



PENFIELD EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
United in Excellence

The Broadside

November, 2013

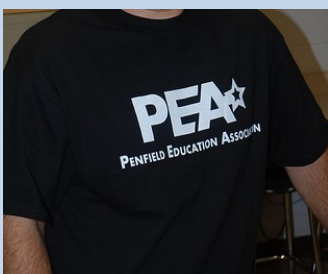
SRP Special Edition

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Reminder!

- ◆ PEA Members should wear their black PEA shirts on **Tuesday, November 19th** to show our appreciation of SRPs



A Message from the PEA President

Please join us in recognizing Penfield School Related Professionals on Tuesday, November 19th, the State recognized day to honor SRPs. SRP Recognition Day acknowledges the contributions of School-Related Professionals in helping to educate the whole student. Penfield SRPs perform a variety of key roles in our schools: working as bus drivers, school nurses, custodians, secretaries, food service workers, teaching assistants, security workers, paraprofessionals, aides and in dozens of other job titles.

SRP Recognition Day was officially established as law in NYS in 2007 and falls on the third Tuesday of each November, often during American Education Week.

We created this Special Edition of the Broadside to honor these amazing people who help meet the needs our students. We also hope that this edition serves to help educate PEA members about day-to-day workplace struggles SRPs face and the things that they do. To continue the celebration on the 19th, PEA members are encouraged to wear their black PEA shirts and SRP Day Recognition stickers. We will be hosting a special SRP Recognition Day celebration in each building so that we can say “thank you” to our SRPs in person.

We know that in each of our buildings we often celebrate these hidden heroes throughout the year but please join the Penfield Education Association in saying a special “thank you” to every SRP you see on November 19th.

Penfield SRPs, we thank you for all you do!

Sincerely,

Sonia

Sonia Basko, PEA President



About This Issue

This being my 14th year in Penfield, I really felt I had a handle on the contributions that others made to our educational “machine” before working on this issue. I was wrong.

Reaching out to the various SRP groups helped open

my eyes to not only the obstacles they overcome but also the joy they find in their day-to-day routines.

I greatly appreciate the time each SRP spent to help me see the big picture view of what they bring to the table.

In this edition, I endeav-

ored to honor the immense impact of each SRP group. PEA members couldn't do what we do without you!

Sincerely,

Sue Mietus
Broadside Editor

SRP RECOGNITION DAY TUESDAY, NOV. 19, 2013

**School-Related Professionals work side-by-side
as partners in the education of our children**

- bus drivers safely transport to and from school
- secretaries keep records
- teaching assistants help educate
- teacher aides assist with care
- nurses keep students healthy
- cafeteria staff feed students
- custodians keep the school clean
- maintenance staff keeps it all running
- security keeps everyone safe



*Thank you
SRPs!*

Sherry Peets, President, Penfield Paraprofessional Association

What is the one thing you wish PEA members would understand about your job and your members?

We work very hard. Most of us are scheduled every minute of every day taking only a lunch. We have very little time to digest curriculum but need to be able to help with multiple subjects. Our pay does not reflect our commitment to our jobs nor our work ethic.

What is the biggest struggle you face as a union right now?

To be recognized that we are instructional staff and deserve equal considerations for retirement, sick bank, raises, and other contractual issues.

What can PEA members do to make your jobs easier?

Be observant of what we are doing and know that we are here to complement what you are doing as teachers of Penfield students. Consider us assets in helping you keep struggling students at the same level as the average student. Respect us and the job we do. If there is a problem, please take it up with us instead of going to the administration so we aren't forced to become adversaries.

Sherry works in the PHS Academic Support Center as a Teaching Assistant. She graduated from Wayne Central and has lived in Ontario for most of her life. She has 23 years of experience working in schools, 12 in the PCSD. Her original plan was to become a computer programmer but she traded that in to be a career mother and homemaker. When she did go back to work, public schools fit into her schedule.

