

29th NACST Convention/ Conference

The annual NACST Convention will be held October 5-7, 2007 at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel in Boston, MA.

Keynote speaker this year is Dr. Charles Russo, M.Div., J.D., Ed.D. Panzer Chair in Education & Adjunct Professor of Law, University of Dayton.

He has published numerous articles on education issues, including the functions of Catholic school teacher unions and religious issues in US public education. Dr. Russo was featured speaker at the 2002 NACST Convention.

Convention business includes a panel presentation, "Regionalization, Privatization: the Encroaching Movement," to include NACST Counsel Bruce Endy, the annual President's State of the Union, reports of locals, and the general issues forum.

from the President ...

LABOR DAY 2007 A CHALLENGING YEAR AHEAD

As I write this year's Labor Day Statement, I am happy to report that labor peace exists between all NACST affiliates and their employers. It is not often that I get to say that, and it feels good.

Not that there are not issues out there, but, fortunately, no one is walking a picket line or getting ready to. Let us hope that the year ahead mirrors this basically calm start.

The 2007-2008 school year, however, will be a year of challenges for many Catholic teacher unions; for others, like our colleagues in the St. Louis elementary schools, unhappily, the challenge is over, for now.

The Scranton-Wilkes Barre leadership is working hard to sign up teachers to be part of a new regional school model to be run by Boards

that have yet to be selected by the diocesan hierarchy. No employer can be petitioned for union recognition as yet and this is of great concern; for the first time in over 20 years, these teachers will be walking back into classrooms without the protection of a labor contract.

In Altoona-Johnstown, plans are still sketchy on how the union representing teachers in the three high schools will handle labor negotiations for three individual Board-operated schools come September 2008. Much will have to be nailed down during the coming months.

Contract negotiations are already underway in Columbus, Ohio and at St. Francis in Newark, Ohio. The spring of 2008 will see

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Rita Schwartz, and ACEE President Mary Chubb among others at the July 2007 ACEE Dinner in St. Louis.

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NACST officers with the COACE Executive Board and Negotiating Team at an August 2007 Organizing Workshop in Columbus.

Legislative Action on Federal Teacher Student Loan Forgiveness Program

Since its inception, the federal teacher student loan forgiveness program has included nonpublic school teachers. NACST members who qualify are participating in the program.

In the proposed 2008 US budget the House version of includes nonpublic school teachers while the Senate version does not. The conference committee dealing with this legislation will be meeting in September.

In order to supplement NACST officers' contact with legislators to include Catholic school teachers in the bill, NACST members are asked to contact committee members.

A sample letter and the names of key legislators involved in the process are available at the legislative action page at the Council for American Private Education website -

<http://capwiz.com/capeissues/alert/?alertid=10096746>.

The link goes directly to the Legislative Action page of the Public Policy link at www.capenet.org.

from the President ...

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talks begin at St. Denis and St. Rose in the Trenton diocese, Holy Cross High School in Delran, New Jersey and for the twenty high schools in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

I am extremely sorry to report that the St. Louis elementary organizing effort has gone into hibernation following the negative decision ACEE received from the Catholic Church's Supreme Court in Rome. The charges were filed against the Archbishop of St. Louis for his 2004 pronouncement that "Neither the Archdiocese nor individual parishes will recognize or bargain collectively with any organization as a representative of teachers."

The Apostolic Signatura did not view this denial of the basic right of workers to recognition and collective bargaining as a "wrong worthy of judicial consideration." At one point in the decision there was even a question as to whether or not the teachers had "actually suffered a wrong."

Of course, the Signatura's job was to interpret Canon Law as it relates to the charge against the Archbishop. To me, the mandate in Canon 1286 seems very clear: "Administrators of goods are to observe meticulously the civil laws pertaining to labor and social policy according to Church principles in the employment of workers." I think this was extremely "worthy of judicial consideration." Sadly, there was no consideration of any kind from the employer church in St. Louis.

I am looking forward to seeing representatives from all of our NACST affiliates at the Annual Convention this October in Boston and hearing from them how the year is progressing.

Happy Labor Day to all those laboring in the Church's vineyards.

Happy new School Year to the caring and conscientious teachers who form the ever-growing ranks of the National Association of Catholic School Teachers. Let NACST know how we can be of assistance to you.




*Rita Schwartz with
SLATA President Pat Spellman
and Carpenters' District
Council Rep John Schmied*

Affiliated Locals

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

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

Mary Chubb

Association of Catholic Teachers
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Rita Schwartz

Association of Catholic Teachers
(Diocese of Syracuse NY)

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Boston Archdiocesan Teachers Association
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NACST @ St. John Vianney

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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
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MaryBeth McCaffrey

St. Teresa Educators Association

(Diocese of Harrisburg PA)
Deborah Foote

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www.sdact.com
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Secondary Lay Teachers Association

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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: *What's the point of the school reorganizations?*

During the past several years school reorganizations have become matters of concern for NACST affiliates. In two Pennsylvania dioceses the process is slowly being implemented as the 2007-2008 school year begins. In the Camden NJ diocese, officials have spent the past three years studying elementary school enrollments, budgets and administrative realignments. The process has resulted in the regionalization and closures of some elementary schools. The process has not affected the diocesan high schools since the previous Ordinary was transferred.

The Catholic school administrative model being implemented by the dioceses is the Board of Trustees - Principal [President] scheme. Presumably, the goals of diocesan education will be enhanced by this business paradigm.

There are three significant problems with the implementation of the model in the dioceses which have so far moved to it.

First, diocesan school officials are giving boards authority to run the schools presumably to help move individual schools to financial viability. This would happen if the boards could run the schools based on sound, socially responsible financial principles. If the operation of the boards mirrors the reorganization process, this will not be the case. To this point, in the dioceses noted above, decisions about regionalizations and closures have not been made based on any financial principles apparent to those focused on Catholic education. Business leaders, teachers, parents, and parishioners were solicited for their ideas about the future of the Catholic school systems. As far as anyone can tell, that input was disregarded in diocesan decisions about the schools.

Second, each bishop has the responsibility to oversee Catholic education in his diocese. He is, nominally, the head of the Board of Trustees. This should assure that the reorganized schools retain their "Catholic identity." That is, they are avenues for the spread of the Gospel message and, as such, are efficacious signs of the Spirit's presence in the world. Among the chief marks of this presence are evangelization, promotion of the preferential option for the poor and the implementation of the Church's social justice teaching. The addition of another layer of diocesan bureaucracy confounds the bishop's responsibility to foster the goals of Catholic education.

Third, reorganization of the schools is an abrogation of the entire diocese's responsibility to Catholic education. In the past two generations of American Catholicism the schools have come to be viewed as burdens on parish and diocesan resources. From the first schools set up in Maryland more than two hundred years ago, through the Philadelphia practice of building a school before Church buildings, then providing tuition-free Catholic education, the schools were understood to be the primary tools of putting into practice the Church's mission. Everyone in the diocese had an interest in Catholic education. Without doubt, that view is further eroded by the reorganization process underway.

Reorganization of the schools may seem to some a way to save Catholic schools in dioceses which are facing financial difficulties or even bankruptcies. But, the process exhibited so far is shortsighted and will, ultimately, be ineffective.

The future of the schools depends on the commitment of diocesan bishops and the resources of all Catholics. Any reorganization that lacks these will, in the end, fail to achieve the goals of the Church's educational mission.

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 email nacst.nacst@verizon.net.

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