



Advocate

October 4, 2017

PORTLAND ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS

Help PAT Engage!

We are so excited to launch a listening campaign this fall.

With so much going on in our District, and in education nationwide, there couldn't be a better time to talk seriously with our members about the challenges they're facing and their hopes for the future.

We've set an ambitious goal of talking with 75 percent of our members this fall about what's working in our schools, and what's getting in the way of teaching and learning.

We will be regularly updating you with progress. If you are interested in being a listener please sign up on the PAT website pdxteachers.org.

Congratulations to Oregon's Teacher of the Year

Mt. Tabor Middle School teacher Matthew Bacon-Brenes is Oregon's 2018 Teacher of the Year!

We are so excited to have a PAT member represent us at the state and national level.

We are also proud of all the Mt. Tabor staff who wore their *2nd Year, No Contract* buttons when Oregon Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction Salam Noor came to honor Matthew!

Read more about Matthew's extraordinary commitment to students on the PAT website under the October 4th edition of the Advocate: pdxteachers.org.

PAT Welcomes the New Superintendent

Yesterday, October 3rd, a group of educators attended the school board meeting to welcome our new Superintendent, Guadalupe Guerrero, and lay out our union's vision for public education.

Public schools are a bedrock of our democracy, and yesterday **we spelled out what we mean when we say we are fighting for the schools Portland students deserve.**

OUR VISION

For starters, we believe in the opportunity for every child, regardless of their zip code, to have the support, tools, and necessary time to learn.

That means ensuring ALL our schools are inviting physical environments, have the resources they need to provide a well-rounded curriculum, and draw on community support for nutrition and health. We believe in a full continuum of services, including educating our students in the least restrictive environment possible, with all the support they need to be successful.

We want to develop tomorrow's inventors, thinkers, and artists. Basic skills are, of course, a part of the equation, but we also want to encourage creativity through a well-rounded education that includes art, music, and P.E. Of all the things we teach our kids, the most important is the love of learning.

PROVIDE NEEDED SUPPORTS

We believe in our students. Education isn't a job—it's a calling. Every day we work hard to connect with each child, to discover their passions and unlock their potential.

It is incumbent on the Superintendent and School Board to ensure each educator has the resources, mentoring, and support professionals need to develop and grow. This means quality professional development and adequate time for planning and collaboration.

SMALLER CLASSES FOSTER CONNECTIONS

As trusted and trained professionals, educators are best equipped to make the decisions about what it takes to ensure student success. That is why we are fighting for class sizes that enable teachers to connect one-on-one with each student.

In San Francisco, the school district our new superintendent comes from, they have class sizes of 22 for K-3. Don't our students deserve this kind of meaningful time and attention from elementary educators?

We welcome our new superintendent. It's time for him to get informed, get involved, and get PPS back on track. I hope he shares our vision for the schools our students deserve, and recognizes that the first step in making that vision a reality is settling our contract.

In Solidarity,

Suzanne Cohen
PAT President





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The Advocate is published periodically by the Portland Association of Teachers for PAT/OEA/NEA members. Send news tips and photos to portlandteachers@gmail.com

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Victory for PAT Substitutes

The Oregon Employment Relations Board (ERB) recently ruled in favor of the Portland Association of Teachers and against PPS. The case definitively established that substitute teachers are entitled to sick leave under the same law as regular contracted educators represented by the PAT. PPS must now withdraw all illegal contract proposals, including one that offers less sick leave than mandated by law.

We assumed that the issue was concluded, and that PPS would simply accept what your PAT bargaining team has proposed as appropriate and fair from day one of bargaining. Unfortunately, the District informed us in our last substitute teacher bargaining session that they plan to file a challenge to the ERB award. Amazingly, PPS would rather pay a law firm hundreds of dollars per hour to try and deny substitutes their rights under Oregon law instead of simply accepting an award and reaching a final agreement in substitute bargaining.

Sick leave is the final sticking point in negotiations over our substitute contract, and unfortunately the District has decided to ignore the needs of students, educators, and PPS families, opting instead for another financial windfall to the law firms it works with.

Donate to the PAT Sick Leave Bank!

During the 2016-17 school year, PAT members helped 30 colleagues in need thanks to contributions to the PAT Sick Leave Bank. These colleagues had exhausted their accumulated leave balances, but were unable to work due to extended or recurring personal illness. But thanks to our contributions to the Sick Leave Bank, they were able to avoid the additional hardships of lost salary and lost insurance coverage.

Thanks to your generosity, last year we met our goal of receiving the maximum number of voluntarily-donated hours allowed under our new contract language. For the first time in years, we were able to fulfill almost all applications for assistance prior to running out of Sick Leave Bank hours.

This shows the District that PAT members act on their belief that an injury to one is an injury to all.

It's a new school year, with new needs, and a new Bank to fill. We can accept up to 4000 hours and have a long way to go to reach that goal.

Please donate on the PAT website - pdxteachers.org - and thank you!

PERS Bubble and Mid-Year Retirement

As in past years, we anticipate a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for members to retire mid-year and continue working while receiving PERS benefits. Unlike recent years, we expect the beginning date to be moved up to December 1, 2017.

The reason for the earlier starting date is to allow certain retirees to retire prior to changes to PERS taking effect. There is a 30-day notification requirement for the PERS Bubble, so retirees would need to notify the District by October 31st to retire on December 1.

Please visit the PAT website for more details on the way recent PERS changes may affect you – pdxteachers.org.