



CATHOLIC TEACHERS UNION

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From the President

Hello Everyone!

Welcome back to the 2025-26 school year!

An important question that teachers are often asked is, "Why do you teach?" The humorous reply often given is "July and August." Those summer months are now in the past, and I hope that everyone is settling into a new school year that is well underway. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to all of our new faculty members who are joining CTU this year.

Both Paul VI and Holy Spirit are beginning new contracts this September, and Camden Catholic is starting the third year of a four-year contract.

Last June CTU had elections for our executive board, and I look forward to continuing to work with Ben Jones (Executive Vice President), Maureen Simzak (Executive Secretary), Jamie (Bottino) Ruiz (Treasurer), Kelly Ogle (Paul VI Delegate), Scott Higbee (Holy Spirit Delegate), and Bob Moffett (Camden Catholic Delegate) as well as our staff member, Len Cava (Communications Coordinator). We hope to make this a successful year for everyone. I would also be remiss if I failed to acknowledge the important role that all of you play as dedicated teachers in your individual schools and supportive members who strengthen the Catholic Teachers Union each day. Thank you. It would not be possible without all of you.

In closing, I would like to quote the Greek philosopher Aristotle: "Those who know, do. Those that understand, teach." What we do everyday during the school year as educators to help shape our students' understanding of the world cannot be overestimated. I hope everyone has a great school year and we can rest assured knowing that "July and August" will be here soon enough after our work is done.

Best,

Bob Cranston
CTU President



Executive Board

Bob Cranston (CC)
President

Ben Jones (PVI)
Executive Vice
President

Maureen Simzak (PVI)
Executive Secretary

Jamie (Bottino) Ruiz
(PVI) Treasurer

Delegates

Scott Higbee (HS)

Bob Moffett (CC)

Kelly Ogle (PVI)

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Layout/Editor:
Len Cava (PVI)

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From the Executive Vice-President

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome back to a new school year! I hope the summer gave you a chance to rest, recharge, and spend time with those who matter most. As we start this year together, I want to highlight one of the greatest strengths of our union: the benefits we've secured through collective bargaining. These are more than just numbers in a contract—they're real support for our health, our families, and our futures.

All of us can count on comprehensive health coverage, including medical insurance with both EPO and PPO options. Employee contributions are fixed by contract, protecting us from unexpected jumps in premium costs. Dental and vision plans are also part of the package—individual dental coverage is provided at no cost, with family coverage available at a cost. Vision care is also offered through the diocesan program at a cost. Prescription drug coverage is built into our plans with affordable co-pays, and teachers also receive life insurance equal to one and a half times their salary, with the option to purchase more. We're further protected by a long-term disability plan provided by the school.

Retirement security is another cornerstone of our contracts. Each school contributes 5% of our base salary annually to a 403(b) plan, once eligibility is met. For those who have dedicated many years of service, an early retirement incentive is available beginning at age 60 with at least 20 years of service, providing additional support until a teacher reaches Medicare eligibility at age 65. Lastly, in the event of constriction, severance pay is available to ensure members are not left without a safety net.

Our contracts also invest in our personal growth and our families. Teachers can be reimbursed up to \$2,500 annually for graduate or certification credits, helping us strengthen our craft. Families benefit directly as well—

tuition, registration, and fees are fully waived for employees' children attending diocesan or parish high schools. Also, the Section 125 plan (cafeteria plan) provides for the use of pre-tax dollars, a savings for teachers enrolling in dependent care, vision, dental, and other supplemental needs.

While these core benefits apply across all three schools, there are some differences to note. At Paul VI, employee contributions to medical premiums gradually increase from 11.5% to 12.5% over the life of the contract. At Holy Spirit, additional language reinforces continuation of healthcare for early retirees and includes specific severance provisions. At Camden Catholic, the contract explicitly outlines the managed dental and vision plans through the diocese.

These benefits didn't appear on their own—they were won because we stood together as a union. They reflect our collective voice and our shared commitment to making sure teachers are supported in every aspect of their lives, both inside and outside the classroom.

