

PROTEUN

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



April 2008

Dear Colleagues:

As mentioned in the previous editions of the PROTEUN, our negotiations for a successor contract and our desire to become equal partners in all educational matters continue to dominate our ongoing efforts.

Negotiations are moving at a slower rate due to the departure of School Board Chief Negotiator, John Simmons, and the announced departure of Superintendent of Schools, Donnie Evans.

The departure of these two individuals has left a School Board negotiating team with little, if any, leadership. As a result, I have been in contact with State appointed mediator, Professor Matthew Bodah, who has pledged to move forward regardless of School Board paralysis. I have also been in contact with Mayor Cicilline and he has pledged to renew and complete negotiations. As always, I will keep everyone informed as to our progress in securing a new contract. In the meantime, please keep in mind that we have a signed agreement which keeps our present contract in place (without modifications) until a new agreement is reached by the parties and ratified by the Providence City Council.

An issue of equal importance is the multitude of anti-union and anti-teacher legislation which has been introduced into the current legislative session. The onslaught is clearly the worst ever and is fueled by the poor economy (national, state and local), the RI budget crisis and the various "reform groups" whose major goal is to weaken collective bargaining rights for teachers.

SMITH PROPOSES PARTNERSHIP WITH BRADY

Providence Teachers Union President, Steven Smith, has reached out to incoming Superintendent of Schools, Thomas Brady, and offered to form a partnership between the two leaders. The goal of the partnership would be their joint leadership of initiatives aimed at improving schools, increasing student achievement and inclusion of teachers and parents as full partners in all matters pertaining to public education in Providence.

The new Superintendent has agreed to meet with Steve during the month of April when Mr. Brady is scheduled to visit Providence.

"It is critical" said Smith "that the new Superintendent hear directly from me about the role the Providence Teachers Union has played in implementing the No Child Left Behind Law as well as the multitude of reform programs the Union and management have designed and implemented in a collaborative fashion."

"It is equally as important" Smith continued, "that he [Mr. Brady] hear directly from me that the Providence Teachers Union is fully prepared to work closely with him from day one."

This offer to form a realistic working relationship based on mutual respect and highlighted by professionalism has been extended to each of the last three Superintendents. Unfortunately, only one recognized the value and the opportunity at hand. Hopefully, Mr. Brady will have the vision and the foresight to recognize the enormous potential of Steve's offer and the two leaders will create a common agenda for the benefit of the entire community.

LOCAL NEWS

[Cicilline Hires New Superintendent](#)

Thomas Brady, the interim superintendent of the Philadelphia school district, was hired as Providence Schools Superintendent days after the resignation of Donnie Evans. The Providence School Board did not advertise the position, conducted no search, interviewed no candidates and voted unanimously to appoint Mr. Brady.

[2008-2009 School Budget called "Shoestring"](#)

Mark Dunham, Providence School Department's Chief Financial Officer, has described the 2008-2009 budget as "bare bones" and will "barely be able to keep the buildings clean and the lights on." The budget includes a \$9.7 million shortfall which Dunham asserts he has no answers as to how the shortfall will be made-up. In addition, the budget includes no raises for all employees.

[Smith Testifies before City Council Committee](#)

The Providence City Council committee established to investigate the causes of the school department's poor response to the December 13, 2007 snowstorm held its first hearing on March 18, 2008. Donnie Evans, Mary McClure and Tomas Hanna did not attend citing a conflict with a School Board meeting. Steve Smith did attend and did testify to the actions of the city's teachers during the snowstorm with many remaining with their students until each student arrived home safely, and in many cases, late into the night. The committee will issue a report of their finding in May or June.

Your building delegate attended a state-wide meeting for all AFT building delegates and was fully briefed on each piece of legislation. In addition, you will be asked to assist in our attempts to defeat all attempts to modify the achievements we have so rightly attained through legislation and collective bargaining.

Of special note is the State and School Department budgets for next year. Governor Carcieri's budget calls for no increase in state education aid for cities and towns and the School Department budget includes no money for salary increases for all employees. Our Negotiating Committee has been studying the School Department budget and has already identified potential savings in several budget categories which could be used to support a salary increase. We will continue to demonstrate that the School Department budget can and should be modified.

