

PROTEUN

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



June 2008

NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE

With the departure of the City's chief negotiator, John Simmons, and the impending departure of Superintendent Donnie Evans, formal negotiations have stalled. Although the last date of formal negotiations took place on March 7, 2008, on-going dialogue with the Mayor and his new chief negotiator, Richard Kerbel, has occurred.

This month there were four briefing sessions held at Bridgman Middle School to update members on the status of contract negotiations. President Smith stated that it appears the City is moving away from interest-based bargaining. The most recent proposal submitted by the City clearly indicates the City's desire for a top-down management approach. While the Providence Teachers Union's negotiating team has proposed items that would benefit our teachers, our schools and our students (i.e. Peer Assistance & Review; staff stability, pre-school classes in all intervention schools, lower class size in grades K-2—to name a few), the City's proposal had little to do with student achievement and improving our schools.

It is our hope that Superintendent Brady is ready and willing to form a partnership with us so we can reach closure on an agreement that is good for teachers and students.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2007-2008 School Year

As mandated by the Board of Regents and the RI Department of Education, Providence teachers were required to complete 38 hours of professional development during this past school year. While the majority of teachers (90%) completed the required number of PD hours, the remaining 10% completed 20 hours or less. Teachers completing 20 or fewer hours were notified that failure to complete mandatory PD places the district at risk of non-compliance with RIDE. Any teacher who received such notice and who believes that he/she has received this letter in error, should send the Office of Human Resources a written response with their specific reason(s) as to why the letter is erroneous. A copy of said rebuttal should be sent to the Union office.

2008-2009 School Year

During the 2008-09 school year, teachers will be required to complete 39 hours of Professional Development. In accordance with a recent directive from Commissioner of Education, Peter McWalters, the Providence School Department will assume primary ownership of all professional development hours for all district schools. Any remaining PD hours unplanned by November 15, 2008, will be scheduled as school-based activities.

Many PD activities will be offered during the summer recess at CCRI (Lincoln and Warwick), RI College and the Providence School Department. Teachers will be able to enroll in said activities on MLP effective July 1st. Although summer professional development is not mandatory, teachers are highly encouraged to participate. However, for those individuals unable to participate in summer Professional Development, additional opportunities will be available during the school year. Teachers interested in attending summer Professional Development should register as soon as possible given that seating is limited.

Dear Colleagues:

As we end another school year, I would like to thank you for your hard work and dedication throughout a most challenging school year. One of the most rewarding aspects of being Union President is visiting schools and seeing first-hand the dedication put forward every day by Providence teachers. I applaud you for your continued commitment to providing the best education possible for Providence students considering the challenging conditions you encounter every day.

As teachers and union members, we face challenges on many fronts. We have a School Board that is disconnected from the realities that teachers and students encounter on a daily basis; a School Department administration that is in constant upheaval; and, a legislature that has consistently tried to place limits on our collective bargaining rights as well as eliminate or change pension and healthcare benefits.

I want to recognize those members who contacted their senators and representatives this legislative session. Their efforts have been extremely effective and greatly appreciated. We all must continue to be engaged in the political process. This election year, it is imperative that we support candidates that advocated for public education, our profession and the rights of all workers. We must take advantage of this opportunity to let our voices be heard.

We have dedicated our lives to the teaching profession. We know what is needed to improve our schools and meet the many needs of our students.

(Continued...)

As members of the Providence Teachers Union, together we must determine the future of our schools as well as our profession.

I thank you for your continue support and assistance and be assured that I will continue to keep you fully informed. Enjoy your summer!



PTU SUMMER HOURS

Effective Monday, June 30, the Union office will be opened:

**Monday thru Friday
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

Normal business hours will resume on Monday, August 25, 2008.



Enjoy your summer recess!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Arbitration Decisions

The 2007-08 school year has resulted in the resolution of six grievances that were filed for arbitration. The PTU prevailed in five out of the six arbitration decisions. These favorable resolutions have clearly shown that the Providence School Department violated the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Teacher Non-Renewal Appeals

The PTU has been successful in overturning the non-renewal of six (6) teachers who were terminated in June 2006. The Commissioner's ruling dated July 2, 2007 cited the Providence School Department's failure to properly notify the teachers by March 1, which is a violation of RI State Law. The Providence School Department appealed the Commissioner's decision to the Board of Regents, and on May 29, 2008 a subcommittee of the Board of Regents voted unanimously to uphold the Commissioner's decision. The final vote by the entire Board is scheduled for August 4, 2008.

