

Union Pulse

Colorado Springs Education Association
March 2, 2023

Read Across America 2023

Statement presented to the D-11 BOE on 22 February 2023:

Dr. Melpakam, Directors, Mr. Gaal,

I'm Joe Schott, elected teacher representative of the Colorado Springs Education Association.

It's a pleasure to come to you this evening as you prepare a resolution in support of Read Across America. Reading is a primary doorway to ideas, understanding, imagination, and challenges to complacency and dogma. Literacy remains one of Public Education's great gifts to its citizenry and a buttress of our Democracy.

In addition to the annual CSEA book give-away he created for the Labor Day balloon festival downtown, at which we give away to our community's children many thousands of books for free, again this year Kevin Coughlin has headed up our Read Across America book donation. Dr. Angelica Givler and CSEA Intermediate-Level Director Laura Andujar are also assisting with this project promoting literacy. In support of pre-K through 12th grade children in the region recent recipients of our book donations have included

Urban Peak—now "The Place"--, which serves homeless youth,

Court Care of the Pikes Peak Region, which provides free child care to families with court-related business

Zach's Place, which provides care for children with disabilities,

and last year all of D11's elementary schools.

This year the teachers of the Colorado Springs Education Association will provide to the library of each of the 9 D11 middle schools two copies of Karthik Delivers... and three copies of We Weren't Looking to be Found to each of our high schools' libraries. These books are recommended by the founder and on-going sponsor of Read Across America, the National Education Association, which over the past century has developed this celebration of reading into an educational institution.

As in years past, CSEA leaders will be in schools sharing their love of reading with students during Read Across America week. We urge everyone to take the opportunity to share an undisturbed moment with a child and a favorite book. It is a simple, easy, and wonderful gift to give.

Thank you.

Non-Renewal Time of Year

It seems like the nonrenewal period is upon us. Several inquiries have come to the office over the last few days, which begin with a similar story and question – “My supervisor has requested my presence at a meeting tomorrow. There is no reason provided for the meeting. I am wondering if someone from CSEA can join me?” In each of these cases, to our knowledge, the management is aiming to inform the member of the intent of the district to non-renew their employment at the end of the year. Often it is accompanied by a coercive transaction – “if you resign, I will provide a letter of recommendation” – which is a problem to be sure. Let’s examine this in two steps:

Step 1. Unknown Reason for the Meeting.

The rights to a representative are clear in the Master Agreement. A representative has the **“right to be present at any meeting when requested by the teacher. Such request shall not have the effect of delaying the meeting unless discipline is contemplated.”** This language requires the member to ask two fundamental questions right away:

1. What is the purpose of/reason for this meeting?
2. Is this disciplinary or is discipline contemplated?

If management does not respond, it is reasonable to assume it is disciplinary in nature. This is where the member should request to reschedule so that they can ask their Association Representative to be present. WE always recommend having someone with you in any meeting.

Step 2: Nonrenewal

- a. Go to your building AR and ask for help. They received a document going through the nuts and bolts of the legal frameworks around nonrenewal that aims to help guide any member around non-renewal versus resignation. Although nonrenewal is often a failure of the building leaders to supply necessary support to a teacher, in this time of staffing shortages, it is more mystifying that management continues the magical thinking that qualified teachers are a disposable commodity.
- b. Don’t rush to make a decision. Be thoughtful, deliberate, and clear in your thinking so you understand the possible outcomes of decisions. Management will say many things, but that does not make them true.
- c. Consider how to help each other. The hurt of nonrenewal is real for that member. Support them emotionally and professionally. If there are a bunch of folks in a building wanting to show their support, consider solidarity lunches, where you eat together and discuss opportunities both in D-11 and outside the District.



Thumbs Up & Article of Note

Thumbs up to Robotics Coaches Susan Forget (Sabin), Sam Bello (Sabin), and Craig Seay (Odyssey) who are bringing exciting opportunities to Sabin and Doherty students! In their words: "The Sabin Saints Robotics teams and the Doherty HS team did an amazing job representing and competing at last weekend's AFCEA VEX Robotics Signature Event held at the Broadmoor. They competed against teams from across the country and Canada. Out of 40 teams, Sabin brought 3 of the 7 middle school teams with the remaining teams being from high schools. Our teams were strong and placed in the tournament. While not winning awards, they went home feeling proud of their accomplishments.

