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Welcome to Portland Public Schools!

My name is Suzanne Cohen, and I have the honor of serving as your President of PAT, the Portland Association of Teachers. I attended Portland State University and have taught at Woodlawn, King, Whitaker and Peninsula Schools. I've taught 5th grade, Special Education and middle school Math and Science. Though I miss the classroom terribly, I really enjoy the opportunities our Association offers and take pride in making sure our union is relevant to our membership.

On behalf of the Vice President, our Executive Board, and myself, I would like to welcome you to PAT. We are a union representing over 4,000 educators in Portland Public Schools – including all certified employees. PAT is the voice for strong public schools and a strong profession because we channel the collective power of the PAT members and the support of the Oregon Education Association (OEA) and the National Education Association (NEA).

I encourage you to watch for emails from PAT. We send a biweekly newsletter called “The Advocate” and we will be sending bargaining updates in a newsletter entitled “Bargaining Brief.” Our website contains information you can use to engage in your profession, including our contract.

Being a member of PAT affords you the opportunity to work with other members on education issues that matter to you and your colleagues. Through PAT we tackle everything from instructional and curriculum issues, to questions of social justice and racial equity in our schools and in our community. We're also actively engaged with legislative and policy initiatives from Portland to Salem to Washington, D.C.

We have a big year ahead of us. Portland Public Schools has undergone some major changes and we have many new people to work with. This will be the first year implementing our class size language – the only language of its kind in the state of Oregon. As our District is remaking itself, it's our responsibility to ensure that our collective, democratic values lead that work. Our union is a team, and we make sure the District listens to the professional voice of educators, your voice, when making decisions about the education of our children. Together, we can ensure that educators lead the transformation of Portland Public Schools.

And when I say we, I mean all our 4,000+ members, working together. With so many big challenges in front of us, I urge you to get involved with our union right away. One easy place to start is coming to our events, like the PAT “Party in the Park” at Laurelhurst Park on September 14th, and our New Educator Social at the PAT office on September 20th. Please stop by and introduce yourself!

I'm looking forward to working with all of you this year to make a real difference in the lives of our students.

Best wishes for the start of your year,

Suzanne Cohen
Middle School Math/Science Teacher
PAT President

Suzanne Cohen, President ♦ John Berkey, Kathi Koenig & Marty Pavlik – UniServ Consultants
PAT – An affiliate of Oregon Education Association & National Education Association