2008-08 School Calendars

The approved 2008-09 school calendars for the 180-day and 230-day are available on the PTU website within the Member Services section.

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



The PTU Related Health Services Fund has only one endorsed provider. There are several other insurance companies in Providence schools attempting to enroll teachers in their programs. There have been issues with these non-endorsed companies not providing teachers with the correct information which could possibly jeopardize claims made by teachers. A complaint has been filed officially by the Related Health Services Fund Board of Trustees with the Department of Business Regulations against one of these insurance companies.

If you have any questions about the validity of any of these insurance companies, please contact your field representative at the PTU office.

The conversion from Concord Heritage Life disability insurance to Allstate Workplace Division Insurance Company will continue in September. Sixteen (16) schools have been completed. If you would like to meet with our representative during the summer, please call the Union office to schedule an appointment.

SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

Mary Joyce Scholarships

For over twenty years, donations from Providence teachers have awarded \$500 scholarships to deserving graduating Providence students. This year's recipients were:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Philip Carpenter | Central |
| Joshua Cabrera | Classical |
| Anacaren Delgado | E-Cubed Academy |
| Patricia Mendez | Feinstein |
| Coua Lee | Cooley HSTA |
| Don Anthony Cunanan | Hope |
| Kayla Costa | Hope |
| Daneele Savoury | Textron Chamber |



PTU Scholarships

Two Providence Teachers Union scholarships were awarded to the following children of Providence teachers:

- Derek Montecalvo (son of Sharon Montecalvo-Feinstein High Sschol)
- Marissa Dursin (daughter of Cynthia Dursin-Windmille Elementary)

Congratulations to this year's scholarship winners!

PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE

April

- 1 Level A Grievance Hearings
- 2 Health Related Trustees
- Executive Board Meeting
- 3 RIDE
- Rep. Carter Fundraiser
- 4 Labor Mgt. Collaboration
- 7 Level A Grievance Hearings
- 8 Building Delegate Meeting
- 9 AFL-CIO Working RI
- Membership Meeting
- 10 Professional Time Comm.
- 11 Blue Cross Labor Advisory Council
- 14 School Board Meeting
- 15 Negotiations
- 21 RI AFL-CIO
- 22 Working RI/IBEW
- Level A Grievance Hearings
- Sen. Ciccone Fundraiser
- 23 HS Renewal Steering Comm.
- 24 PSD/Mary Doyle
- RIFT Board Meeting
- Rep. Rene Menard Fundraiser
- 25 City Labor Leaders
- 28 Level A Grievance Hearings
- 30 AFL-CIO Working RI

May

- 1 Education Sector
- 2 Labor Mgt. Collaboration
- 5 Level A Grievance Hearings
- City Hall/Education Comm.
- 6 Education Sector/Nat'l
- Teacher Survey Panel/DC
- 7 Education Sector/Nat'l
- Teacher Survey Panel/DC
- 8 Professional Time Comm.
- 9 RIFT
- 12 Level A Grievances Hearings
- School Board Meeting
- 13 Building Delegate Meeting
- 14 RI AFL-CIO Working RI
- Membership Meeting
- PTU Elections
- 15 Providence Delegation
- RIFT Board Meeting
- 16 VIPS
- 17 Councilman Nick Narducci
- Fundraiser
- 19 RI AFL-CIO
- 20 Negotiations/PTU team
- Central Honors Night
- Classical Honors Night
- Youth Voices

DIRECTOR OF MEMBER SERVICES' REPORT

Grievances

During the month of May 2008, fourteen (14) grievances were filed. Of the fourteen (14) grievances filed, six (6) were filed by high school teachers; three (3) were filed by elementary school teachers; five (5) were filed by middle school teachers. The area most frequently grieved was Unfair & Inequitable Treatment (7). Other areas grieved are as follows:

Professional Development.....	1
Appendix B-9	1
Health & Safety	2
Posted Positions.....	1
Suspension List.....	1
Discipline Code	1

Layoffs/Recalls

To date, 87 teachers have been rescinded from layoff. The next round of layoff recalls will occur on June 23, 2008. Any teacher who is not recalled by the last day of school, should file for summer unemployment compensation.

Summer Placement Meetings

Consolidation Meeting: Tuesday, June 24 2008/Springfield Middle School

Information regarding available positions and ranking will be mailed to affected teachers at least 3 business days prior to the meeting.

Job Fair: Friday, July 11, 2008/Springfield Middle School

Invitation letters and bid cards will be mailed to eligible teachers early July. Teachers should verify that the date of hire listed on the bid card(s) is accurate. Any discrepancy should be reported to your field representative as soon as possible.

