

MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

March 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			Member Meeting East Sylvan School 5:30-7:30 PM		"Trimester & Yr. Rd. Schools" ONLY CLASSIFIED CONNECTIONS	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Move clocks FORWARD			E-Board Meeting PFTCE Offices 5:30 PM			
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	St. Patrick's Day					
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Spring Break						
29	30	31				

April 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
					"Quarter Schools" ONLY CLASSIFIED CONNECTIONS	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
			E-Board Meeting PFTCE Offices 5:30 PM		AFT-OR Convention Sunriver	AFT-OR Convention Sunriver
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
AFT-OR Convention Sunriver						
26	27	28	29	30		

"A Union of Professionals...Working with Children"

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March 5, 2009

The PFTCE PROFILE



THINKING OUT LOUD...



BY TOM SMITH
PFTCE PRESIDENT
tomsmith@pftce.org

Well, I was hoping to write a long, pleasant column, full of good news, but I'm having trouble finding much.

With the lack of money to balance the state budget, which affects the school district's budget, which could affect the length of the school year, which could affect our work days – it's all a moving target in the fog! Superintendent Carole Smith has stated that she "intends to do everything possible to preserve the student year". We will keep you posted on developments.

Thanks to all of you that responded to the bargaining survey. That was the first time we have used the online method, and it seemed to work very well. Many thanks to Field Representative Belinda Reagan for developing and managing the survey for us. We will not be releasing specifics on the results, as that will be confidential information to be used by the team during bargaining, although, Belinda has addressed some of your comments and concerns from the survey in this newsletter.

As for a bargaining update, there isn't much to report at this time. We had an initial meeting with the District, and our second meeting has been postponed due to illness and waiting for more solid budget information. Our next meeting is scheduled for March 12th.

Last night, we held our March membership meeting, and nominations for Executive Board Officers were accepted. Ballots will be mailed to members homes May 1st, to be returned by May 15th, and counted by the Election Committee by May 18th. Become an informed voter and participate in your union elections.

Nominees are:

President: Tom Smith (Incumbent)
Belinda Reagan

Treasurer: Michelle Batten (Incumbent)
Robert Wong

VP at Large: Bill Beeson (Elected by acclamation)

VP at Large: Belinda Reagan (Elected by acclamation)

Happy Classified Employee Recognition Week! There was a very nice recognition ceremony at the school board meeting on Monday the 23rd of February. Over 150 nominations came in, and twenty were chosen to appear before the board. Gayle Huskey, Madison, and Lynn Terhaar, Duniway, spoke to the Board and made great comments about their schools, students, co-workers and their union. I noticed the School Board members intently listening and enjoying the comments. I know that each of you deserve recognition for all you do, and I congratulate all of you! You make me proud to be your President. Please email me with information on recognition events that took place at your worksite.

We will be quite busy during the next few months with elections, bargaining, and dealing with whatever the budget brings. One good thing that I hear is "spring break calling." Be sure to take some time for yourself and have some fun. We'll stay in touch.

Tom

FIELDING YOUR QUESTIONS...



BY BELINDA REAGAN
PFTCE FIELD REPRESENTATIVE
& PFTCE VP
belinda@pftce.org



Thank you to everyone that responded to our recent online "Bargaining Survey". The number of participants was overwhelming; we had over 500 surveys completed by the 1300 employees asked to share their opinions!

While we are guarding the results of the survey until bargaining is complete, I thought that it was important to address a few of the comments that we received, to clarify a few misconceptions, and explain some issues.

A special "thanks" to the many of you that spoke well of the bargaining team and the Union! We really appreciate your support!

1. Remark/Comment: "I would like to see hypnosis and acupuncture added to our benefits."

Response: The cost of adding alternative care to our Providence plans would increase premiums dramatically for all plan participants. Currently, only the Kaiser plans cover acupuncture, as well as other alternative care. Hypnosis coverage is not available through Providence or Kaiser.

2a. Remark/Comment: "I cannot afford to pay more in health insurance. I also don't think it is fair that classified (that already make less than certified) are paying more in health benefits, than certified. Thanks for listening to another gripe :)"

2b. Remark/Comment: "It's absolutely unfair that teachers pay less than classified for health coverage. Something must be done!"

Response: Unfortunately, health insurance rates are on the rise, with no signs of stopping---for everyone! As with all group health insurance, premiums charged to the Health & Welfare Trust for PFTCE members are determined based on the "experience rating" of the group, as a whole. Because we have an "older" group of participants, with high medical claims, we are charged accordingly.

As to the second part of your comment; most certified staff do not pay less than classified employees for their health insurance. PAT contributions are determined by a "composite" method, which simply means that EVERYONE pays the same amount monthly, whether you are a single person, or have eighteen dependents covered by your policy. While PAT's individual coverage, on any plan (including disability), for EVERY participant, costs over \$110.00 per month, our plans cost PFTCE participants from \$34.61 for an individual, to a maximum of \$130.14 for that same family with eighteen dependents.

3a. Remark/Comment: "I suggest the District use the numbers of employees on Kaiser and Providence to re-negotiate a better health package at a better price. There has to be room to negotiate!"

3b. Remark/Comment: "Have we shopped around for Health Care Options lately? Possibly we could offer a major medical only policy for those who rarely use insurance or have other coverage from a spouse. The premiums seem kind of high to me."

