

Pennsylvania Association of Career and Technical Administrators

November 2008

State Senator James Rhoades Dies in Auto Crash

On Saturday October 18th, Senator Jim Rhoades died from injuries suffered in a car crash near Brodheadsville in Monroe County. Senator Rhoades was a longtime chairman of the Senator Education Committee. He helped craft every major education initiative in recent Pennsylvania history. He served in the state Senate since 1981 and was seeking an eighth term. He also served as a member of the Appropriations, Transportation, Law and Justice, and Environmental Resources and Energy committees. His district included Schuylkill County and parts, of Berks, Monroe, Northampton, Lehigh, and Carbon counties. Senator Rhoades was a tremendous supporter of career and technical education and strongly believe in our programs. Most importantly, he believed in our students. He understood their needs and worked tirelessly to make sure they were always included in any budgetary or programmatic deliberations. We will miss him.

PACTA's Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Programs Review

The first sessions of each PACTA PIL were held at the Nittany Lion Inn in State College during the first week of October. Each PIL is worth a total of 30 hours so participants completing both programs will receive 60 hours. In addition to the six hours of PIL work at the first session, each individual is required to participate in regional meetings during the middle of the school year and a final meeting at the conclusion of the school year. Approximately 14 hours of the program are non-classroom work focused on meeting the objectives of the PIL. More information on the upcoming regional meetings for each PIL will be forthcoming in the December newsletter.

Upcoming PACTA PIL Programs

With the next window for additional PIL approvals, PACTA will be submitting new applications for programs that focus on special education, instructional supervision, and orientation for new directors. The deadline for submitting these PIL programs to PDE is November 20th with expected notification of approval status by mid-December. Each program proposal will contain professional development activities in a group setting along with independent work that will result in approved Act 48 credits. It is likely that each PIL will have online or webinar based instructional components.

The Pennsylvania Conference on Integrated Learning: The School to Career Connection

The Annual PDE conference on Integrated Learning: The School-to-Career Connection will take place at the Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel on November 12-14, 2008. At this conference participants will learn and share instructional techniques, data driven decision making, effective assessment and related information designed to help meet the goals as outlines in No Child Left Behind, Perkins IV, and the Pennsylvania academic standards and assessment requirements in Chapter 4 of the school code. To register for the conference, point your browser to:

http://www.pde.state.pa.us/career_edu/lib/career_edu/Registration_Form.pdf

McCain & Obama on Education

The Public Education Network has developed a side-by-side comparison of the presidential candidates' positions on education matters. Where do Democrat Barack Obama and Republican John McCain stand on topics such as No Child Left Behind, teacher recruitment, early childhood education, school choice/vouchers, special education, and college affordability? [Click here](#) to find out.

View each candidate's plans for education – Democrat [Barack Obama](#) and Republican [John McCain](#).

Career Pathways Bill Introduced in Congress

Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), chair of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension's (HELP) Subcommittee on Employment and Workplace Safety, introduced legislation (S. 3573) that would establish a \$912 million program to help state and regional leaders increase graduation rates and employment opportunities for students across the country. The proposed "Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers Act" would fund federal grants to support state efforts to help young adults transition from high school to post-secondary education and then to skilled high-paying careers needed in the 21st century economy. The grants would focus on providing hands-on job-training partnerships or internships for students and on training teachers in methods for incorporating real-world career skills with core academic courses. For more information: http://www.washingtonwatch.com/bills/show/110_SN_3573.html

Fiscal Crisis

States and local governments are facing their worst budget crunches in decades. As the weakening economy undermines consumers and businesses alike, governments are facing a rare confluence of declines in personal and corporate income taxes, property taxes and sales taxes. This is forcing officials to raise taxes and fees, lay off workers and slash spending - cutting aid to hospitals, schools, Medicaid and more. At the same time, as unemployment and inflation rise, demand for public services and the cost of delivering them is on the increase. On top of all that, the credit crunch has made it virtually impossible for some governments to borrow to cover short-term financing needs, forcing states such as California to appeal to Washington for help. Worst of all, most experts are predicting the fiscal squeeze will only deepen. For more information, please point your browser to:

http://money.cnn.com/2008/10/09/news/economy/states_feel_the_pain/?postversion=2008100909

Virtual High School Study Commission

The Virtual High School Study Commission, created by the Pennsylvania General Assembly in Act 61 of 2008, recently met to identify key issues it will address as part of its charge to examine the feasibility and costs associated with creating a state-operated, Internet-based high school. The Commission will organize itself into six subcommittees to address issues related to: technology; governance; funding; accountability; articulation; and curriculum, instruction and assessment. Additionally, the legislature requested that the Commission review current research about and models for delivering virtual

education, current state initiatives that could be integrated into a virtual curriculum (such as STEM and World Language instruction), and that the Commission gather input from students. The Commission must report its findings and recommendations by December 31, 2009.

Alliance for Excellent Education

Recently, the **Alliance for Excellent Education** published the report “[From No Child Left Behind to Every Child a Graduate.](#)” This report outlines the Alliance’s Framework for Action to Improve Secondary Schools, which is built upon consensus among educators, researchers, policymakers and other authorities on the specific problems of secondary schools as well as the research and best-practice solutions. The report identifies seven policy areas (alignment and rigor, accountability, student supports and options, highly effective educators, supportive communities, college access, and investment) that are necessary to provide a comprehensive and systemic approach to improving secondary schools and achieving national objectives.

Act 1 Index for 2009-2010 - REMINDER

School districts may not increase taxes by more than 4.1% for FY 2009-2010 unless a higher increase is approved by voters, based on the new **Act 1 index** released by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Property tax reform legislation enacted in 2006 limits annual school tax increases to this index – which represents the average of the percentage increase in the statewide average weekly wage and the Employment Cost Index – unless the increase is needed to fund certain identified costs over which school districts have no control.

Environmental Education Grants

The **Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection** (DEP) is now accepting applications for **2009 environmental education grants**. DEP encourages schools, universities, intermediate units, non-profit groups and community conservation districts to apply for the funds to support programs and projects that increase environmental awareness and understanding. [Click here](#) for more information.

Upcoming Events

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| November 7, 2008 | Western Region PACTA Meeting
The Chadwick Meeting and Banquet Facility
One Wexford Square, Wexford PA |
| November 12 – 14, 2008 | Pennsylvania Department of Education
Integrated Learning: The School-to-Career Connection
The Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel
State College, PA |
| November 21, 2008 | Central Region PACTA Meeting
Huntingdon County CTC |

December 4-6, 2008

Association for Career and Technical Education
National Convention
Charlotte, North Carolina