Recall Meeting: Thursday, July 17, 2008/ Providence School Department

Eligible teachers will be notified by the Office of Human Resources by Monday, July 14, 2008.

Sick Leave Bonus

Timelines for this year's sick leave bonus are as follows:

Notices mailed to eligible teachers:	June 27, 2008
Responses due back to payroll by:	July 10, 2008
Checks Mailed:	July 18, 2008

To be eligible, you must have been employed as a full-time teacher effective Orientation Day and utilized five (5) or fewer sick days.

To be eligible as an LTS, you must have been (1) appointed effective Orientation Day ; (2) appointed for the entire second semester; and (3) utilized five or fewer sick days.

Lifewatch

Representatives from LifeWatch are available to provide our members with a series of I-Plan certified workshops geared toward teacher-specific issues. A Stress Management workshop will be scheduled sometime in September/October.

Recommendations for specific areas of interest may be e-mailed to mgalvao@proteun.org. Workshops may be conducted at the school or at the Union office.

PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE

May (continued)

- 27 Mediator Matt Bodah
- 28 Mayor David Cicilline
- 29 Level A Grievance Hearings
Feinstein Honors Night
- 30 Labor Mgt. Collaboration

June

- 2 Jack Reed Breakfast
AFL-CIO Working RI
Negotiations/PTU team
- 3 Hope Honors Celebration
- 4 Health Related Trustees
Executive Board Meeting
Rep. Peter Palumbo
Fundraiser
- 9 Negotiation Briefing Session
- 10 RIDE
Hope Graduation
Negotiation Briefing Session
- 11 PSD/Mary Doyle
PSD/Consolidations
Negotiation Briefing Session
- 16 PSD/Consolidations
Joint Intervention Comm.
Negotiations Briefing Session
- 17 Building Delegate Meeting
Rep. John DeSimone
Fundraiser
- 18 PSD/SIT/Delegates
AFL-CIO Working RI
- 19 Hi-Hat/End of the Year Party
- 23 Level A Grievance Hearings
School Board Meeting
- 24 Consolidation Meeting
- 25 RI Urban Education
- 26 Lynch Fundraiser
- 27 Joint Intervention Committee

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teacher Quality Peer Assistance and Review

There are many factors that affect student achievement. One significant and outstanding variable is the issue of teacher quality. For decades, Providence teachers have found ways to improve instruction despite inadequate facilities, ineffective administrative leadership, lack of materials, and a portion of our student population struggling to find their way out of poverty.

Sometimes, even the most effective teachers can not meet the demands of this formidable task alone. We need support from the school, from the administration, from the community, and from other teachers, as well. The idea of teachers helping teachers is not new. Considering all the challenges facing public school teachers these days, it has become vital that teachers take an active role in supporting each other. This will not only help make education a priority for all our students, but it would improve achievement levels of all students in all grades.

The American Federation of Teachers has taken the lead in this endeavor. They have called together Local Unions from all over the country to look at a model for teachers taking responsibility for teacher quality by reviewing the performance of teachers new to the profession, and offering the necessary support.

As one might imagine, the issue of peer assistance and review is very complex. We have been working in a culture where teachers teach and where administrators evaluate. It is nice and tidy, but it appears that this system has failed not only in Providence, but throughout the country. Most agree that no one knows what good teaching looks like, better than other teachers. Back in the day when administrators came from the veteran teaching ranks, things were different. But today, the national shortage of building principals has resulted in shortcuts and "fast tracks" to holding that position.

In Ohio, the Toledo Federation of Teachers instituted a program of assistance and review for newly hired teachers. It has been operating since 1981 with great success. For the first nine years, Toledo principals blocked the program. During that time, teacher support for it grew considerably because it was always described as the "first step toward a real profession with real professionalization responsibilities for classroom teachers."

Recently, two members of our Executive Board visited Toledo to observe the end of the year process. The collaboration of teachers and administrators recommends renewal or non-renewal of newly hired teachers. "The process was respectful, professional and honest. All comments (about teacher performance) were based on fact and observation..." There were no personal comments or favoritism during the proceedings.

Toledo is a good place for us to start looking at what might work in Providence, since they have been at it for a while. It certainly is a change in the way we have been doing business, but we need to do something, and we need to do it soon.