Finally, included in this publication of the PROTEUN is an article about my initial contact with our new Superintendent, Thomas Brady. At first blush, it appears that Mr. Brady could be a breath of fresh air with regard to the establishment of clear, decisive progressive leadership. Let's keep our fingers crossed that Mr. Brady will not only be successful but will work with us and remain at the helm of the Providence School Department for a significant amount of time.



NEW PTU OFFICE HOURS

In an attempt to make the Union office more accessible, the PTU is extending its office hours.

Effective Monday, April 21, 2008, the new Union office hours are :

[8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.](#)

Field Representatives are also available to meet with teachers prior to 8:00 a.m. or after 5:00 p.m. by **appointment.**



LOCAL NEWS (Continued)

School Department Personnel Office Needs Overhaul

The Council of Great City Schools has issued a scathing report of the school department's human resource office citing weak execution of the most basic functions. The team found fault with the most fundamental workings of the office and that no progress had been made since an initial report citing the same problems were issued in 2001.

Governor Carcieri Wants Public Hearings on Contracts

As part of his budget package, Governor Carcieri would require cities and towns to hold public hearings on tentative labor agreements and require an analysis of the fiscal impact of the contract.

Someone should have asked the Governor if he checked the Providence Home Rule Charter and the Providence Teachers Union website.

Tentative agreements receive public hearings and fiscal notes are prepared. In addition, the teacher contract is printed in its entirety on the Union website (www.proteun.org).

**Reference: The Providence Journal*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Updates on Joint Committees, the 2008-09 School Calendars and Teacher Certification

◆ Site-Based Management

A letter was sent to all site-based schools on March 20th notifying them that completed site-based plans must be submitted to the Site-Based Management joint committee no later than Thursday, May 15, 2008. Once the plans are submitted and reviewed, each school will be asked to meet with the committee to receive feedback on its site-based proposal.

◆ Professional Time (Article 8-34)

Reminder that all professional time activities must be completed for the 2007-08 school year by May 8th. The next Professional Time joint committee is scheduled for April 10 — at which time the breakdown of hours for the 2008-09 school year will be determined.

◆ 2008-09 School Calendars

The proposed calendars (180-day and 230-day) were shared with the Executive Board on April 2nd and the Building Delegates on April 8th. Both the 180-day and the 230-day proposed calendars will be mailed to members for review. Both calendars will be on the May 14th Membership meeting agenda for ratification by the membership.

◆ Certification

Teachers who have certifications that expire on August 31, 2008 have been notified by Human Resources. Currently, the certification office timeline for processing renewals is 4-6 months. Human Resources is able to electronically request that the process be expedited within 48-72 hours once all of the renewal application documentation and fees are submitted to RIDE. As you complete your required coursework, it is imperative that you submit your documentation to the certification office in a timely manner in order to avoid a lapse in your certification.

Contact Paul at 421-4014 or Pvorro@proteun.org.

PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE

January

- 2 Executive Board Meeting
- 7 [Level A Grievance Hearings](#)
RI Federation of Teachers
- 8 [PSD-Layoff Meeting](#)
Building Delegate Meeting
- 9 [Mayor Cicilline](#)
- 10 Professional Time Committee
[Level A Grievance Hearings](#)
Pre-Deprivation Meeting w/
Teachers
- 11 [Labor Advisory Council](#)
Labor Management Collaboration
[Richard Kerbel](#)
- 12 RI Federation of Teachers
- 14 [Level A Grievance Hearings](#)
School Board Meeting
- 16 [RIDE-Commissioner McWalters](#)
RI Board of Regents
- 17 [RIFT Board Meeting](#)
- 22 [Level A Grievance Hearings](#)
[Richard Kerbel](#)
- 23 Youth Voices
[Rep. Gordon Fox](#)
- 24 [Level A Grievance Hearings](#)
[School Board Meeting](#)
- 25 [Labor Management Collaboration](#)
- 28 [Stephanie Federico-City Hall](#)
[RI Federation of Teachers](#)
Level A Grievance Hearings
- 30 [Negotiations](#)
Local 1033, et al
[PSD—Layoffs](#)
Speaker Murphy
- 31 [Mark Dunham—Medicaid Billing](#)
Superintendent Evans
[RI Higher Education](#)
Speaker Murphy Fundraiser

