

*Catholic School Teachers:
Why Unionize?*

keep good teachers in Catholic schools by:

- putting the Church's labor teaching into practice
- having a voice in working conditions, salaries, and benefits
- fairly resolving legitimate disputes
- treating teachers with respect & professionalism

*Catholic School Teachers:
How Can We Unionize?*

- by talking to your colleagues at school
- by becoming informed of locals in your area
- by contacting NACST:

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Honoring former local President Steve Lieb [2nd from right] at the Altoona-Johnstown Catholic School Teacher Association's 25th Anniversary Dinner

from the President...

**JUSTICE AND DIGNITY FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS:
CALIFORNIA HERE WE COME**

It is finally spring and NACST is embarking on its annual spring ritual - bringing the union message to Catholic school teachers attending the NCEA Convention. The key points of the gospel according to the National are positive thinking and the importance of empowerment.

Teachers who are "employees at will" are not represented by a recognized union or under the protection of a mutually negotiated, legally binding contract. "At will" also means that school and diocesan officials are able to institute any and all rules, sending a message to their employees "my way or the highway."

Union-represented teachers, like those who are affiliated with the National Association of Catholic School Teachers, know very well the benefits of representation. Representation means a contract that defines seniority, sick and personal leave, rosters and teaching preferences, extra-curricular stipends, rules for teacher cutbacks and a grievance procedure, among other things.

For the many Catholic school teachers without union representation and a negotiated contract, this is a time of opportunity, the opportunity to

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from the President...

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approach the principal or diocesan superintendent with the social justice teachings of the Church in hand, and express their desire to engage in collective bargaining.

It is definitely time for Catholic school teachers in Southern California, the site of this year's NCEA Convention, to re-establish the union that was formed there over 30 years ago. In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and the Diocese of Orange there were representation elections, held under the auspices of the National Labor Relations Board. The teachers were forced to petition the NLRB when their employers refused to voluntarily recognize the United Catholic Secondary Teachers Association, a union freely selected by diocesan high school teachers.

In 1979, the U.S. Supreme Court removed the NLRB's jurisdiction over Catholic elementary and secondary schools. The union movement in Southern California became dormant as more and more Catholic school teachers left to seek public school employment.

It is time for teachers in the Catholic schools of Southern California to have a say over their salaries, benefits and working conditions, to achieve effective due process and job security. These are really what a teachers' union is all about.

What it comes down to is justice and dignity. Cardinal Roger Mahoney knows this very well. He worked closely with the United Farm Workers as Cesar Chavez and his union members fought for recognition, a living wage and better working conditions - for a say over their work lives.

While teachers in Catholic schools are not treated with the disrespect that faced farm workers, they do remain unrepresented. They have no voice over the conditions under which they work. They can be terminated with or without cause; they can be disciplined without a way to have their complaint presented to a neutral party. They stand alone. The message from the National Association of Catholic School Teachers is that they don't have to.

The National Association of Catholic School Teachers continues to work with and fight for teachers in Catholic schools to help them achieve the rights the Catholic Church champions for all other workers.

Let us know how we can help you.



2008-2009 Lay Teachers' Salaries

diocese	Basic Scale with BA/BS			Basic Scale with MA/ equivalent		Top Salary			Tuition Charged		comment
	starting	maximum	#steps to reach max	starting	maximum	beyond MA	# credits or degree	# steps to reach	elementary	secondary	
Hartford CT diocesan secondary	28481- 33830	52938- 56070	17-18	28888- 36070	57522- 66616	57522- 66616	MA+30	16	n/a	8900- 11000	5
Worcester MA diocesan elem & secondary	33490	61160	19	35990	63660	n/a	MA+30	19	\$3,725	6280- 7500	1
St. Louis MO diocesan secondary	26669	40886	22	27969	57034	57951	MA+30	32	n/a	6454- 7850	1
Camden NJ diocesan secondary	30417	66875	34	32583	69041	71207	2MA/PhD	34	n/a	6,700	1
Trenton NJ St. Denis elementary	29461	46462	21	30461	47462	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3,900	1
Trenton NJ Holy Cross High School	34800	66677	47	35250	67449	68390	MA+30 or PhD	47	n/a	7,200	1
Trenton NJ St. John Vianney High School	27940	58370	32	29459	60062	61752	PhD	32	n/a	9,600	1
Trenton NJ St. Rose Elementary School	25200	53561	320	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	4025- 4920	n/a	1,7
Buffalo NY private secondary	21565- 26425	45546- 56691	varies	22959- 28009	46434- 58275	647971	PhD	42	n/a	varies	5
Cleveland OH diocesan secondary	28000	46210	33	30192	58092	60284	PhD	33	n/a	6500- 8000	1
Columbus OH diocesan elem & secondary.	29714	48697	30	35720	59281	64718	Ph D	30	2350- 4250	5950- 6790	1
Youngstown OH parish elementary	16800- 23500	33600- 47352	30-35	18144- 25145	36288- 48997	38976-5 0642	MA+30	30	varies	n/a	5
Youngstown OH diocesan secondary	29000	46810	30	31100	51850	53950	MA+30	30	n/a	varies	1
Philadelphia PA diocesan secondary	34250	66140	34	34750	66940	67580	Ph D	34	n/a	4850	1

