

# Dissident Is Elected President of Teachers Union in Pr. George's

By Leon Wynter

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Prince George's County teachers have elected a dissident Fairmont Heights High School history teacher to head their 6,000-member union.

Results announced yesterday showed that Paul Pinsky defeated four other candidates in last week's vote, including a protege of John Sisson, the outgoing two-term president of the Prince George's Educators Association.

Sisson, who was prohibited from seeking a third term, was defeated by Ginny Beauchamp in a bid to become vice president.

Pinsky, 33, is a leader of the Bottom Line Caucus, an informal teacher group that spearheaded a "sickout" two years ago during negotiations of the current contract, which expires in June.

The Bottom Line caucus captured a majority of the 11-member executive board, according to union insiders.

Pinsky said that he and other successful candidates for the board tapped "progressive forces" among the teachers. He said his goal was to work to strengthen the beleaguered union "at the grass roots."

Pinsky was a member of the American Federation of Teachers, an affiliate of the AFL-CIO, before joining the PGEA, which belongs to the National Education Association, about five years ago.

The caucus, which was formed in 1980, organized a 250-car caravan that drove around the home of then-school board president JoAnn Bell during the 1981 contract negotiation, an action that was out of char-

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acter with previous mild protests by teachers and one that outraged school administration officials.

School spokesman Brian J. Porter said he wished Pinsky well and "looked forward to a good working relationship."

The teachers, who constitute the largest public employe union in the county, have suffered a string of political defeats recently. Budget cuts forced the layoff of 507 of their number last June and there is no provision budgeted for a cost-of-living increase in the contract currently under negotiation.

"We can only be a strong organization if we're not seen as a paper tiger—and that's how some politi-

cians have seen us," said Pinsky, whose two-year term will begin July 1, after the results are certified under the union election procedure.

"Maybe it's what teachers want," said Jeanette Gordy, who was supported by Sisson and finished second in voting for president.

Gordy, who was seeking to become the first woman to head the predominantly female union in 30 years and its first black officer, said she will challenge the results, in which she was beaten by Pinsky 1,371 to 797, because of "irregularities."

Gordy said Pinsky's election meant that "there might be some teachers on strike by this fall," but Pinsky denied the charge.

"There will be a teachers' strike when the teachers think things are

bad enough—I don't foresee that in the near future," Pinsky said.

An eight-year teacher in the county, Pinsky also coached the Fairmont Heights basketball team to the state title in 1981. He said he gave up coaching after that year to devote more time to union activity. Pinsky, a casual dresser in contrast to the natty Sisson, said he had no plans to change his style.

"I do have a couple of suits, though some people don't believe it," Pinsky said. "I dress like teachers; most of us can't afford suits," he added.