

PSEA Southeastern Region

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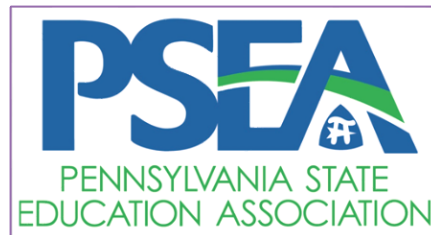
From the RFD – M. Shannon Moore
5/1/2020

Message from the RFD

Wednesday evening, EA Locals participated in coordinated bargaining, which was a great success thanks to UniServ Wendy Leary and committee chair John DiVirgilio. As we continue to move forward in bargaining for the remainder of this year and next year, training, communication of financial realities, and updating your membership will be critical. We encourage all Locals to work with their UniServ who can provide the most up to date information, resources, and guide you through the virtual process. Please reach out to your UniServ with any questions you may have. As you will see in the newsletter, we are so impressed by how our Locals are giving back and are thrilled to highlight the great contributions you have all made. Finally, staff want to support you as reach out to your members and potential members, now and at the beginning of the new school year! Have a great weekend and enjoy the spring weather!

Finger Printing Extension:

Good News! House Bill 360 is on its way to the Governor for his signature. The state house voted unanimously to concur with the Senate on Wednesday, April 29, 2020. The bill extends the finger printing deadline to December 31, 2020 in hopes of an improvement in the spread of COVID-19 and safer conditions for school employees to get the required clearance. As referenced, in early newsletters, the other two clearances can be completed online and should be done as soon as possible.



Join our Region Facebook Page:
www.facebook.com/pseaSoutheasternregion

Remember to consistently check the Region Web site for all the latest memos and guidance information from NEA & PSEA relating to COVID-19. To date there are more than 15 posted documents: www.psea.org/ser

REMEMBER! Our region Facebook Page, www.facebook.com/pseasoutheasternregion is up and running and open for anyone to join. In the last month, more than 125 new members have followed or liked our page, we are a little more than 100 fans away from 2000.

Share the page, especially if you have a local social media page.

What's Happening in Your Local?!
Have something innovative and interesting happening in your local, email Zeek (zweil@psea.org) and we'll include it in our region newsletter.

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Teacher Appreciation Week:

Next week we celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week as students and families, union members, administrators, and staff take some time to show their appreciation for the dedicated work you and your members do every day.

This year, however, many of our Locals chose to show their appreciation for our frontline workers fighting the COVID-19 outbreak. Here are some examples of what SE Region Locals are doing to support their communities:

- **Great Valley EA:** Middle School Technology Teacher Peter Ruckelshaus utilizes his 3D printer to produce shield frame for PPE equipment for area hospitals that need materials for their healthcare workers. In his basement, Peter operates five 3D printers and then drives batches of the frames to Drexel University where the face shields are assembled and distributed to area hospitals. Peter has teamed up with his fellow GV middle school teacher Tim Leary who has contributed straps for PPE shields. To date, Peter and other GV teachers and 3D printer specialists have made more than 500 PPE shield frames for areas healthcare workers. Incredible!
- **Phoenixville Area EA:** PAEA launched a fundraiser with a goal of raising \$5000.00 to help families in the Phoenixville Area. The Local raises money to support three organizations: ORION Communities, Alianzas de Phoenixville and Phoenixville Area Community Services-PACS. All three organizations are working diligently to help community families get through this pandemic. If would like to make donations to help these families impacted by COVID-19 via Venmo @PAEA-1 or on PayPal @PAEA1. If you haven't already, you can learn more about this initiative and all that PAEA is doing by liking their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/PAEAconnected>
- **Ridley EA:** Has raised more than \$10k for Ridley families dealing with hardships related to the outbreak. Their Local's success was featured in the Delaware County Daily Times: <https://tinyurl.com/ycu8drqc>
- **West Chester Area EA:** The Local works with area caterer John Serock to send hundreds of meals home to WCASD families. Serock Catering is a local family-owned business, and the support of WCAEA during these difficult times helps this local business and local families. The Local also donated \$3500 to West Chester Area Food Bank and has made additional donations to Home of the Sparrow and the Health Care Heroes fund at the Chester County Hospital. Outstanding work!
- **Chichester EA:** Working with a Delaware County shirt maker, the Local is selling "Chi-Strong" T-shirts and using 60% of the proceeds to support local Chichester families in need. The Local is working with its counseling and social work members to identify families. Feel free to buy a shirt here: <https://printingsteel.com/local-support/chi-strong>
- **Chester County IU EA:** The Local donated two thousand dollars to the Market at Head Start which provides non-perishable foods to support 88 families, in addition to the 956 children delivered meals through CACFP funds.
- **Unionville Chadds Ford EA and Kennett EA:** Both Locals are using the money they would generally spend to support teachers in their buildings during Teacher Appreciation Week and instead are making donations to the Kennett Area Food Bank. More than \$2000 was donated by the Locals.

