

Membership
Update



December 19, 2014

From the President...

School Board Meeting Comments—Student Discipline Policy

At the December 8, 2014 School Board Meeting, President Calabro addressed the members of the Providence School Board regarding its proposed Discipline Policy. Maribeth expressed disappointment with the Board for not including teachers on the review committee that will be responsible for reviewing data and making recommendations for change to the discipline policy. She also disagreed with the Board's policy language which states that the Board is committed to ensure that interventions proactively keep students in school. Maribeth stated that "this language may be perceived as such to prevent any out of school suspension for those students whose behavior warrants temporary removal from the school setting." She closed her comments by stating "every day in classrooms across the district student behaviors are becoming more dangerous. Compiling 8 weeks of data to assess the child in 10 minute intervals does not allow for instruction to be delivered uninterrupted. This is a systemic issue that needs a comprehensive, consistently applied code of conduct coupled with an increase of full-time supports at all levels."

Joining President Calabro at the School Board meeting was Elementary Vice President, Suzy Quinn. Suzy is a Kindergarten teacher at George J. West Elementary school who articulated for the Board the serious discipline issues that she faces in her classroom on a day-to-day basis. Suzy stated "I felt I needed to come speak tonight because the policy I read, although in draft form, doesn't seem to recognize the crisis our district is in." She advised the Board that on a daily basis she deals with serious behaviors such as students "physically assaulting other students, teachers/staff, throwing scissors at a student's face, screaming for hours, swearing, physically trashing classrooms (i.e. throwing chairs, books, knocking over tables, clearing off teachers desk), licking floors and walls, spitting on students/staff, urinating on other students, smearing feces all over bathroom and classroom floors, and taking the wire out of a spiral notebook and trying to strangle himself." She further stated that the daily behavioral issues she and her colleagues face results in enormous amount of lost instructional time for other students who have to sit and wait for their teacher to get these situations under control. Suzy ended her comments by stating "the main problem clearly is the lack of professional support staff in place to help these students and regular education teachers like myself with these issues. Elementary schools don't seem to have the same resources as middle and high schools. It is nationally recognized that these types of supports need to be in place at the Kindergarten level where these behaviors are first exhibited."

Michaela Evans, second grade teacher at George J. West also addressed Board members about the inordinate amount of time the intervention process takes in order for students to receive the supports and resources they need to be successful in school. Michaela stated "After collecting all this "data" for eight to ten weeks, teachers are then asked to collect more data. How much data do you need to know that a 7 year old child throwing furniture or a 10 year old child trying to choke themselves need help? Teachers are spending an exuberant amount of time filling out forms. This time could be more effectively used for planning, preparation and instruction." She asked the board to acknowledge that our district is in crisis and that students do not have the supports in place they so desperately need. She implored them to address the student's emotional and psychological needs so that teachers can focus on their academic needs.

Speech Pathologist, Elisabeth MacMillan also spoke about inadequate student behavior supports at the Elementary level. She stated that academics should take a back seat until the student behavior is under control and the student is ready to learn. She advised the Board that all of the classroom teachers in her school have rewards systems in place. However, those systems do not work for students with severe chronic misbehavior due to possibly underlying conditions. She further stated that "there is not any time allotted to intervene and provide some therapeutic skills. The psychologist and social worker are being utilized to put out fires."

Several Board members acknowledged the teachers who spoke and thanked them for bringing concerns regarding the draft policy to their attention prior to Board approval. As a result of the testimony heard by the Board, modifications were made to the policy to include teachers on the review committee as well as modification to the language with respect to behavior interventions in order to allow for out of school suspensions as a last resort.

From the President...

Generation Citizens Competition

Providence teachers and students rocked the “House” during Generation Citizens Competition at the State House this month. Four out of seven awards went to Providence schools!

Central High School	Overall Top Ranked High School
Juanita Sanchez Complex	Grassroots Change
DelSesto Middle School	Open Mindedness
E-Cubed High School	Collaboration



Congratulations to the teachers and students. Your hard work has paid off!

18th Annual Book Drive

With the proceeds from this year’s book drive dress down day, new books for all age groups were purchased and donated to the following Providence community centers:

Washington Park
DaVinci Center
Federal Hill House
Silver Lake
Joslin Center
Mt. Hope
Nickerson

Thank you to everyone who helped make this year’s book drive a great success!



From the President...

Reminders....



◆ **Membership Meetings**

All regularly scheduled membership Meetings begin at 4:00 p.m. at the Union office.

March 11, 2015
April 15, 2015
May 13, 2015

◆ **December Paycheck**

The December 26, 2014 paycheck will be mailed to teachers' homes on December 23, 2014. Checks will still be dated December 26. Direct deposit will be posted to accounts on the 26th.

PTU Shirts for Sale

T-shirts, sweatshirts and polo shirts with the PTU logo are available for sale at the PTU office for \$5.00 while supplies last.

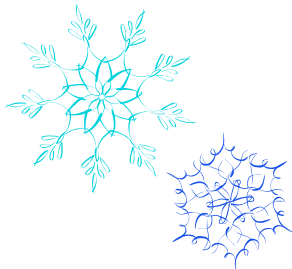
All proceeds will go towards the PTU Scholarship Fund.

Anyone interested in purchasing a shirt should contact Michelle at the Union office.



Seasons Greetings

*Warmest wishes to you and your family for a
wonderful holiday season
and happiness in the
New Year!*



~PTU Executive Board and Staff~