SCHOOL NEWS

Charles Fortes Elementary School recently became one of the first elementary school in the area to participate in a workshop held by the Katie Brown Foundation. The workshop focuses on teaching students about positive, healthy relationships. Students from **Julie Slater's** and **Christen Ahern's** classes participated in the March for Babies at Colt State Park.

Charlotte Woods and Sgt Cornel Young Jr. Elementary Schools are using community resources to help improve reading and math scores. Volunteers from VIP and Johnson and Wales are assisting teachers to develop curriculum and collect data.

Feinstein High School held its internship fair this month. Graduating seniors presented their work based learning projects. Each project is expected to demonstrate professionalism, dedication, responsibility and summarize what they have learned.

Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School held its science fair on May 12th. Projects were judged by professors from Brown University.

Nathanael Greene Middle School science classes of **Kelly Farrell** and **Catherine DiPietro** completed their study of the planets with a presentation room the Boston Museum of Sciences Star Lab. The lab uses an eight foot inflatable dome to help students observe the day and nighttime skies.

Gilbert Stuart Middle School The Junior Honor Society recently raised more than \$500 in a "Pennies for Peace" fundraiser. The money will be used to benefit children in Afghanistan.

**Reference: www.providenceschools.org*

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

SCHOOL NEWS

Carl Lauro Elementary Teachers at Carl Lauro have been the recipients of thousands of dollars of private donations through the Donors Choose program. Teacher **Suzanne Davis's** classroom has received 30 new classroom chairs, three bookcases, leather bound notebooks, a rolling white board, 60 reams of paper and many other necessary supplies. **Stacey Roginski's** class has received supplies for an at-home reading activity including 13 bilingual books, canvas reading bags, activity cards and paint. Librarian **Maria Morin** has received library signage, books, a display, a multi-function printer, digital camera, headphones and microphones. **Bev Martin** received a rolling whiteboard, picture dictionaries, classroom supplies and a writing prompt book. **Fran Orsini** and **Brenda Lucier** had electric pencil sharpeners funded; **Orsini** also received 30 clipboards. **Linda Columbe** was given an art library for her art room. **Anne Pariseau** received a digital projector.

Central Richard Gurspan and Nancy Patino organized a two-hour cultural showcase for Central High School families with an evening of theater and dance. The theme for the evening's celebration was immigration to America. More than 30 students performed five one-act plays.

Lima Sixth grade students under the guidance of teachers Yanaiza Gallant, Joseph Dauray and Maria Vergez conducted a clean up of trash in the neighborhood surrounding the school. The teachers had students discuss topics about recycling and everyone's role in maintaining a cleaner world.

Mt. Pleasant Dawn Gianfrancesco's junior English classes held a mock trial after reading Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* in class. The students decided to conduct the Salem Witchcraft Trials as a modern-day trial.

Perry A team of Perry Middle School students, led by teachers David Baxter and Curtis Matthieu, recently took part in a robotics demonstration at Martin Middle School in East Providence. The students used Lego robotics kits and were challenged to create a robotic chain reaction machine, parade float, and robotic animal that demonstrates behavior in its programming.

Pleasant View Nancy Franzese's Pre-K class has assembled a book of the letters of the alphabet, all created with photographs of the children forming the letters with their bodies. The book promotes language use and literacy.

**Reference: www.providenceschools.org*

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

PROVIDENCE PRINCESS

On Friday, April 25, 2008 and Saturday, April 26, 2008, the Providence Teachers Union held its annual Providence Princess event. According to Debra Pilkington, Providence Princess Coordinator, the event was a huge success. Out of the sixty-four high school students who attended, forty-five of them left with a gown, shoes and jewelry.

In addition, to receiving a prom gown, one lucky student won a free Tuxedo rental.

Thank you to all of the Providence teachers who donated prom dresses, shoes and accessories. And, a special thank you to Deb Pilkington for all of her efforts throughout the year which made this event a huge success.



Contact Deb Pilkington at 421-4014.

FYI

- ◆ **PB Day Requests**
Requests for Personal Business days for the 2008-09 school year, may be entered into AESOP effective July 1, 2008.
- ◆ **Paystubs**
It is good practice to save your payroll stubs for a minimum of 3 years. Especially, for those teachers who are contemplating retirement within the next three years.
- ◆ **PTU Website**
Any suggestions/recommendations for improving our website may be forwarded to mgalvao@proteun.org.
- ◆ **Contact Information**
Please notify the Union office of any address/telephone/e-mail changes that occur over summer recess.
- ◆ **MLP Profile**
Any teacher whose assignment has changed after the end of the school year, should update his/her profile on My Learning Plan prior to registering for professional development activities.

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