Response: The reality is that we have EXCELLENT health care plans, and coverage, compared to most plans offered in the private or non-group sector. Each year, the PFTCE Trustees on the Health & Welfare Trust review all options that are available, and make a decision on plans and design. Sadly, premiums are high on ALL health insurance. Our current plans are structured to benefit those with the fewest medical requirements, while still providing care options for those most in need, at a reasonable rate.

4. Remark/Comment: "If you would stop cutting a person's wages for switching positions then things might be OK. There are too many people who make a lot more than your workers that have been long term. It just doesn't seem fair."

Response: I'm not certain who the "you" is that you refer to in your first sentence, but PFTCE would never cut an employee's wages! If your wages were cut because you changed positions, please contact our office. We'd like to discuss your situation with you.

5. Remark/Comment: "I am concerned that the libraries in our schools will be cut and the staff replaced with untrained volunteers."

Response: Our contract states, in Article 1-5 (Recognition), "A volunteer or student worker shall not be used for the purpose of replacing an employee in an approved position." If you know of any volunteers working in positions formerly held by PFTCE classified employees, or of any plans to replace any employee with a volunteer, please let us know immediately. We will file a grievance.

6. Remark/Comment: "Mileage reimbursement is always very slow to increase the rate but very quick to decrease the rate. We (employees) drive a great deal every day. It took the district 6 months to increase the rate after gas rates sky rocketed. It took them about two days to take money away. Very discouraging, as many of us simply had to pay more to drive than we were even close to being reimbursed for such expenses. I realize the FEDS are always blamed. I think this is a total cop out, and is using employees to the District's own benefit."

Response: The FEDS are blamed because it IS the federal government, aka the IRS, which sets these rates. The current, 2009 standard mileage rate used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business is 55¢ per mile. The district, as well as most businesses, follows these guidelines.

Take it easy

Again, thank you for your input! When bargaining begins in earnest, your thoughts and opinions will help direct our negotiations!

RESOLUTION No. 4036 Resolution to Recognize Classified Employees Appreciation Week March 2-6, 2009

RECITALS

A.

Portland Public Schools' Classified employees are essential members of our educational team. They are often our ambassadors to the public as well as caring, familiar people in the lives of our students. On the front lines and behind the scenes, they create a positive learning environment for our students by assisting them in the classroom; preparing and serving meals; caring for their physical needs; transporting them; keeping them safe, and aiding their families. They keep our administrative and school offices humming; attend to our buildings and grounds; help us communicate with each other and our community; shepherd supplies and equipment, and so much more. We are grateful for their support.

B.

The Board of Education for Portland Public Schools acknowledges and applauds Portland Public Schools' administrative assistants, administrative secretaries, assistive technology practitioners, bookkeepers, campus monitors, community agents, certified nursing assistants, certified occupational therapy assistants, clerks, community agents, educational assistants, library assistants, licensed physical therapy assistants, licensed practical nurses, occupational therapists, para-educators, physical therapists, principal's secretaries, school secretaries, sign language interpreters, technology assistants, therapeutic intervention coaches, transportation route schedulers, nutrition services staff, food service assistants, bus drivers, custodians, truck drivers, warehousemen, maintenance workers, television services employees and driver education instructors.

C.

For their efforts on behalf of the 46,000 students in our Portland Public Schools, the classified employees deserve recognition and thanks.

RESOLUTION

The Board of Education declares March 2-6, 2009 Classified Employees Appreciation Week in recognition of the myriad of daily services provided toward enriching and ensuring student achievement in Portland Public Schools.

J. Patterson

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL PFTCE CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES!

Classified Appreciation Week was March 2-6, 2009. To celebrate this week-long event, classified employees were honored at the PPS School Board meeting on February 24th. This year, there was an overwhelming response to the request for nominees; over 150 nominations were received, but only twenty individuals from PFTCE could be personally acknowledged that evening!

Congratulations to these PFTCE Classified employees that were selected to be honored :

Penny Barnett, Lincoln HS	Olga Filinova, ESL/Roosevelt HS	Marla Manary, Lane
Pam Britt, Chapman	Gayle Huskey, Madison HS	Carolyn May, King
Peggy Bruce, Gray MS	Gretchen Johnson, BESC/SPED	Lucy Miller, Winterhaven
Brenda Bush, Roosevelt HS	Paula Jones, Beverly Cleary/Hollywood	Debra Preston, Nutrition Services
Gretchen Button, Hosford	Kathy Kreipe, Wilson HS	Susan Scanlon, West Sylvan
Janet Carter, Capitol Hill	Jackie Leipzig, BESC/SPED	Mary Sharp, DaVinci
Deborah Dortch, Creative Science		Lynn Terhaar, Duniway

Please join us congratulating our honorees, and ALL classified employees! Each one of you deserves special recognition for your contributions to this district and your dedication to the students of Portland Public Schools!

In appreciation,

The PFTCE Executive Board & Staff,

Tom Smith, President	Michelle Batten, Treasurer
Belinda Reagan, Field Rep & VP	Bill Beeson, VP
Becky Wright, Exec. VP	Louise Currin, VP
LindaCarol McKinlay, Secretary	Thea Stayton, VP
Allison Houghton, Office Assistant	