

Membership
Update



September 28, 2012

From the President...

Charter School Applications

The Providence Teachers Union strongly supports *in-district public* charter schools. The purpose of a charter school is to empower educators in a school by providing them with autonomy and decision-making power over every facet of educating students and school operations. An in-district charter school provides a strong teacher voice with respect to decisions around school improvement, climate and culture and student achievement. It also provides that teachers who chose to teach in the school, remain employees of the district and members of the Union.

Several Providence schools have chosen to explore converting their school into an in-district charter school and will submit a prospectus to RIDE for its consideration. I commend those administrators and teachers who have collectively chosen to take the risk and explore this opportunity in order to have the ability to effectuate positive changes for their schools and for their students. Over the years, the PTU has supported our two existing in-district charter schools — Times2 Academy and ACE (formerly known as Textron Chamber)— and we are prepared to support any new in-district charter school.

Providence teachers are among the most highly qualified and dedicated teachers. We are not afraid of competing with the “big box” charter school management organizations. We have been and continue to be a partner in school transformation district-wide. We continuously advocate for professional growth that supports best practices in the classroom. To that end, the PTU intends to submit its own charter school application in the spring. I will be looking for input and participation from teachers in the development of the PTU charter school application.

A message from the PTU COPE Chairperson...

September 11, 2012 represented a small victory politically for us which has been difficult in our recent political climate. The PTU endorsed 3 candidates and supported one other in the Democratic Primaries. All 4 candidates were victorious! Because of your support for Gayle Goldin (RI Senate 3) we were able to send a message that Maryellen Butke, former Exec. Director of RI-CAN and Achievement First supporter will not further negatively influence our schools in Providence. Your support also re-elected Paul Jabour (RI Senate 5) over Maura Kelly, a RIDE employee and ally of Deborah Gist. Longtime Providence Schools supporter John Lombardi is the new RI House Rep for District 8. Lastly, William O'Brien, a math teacher at Hope High was victorious in his race for RI House Rep 54. O'Brien now faces an independent in the general election.

As we gear up towards the general election, we are again asking for you to support endorsed candidates at the polls. We are also asking for your help with our COPE Drive. The Committee on Political Education is asking members to pledge \$1 a paycheck (21 total) to support political action that will support our work, our schools, and our students. By law, union dues are not allowed to be used for political action and while we will not out raise or outspend our opponents, it is important to send a message that we are present in the political scene. Please see your building delegate to sign up for the COPE Drive. As we move closer to the general election, the COPE committee will be looking for volunteers to help our cause.

Respectfully,
Alex Lucini

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Peer Assistance and Review (PAR)

The goal of Peer Assistance and Review is to improve the quality of teaching. The PAR program will provide intensive support to newly hired teachers as well as to veteran teachers in need of improvement. Currently, five PAR consulting teachers have been hired to provide assistance during the upcoming school year. They are:

Peter Bellisle (Sanchez High School)
Christine Brierly (Sackett Street Elementary)
Melissa Cimini (Central High School)
Christine Fitzgerald (Alvarez High School)
Melissa Palumbo (Broad Street Elementary School)

The role of the consulting teacher is to mentor and support PAR participating teachers by modeling best practices, supporting planning and preparation, providing guidance for teachers on pedagogy, pupil relations and classroom management.

Healthcare Flexible Spending Account (FSA) Informational Meetings

The City Benefits Department will be hosting two informational meetings regarding the Flexible Spending Account voluntary benefit program offered by the City.

A Flexible Spending Account allows you to set aside money on a pre-tax basis to pay for eligible healthcare and/or dependent day care expenses.

If you are interested in learning more about the voluntary FSA benefit program offered by the City, you are invited to attend one of the informational sessions on:

October 1, 2012

3:30 p.m.–5:30 p.m. and 6:15 p.m.—8:15 p.m.

October 9, 2012

3:30 p.m.–5:30 p.m. and 6:15 p.m.—8:15 p.m.

The meetings will be held at **Providence Career & Technical Academy** located at 91 Fricker Street.

PTU Website

This fall the PTU is launching a new and improved website. The site has been completely redesigned and should prove to be far more interactive and user friendly. The layout and content also have been totally overhauled. The site should help to facilitate better member communication and serve as a portal for important information. In addition, it will make it easier for members to access information about evaluation, COPE and the many news issues that affect Providence teachers. To make the site more effective, we need your input. If you have any comments or suggestions regarding the new website, please feel free to email Daniel Wall, PTU Secretary, at danwall67@gmail.com.

Membership Meetings

Membership meetings will be held on the following dates:

October 10, 2012
December 12, 2012
March 13, 2013
April 10, 2013
May 15, 2013

All meetings will begin at 3:45 p.m. at the Union office.