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## **Love Your MA (Master Agreement)**

Article VI.A.5. states that during negotiations both parties agree to negotiate in good faith. Good faith bargaining requires intent to bargain with open minds and a view to reach an agreement.

Article IX.A.1. states that from the first day of work, a teacher has 11 days of paid leave to use for the balance of the year. Days are not accumulated as the year goes on. Teachers have them from day one.

**"Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today."  
Malcom X**

(Submitted by  
Jeanne Williams)

# Member Connection

## **Negotiations: Open or Closed?**

**By Tim Cross, CSEA UniServ Director**

As many of you are aware, recently there has been energy in the press about contract negotiations between CSEA and District 11 being opened to the public. One special interest group in particular is raising this issue as a question of transparency. The thrust of their issue is a financial one: since taxpayers are paying for public education, they should be able to see decisions being made as to how that money is spent. The Master Agreement (Article VI.A.7.) provides that contract negotiations be closed to the public. The core question that some people have is, "Why is that the case?"

As is true with contract negotiations of any sort, only the parties to the contract are privy to the detailed discussions that take place in determining the end agreement. This is because, legally, only the parties bound by the terms of the contract can engage in determining the terms of the agreement. This special interest group is pressing the District to breach a contract it has signed, and outside parties, as well as the general public, don't have the in-depth knowledge or understanding of all the issues or intricacies that go into making educational decisions. With contract negotiations taking hundreds of hours and weeks of discussions regarding issues educators understand best, no outside party could fully understand what was going on unless they were present at every single discussion session.

Allowing outside parties access to bargaining sessions would open the doors for the same type of political posturing we've witnessed recently in the media. Political posturing can end up dominating the discussion and the emphasis begins to be less on outcomes and more on public posturing. The more that negotiations become subject to outside scrutiny, the more it can distract teachers from their work in the classroom, which ultimately impacts students.

In addition, it requires specific examples to inform each negotiation team of what is working and what is not working in the Master Agreement. If an individual in a session states that there is a specific concern and the school name is attached to it in a public forum, an array of issues spill from that. First, a teacher who has said something that might be considered critical of a school could be targeted by an upset administrator. Second, if a school or administrator is cast in a bad light by someone in negotiations, the public might form opinions based upon only a partial snapshot of the situation and not complete information. Third, confidence in the public school system is undermined if only a snapshot of a criticism is taken from a negotiations session. The issues being discussed at the bargaining table are too complex to have anyone from the public, or the media, attend only parts of the conversations and think that they understand the whole of the issue... and then attempt to inform others as to whether they should have confidence in the bargaining process.

The end contract has always been and will continue to be available to anyone who cares to see it, which indeed provides taxpayers full transparency and information on how and where their tax dollars are spent in public education. And, as always, every teacher has full access to the contract as well as the ability to contact Bargaining Team members with questions or concerns they would like to have raised during the negotiation process. The public is welcome to view the results of the bargaining process. The contract can be found at [www.cseateacher.org](http://www.cseateacher.org). We are always happy to clarify or explain any part of the contract and how it's negotiated with teachers or anyone who calls.

Our goal is to make sure that teachers are getting what they need, with the money that is available, in order to provide the best care and education possible to our kids.

## Leadership Spotlight

### Kevin Vick, Vice President CSEA Board of Directors

I've been a Social Studies teacher at Doherty High School, and a member of CSEA since 2001. My early years in District 11 were typical, learning the ropes, and gaining the experience necessary to be an effective professional educator. In 2006, I became department chairperson. Currently, I teach Government, Constitutional and Criminal Law, and Sociology.



My CSEA experience has taken a similar path to my teaching career. Although a member, my early career was not marked by any involvement beyond the occasional attendance at the Exchange of Proposals. Then in 2008, I jumped into Association business by becoming a backup Bargaining Team member. This involvement led me to become an AR for Doherty the next year. The budget experience gained from my initial bargaining training led me to several other District committees. I have served on the Alternative Compensation, Lesson Plan, and Budget Reduction Committees, and the DAC Subcommittee on the Budget.

I am currently serving my first year as Vice-President of CSEA. I am also Co-Chair of CSEA's Bargaining Team, and your representative on the CEA Board.

### Kevin Marshall, President CSEA Board of Directors

I have been a part of School District 11 for pretty much my entire life. For my elementary school years I attended Mark Twain (back when dinosaurs still roamed), junior high at Irving, and graduated from Mitchell High School.



After college and a stint in restaurant management I started teaching in District 11 at my old junior high school, Irving. I taught there for 18 years then moved over to Tesla Middle School for three years. I transferred to Mann Middle School for one year before becoming President of CSEA.