For more information, I encourage you to review your school's full contract, visit the CTU website, or reach out directly to our Diocesan Benefits Representative, Andrea Barcenas, at healthbenefits@camdendiocese.org or by phone at (856) 583-2872.

In solidarity,

Ben Jones
Executive Vice President, CTU

the Lord
is my
Strength
and my
Shield
Psalms 28:7



CATHOLIC TEACHERS UNION

Treasury Report

As of August 2025, CTU is operating with a balance of \$235,524.22 and is in good financial standing. Because of end of the year expenses and the lack of dues in the summer months, we ended this past quarter with a negative net income. As dues are collected this school year and interest rates increase on our investments, we expect to yield a positive net income again. The executive board continues to strive for growth and stability as we begin a new school year.

As always, detailed quarterly financial reports can be found on the CTU membership page. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns. I hope everyone has a great year!

Thank you,

Jamie (Bottino) Ruiz
Treasurer

Report on Schools

Paul VI High School

This fall, Paul VI High School opened its doors to 279 freshmen. With their arrival our school community now totals 1,091 students. We also welcomed an additional six new teachers to bargaining unit positions, as well as a new campus minister and mental health counselor. The latter two positions are not covered by our contract.

We also begin this year under the strength of our new four-year contract. Thank you to everyone who worked on the negotiation team, as well as all the members who provided their input on working conditions leading up to the ratification. One important modification to the contract corrects an area the school had previously neglected to enforce. This affects all teachers hired after September 1, 2021. Teachers will no longer be given tenure at 3 years + 1 day unless they are certified. If a non-tenured teacher chooses not to pursue certification, it could affect his or her employment in the future.

Looking ahead with our efforts to communicate with the school administrators, we will continue through joint committee meetings this year. Anyone with concerns, please relay them to the building delegate or a member of the liaison committee so the issue can be addressed. As the year unfolds, we encourage all members to stay engaged, informed, and connected. Thank you for the role each of you played in this success.

Kelly Ogle
PVI Delegate

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Report of Schools continued

Holy Spirit High School

Spirit opened the school year with 294 students. We graduated 87 seniors last year and enrolled 66 freshmen this year. There were some transfers out and transfers in. We are now at 296 students and expecting a few more transfers to Spirit in the next few weeks.

We unveiled a new schedule this year with one of the goals being increasing the length of the teaching periods and shortening the lunch periods for students. While this was achieved, some adjustments were needed to the teachers' lunch schedule. The activity period from last year was kept but also had some changes. Now called "Forge Time," the period is on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, with much more organization.

Two new teachers joined us this year, Cindy Fussner in the Math department and Jenn Turon in Special Needs.

Also, dance teacher Sharon Festa picked up a third class which enabled her to join CTU under the part-time teacher clause.

Back-to-School-Night on September 18th was a success as parents moved about easily and were very attentive to the teachers who explained the courses taught. There are a few new programs this year at Holy Spirit that are up and running, such as online classes with Rowan University and ACCC, and a few that will be operational soon. We are optimistic about their success.

Goodbye Summer.
Hello Fall.

Scott Higbee
HS Delegate

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Camden Catholic High School

Current total school enrollment at CCHS is 601 students with a freshman class of 158 students.

CCHS teachers are starting their third year of a four-year contract this year.

CCHS would like to welcome the following new faculty members: Mitch McCleery (Full-Time - General Arts Department), Deacon Toby Haiey (Full-Time - Religion Department) and Olivia Haley (Part-Time - Science Department).

Congratulations to Matt Crawford '99 who will be inducted into Camden Catholic's Hall of Fame on Saturday, October 18th. Matt was a standout basketball

player for the Irish and is currently a science teacher as well as the head coach for the Boys Varsity Basketball Team at CCHS.

CCHS Open House is scheduled for Thursday, October 23rd at 6:30 p.m.

CCHS welcomes James Hozier as its new President for the 2025-2026 school year.

Bob Cranston
President

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