February

- 1 [Mayor Cicilline](#)
RIDE—Hope High School
- 4 [Negotiations](#)
Level A Grievance Hearings
- 5 [Perry-Mock Session/State House](#)
[PASA](#)
- 6 Superintendent Evans
[PTU Executive Board Meeting](#)
- 7 RI Federation of Teachers
[Pre-Deprivation Meeting w/
Teachers](#)
Special Building Delegate
Meeting
- 8 [Negotiations](#)

(Continued....)

DIRECTOR OF MEMBER SERVICES' REPORT

Grievances

During the month of March 2008, seventeen (17) grievances were filed. Of the seventeen (17) grievances filed, seven (7) were filed by high school teachers; five (5) were filed by elementary school teachers; three (3) were filed by middle school teachers; two (2) were filed by the Union.. The area most frequently grieved was Plant Maintenance (7). Other areas grieved are as follows:

Unfair & Inequitable Treatment	3
Appendix A	2
Supplies & Equipment.....	1
Hiring of Teachers.....	1
Information to the Union.....	1
Sick Leave	1
Substitute Teachers.....	1

Recent Union Grievance Decisions

◆ **Violation of Article 12-2.4.1, Suspension List and Article 11, Posted Positions**

A Union grievance was filed on behalf of Elementary certified laid-off teachers who had not been recalled from layoff given that unfilled vacancies at site-based/charter schools were not included in the July 12, 2007 job posting packet.

The grievance was partially sustained at Level A with the appointment of those affected teachers retroactive to September 5, 2007. The Union appealed the grievance to Level B given that the Providence School Department's failure to fill its vacancies in a timely manner, caused teachers to suffer financial loss by not working on September 4, 2007 (orientation day).

The grievance was subsequently sustained by Superintendent Evans whereby the teachers' date of recall was changed from September 5, 2007 to September 4, 2007 and compensation was awarded for orientation day.

◆ **Violation of Article 8-7 and Article 12-3.2**

A Union grievance was filed on behalf of laid-off teachers employed as Long Term Substitute Teachers In-Pool (LTSP) as a result of the improper interpretation of Articles 8-7 and 12-3.2 by a Human Resources representative. Laid-off teachers who serve as Long Term Substitute Teachers in-Pool, are entitled to a substitute teaching assignment prior to any Long Term Substitute Teacher in-Pool whose name does not appear on a Recall Seniority List.

The grievance was sustained by Superintendent Evans whereby he directed Human Resources to provide those teachers serving as Long Term Substitute Teachers in-Pool and whose names appear on a Recall Seniority List with a substitute teaching assignment prior to any Long Term Substitute Teacher in-Pool whose name does not appear on a Recall Seniority List (in accordance with Articles 8-7 & 12-3.2).

PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE

February (continued):

- 11 Negotiations
Level A Grievance Hearings
Informational Picketing
at School Board Meeting
Special School Board Meeting
- 12 RIDE—Hope High Schools
- 13 G.J. West Presentation on
Bullying
- 14 Professional Time Committee
Rep. Gordon Fox/
Rep. Costantino
- 15 Secretary of Education—Broad
St. Elementary
- 25 Level A Grievance Hearings
- 26 PSD—PDK Audit Interview
Superintendent Evans
- 28 RIFT Board Meeting
Rep. Fox Fundraiser