Both my wife and my brother are teachers in District 11. My two sons and my brother are also Mitchell High School graduates.

Throughout my years in the classroom, I have been involved with CSEA, as an Association member, an Association Representative (in all three buildings), a member of the Bargaining Team, a delegate to CEA Delegate Assembly, a representative to NEA Representative Assembly, by attending Leadership trainings and workshops, serving on CEA committees, and as President.

It has been an honor to serve as your President for the last four years.

## Celebrating CSEA STAR ARs

By Vanessa R. Leiker, Membership Chair

Association Representatives serve a very important role in our professional education Association. They are the primary link between leadership and members, sharing local, state, and national information that affects members and their teaching responsibilities daily. ARs help strengthen Association membership by contacting each member at the beginning of the year, as well as new employees and potential members. When important information needs to be shared quickly, ARs get the job done by holding a meeting so all can be informed and organized if needed. Being an AR is a complicated job that sometimes seems unappreciated. Our ARs are the "A" and the "R" in CSEA's heARt and we are thankful for their leadership and the service they provide for our members.



The Membership Committee has created a STAR AR recognition program to publicly and personally recognize ARs who go above and beyond their duties and responsibilities and to let them know how appreciated they are. The following ARs have been selected so far this year: **Kevin Coughlin** and **Jeanne Williams** (Hunt), **Lynn Davis** (Palmer Night), **Kelsey Scheurman** (Freedom), **Anastasia Campbell** (Tesla), **Cherry Fenczik** (Taylor), **Joe Schott** (Doherty), **Ryan Ten Brink** (Galileo), and **Natalie Sardi** (Buena Vista).

These outstanding ARs were chosen because of exceptional service to the Association and their members. Their activities have ranged from helping with political action events, assisting the Membership Committee with sorting and distributing membership materials and Master Agreements, recruiting new members, being strong advocates for members they represent, keeping members more informed and involved, and displaying other strong leadership qualities.

We welcome hearing from any member about exceptional ARs who deserve special recognition. Please thank your AR for stepping up and being the link that keeps our Association strong. Elections for next year's ARs will be taking place this spring and every school needs representation.

*Will you be the next STAR AR?*

## Why I Belong

By Anastasia Campbell

All air escaped my lungs. I struggled to breathe. Collapsed in memory, I sifted through my life, analyzing every word, every action. What had I possibly done to warrant such destruction? A few seconds later a man I recognized as the CSEA Director, carrying ease upon his shoulders, sat across from me with a sense of calm. He listened, nodded, and spoke with confidence. Fear and confusion consumed my thoughts. Thick, black, heavy smoke outlined my presence as I shifted my identity, my set of keys, over to the powers that be.

*“An accusation has been made.”*

The words floated in the room, circling, waiting for their chance to unleash reality. The syllables tumbled into vowels and consonants and crashed into the space around me like golf-ball-sized hail impaling my spirit, breaking the skin. Who? “What...what could I possibly have done?” Murky water began to engulf the conference room as thoughts flooded my brain, and I began to drown. The representative from the Human Resources office and my principal rose to a tune they have sung before, and they closed the door to what I thought was my life. The voice of Tim Cross, our CSEA UniServ Director, impaled the doubt and began to unfold the layers of complexity as he offered me a life preserver. He would do the research and get to the bottom of this. “Are you a member of CSEA?” My heart dropped at the memory of a fellow teacher and I who had signed the disenrollment paperwork five months prior. When asked the reason for my leaving, my hand scribbled, “Financial!” “No,” I responded. He paused. I waited.

“Okay,” he declared, and out of concern for doing what was right, as well as protecting not only teachers, but the foundation of education, Tim did research to discover the third party claim was made with less than good intent. With knowledge, guidance, discretion and intuition, he resolved the matter shortly, and I was back in the classroom where I belonged. The other “teachers’ union” I had joined in place of CSEA with the assurance of comfort and protection never came with a raft. At what cost? The savings of forty dollars a month offered no flotation devices, oars, or guide to help me navigate through the tumultuous raging waves. I was a grain of sand on a beach in their eyes, being swept away by the current of a system that without the guidance, security, and peace of mind that our strong CSEA offers, we would all be lost at sea.

Although we are our own captains, I realized that each one of us needs a compass, whether one is new to education or a seasoned veteran. I rejoined the CSEA family last year, and I am grateful for the guidance our union offers. I cannot imagine plotting my course without their direction and support.

## Not A Member Yet?

### Consider A Free Five Month Trial!

Is saving money a priority for you? Our priority is supporting members in their personal and professional lives. That’s our job, in addition to keeping the promise of a quality public education for every student. With 3.2 million members nationwide, our Association has the consumer power to get deep discounts for our members on products from insurance to shopping opportunities.