She says that she enjoys her job and working with challenging students.

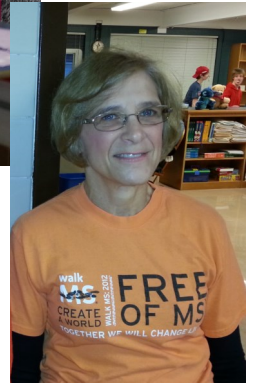
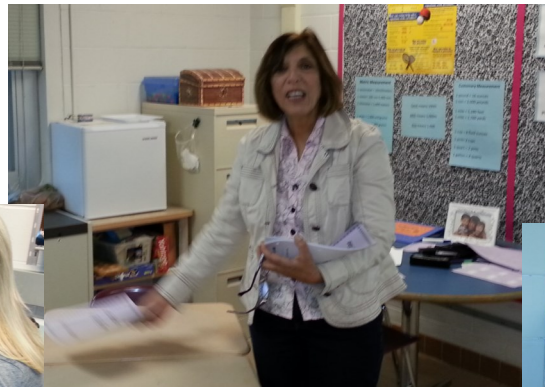
Personally, she is a self-proclaimed computer geek! She loves strategy games and has spent more than 25 years playing Command and Conquer, Starcraft, and Plants vs. Zombies just to name a few. When she's not playing on the computer, she is an avid reader of fiction. She says that as a person she could be classified as a risk taker and she really embraces change at home and at her job.

"I find the students in Penfield to be interesting and wonderful young adults."

PHS Teaching Assistants



Bay Trail Teaching Assistants



Cobbles Teaching Assistants



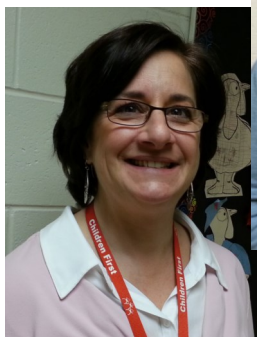
Harris Hill Teaching Assistants



Indian Landing Teaching Assistants



Scribner Teaching Assistants



Darline O'Connor, President of the PAEOP Union

What is the one thing you wish PEA members would understand about your job and your members?

Many of us are working in schools because we enjoy working with children and want to be in this environment. Also, many of us have higher education degrees and have made the choice to be here to support all those aligned with schools including students, teachers, parents, administrators, and the community. We want to help make the school run smoothly.

What is the biggest struggle facing your union right now?

Going into negotiations and trying to keep all the members "whole" while still being fiscally responsible. Trying to keep everyone on the same side and keep the morale of the unit up during negotiations can be challenging.

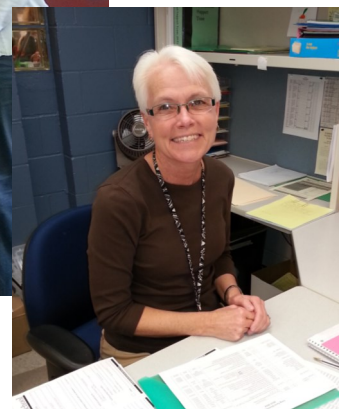
What can PEA members do to make your jobs easier?

By understanding that many of our jobs have also been impacted by changes at the State and District level such as APPR reporting/ documenting, rostering students, data collecting, and the teacher evaluation process moving to OASYS, just to name a few.

Darlene has her MBA from St. John Fisher College. She started her career in the District Media Resource Center at Irondequoit High School in 1987 and was the Principal's secretary when she left in 1998. She has worked at Harris Hill as an Administrative Assistant for the past 15 years.



Bay Trail



Scribner



Harris Hill



Penfield High School



Indian Landing



Cobbles

Brandon Hall, Network Technician

Network Technicians fall under the PAEOP Union but because their job duties are different, we wanted to include this perspective.

What is the one thing you wish PEA members would understand about your job?