March

- 3 Level A Grievance Hearings
- 4 Building Delegate Meeting
- 5 Executive Board Meeting
Sen. Montalbano Fundraiser
- 7 Negotiations
Medicaid Billing
- 10 Negotiations
Level A Grievance Hearings
- 11 RIFT
Rep. Tassoni Fundraiser
- 12 Membership Meeting
RIFT—West Valley Inn
- 13 Informational Picketing
Professional Time Committee
Rep. Charlene Lima Fundraiser
- 17 RI AFL-CIO
Level A Grievance Hearings
- 18 City Hall
- 19 Richard Kerbel, Director of
Administration
Rep. Donald Lally Fundraiser
Councilman John Lombardi
Fundraiser
- 20 RIFT Board Meeting
HSTA Ceremony
- 24 School Board Meeting
- 26 West—Student Presentation on
Bullying
Senator Bea Lanzi Fundraiser
Rep. Joanne Gianni Fundraiser
- 27 State House—School Funding
Formula
- 28 RI Higher Education Urban
Task Force
B. Delegate, Tom Nolan,
Legislation/Letter writing

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

2008 LAYOFFS

Below is a breakdown of this year's layoffs by certification area.

Art	9	Math Secondary	26
Biology	10	Middle School English	24
Business Education	10	Middle School ESL	2
Chemistry	6	Middle School Foreign Language	1
Computer Science	2	Middle School Math	10
Dance	1	Middle School Science	5
Early Childhood/Elementary	63	Middle School Social Studies	10
Early Childhood/Elem. Bil. Span.	14	Music	4
Early Childhood/Elem. ESL	7	Physics	2
English Secondary	43	Reading	1
Foreign Language	14	Sp. Ed. Early Childhood Spanish Bil.	3
General Science	3	Special Education Elementary/Middle	12
Guidance	9	Special Education Middle/Secondary	37
Health & PE/Adaptive	19	Sp. Ed. Middle/Secondary Spanish Bil.	1
History/Social Studies	33	Special Education Severe/Profound	2
Theatre	1	Speech	1

The official Layoff Seniority Lists have been released by the Office of Human Resources. The Layoff Lists may be viewed in its entirety on our website within the **Member Information section**. Each teacher who has received a layoff notice, is highly encouraged to review the applicable Layoff List to verify accuracy of his/her information. Any discrepancies should be reported to the Union office **immediately**.

Contact Maura @ 421-4014 or mgalvao@proteun.org.

Providence Teachers Union
RELATED HEALTH SERVICES FUND



PROVIDER CHANGE FOR DISABILITY INSURANCE

Concord Heritage Life, which presently offers the PTU Health & Welfare Fund's disability insurance, is discontinuing the sale of all products in Rhode Island. Therefore, the Health & Welfare Fund has transferred our disability insurance program to the Allstate Workplace Division Insurance Company.

Teachers currently enrolled in the disability program with Concord Heritage Life, will need to execute his/her policy transfer to Allstate in writing. Your Building Delegate will contact you to arrange a time for one of our representatives to meet with you at your school in order to review and execute the transfer. Individual appointments at the Providence Teachers Union office may also be arranged.

Anyone who does not take the opportunity to execute the transfer of benefits during this time period, will receive a notice indicating that the Concord Heritage Life policy will become a direct billed policy no longer available thru payroll deduction.

Teachers enrolled in the disability insurance program will receive notification from the Providence Teachers Union office with more details about the conversion to Allstate.

In the meantime, feel free to contact the Union office should you have any questions about this matter.

Contact Paul @ 421-4014 or pvorro@proteun.org.

SCHOOL NEWS

[Charles Fortes Elementary School](#): **Brenda Fabrizio's** third grade class participated in the RI Spring Flower and Garden Show Super Hero Essay Challenge. Their essays were written from the perspective of a Super Hero who was working to change the world and improve our environment. The winners from her class include: Xavier Merced, Rafel Moreno Solano, Ashlie Deleon, Elvis Sanchez, and Lysvette Gonzalez.

[Sgt Cornel Young Jr. Elementary School](#): The Providence Police Department in partnership with teacher **Terinna Hartnett** conduct weekly sessions dedicated to helping students understand and appreciate the role of police in our community.

[Springfield Middle School](#) held a cultural celebration on February 4th. Parents and students came dressed in native clothing and shared their favorite recipes and dances.