1. There is one salary scale that is standard for the school(s) being reported.
5. Salaries vary from school to school; therefore, numbers reflect the lowest school and the highest school being reported
- all other schools falls between these numbers.
7. Top BA salary represents 8 steps beyond step 20.

Why Unions?

Affiliated Locals

Altoona Johnstown Catholic School Teachers Association
(Diocese of Altoona Johnstown PA)
Richard Hatch

Association of Catholic Teachers
(Archdiocese of Philadelphia PA)
www.act1776.com
Rita Schwartz

Association of Catholic Teachers
(Diocese of Syracuse NY)
Bernadette Kapps

Catholic Teachers Union - NJ
(Diocese of Camden NJ)
www.ctunj.com
Bill Blumenstein

Central Ohio Association of Catholic Educators
(Diocese of Columbus OH)
www.coace.com
Kathleen Mahoney

Cleveland High School and Academy Lay Teachers Association
(Diocese of Cleveland OH)
Michael DeSantis

DELTA
(Diocese of Worcester MA)
Jonathan Meagher

Diocesan Elementary Teachers Association
(Diocese of Buffalo NY)
Sue Manzella

Federation of Pittsburgh Diocesan Teachers
(Diocese of Pittsburgh PA)
Russ DelVecchio

Greater Hartford Catholic Education Association
(Archdiocese of Hartford CT)
Paul Fitzpatrick

Greensburg Diocesan Teachers Association
(Diocese of Greensburg PA)
Kreg Mendus

People with the same concerns often get together to talk and look for answers. That's exactly what a union is all about. American workers have been joining together in democratic unions since the end of the 18th century. Collective bargaining remains a uniquely American success story. The way that unions address the most direct needs of their membership is through labor-management negotiations, sitting at a bargaining table with the employer. Contracts are bargained by democratically elected union representatives who come to the table as equals of their management counterparts. Through the give and take of the bargaining process, they establish equitable wages, working conditions, job safety and job security, and a system for resolving disputes - a grievance procedure.

from AFL-CIO publications # 164 & P-189-0892-350



Executive VP Mike Milz and NACST President Rita Schwartz at the Negotiations Workshop for the Altoona-Johnstown Catholic School Teachers Association

Negotiations Workshop for members at St. John Vianney High School in Holmdel, New Jersey



Internet Organizing Resources

Information about NACST and the unionization of Catholic school teachers is available at www.nacst.com.

Locals which have their own sites are: ACT [Philadelphia] www.act1776.com; COACE [Columbus] www.coace.com; CTU [Camden] www.ctunj.com



NACST President Rita Schwartz celebrating with the Executive Board of the St. Louis Archdiocesan Teachers Association on the occasion of the local union's 30th anniversary.

ORGANIZE FOR THE GOOD OF OUR SCHOOLS

NACST members involved in organizing locals easily recall the numerous difficulties faced when locals and affiliates organized.

Fears of losing employment, intimidation from school administrators and the frustration involved in working in systems which treated them as servants are not soon forgotten.

Organizing has been ongoing for more than thirty years in Catholic schools.

Catholic school teachers have received praise from nearly every Ordinary of the Dioceses in which we work.

If not for the work of Catholic school unions, many of those same teachers would have left the schools and systems which produce graduates who are exceptional for their academic achievements and personal integrity.

For the good of our students ... for the good of our schools ... organize.



NACST Past and Present: NACST Executive VP Mike Milz, former NACST President Bruno Scuglia and current President Rita Schwartz together for dinner in Pittsburgh

And the Bishops Say ...

Among the basic rights of the human person must be counted the right of freely founding labor unions.

These unions should be truly able to represent the workers and to contribute to the proper arrangement of economic life.

