

It is time again for another successful show of "parent power" here on Staten Island.

The SI Federation of Catholic School Parents will be hosting its Second (Annual?) Legislative Forum on **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2009, at 7:30pm at Monsignor Farrell High School.**

We are working closely once again with Mrs. Zoilita Herrera, Co-Vicars Msgr Finn and Msgr Dorney, Mr. Henry Fortier, Associate Superintendent for Public Policy and Mr. Jim Cultrara, Director for Education for the NYS Catholic Conference.

Once again, this will be a very coordinated effort between our Pastors, Principals and Parents. **BUT THESE ARE ISSUES THAT DIRECTLY IMPACT US AS PARENTS.**

Because of this, the one thing that will again have the most direct influence on the outcome of this Legislative Forum will be the participation (attendance) by our very own parents. As delegates to Federation, we would expect that you make every effort to attend and to garner support within your own schools.

The purpose of the Legislative Forum is to create an opportunity for parents, administrators and teachers to voice our concerns concerning Catholic school legislative priorities. All of our city, state and federal elected officials have been invited to attend.

Last year, prior to the Legislative Forums that were held throughout the state, the reimbursement for state-mandated services was being cut. By the time the forums were held, the cut was up to 12% - with the thought of cutting the reimbursement totally. Because we made our voices heard, our legislators stemmed the cuts to reimbursement.

HOWEVER - the reimbursement for mandates services has NOT been FULLY restored - with the state still owing our schools for prior years.

Added to this is the imposition this year of a secretly-negotiated MTA bailout plan which has imposed a payroll tax on every non-profit organization. This tax is PERMANENT and our schools have already had to make an initial payment on November 2, 2009.

Under the new law, public schools will be reimbursed.

The cost to our schools for non-reimbursed mandated services and the payroll tax will be approximately \$400 per student.

Our schools, no doubt, will find it enormously difficult, if not impossible, to comply with this without possibly cutting programs or reducing expenses in other areas **OR BY PASSING THE BURDEN IMPOSED BY THE STATE ON TO YOU AS PARENTS.** The Diocese of Brooklyn has already communicated such a measure to its parents.

The mission statement of Federation reads "to provide continuing support to the Parent Associations of the Catholic schools on Staten Island in their quest to provide their children with a Catholic education." Albany continues to deal blow after blow to our schools - almost as if in an effort to completely undermine our existence. You as delegates to Federation must communicate with your principal immediately about this forum and coordinate with your principal your school's participation in the form of parent attendance, at the forum.

Keep informed and keep up to date. Check, read and act upon the emails that you will be receiving from Federation within the next few weeks.

Thank you.

Barbara Bortle-Gainey