

FEDERATION FLASH

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE PERTH AMBOY FEDERATION/AFT

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About AFT Local 857/Perth Amboy

- Our Local (# 857) was chartered by the American Federation of Teachers in 1946.
- Our Local helped bring collective bargaining to New Jersey. In 1965, our brothers and sisters struck for the right to negotiate with their employer. That sacrifice and others led to the 1968 enactment of the PERC law, bringing collective bargaining and a dispute resolution mechanism to New Jersey's public employees.
- AFT Local 857 has a 2005-'06 membership of 1300+. Ninety percent (90%) of all locally-eligible employees are AFT members. The wall-to-wall bargaining unit we represent includes PreK-12 teachers and other certificated staff, adult education personnel, custodial staff, school-related personnel, educational secretaries and paraprofessionals. Our governance structure provides for a 29-member Executive Council that meets monthly during the school year and once during the summer. All of our constituent groups are represented on the Council. General membership meetings and component group meetings are held regularly throughout the year.
- Donna M. Chiera was elected our President in 1991 and continues in that office today. A full-time special education resource teacher, this year Donna has accepted a reduced schedule at the Ceres School, teaching 3 periods before taking up her union duties. Donna is a former local Teacher of the Year, former Middlesex County Teacher of the Year, and a runner-up for New Jersey Teacher of the Year in 1991. She has been appointed to serve on AFT's national Program and Policy Council since 1996, an advisory body to the national organization that helps guide its work and its positions on topical issues. Ms. Chiera represents national AFT on the 13-member selection panel for the National Teacher of the Year program. She also serves on the 30-member Abbott Advisory Committee, providing guidance to New Jersey's Department of Education on Abbott issues.
- Judy L. Davis is AFT's District Representative, having served as Deputy District Rep. for the past two years. Judy has been teaching special education at Perth Amboy High School for 30 years, active throughout that time in efforts to improve student achievement, serving on the School Management Team and other committees and task forces. Judy now teaches 1 period at PAHS, allowing for full-time servicing of the unit's constituents. Judy's union role allows her advocacy for needed improvement to be focused throughout the district, and she has already played a key role in furthering shared aims with district leaders. Ms. Davis was instrumental in reaching agreements with the Board in our recently-concluded negotiations.

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- Treasurer Michael P. Savoia has been handling our local's finances since 1985. Mike teaches US History at Perth Amboy High School. He was formerly the Treasurer of the New Jersey State Federation of Teachers, our state parent body. Throughout his tenure, Mike has represented our local at many AFT Conventions. He was named as Perth Amboy High School's Teacher of the Year for 2004. He has taught in Perth Amboy for 30 years, beginning at McGinnis and now at PAHS. Mike also served on the bargaining team for the new contract recently approved.
- Executive Vice President Jean G. Browne is a veteran teacher of 30 years. She presently serves as an Intervention Resource Teacher at the Wilentz School. Jean serves on the district's Professional Development Committee. She was nationally-trained in Thinking Math, a strand of AFT's Educational Research and Dissemination program. Jean also provides local training in the Four Blocks of Literacy. She also served on the negotiating team for the contract beginning July 1, 2005.
- Director of Organization Wayne C. Castello is a full-time social studies teacher at Perth Amboy High School. Wayne serves as Recording Secretary of the New Jersey State Federation of Teachers and also served on the negotiating team for our newly-approved contract.
- Parliamentarian Jeffrey A. Hudanish is a full-time social studies teacher at PAHS. A member of our negotiating team, Jeff also serves as co-editor of our educational issues publication, *Educators' Quarterly (EQ)*. Jeff is also a nationally-trained instructor in AFT's Educational Research and Dissemination (ER&D) program, offering high-quality professional development opportunities for district staff.
- Melissa A. Hudanish is the Local Site Coordinator for AFT's ER&D program. ER&D is a research-based, nationally-recognized effort to bring proven research and best instructional practices for new and seasoned practitioners to consider. Melissa chairs the district's Professional Development Committee. She teaches English at Perth Amboy High School.
- Gwen A. Cerasoli is the co-editor of *EQ*, our educational issues publication. She also serves as AFT's Director of Professional and Vocational Development, designing and providing training for our various constituency groups. Gwen is a Reading Specialist at the Richardson School.
- AFT Webmaster Dave Zirkle is our connection to cyberspace. Wilentz School's Teacher of the Year for 2004, Dave has worked hard using his computer skills in developing our website, and we hope to offer even more as time goes by. Check our site out @ www.paf-aft.org.