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If your Local is supporting its community, healthcare workers and other impacted by COVID-19 make sure you let Zeek or your UniServ know. We want to tell these stories.

NEA RA Goes Virtual:

On April 20th, the NEA Board of Directors voted to conduct the 2020 NEA Representative Assembly via a virtual platform. Please note that the only business to be covered will be the election of officers and at-large board members; approval of the NEA budget; and a recommendation in the 2020 presidential campaign.

The RA will be conducted by virtual platform on July 2-3 for approximately four hours each day. PSEA is also looking into the best way to hold our state caucus meeting as they will happen. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

Legislative Attacks on the Rise:

For several weeks some Pennsylvania lawmakers advocated for laws to freeze property tax rates. In fact, three times in the past five weeks some in the Pennsylvania state house have pushed these radical bills. These attacks on public education advance as powerful lawmakers at the Federal level seem unwilling to consider funding increases to the states.

Taken together, a lack of Federal action to support states and state government proposing bills to drastically reduce local revenue, the impact on our school budgets would be potentially devastating. State laws that take away local authority for our School Boards to make community-based funding decisions may result in the loss of billions of dollars which could trigger massive furloughs and curtailment of educational programs.

We need to remain hyper-vigilant to these threats and take collective action when necessary to stop them at every turn. Earlier this week, President Askey circulated a critical alert asking members to take action to demand Federal lawmakers provide critical funding to the states. The worst-case scenario, if nothing changes, could be as many as 50,000 jobs lost in our schools. When these calls go out, it can no longer just be about you making the call or sending the email. We must lead our members to take large-scale action as the fight to protect school funding will be an ongoing and long-term battle.

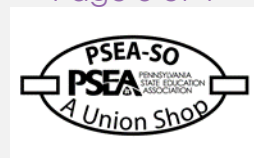
Save the Date, Virtual ACE Training:

The economic downturn due to COVID-19 is already underway and will last much longer than the outbreak. Consequently, in the next few years, the legislative battles to secure and protect school funding will be lengthy. We must prepare our members for what lies ahead, and at the same time, continue to educate our elected officials about the essential role public school employees have in our workforce and society.

To that end, we need to train more members to be PSEA ACEs and have schedule a virtual ACE training for Wednesday, May 27th at 4:30 p.m. ACEs are Advocates for Children and Education, our members that lobby elected officials in their home districts, Harrisburg, and Washington DC. To date, SE Region trained 115 ACEs, and we can always use more (both EA and ESP). Recruitment materials to follow in the near future, and you will need to register online: <https://www.psea.org/seracevirtual>.

Vote-by-Mail:

PSEA continues to advocate for thousands of our members across to state to vote by mail (VBM). With the



COVID-19 outbreak, VBM allows our members to vote securely and safely from the comfort of their home and allows all of us to perform our important civic responsibility. Voting by mail is simple as the process takes less than two minutes to complete, and you can do it from your phone or computer. You can also request a paper application.

First, access the link (<https://www.mobilize.us/psea/event/265329/>) to let PSEA know that you are registering. Once you click the above link, then the site directs you to Vote By Mail. You will need your driver's license number or another form of acceptable state identification when you register. The deadline to register to Vote by Mail is May 26, 2020, and you can choose to VBM only for the primary or for the general election as well. Please follow the instructions to vote by mail and only follow the absentee ballot instructions if you will not be in the area to vote. If you have any questions, please reach out to Zeek Weil (zweil@psea.org). To date, more than 11,000 PSEA members and 1400 SE Region members have registered to Vote-by-Mail. Please act fast as there is surge in applications due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

May 1st, International Workers' Day:

In closing, take a moment and remember all the workers that came before us, and the fights and struggles they endured to make their lives and the lives of their families and communities better. May Day initially commemorated the Haymarket Massacre that took place in Chicago in 1886 and was a fight for the eight-hour workday. However, that uprising began a 50-year struggle to organize International Harvester, owned by McCormick Family (yes, the spices in your cabinet). If you are looking for a good read on those campaigns, check out: <https://www.haymarketbooks.org/books/1383-the-long-deep-grudge>

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