[Veazie Street Elementary School](#) conducted a successful fundraiser to help a family who had lost everything in a holiday fire. In addition, they coordinated with Cardi's furniture to gain donations of bedding for the entire family. The Safety Patrol/ Student Leadership Team donated 723 food and hygiene products to St. Edward's Food and Wellness Center.

[Webster Avenue Elementary School](#) students, in **Scott Shepard** and **Donna Tolppa's** sixth grade classes, concluded their five-month study of immigration with a series of presentations to parents and students. The program included music, speeches and ethnic foods. The classes will continue to expand their knowledge of immigration by holding monthly dinners, city debates and finally participate in a trip to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

[Providence Academy of International Studies](#) participated in the O Ambassadors, a joint project of Oprah's Angel Network and Free The Children. The students worked on the UN Millennium Development Goals and learned about global issues. They will be conducting fundraisers to help with holistic development projects in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

[Hopkins Middle School](#): On Saturday, March 8, students in **Angelo Neri's** Italian class took the National Italian Exam. The exam was taken by more than 300 students statewide. Four students from Hopkins ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in several of the exam's categories.

Contact Ed at 421-4014 or eneil@proteun.org.

PROVIDENCE PRINCESS

The Providence Teachers Union in collaboration with Sigma Sigma Sigma Sorority will be hosting its Annual "Providence Princess." The event will be held at the Providence Teachers Union office on:

Friday, April 25, 2008 **3:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

Saturday, April 26, 2008 **10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

Providence high school students are invited to attend the event and choose a prom gown (many sizes available), shoes, jewelry and accessories.



Contact Deb Pilkington at 421-4014.

SCHOOL NEWS

[Flynn Elementary](#): *Cecilia Flores*' 5th grade class hosted an "Author's Celebration" on February 7, 2008.

[Bridgham Middle School](#): Students in Ms. *Jenny Chan-Remka*'s English as a Second Language class worked with Brown undergraduate students to complete a hands-on science experiment in class.

Kathy Fleenor was recently awarded a \$1,350.00 Feinstein grant to fund a good deed coupled with a science project. Kathy's sixth grade team will travel to Narragansett this spring to launch model rockets.

[Roger Williams Middle School](#): Students in *Dora Valazquez*'s 8th grade bilingual Social Studies class visited the Rhode Island State House on February 25, 2008. The students toured the state house and met with Rep. Grace Diaz. Students had an opportunity to use the electronic voting module to participate in a mock vote on whether their school should require uniforms. After the vote, students debated about the pros and cons of school uniforms.

[Perry Middle School](#): More than 100 students from *Sabrina Antonelli* and *Shaila Cruz*'s classes participated in a World Math Day. The Perry students worked interactively on math problems with students from around the world.

[Hope High School](#): *Sandy Hamlin*, an English teacher at Hope Arts, was recently voted Teacher of the Year for her learning community.

Valerie Kline, Art teacher, received a Target field trip grant designed to bring learning to life for her students. Ms. Kline plans on using the grant to take 50 students to the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

Regine Tardieu, Foreign Language teacher, has been raising funds for Hope's French Immersion Program. Students in the program will participate in a four-day educational tour of Quebec. This opportunity will develop the student's appreciation of world cultures and their own.

[Classical High School](#): On Saturday, March 8, students in *Roberto DiMascio*'s and *James Lyman*'s Italian classes took the National Italian Exam. The exam was taken by more than 300 students statewide. Five students from Classical ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in several of the exam's categories.

Contact Phil at 421-4014 or pdececco@proteun.org.

FYI

◆ [Job Fair Registration](#)

Have you registered for Job Fair yet? Deadline to register for this year's Job Fair is **Thursday, May 15, 2008**. Registration must be done in person at the Office of Human Resources.

◆ [Middle School Endorsement](#)

The regulation for a middle school endorsement requires "Completion of an approved college program of studies for the preparation of middle level educators to include collaboratively supervised field experience(s)...." Individuals interested in obtaining middle school endorsement should be aware that completion of an approved program must be verified by a college or university. Therefore, the program of studies must be completed at a single college or university.

Contact Maura at 421-4014 or mgalvao@proteun.org.