# NEGOTIATIONS aft Update

*A bulletin from the Perth Amboy Federation/AFT, offering news on your contract negotiations.* ***August 8, 2005***


## Finishing touches sought.

As we head into the summer's closing stretch, we continue to seek closure on just a handful of open issues from the contract's Sections 1 and 2. Two all-day sessions were held on August 2nd and 5th, narrowing the open issues and their resolutions considerably. That progress positions us to settle the commonly-applicable and certificated terms as August moves along. Though vacation schedules have taken/are taking some key administrative personnel out of play, we hope to continue making progress wherever, whenever and with whomever we can.

## Closing in to close out Sections 3-6.

Included in the August 2nd and 5th sessions were exploratory talks for custodians, paraprofessionals and school-related personnel. We had to wait on talks for secretaries due to vacation conflicts. We expect to get those talks moving soon. Some agreements for our non-certificated ranks have been reached and some issues and concerns are coming into closer focus, helping the parties to find common ground in a shared search for supportable solutions. It's never easy, it's never quick and the ultimate resolution is rarely what either party envisioned at the outset. That's Negotiations 101.

## Crunch time.

Believe it or not, these talks have been on-going since February. We were all hopeful that an early start would yield an early finish. No such luck. Even in this age of immediate gratification, good things are still worth waiting for. It is certainly our hope, which we believe we share with our management counterparts, that when the workforce gathers on September 1st, Superintendent Rodecker and PAF/AFT President Chiera will be able to announce a tentative settlement has been reached. But hoping alone won't make it happen. It is now unfortunately not uncommon for districts to go for months or longer without reaching a new contract. That's certainly not our expectation here, but we can't guarantee a September 1st settlement announcement either. Things worth doing are worth doing well. And experience teaches us that things have a way of working out on a schedule all their own. We're committed to see it through for all of you, in the timeframe that gets the job done right.

## 9/05/05

P.S. On Labor Day, take a moment to reflect on the many things you have *because* of the labor movement -- competetive wages, top-notch benefits, fair and responsive working conditions and the opportunity to make America stronger and smarter.