



Catholic Teachers Union

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May 2019

From the President

Fellow CTU Members,

Here we are again! What seemed like an impossible finish line in September is suddenly within sight. Is there a merrier month than May? Well, maybe June.....

This year was much less stressful for me than my previous year as CTU president. I got a chance to see what a 'typical' year might look like without the stress of four contract negotiations in one year. September was busy with getting all the contracts signed by the appropriate parties. In October Bob Cranston and I went to the NACST convention in St. Louis. In November, I met with Rita Schwartz, president of NACST to discuss how we might strengthen not only CTU, but Catholic Teachers unions at the national level as well. Catholic schools, like the Catholic Church, are facing tough times ahead. We have to find creative ways to strengthen and defend what is important to us and the future of our families and students.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our delegates for the fine job they do answering my requests for updates from their schools. Your school delegate keeps me informed with what's going on at your school and I, in turn, bring it to the attention of our executive board at our monthly meeting. Sometimes, issues are easily resolved by the delegate. Sometimes I can handle them with a phone call or an email. If the issue is significant enough, Bob and I will take a ride to the school for a meeting with the principal or president. I'm a big proponent of collaboration and a couple of our principals have joined me in this spirit of pro-active negotiation. I've consulted with schools on issues outside of contract negotiations to ensure contracts are being honored and changes were being made that benefit the faculty, students, and economic health of the school. I find this work incredibly rewarding and an encouraging trend for the future.

There are times when issues are not so easily reconciled. I've had to file two grievance at the superintendents level, one of which was further appealed. I'm getting to know my way around Camden. Right now I'm busy planning the general membership meeting and scouting out next year's spot. This year we'll stick with the Kove, but I'm feeling a change might be in order for next year. Top Golf anyone? If you have an idea for a new meeting venue, let me know!

All the best,
Mary Kay Rossi, *CTU President*

Excerpted from *Real Simple* magazine, April 2019

Five Things You Should do Before Paying Medical Bill

Verify – make sure the bill was in fact run through your insurance and that your information is correct.

If your provider has not given you a bill with a **line item break down**, ask for one. Check to make sure you received all services tests, and medications on the list and that there are no duplications.

Check billing codes. These codes are entered by the doctor's office when submitting a claim. Use findacode.com to determine if coverage was denied due to a coding error.

Don't be afraid to **negotiate**. To get a sense of what a reasonable charge for the service is, use online tools like healthcarebluebook.com or fairhealthconsumer.org and use that information as a negotiating starting point.

Take care of bills and billing errors quickly. Medical debts that are less than six month past due do not show up on your credit report. Try to resolve any issues within the first six months.

Executive Board

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CTU History Part I [1984-2000]

Chris Ehrmann

This year marks the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Catholic Teachers Union-NJ. Although a number of current members who have been in the Camden diocesan/parish school system for those years, most teachers in the schools represented by CTU have not been. An understanding of the history of the union and its functioning for the thirty-five years should be instructive for members as they move forward.

The first high school teachers' union in the Camden Diocese was incorporated in New Jersey as the Secondary Contracted Teachers Organization [SCTO] in 1984. By a vote of 243 to 3 teachers at eight high schools [the current five represented by CTU and Gloucester Catholic, St. James—Carney's Point, and Sacred Heart—Vineland] rejected a salary proposal offered by the Diocese, beginning an organizing drive and the establishment of the union. Teachers held a one-day strike in October during a diocesan wide In-Service day [attended by both elementary and secondary teachers] at Camden Catholic and a second one-day strike on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. The Diocese then recognized the union and negotiations began in January 1985.

Prior to the SCTO, representatives from the high schools had met annually with diocesan school administrators in the Lay Faculty Council. The council had been in existence since the late 1960's and dealt only with financial (i.e. salary) issues. By 1984, teachers were looking to have a greater voice as employees of the schools, including working conditions & traditional collective bargaining issues, in accordance with Catholic social justice teaching on labor unions. After consultation with the leadership of the National Association of Catholic School Teachers [established in 1979], SCTO negotiators devised a complete contract proposal which was the basis for the contract that eventually was ratified by members in April 1985.

The first negotiated contract was implemented after a nine-day strike by teachers after the Easter vacation in 1985. The contract was comprehensive, covering working conditions such as class size, number of preparations, due process and employment security, as well as salary and benefits. It was a three year contract, retroactive to the beginning of the 1984-1985 school year. Negotiations were conducted using a traditional adversarial model. Under that first contract, more than four dozen grievances were filed and processed as both school/diocesan administrators and union members adjusted to working under the contract.

When preparation for negotiations began in 1987 union leaders contacted diocesan administrators to explore the possibility of using a collaborative negotiation model for a subsequent contract. They agreed, and the 1987 negotiations were conducted using the Win-Win process. The process resulted in a three year contract that was ratified before the end of that school year. The first two contracts covered teachers at the eight high schools, except for Special Education teachers, who were diocesan employees working in the secondary schools as well as

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Know Your Contract — *The Volunteer Form*

A major factor of the contract is the codification of working conditions to set reasonable circumstances for teachers to effectively educate students. The majority of teachers desire to help as many students as possible to develop intellectually, socially & spiritually. Contractual limits on the number of courses/preps, class size and total student load are meant to set reasonable parameters to accomplish that goal. It may seem, then, that a contractual provision which waives those limits is contrary to the teachers' goal.

