

April 2011

Colorado Springs
Education Association
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Love Your MA (Master Agreement)

Article X.A.2.d
Leaving the Building
The Master Agreement states that: "Teachers have the right to leave the school during the duty-free lunch period, except in the case of an emergency when teachers may be asked to remain in the building."

Additionally: "Teachers may leave the school during the preparation, planning or conference periods upon prior notice to the principal or designee if their duties would be better served than by remaining at school. Teachers may be asked to sign in and out at any time during the normal work day."

Many of you are getting supplies for your classrooms during the work day because of this valuable teacher right. Please be courteous and give notice if you leave school.

**The purpose of
education is to replace
an empty mind with an
open one.**

Malcolm S. Forbes
submitted by Jill May

Member Connection

TAP Conference Reflections

By Kevin Vick

There is a new teaching program, TAP, coming to District 11. The TAP program was founded by Lowell Milken, an investment banker turned education philanthropist. Originally called the "Teacher Advancement Program," TAP now stands for "The System for Teacher and Student Advancement." This program has secured grant awards of more than \$300 million through the U.S. Government's Teacher Incentive Fund. Our District has received a \$15 million grant from this very fund in order to implement TAP.

During March 11-13, a delegation from District 11 participated in the 11th Annual TAP Conference, held in Los Angeles. I was not quite sure what to expect from this conference even though I had been in on many conversations about TAP as a member of the District TAP Steering Committee. What I found over the course of the three days was part sales pitch and part useful information for teachers starting this program.

The sales pitch came in the form of large conference sessions where different education experts and representatives of TAP would hold heavily scripted panel discussions on the state of education. These panels would go on about how current education systems are failing and how TAP is the answer. While informative, these panels were not what I found useful at this conference.

The useful part came in the form of the many breakout sessions the conference had to offer. At these sessions, teachers and principals who were actually working with the TAP program gave advice on implementation and management. At these sessions, we received more explicit details about the daily life of a TAP school, how observations are managed, and what qualities best reflect a "master" and "mentor" teacher.

The first impression I had at all of these sessions was that the first year of implementation was the most challenging. TAP requires two things: scheduling and a culture shift in the school. TAP is very time intensive in terms of the observation numbers and the preparation for the discussions about what is observed. When starting the program, the biggest stumbling block schools had was allowing other events to creep into the established observation schedule. The most poignant statement I heard all conference was, "TAP is not a part of your school, TAP IS YOUR SCHOOL."

Another notable piece from the conference centered on the selection of "Master" teachers. It was advised that the best candidates for this position generally are not the ones who are the "best" teachers. They are the ones who can breakdown the elements and process of teaching. They then are able to communicate and articulate these processes to their fellow teachers. Being able to constructively discuss a critique of a colleagues' teaching is a very delicate skill that needs to be considered so the post-observation process is fruitful for the classroom teacher and not destructive.

In general, the reflection I most want to share is about the chance to view this program as an attempt to begin needed changes in our own current observation/evaluation system. TAP offers a chance to shift from a punitive model of observation, where teachers potentially dread the visit from their supervisor, to a coaching model where teachers can learn from each other in an organized and focused manner. TAP will be challenging in these first years, but hopefully will bear fruit as people become more experienced with the observation methods.

Leadership Spotlight

Bruce Cole, Co-Chair CSEA Bargaining Team

I have been a member of CSEA since 2007, when I made a career change to become a teacher. I teach Business and Marketing at Mitchell. I recently completed my M.A. in Educational Leadership, hold an M.S. in Organization Development and a B.S. in Business/Economics. Prior to teaching, I was a management consultant for non-profit organizations working specifically with “at-risk” youth. I have also been the Executive Director for two similar organizations. Though my career path to become a teacher was the “long way around,” my membership with CSEA was immediate upon being hired by District 11.



I have found my relationship with CSEA to be very rewarding. Personally, my political views on many issues are diametrically opposed to those of CSEA, CEA, and the NEA. However, what I have found through my involvement is an opportunity to be a voice for many of our members who may feel unrepresented within our organization. I had the opportunity to travel to Washington D.C. as a representative to the NEA Republican Leadership Conference, and found out that approximately 1,000,000, or one third of all NEA members, are affiliated with the Republican Party. Within our local organization I have found total acceptance from my fellow members and a respect for a differing opinion amongst leaders.

I became a member of Bargaining Team three years ago because I wanted to find a way to use my skills and education to better understand how the educational system works. I was at the table my first year and have been Co-Chair for the past two years. Though the hours are long and sometimes tedious, I have loved representing our teachers at the bargaining table. I have learned so much in a short time. The camaraderie of bargaining has developed friendships that I believe will last for the rest of my life. I have served on the Alternative Compensation Committee, Joint Council, District Lesson Plan Committee and the Discipline Committee. I have been a delegate to Delegate Assembly for three years and I am working with CEA to establish a Republican members’ organization in Colorado.

