

**2006 John J. Reilly  
Memorial Scholarship  
Winners**

The annual John J. Reilly Memorial Scholarships have been awarded by NACST.

The scholarships were established to remember the founding president of NACST and are awarded annually to help defray the cost of a college education for outstanding children of NACST members.

The students will receive \$1250 in each of their four years of study, making each scholarship a \$5000 value over each student's course of collegiate studies.

Congratulations to the winners of the 2006 Scholarship:

**Samuel Cooler**  
COACE  
Columbus OH

**Amelia Pedlow**  
Association of Catholic Teachers  
Philadelphia

**Caroline Porter**  
Association of Catholic Teachers  
Philadelphia



*Bill Blumenstein, Rita Schwartz & Bruce Endy*

**28th NACST Convention/Conference**

The annual NACST Convention will be held October 6-8 at the Penns Landing Hyatt in Philadelphia PA.

Keynote speaker this year is labor attorney Bruce Endy, a partner at the firm Spear, Wilderman, and counsel for NACST locals in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Endy will present convention delegates with a retrospective of Catholic school labor organizations and the future for the unions.

NACST Vice President Mike Milz and Secretary/Treasurer Bill Blumenstein will present an organizing workshop.

Other convention business includes the annual reports of locals and the general issues forum.

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## When School Systems Change

*From a statement by SDACT concerning the reorganization of the Scranton diocesan and parish schools*

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During the early 1970's, the Catholic school system in the Scranton Diocese saw a major change in its mode of operation

Owing to changing demographics and a significant decrease in vocations, the old parish high school model, which had been staffed chiefly by religious orders, was no longer sustainable.

Taking its place were the consolidated high schools now in operation.

Now we are entering upon yet another major change in the structure of Catholic education in the Scranton Diocese.

With another change in demographics, and with enrollment shrinking and costs of operation rising, economic necessity has once more dictated change.

Bishop Martino has initiated a study of the situation, with an eye toward a paradigm shift which will allow Catholic education to remain viable.

When his decision is made, it is anticipated that the result will be a substantial reorganization of the schools.

Both the current elementary and high schools will feel the effects of the new plan.

One of the most significant considerations for those who will have the responsibility of implementing the study's recommendations will be jobs.

Who will be chosen to staff the schools?

Parents who now send their children to Catholic schools care deeply about those teachers to whom they have entrusted the educational and spiritual welfare of their children.

Therefore, who will staff the new schools will undoubtedly be a key consideration in parents' decisions about continuing to choose a Catholic education.

Ordinarily, not all current teachers and administrators might be needed to

staff the new entities that emerge as the elementary and high schools.

It is our position, however, that if more than economic expediency is to be served, all teachers should be retained for a specific number of years.

Such a resolution which would allow the schools to provide a maximum of services and courses.

Moreover, should school closings or consolidations take place, retaining all currently employed teachers would serve to assuage the fears of students and parents regarding the "unknown."

They would be assured by the continued presence of trusted and experienced teachers that a degree of familiarity and continuity would exist.

To that end, the Scranton Diocese Association of Catholic Teachers, which represents lay teachers in the Diocese, has submitted a proposed "Action Plan" to the Diocesan Schools Office, advocating these and a number of other ideas we would like the powers-that-be to consider.

At the heart of our plan is a proposal calling for continuing (but limited) employment for all teachers.

After a number of years, senior teachers could retire with the dignity they deserve as veterans of Catholic education.

At the same time, younger teachers could use the time to find other employment, or to assess their chances of fitting into required faculty levels, as they evolve.

During the transitional period, the collective wisdom and experience of all such teachers would enrich the schools, and provide an enduring foundation for the future of Catholic education in the Scranton Diocese.

When change is required to maintain the viability of Catholic education, it should be purposeful and positive in nature, reflecting the concern of the Church for those who labor so tirelessly in its name, and for those families which they serve.

*from the President ...*

## **LABOR DAY 2006: IT'S ABOUT EMPOWERMENT**

This Labor Day, as with most others, I will be trying to complete negotiations on a new teacher contract. This year, the contract is for my own local. The members of my local union in the Philadelphia Archdiocese are among the small percentage of Catholic school teachers across the country who have the ability to actually vote to accept or reject their labor agreement. Close to 80% of teachers employed in Catholic elementary and secondary schools are "employees at will" whose wages, hours and working conditions are imposed upon them by a pastor, principal, school board or superintendent. They are, sometimes, asked for input, but have no real say over what they sign, if, in fact, they sign anything at all.