Specific circumstances, however, on rare occasions, require that those contractual limits be set aside, primarily for curricular reasons. One example of this is the single-language teacher who develops a course for the fourth year of the language. If there is only one teacher of Mandarin Chinese and the teacher wants to offer a complete four year course, that teacher technically violates contractual provisions which limit the number of courses/preps to three.

Throughout the CTU-diocesan contractual history, the volunteer form is the instrument used most often to address issues with the number of courses/preps, individual class size, and total teaching load.

No teacher is required to agree to go beyond contractual provision limits. In the development of teacher & student rosters and classes/sections, school administrators have asked teachers to teach more than 3 preps, accept more than 35 students in an individual class, or teach more than the number of students listed as the total teaching load. Administrators have given reasons such as providing comprehensive course offerings and maintaining overall enrollment levels. Teachers have chosen to sign the form, teachers have chosen not to sign the form.

Volunteer forms should accompany tentative rosters when they are distributed in June for number of preps or in August when course lists have been developed for class size and total load.

In June, members should take note whether or not the number of preps is greater than the three listed in all contracts [except WCHS] when tentative rosters are distributed. In August, members should also note that, if more than the contractual number of students in a class or total load is scheduled when the August completed roster is distributed, a volunteer form should accompany the roster. If a teacher chooses not to sign the form, the school has 5 days to move students to bring the numbers in compliance with contractual numbers.

Upcoming Dates

May 20—final notification of non-renewal for nontenured teachers

June 5—tentative roster distribution

CTU Scholarship

Union members with children who are seniors at any high school [not just CTU schools] this year and attending any type of continuing education next September – please note that CTU offers a one time \$750 scholarship. You will need to submit a copy of the tuition bill or transcript. Contact [Bill Blumenstein](#) for the form.

CTU History Part I [1984-2000]

some elementary schools, but were diocesan employees in a program funded by the House of Charity. In 1988, the Special Education teachers in both secondary and elementary schools were included in the bargaining unit.

The 1990 negotiations began using the Win-Win process again, but broke down without a resolution and traditional bargaining resulted in a one year contract. The subsequent negotiations in 1991 were conducted with the traditional adversarial method, which led to a three year contract. Other than informational picketing during the second, third and fourth contracts, no job action had been taken by union members. That changed with the 1994 negotiations. Again conducted using the adversarial method, the school year began with no contract, and union members staged a seven day strike. Again, a three year contract was the result.

At the same time as the 1994 negotiations were underway, the union leadership responded to inquiries from diocesan elementary school teachers to see if they could be represented by the union. Following informational meetings with elementary school teachers, the union petitioned the diocese to be the bargaining representative for the elementary schools. By the third contract, Special Education teachers in the elementary schools had worked for three years under a contract and were in daily contact with elementary school teachers. Those teachers spurred the drive to include the elementary schools under contract. The union, anticipating the inclusion of elementary schools, changed its name from SCTO to Catholic Teachers Union—NJ. The diocese refused to recognize the CTU as the bargaining representative of the elementary school teachers unless a memorandum limiting the due process of those teachers was signed by the union. Union leaders refused and sued the diocese under the New Jersey Constitution to force recognition of the union for the elementary teachers without preconditions for negotiations. The union lost at the Chancery Division, but then prevailed at the Appellate Level. The diocese appealed to the state Supreme Court, and, in July 1997, the NJ Supreme Court unanimously ruled in favor of the union.

At the same time that the case was before the Supreme Court, CTU was negotiating using the adversarial method for the secondary schools and Special Education teachers. As of September 1997 those negotiations did not result in a contract and teachers staged a strike that lasted for nine days. During the strike, teachers at two of the schools chose to withdraw from representation by CTU. The diocese recognized the new teacher associations at those schools. Subsequently, following resolution of the labor conflict and ratification of a new five year contract, CTU sued the diocese to reverse withdrawal of the schools from CTU representation. That suit was resolved with a Settlement Agreement in 2001, in which the diocese, schools and union agreed to a process for teachers at schools to withdraw from representation. The Agreement recognized the withdrawal of the two schools and also mandated that, after two subsequent contracts, the single bargaining unit for all the schools would be divided into individual school-specific bargaining units.

[CTU History Part II, in the next newsletter, will present CTU representation of the elementary school teachers and bargaining from 2001 through 2018]

“Work with pride, retire with dignity”

Congratulations and the best of all possible futures to the following CTU members retiring at the end of the school year—

Barbara Cortese – Guidance [CCHS]; **Tony D’Antonio**—English [CCHS]; **Maureen Dean**—Math [St. Joseph];
Craig Gras—Social Studies & English [WCHS]; **Sue Valenti**—Math [PVI] -

thank you for the contributions you made to the students and schools in your careers.

Useful Links

[Horizon](#) [Medical]

[Express Scripts](#) [Prescription]

[403\(b\)](#) Retirement Plan

[Vision](#) Benefits of America

[ABCO](#) Credit Union

[Camden Diocese](#) Human Resources Department

Annual General Membership Meeting

June 13, 2019 6:00 p.m.

The Kove

20 W. Atlantic Ave

Audubon, NJ 08106

Election Year—You must be present to vote

If interested in running for office (pres, vp, treasurer, secretary, area vp) please email your intent to Matt Hoover at mhoover@ctunj.com by May 30th.