I would like to encourage my fellow teachers whose views may be different than the majority to get involved with CSEA. You have the choice to “light a candle or curse the darkness.” It is truly a pleasure to serve the members of CSEA.

Non-Renewal Notice Update

“Your contract is not being renewed.”

These are among the worst words a teacher can hear. Unfortunately, with today’s budget situation, these words are being said far too often. To those of you who have received this notice, we have information that may answer some of your questions.

State law requires School Boards to give probationary teachers whom they intend to non-renew a written notice of non-renewal by June 1. This must be a written notice from the School Board, not from the principal, the Superintendent or anyone else in the District, and it must indicate that the Board of Education voted at a public meeting to non-renew the teacher’s contract. Many of you have already received the intent to non-renew letter.

A principal’s or Superintendent’s recommendation is not binding on the School Board. If the Board does not act officially and in writing, the teacher is still employed.

If you or someone you know is non-renewed, determine whether there is any argument that he or she is, in fact, not a probationary teacher, but a non-probationary teacher. This sometimes comes up if a teacher has been employed in the District for four years, but the District contends that one of the years did not qualify toward non-probationary status for some reason.

A probationary teacher who anticipates a non-renewal should get letters of support from colleagues, parents, and others – and get them now and not wait to receive the notice from the School Board. There is no legal basis in Colorado for challenging a non-renewal unless there is evidence that the decision to non-renew was based on unlawful discrimination.

Sometimes the District will ask a teacher to resign “voluntarily” rather than be non-renewed. The advantage of a resignation is it will not reflect on future job or license applications that the teacher has been non-renewed. The potential consequence of resigning is that the teacher may not be eligible for unemployment compensation. District 11, however, has an agreement with CSEA that non-renewals due to staffing decisions will be eligible for unemployment. A teacher should immediately apply for unemployment compensation to bridge the gap until another teaching job can be found. Unless you specify to Human Resources a different ending date for your contract, your pay and benefits will continue until August 1st.

Please contact CSEA at csea@coloradoea.org or 471.1190 if you have additional questions.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Every year at the CEA Delegate Assembly, CEA honors members selected to receive awards for their outstanding contributions to public education and our Association. CSEA members **Diane Ciccarelli, The Bijou School and Palmer Night School, and Clint Knox, North Middle School**, have been honored with two of CEA's highest awards this year.

Diane Ciccarelli, The Mickelsen Award

This award recognizes an Association member or group of members for outstanding service to education through collective bargaining. It honors those who have been deeply involved in our Association's representation of education employees through collective bargaining. Mel Mickelsen was one of the co-founders of CSEA and later went on to serve as the CEA Director of Bargaining.

Diane has given generously to CSEA during her years with District 11. She has served in many leadership roles, but it is her dedication to bargaining which earned her the Mickelsen Diamond Award. Diane's contributions to CSEA are best reflected by excerpts from testimonials written on her behalf. A few of those excerpts are:

"I have always been awed by her command, expertise, professionalism, and preparedness while always keeping an eye on the ball. Diane is the epitome of what a bargainer is and should be." Kevin Marshall, CSEA President

"When I think of Diane I think of a fierce protector. She is unswerving in her commitment to stand for those who can't or are afraid to stand for themselves. Her vast experience has made her an expert in virtually all elements of K-12 education and a formidable asset to CSEA." Tim Cross, UniServ Director

"She has marshaled our Association through several major crisis, including strike threats, School Board recalls and budget cuts." Kevin Vick, CSEA Vice President and Bargaining Co-Chair

"Through her longevity on the CSEA team, she has developed a level of respect and integrity among the membership and the administration that has been instrumental in building understanding and support for difficult negotiations compromises." Dan Daly, past UniServ Director

"Diane's many years as an active team member have resulted in a collective bargaining agreement that serves as a model for our state. Diane is not only giving of her time and effort to the Colorado Springs Education Association, but has made tremendous effort to provide support for other locals throughout the state in times of need." Lynn Lange, UniServ Director, Northern Colorado

Diane has consistently contributed to the CSEA through her leadership and commitment to members' increased protections and benefits through her work on the CSEA Bargaining Team." David DiCocco, CSEA Retired

"Simply put, I cannot imagine a more qualified person for this award." Tom Watson, CSEA Bargaining Team

"She focused on what was best for students, the classroom environment, and the teachers. She never wavered from campaigning for teachers' rights and equity in compensation." Jill May, CSEA Bargaining Team

"I can think of no better ambassador to follow in Mel Mickelsen's foot steps in our Association's work for collective Bargaining." Michael Coughlin, past CSEA President

"She is passionate about her Association, and will defend members and their rights with every ounce of that passion. Diane Ciccarelli embodies the spirit Mel Mickelsen planted in CSEA." Denise Brown, CSEA Office Manager

Diane, thank you for everything you have done for our Association and our members.