Four of SMS teams and the DHS team qualified for the March 3-4th State VEX Robotics Competition at Kent Denver. Teams will be competing for the coveted World VEX Challenge seats to be held April 27-29 in Dallas TX. Please wish our teams the best of luck heading into the State competition."

https://gazette.com/news/education/colorado-springs-robotics-tournament-draws-teams-from-across-us/article_53f62bd6-b19a-11ed-b62e-df812ef30b7b.html

Sick Leave Bank (Re)Enrollment Request

It appears that the Sick Leave Bank balances have dropped below the threshold of 200 days. This means that to *remain* in the Sick Leave Bank, you are being asked to donate one additional day. CSEA encourages all teachers to re-enroll if you are currently a member, and if you are not already part of the bank, *please take this opportunity to sign up*. If you are retiring, consider contributing the 10 days you are allowed to contribute for those in the future.

The sick leave bank is the fairest way to ensure staff have access to paid leave when horrific events occur. It is essentially an anonymous process (even the documents the committee sees have the names scrubbed). Unlike Hardship Leave, which in fact can be sought in addition to SLB, SLB operates irrespective of the person asking or whether people feel they have enough days left to donate, for example near the end of the school year.

Announcements & Upcoming Events

Read Across America 2023

We would love to see and share how you celebrate Read Across America in your classroom and schools. Please send us pictures of yourself and other CSEA members as you celebrate this annual event. Pictures may be displayed on the CSEA website or highlighted in next week's Union Pulse.

CSEA First Friday

Join us for CSEA's March First Friday at **Battle Mountain Brewing Company** tomorrow, **Friday, March 3rd, from 4 - 7!** CSEA will provide appetizers and as always, bring a friend or two.

Battle Mountain Brewing Company
1007 S. Tejon Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80903
<https://battlemountainbrewing.com/home/>

Bargaining March 6: Public Meeting

Next Monday your CSEA Bargaining Team will be in session with the BoE Team. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services will facilitate the discussion. The session runs from 1:00-8:00 at the Tesla Professional Development Building (second floor) and is open to everyone. You can come for any portion of the session. It will also be live-streamed on the CSEA Facebook page. There likely will be times when the teams are in caucus, so don't let that shock you! The tentative agenda is as follows:

MARCH 6 AGENDA

1. Check-In
2. Retirement Deadlines
 - Small Group Report Out (Thad, Joe, Nancy & Toni)

- Review Redlines & Discuss
- Consensus Check on Language
 1. Teaching Conditions / Assignments (Professional Development Days) (see X, XIV)
 2. Intentional Professional Development (see XI, XII, et passim)
 3. Set Next Agenda & Check Out

The issues exchanged in December remain posted on the member page of www.cseateacher.org.

Colorado Springs St. Patrick's Day Parade

Hey all you runners, cyclists, walkers/marchers and walkers, the St. Patrick's Day event is coming up! CSEA will march in the parade, and you are all invited -- bring the family! Parade walkers/marchers will gather at Palmer High School starting around 10:30 or so - the parade starts at Noon, and we have to be in position prior to the start. Runners and cyclists - feel free to sign up for a variety of events. Note that the bike ride starts and ends at Trail's End Taproom. Details on all can be found at <https://csstpats.com>. Come on out and have some fun on March 11, 2023, with CSEA and Sláinte! Would you like to join us? If so, email Anton to sign up and get additional information.

Know your Rights!

Many members have expressed thankfulness for this area of the weekly *Pulse*. It serves as a quick reminder of the rights you have in [your Master Agreement](#). When you have a question or concern, we want to remind you that you can go directly to the MA yourself to get a first take on the issue, as it provides direct language to answer many questions. Then, do not be afraid to cite it when your management comes with some weird idea that violates it. That in mind, this week we reconnect you to an old favorite, Article XIII.E.4. It states: "*Students receiving documented Level II referrals involving classroom misconduct during the school day, will be returned to the classroom only after consultation with the teacher making the referral or providing an explanation to such teacher of the disciplinary action taken...*" So remember when that kid returns with a pixie stick and desire to go back to the office, you can:





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