

PROTEUN

A bi-monthly publication of the Providence Teachers Union available on-line at www.proteun.org or via e-mail.



April 2007

On March 12, 2007, I appeared before the Providence School Board at its regularly scheduled meeting.

The purpose of my addressing the Board was to remind them of the previously negotiated provisions in our contract designed as the vehicles to be utilized when the District is obligated to comply with directives from the Commissioner, specifically those regarding school interventions.

Please take time to read my statement (which follows this introduction) in conjunction with the other articles in this newsletter dealing with the latest corrective action requirements.

PROVIDENCE SCHOOL BOARD MARCH 12, 2007

Public Comment

The School Improvement Team (SIT) and the School Improvement Intervention Team (SIIT).

On September 1, 1999 the Providence School Board and the Providence Teachers Union created School Improvement Teams (SIT) in each Providence School (see Article 8-28).

Each SIT is made-up of teachers, parents, non-certified school personnel, community representatives, students (where age appropriate), the principal and the Union Building Delegate.

SIT members are volunteers and are not compensated for their services. They function in accordance with federal, state and local laws; regulations, mandates and Collective Bargaining Agreement.

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CORRECTIVE ACTION PLANS DUE APRIL 30, 2007

Peter McWalters, Rhode Island Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, has placed the Providence Public School District in corrective action in accordance with Article 18 of the Rhode Island General Law and in compliance with the requirements of the Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation.

In Commissioner McWalters' notice to Superintendent Evans, he defines the authority which allows him to place the Providence School District in corrective action status. In addition, the Commissioner describes in detail what each corrective action plan must contain as well as the obligations of the Superintendent, specific Providence schools and the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE). He also details ways in which all parties might work together.

The Commissioner's powers include any one or more of the following actions: defer funding, implement curriculum, replace personnel, remove jurisdiction from the school board, replace the Superintendent and/or the School Board, restructure or close the district, provide inter-district school choice to students.

Schools identified as in need of corrective action (i.e. Lima, West, Veazie, Hopkins, Stuart, Bishop, Bridgham and Springfield) must consider the following specific actions: replace school staff, implement research based curriculum, decrease management authority, appoint an outside advisor, extend the school day and/or year, restructure the internal organization of the school.

Schools identified as in need of restructuring (i.e. Greene, Perry, Williams, Hope, Feinstein High School and Mt. Pleasant) must consider the following specific actions: re-open the school as a charter school, replace all or most of the school staff, place the school under private management, place the school under RIDE management or restructure staffing and/or governance.

In response to the Commissioner's order, the Providence School Department must:

1. Design corrective action and restructuring plans by April 30, 2007.
2. Draft a District corrective action plan by May 1, 2007.
3. Complete final District corrective action plan by June 1, 2007.

Once the plans are completed and approved by RIDE, the Providence School Department must begin a process of communicating them to students, teachers, families and other constituencies within two (2) weeks of the completion of the plans. (NOTE: The full text of the Commissioner's letter can be found on the PTU website at www.proteun.org).

A SIT may be made-up of any number of individuals, provided the majority of members shall be teachers elected by the faculty of each school.

A SIT may recommend modification to any Collective Bargaining Agreement. Any modification to the Providence Teachers Union/Providence School Board Collective Bargaining Agreement must have seventy-five percent (75%) faculty approval as well as Union/Board Approval.

The School Improvement Intervention Team (SIIT) was agreed to by the parties as part of the September 1, 2004 – August 31, 2007 Collective Bargaining Agreement (see Article 8-32).

This joint committee is committed to school reform and improved student achievement. The SIIT is responsible for designing a protocol for schools facing Federal State imposed sanctions/Intervention.

These protocols are intended to assist each school's SIT in the development and implementation of current state-of-the-art practices that address improving student achievement.

The SIIT is jointly chaired by the Superintendent and the Union President. The SIIT shall have decision making authority with regard to support and intervention in cooperation with the RI Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

I bring this matter to your attention tonight because the Superintendent (as you know) must present a corrective action plan involving several schools no later than April 30, 2007.

Thanks to the wisdom of our respective Negotiating teams, the 2004-2007 Agreement created a vehicle to move this process along, to allow us to meet the challenges of NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND and state Intervention while respecting the contract and the efforts of our teachers.

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COMMISSIONER ENDORSES ARTICLE 8-32 AS VEHICLE FOR CORRECTIVE ACTION PLANNING

When placing the Providence School District in corrective action, Commissioner Peter McWalters called upon the Providence School Board, the Mayor's office and the Providence Teachers Union to work cooperatively in the design and implementation of the District's Corrective Action Plan as well as the School's Corrective Action and Restructuring Plans.

The Commissioner made specific reference to Article 8-32 of the Providence Teachers Union/Providence School Board Collective Bargaining Agreement (i.e. School Improvement Intervention Team) as the vehicle to be utilized by the Parties in finding ways most beneficial to improving student learning while meeting both management and Union interests. He further states that this Team serves as the proactive effort to ensure that corrective action and restructuring occurs in the most cooperative fashion possible.

NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

Formal negotiations for a successor collective bargaining agreement have been ongoing with interest-based bargaining continuing to serve as the vehicle for discussion. At the present time, although dialogue is cordial and goals are similar, no specific agreements have been reached on any topic.

The Union has presented a comprehensive listing of subjects affecting our teachers, our children and the teaching/learning process. Many of the suggestions received from teachers have been incorporated into our listing.

The Board has yet to propose any comprehensive concepts for consideration, although we anticipate more specificity forthcoming on April 16, 2007, our next scheduled negotiating session.

As mentioned previously, the Union's Negotiating Committee will be scheduling another series of regional meetings once particulars begin to emerge.

We continue to remind the Board that any Joint Proposal which results from negotiations must be disseminated and discussed at length by the PTU membership prior to any formal vote and that no votes can or will take place once the summer recess begins.

Providence Teachers Union
RELATED HEALTH  SERVICES FUND

We are again pleased to report continued success in the implementation of our Union paid Health and Welfare Benefits program.

Our latest mini-drive resulted in 198 additional teachers accepting their \$10,000 life insurance policy as well as making other choices in the areas of Disability Insurance, Accident Insurance and Cancer Expense Insurance; all products of our contract with Allstate Insurance.

We now have 1,750 teachers fully enrolled and receiving the benefits of this plan.

For those who have yet to take advantage of these benefits or for those who are enrolled but would like to review their choices, please call Patti at the Union office (421-4014) and she will arrange an appointment for you at your school or at the Union office, whichever is convenient for you.

The collaborative efforts of the Parties are supported by this contract language, if utilized and utilized effectively. The vehicle was designed also, in support of the belief that meaningful and significant improvement will occur when teachers and parents and principals are valued as equal partners in the change process and that top-down management styles hardly ever work.

We learned many lessons from the efforts at Hope High School. At Hope there was an agreed upon focus that discipline and organization would create an environment where teaching and learning is of paramount importance.

As a result, Hope High School is not only recognized by the Governor and the Commissioner as a model for success, but has also received national recognition for its reform efforts.

The Commissioner supports the continuation of these collaborative efforts as we move towards further intervention.

When the commissioner called for public hearings regarding Hope High School, the Union had a choice. We could have participated or not. We chose to participate and stand ready to serve as full partners in the development and implementation of the new intervention plan.



GRIEVANCE UPDATE

During the months of February 2007 and March 2007 thirty-one (31) grievances were filed. Of the thirty-one (31) grievances filed, eighteen (18) were filed by elementary teachers; seven (7) were filed by high school teachers; five (5) were filed by middle school teachers; and one (1) was filed by the Union. The area most frequently grieved was Plant Maintenance (9). Other areas grieved are as follows:

Inappropriate Admin. Action	5
Code of Conduct	3
Inappropriate Student Placement	2
Personnel File	2
Union Faculty Committee	1
Supplies and Equipment	1
Postings	1
Article 17-5	1
Unfair & Inequitable Treatment	1
Teacher Evaluation	1
On-the-Job Injury/Assault	2
Personal Business Day	1
Payroll	1

All thirty-one grievances were filed at the Superintendent's level (Level A). Nineteen (19) were successfully mediated prior to a Level A hearing while the remaining twelve (12) are pending resolution.

[Contact Maura at 421-4014 or mgalvao@proteun.org.](mailto:mgalvao@proteun.org)

PTU IN THE NEWS

National Ed Week offers PTU President The Last Word On Governor's First Education Conference

In the article entitled "Event Provides Entrée Into Bargaining Talks," Ed Week's reporter Bess Keller interviewed Steve Smith, quoting his as the final words on that recent conference. In what was considered to be the "first state-focused conversation" on this topic between teachers union and education agency leaders, Ed Week cited the effort as a "New Dialogue."

Keller sought Smith's insights. Clearly, there was lively interaction and opposing views. According to that article, Smith said "he had feared that the gathering would focus on changing collective bargaining." His comments concluded the article: "I'm pleased the discussion evolved into really talking about collaboration," Mr. Smith said, "about unions working together with districts and states." It is apparent that Smith presented a reasonable conclusion to the day-long debate about beneficial changes.

UNION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Highly Qualified Teacher

The first workshop for teachers who need information on the Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) process was held at the Providence Teachers Union office on March 6, 2007. Steve Olsen from the RI Department of Education made a presentation and addressed questions. Arrangements are being made for a second workshop for teachers who wish to complete the HOUSSE Rubric to attain HQT status.

Participants who attended on March 6, 2007 placed their names on a list to be contacted directly for the second workshop in May. Teachers have until June 2008 to begin the HOUSSE Rubric but all are encouraged to start as soon as possible.