For Catholic school teachers, it's usually about more than the money, although, I could write volumes about a just wage. As we all know, the definition differs sharply depending upon who is paying it and who is receiving it. For Catholic school teachers, it is primarily about empowerment. Throughout the current negotiations here in Philadelphia, a significant amount of time and energy has been spent on working conditions. The Labor-Management Agreement has been in existence for almost 40 years. I was there when it began and I have been at every negotiating session since. Over the years, there have been changes and these were mutually agreed to. That is the great thing about negotiating as the recognized collective bargaining representative. It's not a "take it or leave it" situation. The members give their wish list to the Team at the outset and the members determine if what comes back to them at the end of negotiations is acceptable.

For 100,000 Catholic school teachers, there is no vote on the conditions under which they work. They have no mutually agreed upon job security,

due process or work rules. They are told how much or how little they will be paid and how much of that pay will be deducted for medical insurance.

For well over 100 years, the American labor movement has fought long and hard to secure rights for working people. From labor's efforts came, among other things, a defined work week which includes the weekend, employer paid medical and other insurance, and Medicare. Organized labor also pushed for the National Labor Relations Act so that workers could form a union without risk of reprisal and be protected from unfair labor practices. Sadly, since 1979, Catholic elementary and secondary school teachers have been excluded from these rights and protections because of a U.S. Supreme Court decision.

However, the social justice teachings of the Catholic Church are very clear about the rights of workers to be treated with dignity and to have a say over their conditions of employment. Unfortunately, when Catholic school teachers seek representation in cities such as St. Louis and Boston, the Church reverts to employer mode. Petitions for union representation are ignored and those who bring such legitimate concerns to their employers are told that unions are fine for other workers, but not for the Church's own.

It is my continued hope and prayer that with each new Labor Day, the employer Church will act the way it urges all other employers to act. The Church cannot admonish an unjust employer when, in any number of instances, the employer Church is equally guilty.

The National Association of Catholic School Teachers wishes everyone a happy Labor Day and a productive new school year.



*Affiliated Locals*

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

**Association of Catholic Elementary Educators**  
(Archdiocese of St. Louis MO)  
Mary Chubb

**Association of Catholic Teachers**  
(Archdiocese of Philadelphia PA)  
[www.act1776.com](http://www.act1776.com)  
Rita Schwartz

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

**Boston Archdiocesan Teachers Association**  
(Archdiocese of Boston MA)  
[www.nacst.com/BATA/home.htm](http://www.nacst.com/BATA/home.htm)  
Tom Norris

**Catholic Teachers Union - NJ**  
(Diocese of Camden NJ)  
[www.ctunj.com](http://www.ctunj.com)  
Bill Blumenstein

**Central Ohio Association of Catholic Educators**  
(Diocese of Columbus OH)  
[www.coace.com](http://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)  
Mike Ryba

## Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program Expanded

As of July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, the Higher Education Reconciliation Act will expand loan forgiveness to teachers in private schools who are exempt from state certification.

An individual who is employed as such a teacher and who is exempt from state certification requirements for such employment may qualify for the loan forgiveness program, if the teacher can demonstrate rigorous subject knowledge and skills by taking competency tests in the applicable grade levels and subject areas.

Competency tests must be recognized by five or more states and the teacher's score on each test must equal or exceed the average passing score of those five states.

The HERA makes no change for private school teachers who are subject to state certification and who meet the highly qualified teacher definition under NCLB.

They will continue to qualify for student loan forgiveness to the extent that they meet the eligibility requirements.

The HERA authorizes up to \$17,500 in student loan forgiveness for certain full time secondary teachers of mathematics, science and for those whose primary responsibility is in

special education.

Teachers who do not teach in specialties noted above and begin teaching after October 30, 2004, may be eligible for up to \$5,000 in student loan forgiveness, as long as they meet the "highly qualified" teacher definition under NCLB or, effective July 1, 2006, meet the requirements set forth in the HERA for private school teachers, and meet the eligibility rules applicable to all Federal Family Education Loans and Federal Direct Loan Programs.

Teachers who began their teaching service prior to October 30, 2004, continue to qualify for up to \$5,000 in student loan forgiveness and are not required to meet the "highly qualified" definition.

