## President’s Message: On the Brink of Something Big

Last week, more than three-quarters of Portland voters cast a ballot for the Portland Teacher Levy.

They overwhelmingly support what educators already know—our students deserve smaller class sizes.

Every time we talk to students, families, and communities, like our amazing Student Success Act community forum October 28th, this message comes through loud and clear.

PAT members have also made it clear to the District where Student Success Act dollars should be directed.

Eighty percent of all respondents to our recent survey with the District rated smaller class sizes or social emotional supports for students as their top priority for new SSA funding. (You can view the full survey results on the PAT website).

Now we’re working to synthesize all the different information we’ve collected. This includes Student Success Act survey responses, the results from our SSA listening sessions with educators, as well as the insights from our community forum. Once we have a clear picture of priorities for Student Success Act funding, we’ll integrate those with the priorities that you’ve identified for our next round of contract negotiations.

Look out for our full report and complete set of recommendations later this month. We know that we’re on the brink of a big step forward in PPS.

Our priorities are in lock-step with what our communities value. And as we’ve seen from Arizona to Chicago, when educators and communities are united, we can win big.

In Solidarity,

Suzanne Cohen
PAT President

## Do You Have a Student Loan?

PAT members are invited to attend a Student Loan Debt & Basic Financial Planning Workshop on Monday, December 2, 2019, 4:30 – 6:30 PM at the PAT office.

Learn about the various types of federal student loan forgiveness programs and how to use the new NEA Student Loan Forgiveness Navigator Tool (SAVI) to determine your eligibility for a federal forgiveness program and the potential reduction in your loan debt. Information on basic financial essentials and financial planning will also be provided.

Find additional information and RSVP on the PAT website: pdxteachers.org

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Become a PAT Leader—Run for PAT Office

Nominations will open on November 13, 2019, for election to the positions of: PAT President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, PAT Executive Board Directors (5 positions), PAT Delegate to the Oregon Education Association or National Education Association Representative Assemblies.

Any PAT member (paying dues to PAT) may run for any of these positions. Non-members are not eligible to run for an elected union office. Detailed information about the terms and duties of the positions, the Nomination Form and the Election Handbook may be found here on the PAT website: pdxteachers.org.

Nominations close on Wednesday, December 18, 2019, at 7:00 PM Nomination forms must be submitted to the PAT office.

The Voters’ Pamphlet and Ballots will be sent electronically to members on February 10, 2020.

Votes must be cast by 5:00 PM on Monday, February 24, 2020.

Universal Pre-K is Coming to Portland!

The Universal Preschool NOW! coalition is finalizing a ballot measure that will bring universal, year-round, culturally inclusive preschool to all 4-year-olds in Multnomah County! They have asked for educator feedback on their plan, so PAT will be hosting a discussion on their proposal, Monday November 18th at 4:30 PM at the PAT office.

We will provide dinner for you if you RSVP online: pdxteachers.org.

Below is a message from the coalition:

“We have been advocating reliance on play-based curricula, provided by workers earning living wages in a range of languages and settings, including schools, community centers and family child care, with coaches and other professional development supports.

“We would love to meet with PAT members with expertise in early childhood education to discuss what is needed to help kids successfully transition to kindergarten and set them up for success in public school. We hope you’ll join us to provide us the feedback on our language, and to ensure that kids, teachers, and families get what they really need!”

No Make-Up Conferences When Families Are on Vacation

Family Conferences are one of the many tools we have to boost student success. It’s a chance for us to talk to families holistically about their child—including their curiosity, love of learning, and critical thinking skills. These two days are long and exhausting, but they’re also filled with meaningful conversations, personal connections, and other opportunities to build community.

This year, conferences are scheduled right before Thanksgiving. Some families may not be able to attend due to travel. Our Superintendent made it clear that make-up conferences do not need to be scheduled when families can’t attend because of travel. Instead, they may want to schedule a video-conference, phone call, or email contact during the time period designated for conferences. As educators, we try to be flexible, doing whatever it takes to meet with families, especially those whose work schedules or other obligations make it hard to meet during the designated conference time. Just remember, we don’t need to schedule make-up conferences because families are on vacation. You deserve to enjoy your holidays just as much as your students and their families.