

Union Pulse

Colorado Springs Education Association

April 22, 2021

Bargaining Update: Assault on Teachers and Teacher Representation

On Monday, April 19, the Board of Education said that they do not believe stable and supportive working conditions are critical to student success. They noted further that they “[do] not feel the mission of CSEA aligns with that of the District.” You don’t say! Our mission explicitly states that we endeavor to assure that

“teachers enjoy the benefits of professional working conditions, fair treatment, just compensation, and the support needed so that students and schools thrive.”

How this doesn’t align is beyond us, and we’d like to hear the rationale, but the BOE has asserted before an expectation that CSEA keep teachers in line for them, automatically support BOE and management decisions, and otherwise behave like their hired contractor. (Nope!) Perhaps that reflects their *unspoken* mission. Through this, we see the Board struggling to support its own mission to develop collaborative relationships, encourage imagination and effective academic risk-taking, and help students develop the fortitude and critical thinking necessary to succeed. Is this mission restricted to beliefs about students and classrooms that evaporates in the face of accountability to employees and the world students will enter?

All of this discord between language and action shows that a majority of the BOE has a truly distorted understanding of the role of CSEA, the role of critical thinking in education, and why students and staff are leaving in increasing numbers. CSEA is a union of teachers, not an arm of management. Collectively we secure our workplace rights, so we teachers can focus energy on our job of empowering students. The BOE is scapegoating teachers and their representatives, blaming both for loss of students and asserting that teachers’ rights undermine students’ testing data. Such tired arguments, while offensive on their face, aim to shift all responsibility from themselves. We need to unmask those who believe this malarkey. We are professionals with professional knowledge and insight, not their pawns. The Graduate Profile expects us to help our students to be engaged advocates, innovative problem solvers, and empathetic collaborators. It is not--contrary to BOE claims--“blasphemy” to question management or whatever assertion that they may make. Teach inquiry, but never model it?

Ask each Board member to take a stand on our Mission. Don’t they believe that teachers should have professional working conditions in order to maximize student learning? Don’t they believe a stable workforce contributes to pro-social relationships with students and furthers academic and social development? Don’t they believe that employees should be treated fairly rather than condemned for disagreement? Don’t they believe that employees should be justly compensated? The stability of our contract, the Master Agreement, is a launching pad for a confident and committed workforce. It underpins the trust and relationships essential to innovation and risk-taking to achieve student success. The BOE seems to be saying it is somehow bad, so they are seeking to cut it back in order to have leverage over their professional teaching force. Ask them how that’s a win.



Thumbs Up – Congratulations to Kevin Coughlin who was elected to represent CSEA on the CEA Board of Directors and to Hunter Conde who was elected to the CEA Fund. Thank you for taking the voice of CSEA to the state level!

At last night's CSEA BOD meeting, Hunter Conde was seated as the new CSEA Doherty Region Director. Thank you for your increased commitment to the profession and our association!

District 11 Board of Education: the Good, the Bad & the Ugly...

Noteworthy observations of and commentary by elected members of the Board of Education during recent meetings:

The Good: D-11 Teacher: *"It matters whether or not your work force is comfortable, secure. The strategic plan expects risks, being able to fail--that is predicated on the background of what we are talking about (the stability of the Master Agreement). When you have security for a week, it is not security. The idea is students' learning environments are teachers' working environments. It's that in loco parentis status: Just like in any home, stability is an essential piece of making that home a nurturing one."*

The Bad: Spokesperson of behalf of D-11 BOE: *(Teacher) Loyalty, security, comfort--not a lot of things that do anything for student achievement or student enrollment.*

The Ugly: Spokesperson on behalf of D-11 BOE: *"...that conversation about enrollment and student achievement ... if you (CSEA) can't help us fulfill that on both counts, then we need to look for another organization that can."*

Virtual Event

CSEA & D-11-Bargaining- Monday, April 26 at 8 a.m.!

All sessions will be live streamed via this [link](#). Future bargaining dates are available on the CSEA website.

CSEA Equity Forum

CSEA will be hosting an Equity Forum on Thursday, May 6, 4:30-5:30 pm via [zoom](#). Topics include Interviewing to Ensure Equity, Classroom Audits, Implicit Biases and School Audits. Email [Carmen](#) for additional information.

Announcements

CSEA Mitchell Region Director

Kevin Coughlin has been elected as the CSEA representative to the CEA Board and will step down as the current Mitchell Region Director, leaving the position open. If you would like information on this position, email [Joe](#).

Reminder: Self-nomination for Association Representatives

If you are interested in volunteering as an Association Representative in your building for the 2021-2022, email us at CSEA

Updated Book List

We have updated our “Diverse and Inclusive Book List” to include more recommendations for elementary, middle school, and high school students. The last category on the list includes websites that have preK-12 book recommendations. Check it out here:

<http://www.cseateacher.org/about/csea-equity-council/>

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