

PSEA staff contributors

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Carla Claycomb, Ph.D., Senior Specialist, Education Services

Dr. Carla Claycomb has more than 20 years experience in education. A former teacher, she has conducted both quantitative and qualitative research, evaluation studies, and policy analyses for audiences at the national, state, and local levels. She's authored numerous papers, journal articles, and reports and has presented at national conferences.

Claycomb works on teacher certification, student achievement gap issues and best practices research in teaching and learning. She represents PSEA on the Pennsylvania Staff Development Council and the Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators, and works with the Learning First Alliance-Pennsylvania. Claycomb holds a B.S. in Elementary Education, summa cum laude, from Bucknell University; a M.A. in Multicultural Education Studies from York University in Yorkshire, England; and a Ph.D. in Education Theory and Policy from The Pennsylvania State University.

Leslie Collins, Esquire, Staff Attorney

Leslie Collins is a graduate of Georgetown University's Law Center. Upon graduating from Georgetown, Collins worked for the U.S. Department of Education where she was responsible for drafting and reviewing special education legislation. Collins worked for private law firms in Connecticut and Pennsylvania where she represented clients in special and general education matters. Since 1992, Collins has been employed by PSEA as a staff attorney responsible for matters pertaining to ESEA/NCLB and other federal education legislation, special education, testing issues, and violence in the schools.

Eric G. Elliott, Ph.D., Director of Research for School Funding and Finance

Dr. Eric Elliott joined PSEA in 1995 and specializes in school funding research. He has a M.A. in Economics from the University of Texas at Austin, and a Ph.D. in Public Policy Analysis from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Elliott provides bargaining support to PSEA's members by analyzing the finances of school districts. He has also conducted research on school funding equity in Pennsylvania, including assisting the Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools in its equity lawsuit. In 2006, he was appointed by Governor Rendell to the state's Task Force on School Cost Reduction.

James Henninger-Voss, Assistant Director of Research

For more than a decade, James Henninger-Voss has specialized in research and negotiations regarding compensation, alternative compensation, and pensions for PSEA members. Henninger-Voss has taught at the University of Massachusetts – Amherst, Rider University, Mercer County Community College, and Princeton University.

Henninger-Voss earned his undergraduate degree in Economics and American Studies from the University of Dayton, and a master's degree in Economics from the University of Massachusetts - Amherst.

Mary C. Keller, Education Services Assistant

Mary Keller has been with PSEA for 25 years and is responsible for assisting staff and members with issues related to Act 48 continuing education, teacher certification, special education, best practices, gifted education, and National Board Certification. She is the liaison between PSEA's Department of Career and Technical Studies and the Bureau of Career and Technical Education.

Bernard R. Miller, III, Director of Education Services

Bernard R. Miller, III, specializes in special education issues and serves on PDE's Special Education Advisory Panel, the Advisory Committee for Response to Instruction and Intervention and the Advisory Committee for PSSA-Modified.

Miller was an adjunct professor at West Chester University and worked at the Delaware County Intermediate Unit for 30 years as a classroom teacher, community-based coordinator, and technical assistance consultant. He is a frequent state and national conference speaker and is a guest lecturer at several universities. Miller has his master's degree from Temple University and his bachelor's degree from Bloomsburg University.

Steve Nickol, Assistant Director of PSEA Retirement Programs

Steve Nickol served as a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for 18 years representing the residents of York and Adams counties. After retiring from the House, Nickol joined PSEA in 2009. Nickol is a graduate of York Country Day School, and attended Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, PA.

As a member of the House, Nickol served on the Pennsylvania School Employees' Retirement System's board of trustees for 18 years, developing expertise in the various aspects of a defined benefit pension plan. He came to be seen by many as the most trusted voice in the state

Legislature on issues impacting PSERS, and has been a presenter at various conferences on pension issues. Nickol also served on the Tobacco Settlement Investment Board and was active in insurance, finance, school funding, and health care issues.

David Petruzzi, Region Field Manager

David Petruzzi serves as Region Field Manager for the Central and Northeast regions of PSEA. He was a PSEA UniServ Director for the Central Region providing member advocacy, leadership training, and bargaining support and assistance to PSEA local associations.

Petruzzi taught secondary emotional support, served as a facilitator, and as a lead teacher in the special education office in school districts in both Ohio and Pennsylvania. He earned a B.S. in Special Education and a M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction from Lock Haven University. He also attended the Educational Leadership program at St. Francis University and has participated in trainings focused on improving contract negotiations and collective bargaining.

Christine Rupnow, Assistant Director of Research

Christine Rupnow has worked for PSEA for more than 20 years. She specializes in compensation issues for Education Support Professionals, the Living Wage initiatives, and analyzes cost comparisons between in-house and contracted services. She has a B.A. in Economics and a M.S. in Industrial Relations, both from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Joseph Thayer, Assistant Director of Research

Prior to joining PSEA, Thayer spent 10 years working for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers union. In his capacity as a Senior Research Economist he specialized in health care issues during labor negotiations.

Thayer received his B.A. in Accounting from Bryant University and his M.B.A. in Finance from George Washington University.

William Michael Townes, Director of Special Field Programs

W. Michael Townes has worked for PSEA for more than 23 years. He was a UniServ Director responsible for member advocacy, negotiations and leadership training. Townes now serves as a Regional Field Director with an emphasis on coordinating programs for Education Support Personnel and managing PSEA's Conflict Resolution Through Collaboration program. Townes obtained a bachelor's degree from Kean University in New Jersey, cum laude, with a double

major in Political Science and Economics and completed additional graduate work at Rutgers University in the area of Labor Studies.

David Wazeter, Ph.D., Assistant Executive Director of Program Services

Dr. David Wazeter has worked for PSEA for more than 20 years, serving as Assistant Executive Director for Program Services since 2006. Wazeter has co-authored articles published in various peer-reviewed journals on the topics of union leadership, union commitment, and teacher compensation. Before joining PSEA, Wazeter was an Assistant Professor at the Michigan State University School of Labor and Industrial Relations and also a Visiting Assistant Professor at the State University of New York – Buffalo School of Management.

Wazeter earned a Ph.D. in Labor and Industrial Relations from Cornell University and a master's degree in Labor Relations from the University of Massachusetts – Amherst. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Franklin and Marshall College.

Mark C. Wescott, Director for Education Services

Wescott is a graduate of the University of Scranton and began his teaching career in 1978 as a high school biology teacher. He holds a master's degree in Secondary Education from Villanova University.

Wescott joined PSEA's staff in 1989, serving for 10 years as a UniServ representative in Allentown before taking his current position as Director for Education Services.

Harris L. Zwerling, J.D., Ph.D., Assistant Director of Research

Harris Zwerling joined PSEA in 1997. His areas of research concentration are value-added modeling, student achievement, and charter schools. Zwerling also has served as an expert witness in more than 90 fact-finding and interest arbitration hearings. He has been the president of the PSEA Staff Organization since 2004.

Zwerling earned a Doctorate in Industrial Relations and a law degree from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He also has a Masters in Labor Relations from the University of Massachusetts - Amherst. Prior to joining PSEA, he worked for eight years as an Assistant Professor with McGill University's Faculty of Management and the State University of New York at Potsdam's Economics Department. He has published numerous book chapters, journal articles, and monographs in the areas of collective bargaining, education, and employment law.

(01/10)