

November/December 2011

Colorado Springs
Education Association
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Love Your MA (Master Agreement)

Inclement Weather

Board policy EBCE states that if there is a two hour delay, employees are expected to work their regular hours, HOWEVER, they should take their time and use their judgment to get to work safely.

This language was intended to allow staff to arrive after contracted start time due to weather conditions, but to reinforce that staff are still being paid for these two hours.

Your role as a leader is even more important than you might imagine. You have the power to help people become winners.
Ken Blanchard

Member Connection

Valuing Your Association

By Tim Cross, UniServ Director

As we approach the holiday season, there are occasions when we take a moment to reflect on the value of our lives, partially because we go through the process of buying gifts for family or friends. While we are thinking of giving gifts, we have time to reflect on the expensive gift or the less expensive gift and fumble around the old conversations that we remember having with our parents in which they told us, "It's the thought that counts." While we remember that conversation, we stumble through what we value and how we came up with that value. Is it financial value or sentimental value? Is it immediate value or long term? Here at CSEA, we work hard to make sure that we have helped teachers receive the compensation that they deserve, while having reasons to feel connected to CSEA and proud of how our teachers' professional association is representing them.

The Colorado Springs Education Association attempts to help you maximize the value of the money you bring home by informing you of member benefits that provide you with discounts all year, and during the holiday season. We understand that teachers love giving gifts and at this time of year there are many celebrations which include gift-giving. The teaching profession doesn't easily lend itself to thoughtlessly spending money and we know you make your gift-giving decisions with that in mind. As many of you have discovered, using your Access card saves money because of the large discounts to our members as a result of the combined purchasing power we have. Members have saved hundreds of dollars going to the Access card website to purchase appliances, home needs, and gifts. Members recently received an email highlighting the special savings on holiday gift-giving available through their Access benefit. We hope you'll take advantage of this benefit to help with any holiday shopping you might want to do. You can find information on using your Access card at by visiting us at www.cseateacher.org and logging into the members' section.

CSEA has also worked hard to provide discounts in other areas, such as insurance, throughout the year. As you read in our September newsletter, a member from Lincoln paid for her CSEA dues for the year, cut her car insurance in half and saved an additional \$800 by using California Casualty home and auto insurance! That's the value of using member benefits!

Belonging to CSEA, though, is bigger than just the money. CSEA works hard to remind people of the great experiences that they had in school and that we are working to provide for their children. As many of you saw, CSEA ran advertisements in *The Independent*, *The West Side Pioneer* and *The Gazette* reminding the community that the two additional days that students had off during the Thanksgiving break came with a cost to their learning, because as teachers, we were ready to teach. We are stretching ourselves to remind the public of how valuable teachers are and how much their children's success relies upon teachers. We work to make you proud by helping others see the value of what you give to all the kids in District 11. **Thank you** for all that you give every day to the students whose lives you touch. We are proud to be your association and believe that you are more valuable than you know. Have a rich holiday season!

Thank you!

Announcement of CSEA Elections

CSEA will conduct elections for seats on the CSEA Board of Directors, delegates to CEA Delegate Assembly, and representatives to NEA RA in February. The Board positions to be elected are President, Vice President, Secretary, Middle Grade Director and Mitchell and Palmer Region Directors.

Nominations are due January 11. Elections will be held February 3-8. Members have been sent an email with complete information and may also visit our members' section at www.cseateacher.org.

Please contact us at csea@coloradoea.org or call 719.471.1190 for additional information.

Works 4 Me: Practical Tips From Teachers Like You: Secret Story Words, by Janice Roehr, Gaudet Middle School, Middletown, RI

I put names of people, places, things and vocabulary words from the story we've read on small pieces of paper and tape them to my students' backs. They wander around the room asking their classmates questions that can only be answered by yes or no. When they've figured out what their word is, they return to their seat and write down the significance of their word to the story. When everyone is finished, we review the words starting with the first person who guessed their secret story word correctly.

An Unexpected Invitation, by Diana Beatty, Coronado

I had a very unexpected message when I got home from parent-teacher conferences in late October. The message was from Andy Linebaugh at the NEA office in Washington D.C., inviting me to the White House for a meeting with President Obama. I was invited because of comments I had written at the Education Votes website in response to an NEA email request asking teachers to describe how budget cuts were affecting their schools. This is what I wrote:

"My school has been lucky compared to many in these times of cuts. We didn't have to lay off nearly as many teachers as some schools. But, year after year we come to work in 90+ temps with packed classrooms and no AC. We can't pass a bond issue for many reasons—public education's battered reputation and "we-can't-take-one-more-request-for-money" battered voters are two of the big ones. I have classes of 36 and 37 teenagers packed into desks that are falling apart, using textbooks older than they are. Every day, students ask for food, paper, pencils, fundraiser purchases, even clothes, let alone the graphing calculators we want them to have to keep up with technological advances in education. Our carpet is threadbare, stained, and approaching 40 years old, but can't be replaced because there is an asbestos issue we can't afford to address. New mandates come from the government every year, but never with any funding for the training and infrastructure required to implement. We're supposed to be a magic black box that produces perfect widgets out of students with nothing. I wish we could have some of the joy of Finnish education; I wish I could feel that people of America believed in the value of free quality education for all. That was a principle I was raised on and firmly believe in, but I feel it is a value that is being sorely eroded."

