

RTA news from Rep Meeting, December 16, 2008

1. RTA recognized 4 teachers who received their National Board Certification (Rochester now having more than NYC) and Jennifer Tomm who was recertified after 10 years.
2. 403 B plans -- The deadline for change has been extended from Jan., 2009 to December 31, 2009. RCSD has hired the Omni Group to oversee the district's plans. It has been negotiated that all present plans will continue and that the broker fee of \$.50 per pay check will be paid by the district, not by the individual.
3. Conference Days - the final numbers and money has been issued by CO and John Pavone will send out the information to each building. If there is a change Mike Rogala will notify the teachers that are affected.
4. Medical Benefits changes - Retirees and teachers paying 15% of their benefits will be affected. The district has a commitment to cover a certain level of benefits according to the contract. There has been a reduction of the basic BC/BS costs, which is what they have agreed to cover. Other programs have increased substantially, such as HMO's. Therefore, the district has increased some benefits by 29%. RTA has filed a grievance but a judge has ruled that the union should have filed the grievance at the time of occurrence. RTA said they have just found out about it and is now working with NYSUT lawyers to work this out. The district reopened enrollment for retirees to change plans during the month of January, but not for active teachers. There is a chart on the RTA website comparing programs for retirees. Pavone said that he will send out a chart comparing the price difference to reps that will be posted. The unions are working together to investigate other plans. We will inform you of further information.
5. There is a NYS Teacher Certification Exam Prep Class being offered. Look at the RTA board for the info.
6. More Prof Dev Dinner Seminars will be posted on AVATAR offering 2 PD hours:
 - Jan 26: Brizard discussing safety and discipline
 - Mar 2 Dr. Perky: Ed. Issues
 - Mar 23: Dr. Schmidt: Math in Urban Ed
 - Apr 6: Jonathan Kozol
 - May 18: ?
7. Masters Award -- Group 2 should expect their payout on Dec. 19; their last check should have seen the correct step salary. Next group can expect their money in February.
8. Martin Luther King award -- thanks for submitting names.
9. Crime Victims Committee -- have scheduled workshops for spring, 2009. Watch your mailboxes for forms to sign up. You will receive a certificate for 2 pd hours that you will need to submit to SBP.
10. Nominations and Elections -- The call for written nominations for RTA officer elections will come in the January Rochester Teacher newspaper. At the March rep meeting, verbal nominations will be taken.
11. "I Am Ready" Program will have 2 reps to the RTA. Many teachers are from the Home Hospital and School Instructors units, but as an alternative school, need reps from that specific location.

12. Paras asked RTA to support Teacher Centers with a resolution to NYSUT so that level 3 paras have access to PD hours that they need to keep their certification (75/per 5 years).

13. President's Report - Budget Crisis -- according to the district there will be an \$8 million dollars less from the state as well as a "structural deficit" of \$44 M for a total of \$52 M deficit for a budget worth \$600M. Urbanski said that with the help of legislators, it could get better, or with the economic crisis, get worse. Urbanski warned not to overreact, "don't take early info as final" and "it may be a rough ride for negotiations", but with teacher support he is confident we will do fine.

- He continued, everything is volatile (economy, etc.) but moderation and patience serve well.
- He will announce in January when they will be gathering info from teachers for topics of negotiation.
- There will be a special meeting of RTA reps when a package is prepared to discuss it. If anyone hears rumors, they should ask RTA officers to see if there is any fact behind them.
- Saturday's newspaper will have comments from Brizard about having more school days in the calendar. A. Urbanski responded but is not sure if the D&C will publish them.
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- Urbanski said that we should give the impression of confidence about negotiations and that it is helpful if teachers are confident, too.
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- When asked about CO's new hires and new positions, AU said that there were some lay offs, but at low, clerical positions and were replaced by highly paid positions. He said that they are monitoring it and will use the information when appropriate, as in the past during negotiations.

14. Discipline and Safety -- AU again thanked everyone who came out that evening for the Board meeting. He said that many issues that RTA had suggested are quietly being implemented, i.e. the small # of discipline problems at East have been asked to stay home until Jan 8 when they should return with parents. There will be a plan for them when they return. The rep who was disciplined, went back to school after 4 days in the rubber room.

15. Urbanski said that Mayoral Control of the School District is likely to happen because the governor is in favor of it and supports the idea with Mayor Duffy.