With our Early Enrollment program, you’ll be able to take advantage of some of these discounts if you join now. ***This program is available only to potential members who are joining the Association for the first time.***

The program allows prospective members to join now and try out some of our benefits without charge for five months. There are no payments until September 2011. Early Enrollees receive these NEA Member Benefits:

- Educators Employment Liability Insurance
- Auto and Home Insurance
- Credit Card Program
- Car Rental Program
- Term Life Insurance
- Magazine Services
- AD&D Insurance

Contact CSEA at 471.1190 or see your building’s Association Representative for additional information and enrollment forms.

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## Use Your CSEA Member Benefit Access Card For Discounts On Food And Fun!

*How about these great deals for lunch or dinner?*

- Subway: Free six inch sub with purchase of same of equal or greater value.
- Dominos: Buy any large pizza at menu price and get a second large pizza of equal or lesser value for free when you order online!
- Sonic: Free extra long cheese coney with purchase of same.
- Del Taco: Free Chicken Soft Taco with purchase of same at regular price.

*Need something to do?*

- The Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center: Free admission with purchase of same.
  - Peak Bowl: Free two games with purchase of game.
  - 7 Falls: Free admission with purchase of same.
  - Garden of the Gods Visitor & Nature Center: Free theater pass with purchase of same.
  - Miramont Castle: Free admission with purchase of same.
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## Sharon Milito Is A Big Winner!

Congratulations to CSEA member **Sharon Milito**, (Henry), for being named the 2011 American Association of Petroleum Geologists' Earth Science Teacher of the Year!

Sharon received a \$5,000 prize that will be split into two parts: half is designated for her personal use, and half goes to Patrick Henry Elementary School for educational use under her supervision.

She also will receive an all-expense paid trip to the AAPG Annual Convention and Exhibition in Houston in April, where she will be presented with her award at the All-Convention Luncheon.

## Rotary Club Diamond Award Winners

The Colorado Springs Rotary Club recently announced Diamond Award winners and we are pleased to share with our readers that both of the recipients are CSEA members! **Joan Keating**, Wasson, and **Susan Massa**, Tesla, were honored at a recent Club luncheon and meeting. Nominations for this award are made by students, and the awards are presented several times throughout the year. Recipients receive a variety of gifts as well as a cash gift from the Club. Congratulations to **Joan** and **Susan**!

## 100% TELL Survey Participation

Congratulations to the staff at our schools with 100% participation in the TELL survey! We especially thank their ARs for encouraging all staff to participate. Let's hear a hearty round of applause for Achieve K-12, Audubon, Columbia, Freedom, Madison, Martinez, Steele, and Trailblazer.

CSEA will be hosting lunch for the staff in these schools. We appreciate the effort put forth by the staff in these buildings to making an impact on the future of education in Colorado.

Penrose Elementary was one of the schools winning \$500 from CEA in a drawing from a pool of schools with a higher than 50% participation rate.

As a District, we outperformed the average state participation by over 12%, with 59.28% of our educators completing the survey. Many of our schools had greater than 50% participation in the survey. Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey. You will be heard and will make a difference!

## CSEA Happenings

- April 7 CSEA Delegate Assembly Boot Camp  
4:30 - 7:30 p.m., Keller Elementary
- April 26 CSEA Workshop, 4:30 p.m., CSEA office  
Liar, Liar Pants on Fire: Protecting Your Identity
- April 26 AR and CSEA Annual Meeting  
4:30 p.m., Tesla
- April 28-30 CEA Delegate Assembly, Denver Marriot
- May 17 AR Meeting and CSEA Volunteer Banquet  
5:30 p.m., Giuseppe's Depot

## Works 4 Me: Practical Tips from Teachers Like You: Relevant Science By Diane Postman, Yorktown, Virginia

When I was the science lab teacher, I wanted to make science relevant to the daily lives of my students. I created a large display in the hallway called "Science in the News." I did not mention it to the kids. I cut out articles and photos from the newspaper and from online. I displayed them with a brief summary. Once the kids began to notice it, they stopped to read the display and began to talk about the articles in class. I then began to introduce articles in class, as time allowed.

As interest built, I offered extra credit for students who found articles and wrote about them. I provided a basket of articles for students who did not get a paper at home and/or did not have computer access.

These articles opened their eyes to local topics such as oyster farming and national topics such as wind farms or weather events. I also found that some articles helped me to review or present state standards.

## Welcome to our new members! We'll make you proud to belong!

Alice Caplinger, North  
Karli Decker, Bates  
Margaret Talbert, Chipeta  
Nancy Henderlong, Jackson  
Amanda Swihart, McAuliffe  
Mary Wegert, Doherty  
Sue Knopp, Doherty