Several days later I flew to Washington D.C., where I was warmly welcomed at the NEA offices. I was the only classroom teacher attending. The ten others representing NEA and teachers were the NEA President, a staff member, and eight state Association officers. We attended a briefing, and were interviewed and video-taped individually about school conditions. We went to the White House in the afternoon. The meeting was in the East Room and in-

cluded representatives from other organizations, such as the NAACP, in addition to NEA, for a total of about 120 guests. Three cabinet members and the Reverend Al Sharpton were in attendance. There were four speakers, including President Obama and Vice President Biden. The topic of discussion was the American Jobs Act and the need to create and preserve public sector jobs and infrastructure. The President took questions and comments from the audience and committed to continue fighting for school funding. He said that the most important thing educators and students can do to try to advocate for school funding and infrastructure is to get their stories out in the local press as much as possible. Much of the public does not really understand how budget cuts are affecting what happens in the classroom and the state of disrepair of schools and the only way they will learn is if people in the schools tell them and show them.

After the President left, the NEA group was quickly ushered to the West Wing to attend a conference call with David Plough (President Obama's campaign manager and political strategist), NEA President Dennis Van Roekel, and a variety of NEA members from around the country who wished to learn about the meeting we had just attended or express what is happening in their schools. When the call concluded, we left the White House and each gave a short video synopsis of our experiences to the NEA press crew.

While we hope that the meeting will make some positive difference from which we will all benefit, the experience was also very exciting and fun. We had the opportunity to get pictures of the President and Vice President, and we had a group photo with the Vice President. We were made to feel quite welcome at the White House. I put some of my trip pictures on my blog at <http://masooma.blogspot.com/2011/11/white-house-trip.html>, which also includes a link to an article with pictures and video that NEA wrote about the event. They decided to make the stories with me the focus of the event because I was the classroom teacher as opposed to a state officer. I tried to represent us all well and am very thankful for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Senate Bill 191: The Beginning of a Journey

Understanding How This Effects Your Evaluation

By Rose Tinucci, Jenkins Middle School

The ultimate goal of all teacher evaluations should be to improve teaching and learning. With that in mind, Senate Bill 191 was created! The purpose of SB 191 is to improve teaching and learning, every day for every student, in every classroom. The bill requires all school districts to align their teacher evaluation systems to the Educator Effectiveness legislation. District Eleven started this process a year ago by creating a new evaluation tool that is aligned with the language in the legislation in an attempt to “get ahead of the game.” Our new evaluation tool is less about CQI (from previous years) and more about teacher skills, delivery of instruction, and learning; both by the teacher and the student. Now we await word from the state legislators to see if District Eleven’s evaluation will be aligned closely enough with the state expectations; enough that we will be able to use it when the implementation begins in the year 2013.

By August of 2013, all evaluations will be required to have 50% of the employee evaluation based on Professional Practices which has five sub categories (knowledge of content, established environment, facilitates learning, reflection on practice, and demonstration of leadership), with the remaining 50% based on Student Academic Growth. Data sources to measure student growth will include, and are

limited to CSAP scores, MAPS data, common assessments, student portfolio scores, as well as other teacher-created tests such as pre and post unit tests. The Educator Effectiveness Council is continuing to work on defining exactly what will be acceptable sources and what “non testable areas” such as Music, Foreign Language and P.E. will show as data sources.

Other parts of SB 191 include a change in probationary status. There will no longer be teacher tenure. Instead, Educator Effectiveness will be determined on a year to year basis with evaluations happening every year for both teachers and principals. Teachers transferring from one school to another must have at least two teachers, chosen by the staff, and the principal, decide whether or not to accept the teacher transfer, which is intended to prohibit forced placements of teachers. Seniority will no longer be a factor regarding transfers. Lastly, non-probationary status may be lost based upon two consecutive years of ineffectiveness. All of these issues were addressed by our CSEA negotiation team last spring. The membership voted to accept these changes to our current Master Agreement so that we are aligned with the state standards. So now we wait. Wait for the state to make final decisions on this bill that will effect each and every teacher evaluation in the future.

Why I Belong, by Siri A. Everett

Sitting next to Jacob in his fourth grade music class, I asked why he chose to learn the violin. “I am not like other boys,” he replied. “They’re rough. I am a gentle, soft boy and the violin has a sweet voice.” It is risky to poetically speak this truth about oneself as an elementary school boy.