As frustrating as it can be, sometimes we are limited by the building's technology infrastructure and the costs involved to implement different systems. In addition, the wireless network is simply less stable than wired connections. Think about it – have you ever experienced a “dropped call” on your landline phone? We try to meet everyone's technology needs, but sometimes it's just not possible.

What is the biggest struggle you face as a group right now?

We face the same issues that all the other groups do. The PAEOP would like a fair contract with equitable pay and benefits.

What can PEA members do to make your jobs easier?

Understand that the easiest way to get help with a technical issue is to put in a Help Ticket on the web. Technicians are dispatched electronically and your issue will be resolved in a timely fashion.



Brandon is one of 6 Network Technicians for the whole District. While most of the techs are housed at PHS, Brandon is housed at Bay Trail and he supports both Bay Trail and Scribner. Originally hired through BOCES, he now works for PCSD. A resident of Penfield, Brandon is keenly invested in quality education for our students. In his spare time, he enjoys participating on a few hockey leagues.

Kathy Harris, Scriber Nurse & Nurse Facilitator for PCSD

A conversation with Kathy Harris, Nurse Facilitator for Penfield Central Schools and the Scriber nurse, isn't complete without at least 2 interruptions from students who need their medicine or are complaining of an upset stomach after drinking too much apple cider. But don't let her calm demeanor fool you. Like all the nurses in our district, she's moving at a hundred miles an hour every day, rapidly transitioning from one task to another.

What is the one thing you wish PEA members would understand about your job and your members?

Did you know that on top of managing the day-to-day medical issues for students, nurses must also keep accurate records in Infinite Campus on every single student in their building? This includes not only allergies and medical conditions, but also records of immunizations, vision, hearing and scoliosis screenings, and physicals. In addition, they log every single visit to their office (on average at Scriber 35 – 40 daily) into Infinite Campus. Last year that translated to about 5,000 visits for Kathy's office at Scriber (school enrollment - approximately 500 students).

A school nurse's role is unique. Not only do they have to serve the students and adults in their buildings, but they also have to communicate with parents, teachers, administrators, kitchen staff, and the school's physician on a regular basis.

What is the biggest struggle facing your union right now?

Newsflash: teachers will all be affected by the State's "Return to Learn After a Concussion" program once it is fully implemented. Children who sustain a concussion will have to be monitored by both the nurse and their teachers at school to ensure that the child can heal with time. A period of "cognitive rest" may be necessary for a child's long-term health. Teachers and nurses will work together with administrators and guidance counselors to come up with an individual plan for students post-concussion.

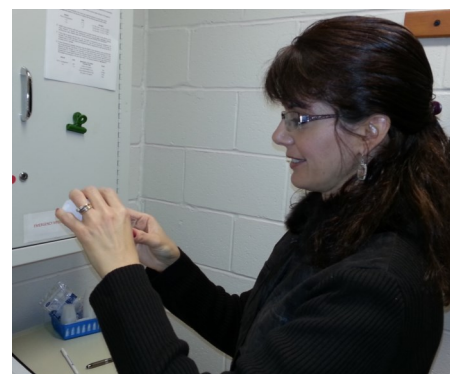
What can PEA members do to make your jobs easier?

We can help our nurses by asking some follow up questions the next time we have a student at our desk asking if they can go to the nurse. We need to realize that the nurse's office is not just for band aides and ice packs but that it operates to perform triage for every person that walks through their door. If we can keep some of the less severe situations out of their office, they can provide nursing care to the more critical ones. In recent years, the district overall has seen a spike in children with more complicated medical issues, such as diabetes, seizures, tube feedings and concussions. That is ultimately where the nurse's focus needs to be.

According to Kathy, the best part of her job at Scriber is being around the students. She says, "The energy of the kids is infectious- it keeps me on my toes." Not only do they rely on her for medical care, but they also develop a rapport with her so that she sometimes finds herself talking with them about non-medical issues. It is making that connection with the students that is so important.