Clint Knox, The Johnson Memorial Scholarship

This scholarship recognizes a member committed to improving his or her professional skills. It is named for Dr. Robert H. Johnson, Jr., former Executive Director of CEA. The \$1,500 scholarship is given each year in his memory from a fund administered by the CEA Board of Directors.

Clint is in his third year of teaching history at North, is completing his Masters of Arts in Teaching at Colorado College, and is a National Board Certified candidate. He's been involved in our Association since his first year of teaching. He has served as an AR, on the Bargaining Team and on the CSEA Board of Directors. He has represented us at several conferences, and has a deep commitment to his students, District 11, and public education.

In his nomination, Clint stated, "I hope to continue to advance my skills as a teacher through continuing education. The Johnson Memorial Scholarship will help make this happen." He indicated that he hopes to demonstrate to his students, first hand, that it is possible to obtain scholarships and grants to help them in their academic goals. One of his goals in public education is to help students achieve to their greatest potential and be an instrument of change in public education, and another is to help transform the profession of teaching into a respected one. He is looking forward to May of 2013, when he will watch the first group of students he has taught walk across the graduation stage at the end of their senior year.

Congratulations, Clint, for being selected to receive this scholarship award. It is well-deserved!



to the winners of the 2011 CSEA Scholarship for Prospective Educators!

Our Scholarship Committee (**Diana Beatty, Chair, Coronado, Lori Duffy, Trailblazer, and Jan Rennie, Wasson**) met recently to review the applications from a pool of very qualified District 11 high school seniors intending to enter the teaching profession. The committee decided upon two outstanding students and has awarded each of them \$1,000 to help with their college expenses.

Allyssa Hinkle is a student at **Doherty** who has taken two years of Teacher Cadet training and has also already taken Educational Psychology at UCCS. She wants to be a secondary science teacher.

Stephanie Kring is a student at **Wasson** and is in Teacher Cadet training and a service learning program. She has taken Early Childhood Education. She plans to teach elementary school.

If you are interested in serving on next year's CSEA Scholarship Committee, please let us know at 471.1190 or csea@coloradoea.org.

Fuel Costs Got You Down? Use Your CSEA Access Member Benefit to Save \$\$\$\$

Did you know you can use your CSEA Access Member Benefit program to help offset (even if only a bit!) the rising costs of fuel? Here are a few of the things we learned recently by exploring the Access website:

Keep your engine properly tuned for maximum fuel economy. A car noticeably out of tune wastes fuel, and fixing such problems can improve your mileage significantly. Use your Access member benefit to keep your car in top condition. Save \$20 off maintenance and repair services at Pep Boys! (\$100 minimum, online coupon required.)

Keep your tires properly inflated, and you'll boost your mileage efficiency. Members can save 15% off selected tires and service at Firestone Complete Auto Care Centers.

Use the right motor oil, and keep it fresh. Using the recommended grade of motor oil can improve your mileage 1-2% annually. Members can enjoy \$5 off a full service oil change at Valvoline Instant Oil Change service centers.

Learn more ways to use your Member Benefit program to save money by visiting www.cseateacher.org and clicking on the link on the left side of the home page.

Let us know how **you** have saved money with your Access member benefit. If we use your hint in the newsletter, we'll send you a Starbucks gift card!

CSEA Happenings

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| April 28-30 | CEA Delegate Assembly, Denver Marriott |
| May 11/18 | District 11 School Board Meetings
Possible ratification of negotiated collective bargaining agreement |
| May 17 | CSEA Volunteer Banquet
5:30; Giuseppe's Depot |

NEA Member Benefits Is Giving Away \$2,000 A Month!

Every month from now through August, a lucky NEA member will win \$2,000 to further educational pursuits.



NEA Member Benefits has teamed up with Sallie Mae, provider of the NEA Smart Option Student Loan, to offer NEA members a chance to win \$2,000 cash! It's their way of rewarding you for your dedication and helping you further your own educational pursuits. If you're one of the lucky \$2,000 winners, you could choose to fund professional development courses for yourself, cover some of your expenses toward National Board Certification, or even help a family member with their college tuition!

Don't wait until next month. Learn more and sign up now at www.neamb.com.

Works 4 Me: Practical Tips from Teachers Like You: Susan Wraspir, middle school teacher Auburn, Washington

There is research indicating that instrumental music truly helps students learn. However, anything with lyrics tends to pull us out of that receptive, creative, super cognition mode. I have found that movie sound tracks are a great way to use music in my classroom. My students love the sound tracks for Braveheart, Lord of the Rings, and Star Wars - The Phantom Menace. I will play the sound track for The Little Mermaid or Lilo & Stitch when we need an energy pick up. I would recommend anything by John Williams. When I have after school detention, I sometimes play a little hardball with these darlings! I'll put on a CD of Strauss waltzes or even opera! I strongly recommend using music in your classroom; the power and emotions it evokes will truly benefit your students.