The conversation with Jacob reminded me of a New Yorker article on the study of playgrounds by English folklorists Peter and Iona Opie. They were intent on discovering, through observation, what makes playgrounds feel safe to children. The critical element is the presence of a “base.” “Base” is the spot you touch for sanctuary, the spot that declares your inviolable safety, and without it, playgrounds feel aggressive and treacherous.

Aggressive bullying on playgrounds and within our classrooms is not new, but the alarming number of recent student suicides in response to bullying has propelled all but six states to pass anti-bullying laws. According to an article titled, “There’s Only One Way to Stop a Bully” by Susan Engel and Marlene Sandstrom in *The New York Times*, laws and purchased curriculums will be ineffectual unless educators “make a profound commitment to turn schools into genuine communities” by teaching children that “adults consider

kindness and collaboration to be every bit as important as algebra and reading.”

The authors continue, “... as obvious as it sounds, teachers can’t just preach kindness; they need to actually be nice to one another and their students.” I would add another obvious factor: administrators need to be kind to teachers.

Adult communities can fall out of the practice of kindness and collaboration and goodness, and sometimes it is essential to find places of sanctuary to allow our “sweet voices” to risk telling our truths. CSEA is one such base.

It’s why I belong.



to our newly National Board Certified members:

Carol Chapman, Henry	Alayna Gee, Wilson
Cecilia Horne, Penrose	Erin Ponsor, Fremont
Jessica Trovik, Columbia	Beverly Foster, Freedom

CSEA Happenings

Saturday, January 7 7:00
CC Tiger Hockey Night
Tickets \$7 for adults, \$5 for those under 17

Tuesday, January 24 4:30
AR Meeting Tesla

Ahoy Mateys!

By Sean Mabey, NEA Member Benefits

At a recent CSEA Association Representatives meeting, your ARs went on an “electronic scavenger hunt” searching for gold, deals, discounts, and other “loot” on the NEA Member Benefit website. Some of the treasures discovered were discounts on auto and home insurance through California Casualty, with added loot just for teachers. Discounts on classroom supplies and decorative items were “dug up” from Smile-Makers and Carson-Dellosa. With the holidays just around the corner, “land lubbers” discovered deals and discounts



on NEA Click & Save for many stores at which they shop. A treasure chest of benefits was also discovered through the NEA Academy, with discounts on Masters Degrees from WGU (Western Governors University), Walden, and UMass. In an effort to get off the seas and settle into one place, there is also a benefit from Wells Fargo Home Mortgage. All of these NEA Member Benefits are available to fellow “pirate members” in an effort to ride out the difficult “economic seas.” Check out www.neamb.com, talk to your building Association Representative, or email me at smabey@neamb.com to find out how you can save “loads of loot!”

Ship Ahoy, enjoy sailing to savings!

Welcome To Our New Members! We'll Make You Proud To Belong!



Katherine Beach
Reed Carlson
Jane Hook
Libby Marcolongo
Hillary Wessells

Leadership Spotlight CSEA Board of Directors

Leslie Miller, Intermediate Grade Director

Season's Greetings! This is my first year as a Board member, but I have been a member of my local association from the beginning. I have been teaching for 11 years, five years in Missouri and six years with District 11. I grew up on a farm in Missouri and six years ago moved out and fell in love with Colorado Springs.



During my career I've taught everything from pre-school to 5th grade. Currently, I am an ESL teacher at James Monroe Elementary School. My favorite part of working in education is seeing a struggling student finally "get it."

As a part of the CSEA membership committee, I'm passionate about membership organizing and involvement. Yes, I'm the Leslie to whom you normally RSVP for The Extension's events! I've chosen to be an active participant in many different association opportunities and I hope to see others do that as well.

Sandy Cox, Palmer Region Director

I've been teaching for twenty-nine years. This is my 27th year of teaching in District 11. During this time I have taught 2nd, 4th, 6th, keyboarding, Spanish, and art. I currently teach kindergarten at Taylor Elementary.

Before teaching at District 11, I taught at Fountain/Fort Carson District 8, and Harrison District 2. At the time, neither district had a strong association. As a new teacher, I was horrified to see that these districts had little or no representation for their teachers.



I came to District 11 because of CSEA. As a member of CSEA, I have served on the Board of Directors as Wasson Region Director, Middle School Grade Director, and now as Palmer Region Director. Also, I am the Ethnic Minority Advisory Council (EMAC) Chairperson, and I serve on the Calendar Committee and Teacher Evaluation Review Committee. I strongly believe that what makes District 11 stand out from the other districts in Colorado Springs is CSEA.

Wishing you a happy holiday season and a wonderful winter break! See you in 2012! Kevin, Tim, Laura and Denise

