monroe.edu to inform me of your interest by Friday, April 9, 2010. There is a \$500 PDTA stipend for serving in this capacity.

Budget News

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If not, our story may end up similar to other surrounding districts.

Other districts around the county rely much more heavily on state aid and do not have reserve funds to pull from as Pittsford does which makes their story much different. Other districts are expecting cuts of 18 to 60 teachers in these neighboring districts for the 2010/2011 school year according to Superintendent Price.

PDTA does not wish to spread fear and panic amongst our ranks, but to inform you of the severe economic downturn that most of you have read and hear about.

What can be done?

The largest thing that can be done to preserve programs/curriculum and in essence jobs is to get out the vote in Pittsford. Currently, Pittsford has the narrowest gap between yes and no votes in the county and that gap continues to shrink each year. There are just over 400 staff members who live and work in Pittsford. Unfortunately, there is a large amount of apathy amongst our ranks here and elsewhere and only 18% of those 400 plus employees of PCSD vote on a regular basis. If PDTA can get those individuals and other eligible family members in their house to vote, hopefully we can have a positive impact on the vote. This translates to better times ahead for our members and **shows the Board of Education that we support them in difficult times as one of their goals this year is to increase the overall numbers of voters on the school budget.** Please mark your calendars for **May 18th** as the day of the budget vote and Barker Road Middle School as the place to vote and **please fill out exit poll cards letting the BOE know that Pittsford employees are getting out the vote and support their efforts.**

VOTE/COPE: Len Chaput

Vote/Cope helps protect our interests. It gives us the ability to get our message out to elected leaders and the public. **It helps preserve the bargaining rights our predecessors' fought so hard for and our pensions.** I am pleased to say that our pension program is very much alive and well with \$86 billion invested and is the 11th largest pension program in the world and **your greatest benefit!!!!!!!**

As most people are aware, Tier V is what our incoming colleagues are straddled with. They no longer enjoy the 3% contributions toward pension for only 10 years, but a

3 ½ % contribution for life, 10 years as opposed to 5 for vesting in the pension and cannot retire prior to 57 years of age without a 38% reduction in their pension. Vote-Cope was able to stave off Tier V to get the 2009 crop of new teachers Tier IV status and all the benefits we enjoy. The sad part about Tier V is that savings from this will not be felt at the state level for 35 years which is not how it was portrayed to the public.

In the past your Vote/Cope money allowed NYSUT to fight for things such as:

- ◆ The stoppage of the 3% contribution after 10 years of

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Vote/Cope

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service for Tier II, III and IV members.

- ◆ A Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for our pensions.
- ◆ The passage of a new Weingarten Rights Law that ensures public employees the right to union representation at a meeting that might result in disciplinary action. Know your Cadet Rights!
- ◆ Protecting your tenure rights.
- ◆ Vote/Cope will fight for our Tier V members to get back some of the benefits that were lost.

The list goes on, but keep in mind that your 50 cents increase or new \$1 a pay check donation (\$20 a year) is not only a good investment, but also your best protection against having your working rights denied and your pension tampered with.

Some of the money that is donated comes back to PDTA to use for political action. **It is better to be proactive than reactive and every dollar spent goes toward being proactive when it comes to your greatest benefit, your pension.** The Vote/Cope drive will be from May 3rd to May 7th this spring so please mark your calendars and look for reminders from PDTA.

SRP Meeting

Spring

General Meeting

May 6, 2010

3:45 p.m.

SHS

Large Group

Instruction

Second Floor



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