Another such right is that of taking part freely in the activity of these unions without risk of reprisals.

(#68, Gaudium et Spes, Vatican II)

Affiliated Locals

NACST @ St. John Vianney
(Diocese of Trenton NJ)
Judith Cumbia

Queen of Peace H.S.
Lay Teachers Association
(Archdiocese of Newark NJ)
Donna Giovia

St. Denis Teachers Association
(Diocese of Trenton NJ)
Janne Darata

St. Joseph's Teachers
Association
(Archdiocese of Newark NJ)
Darlene Fisher

St. Louis Archdiocesan
Teachers Association
(Archdiocese of St. Louis MO)
Patricia Spellman

St. Rose
Teachers Association
(Diocese of Trenton NJ)
Shelia Langon
Jane Magovern

St. Teresa Educators
Association
(Diocese of Harrisburg PA)
Deborah Foote

Scranton Diocese
Association of Catholic
Teachers
(Diocese of Scranton PA)
www.sdaact.com
Michael Milz

Secondary Lay Teachers
Association
(Diocese of Buffalo NY)
Doug Bowers

Union County Catholic
Education Association
(Archdiocese of Newark NJ)
Marc Berger

Youngstown Confederation of
Diocesan Teachers
(Diocese of Youngstown OH)
Barbara Demesko

from the editor...

Employees At Will

In legal terms an "employee at will" is any worker who is not part of a working unit represented by a collective bargaining agent, i.e. a union.

For more than thirty years, thousands of Catholic school teachers have been represented by unions they themselves have chosen.

Representation begins with the election of a bargaining agent independent of the employer Church.

The union then negotiates contracts with the diocesan and/or school administrations.

Teachers have sometimes found it necessary to take job actions to safeguard key provisions of the negotiated contracts.

The bargaining process puts the Church's social justice teaching into practice.

A cornerstone of the process is the personal satisfaction accompanying the accomplishment of our educational mission without a concomitant anxiety about our ability to continue the mission.

Teachers working under negotiated contracts have that essential aspect of working to fulfill our mission - job security.

Such is not the case with employees at will.

Often enough, for employees at will, terminations have been based on the changing whims and personal quirks of school administrators.

While it would be nice to think that all members of the Church follow the moral imperatives associated with the dignity of the worker, experience has shown that, even as the Church actively promotes the rights of workers, individual bishops, pastors, and principals act contrary to those same moral principles.

Without the protection of unions and negotiated contracts with job security, teachers remain merely employees at will.

At this time in the American Church, NACST urges all Catholic school teachers to put into practice the Church's social justice teaching.

To all employees at will in Catholic schools:

ORGANIZE ... ORGANIZE ... ORGANIZE

That Day in June 1976

excerpts from a March 2009 letter to members by Scranton Diocese Association of Catholic Teachers President Mike Milz - the Scranton bishop withdrew recognition of the union in January 2008 - information about the Scranton situation is available at www.sdiact.com, in previous issues of Newsworthy, and will be highlighted in the June 2009 Newsworthy

Yesterday I read the "Scranton Diocese Standardized Teacher Contract." As the old hands will recognize it is almost an exact replica of the three-page, at-will employee documents teachers were required to sign prior to 1978 and the formation of our unions.

In an instant, I was transported back to a June day in 1976. I had just finished my first year as a teacher at [Bishop] Hoban [High School]. Though my teaching salary was one-fifth the salary I had earned at my most recent full-time job I was, at the end of that year, as happy and content as anyone could possibly be. Teaching, I found, was my vocation and avocation. After that first year, I was hooked. I never wanted to do anything other than teach.

Back to that day in June. During the last week of the school year, students were dismissed early so that teachers could spend the afternoon signing their "contracts" for the 1976-1977 school year. The lay teachers sat on straight backed chairs in the hallway outside the library and waited for their names to be called by the president of the Board of Pastors. They then entered and were either presented with a new three-page at-will employee document - OR NOT. Being at-will employees, no reason was, nor needed to be, offered to those who were dismissed.

Here we are more than 30 years later returning to the unjust ways of old. There have already been teachers dismissed during the course of the current school year without cause or progressive discipline. I'm sure even more will get the axe at the end of the year. Many teacher simply refuse to believe that the diocesan "contract" makes you an at-will employee, and as such that the employer needs no reason to substantiate anyone being fired. This is a fact of law.

We must all continue to stand up for our rights. We must all keep in mind that the diocese's plan to force us to accept the humiliations laid out in their "contract" can only succeed if we work with them to bring about our own demise.