Applications are available from the lender or servicer of the teacher's outstanding student loan in the FFEL program

Applications are available from the Direct Loan Servicer if the teacher has a Federal Direct Loan

More information on repaying student loans and on the Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program is available at <http://studentaid.ed.gov>.

For questions concerning these requirements and benefits, contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) at 1-800-4-FED-AID.



*Mike Milz & Rita Schwartz with COACE President Kathleen Mahoney at the NCEA Convention*



*Mike Milz & Rita Schwartz meeting with the FPDT Executive Board members during recent visit to Pittsburgh*

## ACT Settlement

Members of the Association of Catholic Teachers [Philadelphia] ratified a two year agreement September 5.

Negotiators for the union and Archdiocese of Philadelphia worked throughout Labor Day night to reach a tentative contract settlement and avoid a teacher job action.

Union negotiators had declared an impasse at 8 p.m. Labor Day but were then called back to the table two hours later.

Negotiators were unable to agree on medical coverage for the third year of any contract settlement.

Salary increases are \$1500 [3.5%] for the first year and \$1700 [3.7%] for the second year of the contract.



*VP Mike Milz & President Rita Schwartz at the NCEA in Atlanta*

### *Affiliated Locals*

**Greensburg Diocesan Teachers Association**

(Diocese of Greensburg PA)  
Kreg Mendus

**NACST @ St. John Vianney**

(Diocese of Trenton NJ)  
Jerelyn Dougherty

**Queen of Peace H.S. Lay Teachers Association**

(Archdiocese of Newark NJ)  
Kathy Kiszka

**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)  
MaryBeth McCaffrey

**St. Teresa Educators Association**

(Diocese of Harrisburg PA)  
Deborah Foote

**Scranton Diocese Association of Catholic Teachers**

(Diocese of Scranton PA)  
[www.sdact.com](http://www.sdact.com)  
Michael Milz

**Secondary Lay Teachers Association**

(Diocese of Buffalo NY)  
Doug Bowers

**Union County Catholic Education Association**

(Archdiocese of Newark NJ)  
Phyllis Barone

**Youngstown Confederation of Diocesan Teachers**

(Diocese of Youngstown OH)  
Barbara Demesko

from the editor ...

### **Why not be an employee at will?**

The differences between being a union employee and an employee at will are most apparent in professional treatment and job security afforded to teachers. Without the protection of a negotiated contract, teachers rely on the good will of principals and pastors for their continued employment.

In every one of the contracts negotiated by NACST affiliates, teachers have legally guaranteed rights of tenure and due process. A teacher need never fear being ambushed by undocumented, unsupported, anonymous complaints. Employees at will are not free from such treatment.

Under a negotiated contract the tenure system is the main form of teacher job security.

Tenure assures a competent, qualified teacher that he/she need not worry about the personal whims nor rely on the good will of changing administrators for peace of mind in the classroom. Tenure is not a system to prevent the dismissal of incompetent teachers [although some school administrators view it as such]

A teacher's competency doesn't disappear after completing the period of nontenure. He/she is still observed by administrators and department chairs.

Never does a tenured teacher have to fear "personal" problems with administrators as a cause of dismissal. As long as teachers do their jobs in the classroom and administrators do their jobs of observation and evaluation, the tenure system works well and effectively to guarantee students a continuity of quality classroom instruction.

Without union representation, employees at will can be accused of almost anything by almost anyone and face the most serious disciplinary measures, including firing, by principals and pastors without any recourse or redress.

Without a negotiated contract and union representation, Catholic school teachers are not guaranteed: the right to an impartial hearing on any accusations; the right to respond to accusations; the right to face their accusers; the right to defend themselves; and, teachers can be disciplined based on anonymous accusations.

School, parish, diocesan administrators change much more frequently than classroom teachers in Catholic schools. Catholic school teachers choose to be a part of educational institutions that provide quality education. With a negotiated contract, good teachers need not face the anxiety of job loss because of personal conflicts with any of the changing administrators.

So, why not be employees at will? Because it is harmful to continuity of instruction and teacher peace of mind.

**NACST 2006 Convention/Conference  
Philadelphia, PA October 6-8, 2006**

*Newsworthy* is published four times throughout the school year by the National Association of Catholic School Teachers, Suite 903, 1700 Sansom St. Philadelphia, PA 19103 phone (215) 665-0993 or (800) 99 - NACST fax (215) 568-8270  
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