[Contact Fr. Nick Milas at 421-4014 or Frnickm2@aol.com](mailto:Frnickm2@aol.com)

PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE

March

- 1 Rep. Fox Fundraiser
[Sen. Perry Fundraiser](#)
- 2 RIFT Meeting w/ Colleen
[Callahan and Union Presidents](#)
- 5 School Improvement Intervention
Joint Committee
[Level A Grievance Hearings](#)
- 7 Mayor Cicilline & others
[PTU Executive Board](#)
- 8 City Hall: Contract Negotiations
[Councilman Narducci Fundraiser](#)
- 9 City Hall: Contract Negotiations
- 12 City Hall: Contract Negotiations
School Board Meeting
- 13 [Feinstein HS Faculty](#)
Building Delegate Meeting
[Sen. Tassoni Fundraiser](#)
- 14 Councilman Wood Meeting
[Membership Meeting](#)
- 15 Professional Time Joint Com.
[Reservoir Faculty Meeting](#)
Rep. Kilmartin Fundraiser
[Rep. Giannini Fundraiser](#)
- 16 Flynn Faculty
- 19 [Gregorian: Title I Award](#)
AFL-CIO Executive Board
[Level A Grievance Hearings](#)
Rep. Moura Fundraiser
- 20 [Literacy/Math Coaches](#)
- 21 Sen. Gallo Fundraiser
- 22 [Rep. Lima Fundraiser](#)
- 23 Labor Advisory Council
- 26 [Level A Grievance Hearings](#)
School Board Hearings
- 27 [Mayor Cicilline & others](#)
Rep. Palumbo Fundraiser
- 28 [PSD: Advisory Meeting](#)
Rep. Melo Fundraiser
- 30 [Wallace Foundation, New York](#)

April

- 2 Level A Grievance Hearings
- 4 [PTU Executive Board](#)
Rep. Serpa Fundraiser
- 5 [Superintendent Evans](#)
RI House Democratic Leadership
Fundraiser
- 9 [Level A Grievance Hearings](#)
School Board Meeting
- 10 [Building Delegate Meeting](#)
- 11 [Membership Meeting](#)
- 12 [Professional Time Joint Com.](#)
Superintendent Evans
- 16 [City Hall: Contract Negotiations](#)
AFL-CIO Executive Board
[Level A Grievance Hearings](#)
- 23 [Level A Grievance Hearings](#)
[School Board Meeting](#)
- 26 [Superintendent Evans](#)
- 30 [Level A Grievance Hearings](#)

(See CALENDAR OF EVENTS for listing of school visits.)

LAYOFFS

On February 12 and February 26, 2007, the Providence School Board approved a total of 726 layoffs effective the last day of the current school year. Below is a breakdown of the layoff categories:

Athletic Coach	75	Athletic Director	4
Emergency Certification	6	LTS	5
Emergency/Job Fair	2	LTSP	135
Emergency/Seniority	5	Regular Teachers/LTSP	13
Non-Renewal	2	Job Fair	5
Return from LWOP	78	More Senior	54
More Senior/Temp. Assignment	36	Temporary Assignment	2
Displaced LTSP	15	Program Reorganization	245
Program Reorg./Job Fair	13	Program Reorg./Emergency	31

Each teacher who has received a layoff notice has been notified by the Union as to their rights as a laid-off teacher. A complete copy of the Layoff/Recall list will also be distributed to each laid off teacher upon receipt from the Office of Human Resources.

Teachers are strongly encouraged to verify accuracy of the information on both lists and call the Union office immediately if there is a discrepancy.

FYI....

◆ [Job Fair](#)

The annual Job Fair will be held on Friday, July 13, 2007 at Springfield Middle School. Deadline for registering to attend the Job Fair is **Tuesday, May 15, 2007**. Registration must be done in person at the Office of Human Resources.

◆ [Informational Workshops: SRA-Direct Instruction](#)

The following schools will be implementing SRA-Direct Instruction next academic year which has been identified as the Core Reading program beginning in September 2007. The program will provide explicit, systematic instruction in the five areas of reading instruction.

Veazie (K-6)	West (K-6)	D'Abate (K-3)
Sackett (K-3)	Carl Lauro (K-3)	Kizirian (K-3)
Pleasant View (K-3)		

Informational workshops for teachers who may consider selecting these schools next year at the Consolidation meeting, Job Fair or Recall meeting will be held on May 15 and 16 from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. in the Technology Room at the Providence School Department. These meetings are strictly voluntary.

UNION OFFERS

[RE/MAX Professionals](#), 655 Main Street, East Greenwich - Verna Pezzullo, authorized real estate representative, is offering members and their immediate families a 1 % discounted commission fee for both buyers and sellers. Members who are interested, may contact Verna at 401- 884-6050. In order to receive a discount, members are asked to inform her that you are a Union member.

[Davol Square Fitness and Spa](#), 3 Davol Square, Suite A100, Providence - PTU members are offered a full-service, discounted membership rate of \$64 per month. For more information, you may call 401- 383-9600.

[iParty](#) Union members may apply for a 10% discount on all in-store purchases by showing their PTU membership card and filling out an application form at their local store.