Kathy grew up in Webster and graduated from Niagara University with a BS in Nursing in 1981. She has been married to her husband Tim for 30 years. She has two children, both Penfield graduates: Meaghan, age 27 who just graduated from law school in Boston and Patrick, age 24 who is living in New Jersey and working for NFL Films. There is nothing she likes better than spending time with her extended family or reading a good book on the beach, especially in Cape Cod or Hilton Head.

Kathy (Harris) takes great pride in watching former students become successful in the classroom, field, or stage- all the while recalling what they were like "back in the day" when they were 5!



Susan Cymbal, Bay Trail School Nurse, Dispenses Medication in Her Office



Cathy Underberg, President, Transportation Association



Cathy represents approximately 70 bus drivers, 5 per diem drivers, and 15 bus attendants.

What are some things that PEA members should know about your group?

Bus drivers need to do a lot of things at once. Not only do they have to drive the bus, they also have to watch other motorists who may not stop to yield to students getting on or off the bus. Inside the bus, they have to maintain order and noise levels while still driving safely. Most people don't know that if an accident should occur, the bus driver may be held personally financially liable if they are deemed at fault.

Cathy says "Bus drivers are the first to see kids in the morning and the last to see them in the afternoon. Sometimes students share their concerns and the driver can help them feel better."

When it comes to training, bus drivers need to not only possess a Commercial Driver's License (CDL), but they also must take a re-certification test every 2 years and pass a physical performance test yearly. In addition, they take courses on student behavior and management so they can do their job well. Bus attendants, who are

assigned to selected high-need special education students, must complete a yearly physical performance test and take courses to help them effectively cope with these sometimes medically and/or behaviorally challenged youth.

Each August, we run several kindergarten bus orientation programs called "Strive for 5". The goal of the program is to get students on and off 5 buses so that they become less anxious about riding the bus on the first day of school. At each bus station, the kindergarteners learn the rules they must follow to keep their bus ride safe, the crossing procedure, and the safety drill if they would ever need to evacuate the bus. Cathy says that the program has completely eliminated crying Kindergarteners on their first actual bus ride.

What challenges are you facing now as a group?

We too are negotiating our contract this year and deserve fair pay and medical benefits.



When the District went to full-day Kindergarten, bus drivers lost income due to the fewer number of bus runs. Only about 5 drivers out of 70 come close to working 40 hours per week.

What can PEA members do to make your jobs easier?

If there are behavior issues that you may feel would overflow onto the bus, please notify us by calling the bus garage. If we know what to expect, we can be proactive about interventions.





Les Doherty, President, Penfield Support Staff

The PSSA includes the following groups: Bus Mechanics, Building Mechanics, Cleaners, Custodians, Couriers, Ground Maintenance, Head Custodians, and Painters.

What are some things you wish PEA members would understand about your job and your members?

Our primary goal is to get school ready for opening day and that timeframe may not be when you need a classroom or a hallway ready. Please understand that even though you may have a particular need, we have to look at the building as a whole.

In addition, everyone in our department has daily responsibilities that must be carried out and we don't have a lot of time for special projects. Not only do we have our regular routine, but we must also address anything else that comes up during the day. We must also unload and assist with deliveries made to the school such as bulk cafeteria food, new furniture, and new textbooks. With the new Common Core standards, some departments are utilizing new materials and we must handle the old textbook storage and removal.

What is the biggest struggle you face as a union right now?

Just like many of the groups in Penfield, we want a fair contract which reflects inflation while maintaining quality medical insurance.

What can the PEA do to make your jobs easier?

When calling for janitorial assistance, be clear and specific about what is needed for a clean-up (wet mess, bio hazard, etc.) so we can be prepared with the right supplies. In addition, when well-meaning students and teachers launch a new initiative but leave it up to us to implement, there are often unseen additional costs and manpower involved. Talking with us first before moving forward with a special project can save us all time and energy.

