

Union Pulse

Colorado Springs Education Association
May 5, 2020

CEA Message For Teacher Appreciation Week

DENVER – Message from Amie Baca-Oehlert, high school counselor and president of the Colorado Education Association, for National Teacher Appreciation Week (May 4-8):

“Monday kicks off our nation’s first-ever social distancing observation of Teacher Appreciation Week. It’s not ideal. This week is always a special time for kind words, hugs and even small gifts from our students and their families during our final sprint to the finish line of a successful and rewarding school year. As with so many school traditions this year, we’ll have to mark the occasion as best we can from a distance with the larger aim of protecting public health and safety.”

“Perhaps never before have our nation’s educators been more appreciated than over these past seven weeks. As we’ve rightly honored all of the professionals who make up our essential workforce, the outpouring of support for the education profession has been profoundly heartfelt and deeply moving. For many Coloradans, assuming a school-at-home role has been a revelation into the hard work required of public school educators, and how the demands placed on educators and students have changed and grown over time. We have heard in no uncertain terms that students and parents miss their teachers and want us back in school. We have also heard how much schools are missed by those who count on the critical services they provide – from nutritious meals to mental health supports – especially in our underserved communities. On behalf of CEA’s 39,000 members in every corner of our state, we have felt your appreciation and it means the world to us to know how central educators and public schools are in the lives of every Coloradan.

“Unfortunately, this Teacher Appreciation Week is under the dark cloud of budget cut projections due to the coronavirus pandemic. We hear the phrase, ‘We’re all in this together,’ repeated throughout this crisis. It’s a wonderful sentiment, but as far as budget cuts are concerned, not true of how Colorado has dealt with crisis in the past. The budget cuts during the Great Recession a decade ago we’re squarely placed upon K-12 education when the legislature invented the Budget Stabilization Factor. Put simply, this ongoing cut to public school funding amounts to a gargantuan I.O.U. of \$8.1 billion that Colorado still owes its students and educators from the last crisis. Even in recent years of fantastic economic growth, the cuts never stopped. The state is withholding \$572 million from public schools in the current school year.

“So when the legislature reconvenes May 18, remember the vast majority of our students have never attended a fully funded school and many suffer from the ramifications of four-day school weeks, large class sizes, reduced options in curriculum, meals, and school transportation, and a massive educator shortage. Recognize that distance learning is not an adequate replacement for the effectiveness and warmth of in-person learning and that our students will return to school with more needs than they had when in-person learning was canceled. We appreciate the coronavirus outbreak will force our lawmakers into difficult decisions, but they can’t continue to balance the state budget on the backs of students and educators. Our students need more from all of us and educators will fight for the schools they deserve.

“Finally, educators send our appreciation to all Colorado parents who have bravely stepped up to face the challenge of distance learning and who have helped us to help your students thrive. As a mother of three school-aged children who is working from home, I am on this crazy rollercoaster with you. Know that all Colorado educators are with you and thinking of your students every day. We eagerly await the day when we can be together again, safely, in our classrooms, lunch rooms and school buses.”

Teaching And Academic Resources

“Though remote learning has brought many challenges, some students seem to be thriving in the new circumstances. What can we learn from them?” Here are a few factors [this article](#) from *Edutopia* explores:

- The benefits of self-pacing
- Time to rethink the over-extended kid
- Reducing the chatter
- Getting enough sleep

[Crayola](#) has a variety of resources, including lesson plans in a wide variety of topics, including language arts, mathematics, STEM/STEAM, social studies and art techniques.

Did you know that [Jeopardylabs](#) has pre-made jeopardy boards you can use in your remote teaching? You can also make your own if you would prefer!

Above And Beyond

Here’s a special thank you to **Alfredo and Molly Pargas**, both ELL teachers at Keller. Together, with donations from some other Keller teachers, they donated Kindles and Chromebooks with cases and headphones to our ELL students who needed assistance with acquiring technology. Alfredo set up all the devices with learning apps, guided some families in signing up for internet service, and taught kids and parents how to attend their class meetings.

Thumbs Up, Alfredo and Molly Pargas!

Additionally, Alfredo has worked to keep teachers at Keller communicating weekly with our parents who do not speak English, keeping these families connected and their students involved in learning. Thank you for your focus, diligence, and passion, Alfredo!

For Your Pleasure And Health

Take a few minutes to listen to [this bedtime story](#) from the future about how we can learn from our mistakes and emerge from this pandemic crisis into a better world.

Learn how to [prevent your glasses from fogging up](#) when you wear your face mask.

Cinco de Mayo Live Concert Today

Altísimo Live! Will be livestreaming a Latin and pop culture Music Festival honoring our frontline farm workers who work daily to provide food for our tables. Musical performances will begin at 5 p.m. today. This is a benefit concert with a goal to raise 3 million dollars, \$5 at a time, so if you want to enjoy the music, be prepared to donate \$5. There is an all-star line-up that should be fantastic! You can learn more and see viewing options [here](#).

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