Les is the Head Custodian at Harris Hill and has been the President of the PSSA for approximately 15 years. He's been with PCSD a total of 20 years. In his spare time, Les raises Angus beef cattle at his hobby farm in Marion.



Don Schrank, Head Custodian, Bay Trail & Scribner

Kim Girouard, Hall Monitor, Bay Trail

What are some things you wish PEA members would understand about your job and your members?

We are at the front lines of student behavior and often overhear issues brewing that we can take care of quickly. We are always behind the scenes monitoring and supporting the students.

We are less about guarding the building and more about guiding the children. We have many constituents that we must relate to on a daily basis. Not only do we deal with students, but we also interact with coaches, counselors, administrators, teachers, other staff members, and parents.

What is the biggest struggle you face as a group right now?

Because we are not part of any bargaining unit, we have very few benefits. In addition, parents often don't appreciate that we have policies and procedures in place to keep children safe. When parents pick up their kids after school or at the conclusion of a sporting event, the parking lots are sometimes quite harried.

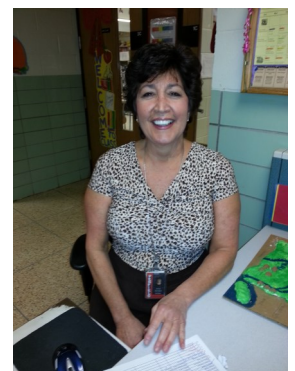
What can PEA members do to make your jobs easier?

If teachers keep track of the students during the school day, it will make our jobs easier when a parent needs to get something to their child.

Kim formerly worked for Delco Products. When her kids were school-aged, she liked the hours as a hall monitor so she could be home with her kids when they got home from school.



Bay Trail



Scribner

Cafeteria Staff

Remember what lunch ladies were like when you grew up? They dished up gruel with something between a smirk and a grimace, daring you to eat the food they'd ladled out of gigantic pots from the walk in coolers. Well, brace yourself. The times have changed.

You won't see even a tiny grimace in our school kitchens in Penfield. And the gruel we remember is long gone. What do we see today? Smiling staff, shining surfaces, fresh food, and menus which are well-balanced. I sat down with Debbie Mack and Shelly Maimone in the Bay Trail Cafeteria to get the facts.



What do you wish PEA members would understand about your job and your members?

We are proud of our work and enjoy our jobs. We endeavor to make the food not only healthy but also appealing when it is served. We have come a long way in the last 2 years since the new nutrition standards went into effect under the guidance of Michelle Obama. Due to this change, we had to completely overhaul our menus to be sure they complied with state and federal requirements. Every child who buys lunch gets a nutritionally complete meal. Food Service in PCSD gets no financial support from taxpayers. It is a self-sustaining entity.



What is the biggest struggle you face as a group right now?

When kids are in line waiting to eat breakfast or lunch, we can't in good conscience close the door on them and not allow them to enter. We understand that teachers and administrators must maintain a schedule but if a child is hungry, they won't be prepared to learn. In addition, the government will be initiating school cafeteria audits in November so we must always be prepared and ready for inspection.

What can PEA members do to make your jobs easier?

Please understand that for \$3.50, you are getting a bargain and that requests for substitutions or extra helpings puts the servers in a difficult position. You can also encourage students to eat breakfast and lunch and post a menu in your classroom.

In Memory Of a Beloved Teaching Assistant...

Kathy Salmon

Kathy passed away in her home on November 4th after a long battle with cancer. She was surrounded and comforted by her family and friends.

Kathy was a Teaching Assistant at both Bay Trail (9 years) and Scribner (7 years). During her time in Penfield, she served as a 1:1 Aide, Resource Room T.A., and a 12:1:1 Aide.

She loved reading and travel (especially to Charleston, SC). She will be sadly missed by her colleagues and friends. She was dedicated and very supportive of her students.

