



DCTA Slate

Colorado State of Education Report

A few weeks ago, the Colorado Education Association released their annual State of Education Report. This report centers the sentiments and experiences of our 39,000 member educators across Colorado (including DCTA members) and illustrates the ways in which Colorado's systemic disinvestment affects every part of our educators' and students' lives. It finds that Colorado's education system is in a state of crisis due to lack of funding, respect and school safety.

[See full report here >](#)

Sign the Petition and ask Legislators to Fully Fund Public Education

While Colorado is rated as having one of the top economies in this nation for several years running, our state ranks as one of the lowest when it comes to K-12 education funding. Our per pupil funding is \$3,087 below the national average. The National Education Association found that Colorado ranked 48th for starting pay in 2021, making it difficult to attract and retain educators. Sign the petition and ask legislatures to:

1. Completely buy down the BS Factor to \$0, fully funding our schools to the amount required by the constitution, and
2. Identify and implement long-term systemic solutions to sustainably and adequately fund our public schools.

[Sign the petition >](#)

Lobby Days for Public Education Funding

We are partnering with fellow Colorado Education Association members at the legislature to fight for a fully funded public education system by buying down the budget stabilization factor to zero and fully funding education through Colorado's revenue increases. **Buying down the budget stabilization factor at the state level would mean a full cost of living increase for Denver educators.**

This fight is not possible without the voices of educators across the state, which is why we are hosting a lobby day on March 9th. Members who participate in lobby day will receive a DCTA leave day. Please fill out the form below if you are interested in participating.

[Sign up here >](#)

RIBs and Letters of Resignation

Administrators may pressure you to resign "voluntarily" if you are being RIBed. We advise educators to reject the "voluntary resignation" offer in these situations because the act of resigning may make you ineligible for rehire and unemployment compensation may also affect your future teaching license renewal. Please contact your UniServ Director if you need any support.

Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action

[Black Lives Matter at School](#) is a national coalition organizing for racial justice in education. We encourage all educators, students, parents, unions, and community organizations to join our annual week of action during the first week of February each year. The goal of Black Lives Matter at School is to continue the ongoing movement of critical reflection and honest conversation and impactful actions in school communities.

[BLM at School Week of Action Resources >](#)

Have you been evaluated?

If you have not yet received a LEAP evaluation and are concerned, please [fill out this form](#) and your UniServ director will contact you directly.

1923 DCTA Charter Member - Amelie "Amy" Delmas Irving

By Dr. Timothy Brown, NBCT - CEA Board of Directors

A predecessor organization of the *Denver Classroom Teachers Association* was *The Denver Grade Teachers Association*. Amelie "Amy" Irving served both organizations. In 1922, she was the Secretary of *The Denver Grade Teachers Association*. In 1923, she was one of the signers of the DCTA Charter with the Colorado Secretary of State.

Amelie (sometimes given as Amelia) Irving was born October 26, 1883, in Louisville, Kentucky. The 1900 United States Federal Census lists 17-year-old Amelie as a "boarder" in Chicago, Illinois. In 1902, she arrived in Grand Junction, having had experience in the newspaper field.

While exact dates for her work in Moab, Utah, are not known, her teaching there is documented in *The Daily Sentinel*. (Grand Junction). The summer of 1905 saw her attending a "Normal School" Summer Institute in Montrose. The newspaper printed the names of attendees from several counties. In 1907, she is listed as a teacher in Grand Junction, and appears in several Grand Junction city directories. She appears to have summered there often with family. In 1910, she was teaching in Orchard Mesa.

Just prior to beginning her teaching career in Denver, The Denver Grade Teachers Association was urged to become a union in 1913. An article to that effect appeared in The United Labor Bulletin in February, 1913. She began teaching in Denver in 1914 at Lincoln (Elementary) School. In those days, educators' places of employment were listed in the Denver City Directory along with their home addresses.

In 1914, reports of efforts to create tenure in Colorado appear in newspapers, and indicate that *Grade Interests*, the newspaper of *The Denver Grade Teachers Association*, would be used as the mouthpiece of the state-wide effort until *The Colorado Classroom Teachers* organization became stronger.

In 1916, these efforts were continued. Members of *The Denver Grade Teachers Association* organized to lobby the state legislature for a tenure bill. While there is no evidence of Miss Irving's participation in this initiative, it seems likely that she would have been aware of it.

Miss Irving taught at Lincoln School until at least 1920, when the directories listed only the occupation of "teacher" without the school name. She taught in Denver through 1940, when she moved to Tacoma, Washington, and also taught briefly there. It is these same city directories that list her as the Secretary of *The Denver Grade Teachers Association* in 1922.

On January 8, 1923, Amelie D. Irving was a signer of the Charter of the Denver Classroom Teachers Association. In 1924, Amelie Irving received a two-year diploma in Sociology from the Colorado Teachers College (now known as the University of Northern Colorado).

Newspaper clippings retrieved from www.ColoradoHistoricNewspapers.org August 2022. Photo of Lincoln School Staff and Students, 1921. Amelie D. Irving may be in this photo.

Miss Amelie D. Irving arrived in the city at noon today and will probably spend the summer with her mother Mrs. Nancy B. Irving, owner of the large Angora goat ranch near this city. Miss Irving is a very charming young woman and it is to be hoped that she will find the Colorado climate and the bracing air as attractive to herself as did her estimable mother, who while on her recent eastern visit took occasion to spread broadcast the beauties of Colorado climate and its healthgiving air. The talent of Mrs. Irving in the newspaper field and her experience therein, gives her large latitude for good.

The Daily Sentinel (Grand Junction), Volume 9, March 22, 1902

TEACHERS MAY FORM UNION.

Denver teachers want a School Teachers' union.

They want a union because they want higher wages for their work and they are convinced that the only way in which they can get what they want is to back up their demands with an organization so powerful that they can declare a state-wide teachers' strike unless the various school boards listen to and heed their demands.

They say that they have waited long enough for a revision of the salary schedule which, after six years of hard work and long experience, only pays a teacher who began her work at \$50 a month the sum of \$80 for all the remaining months of all remaining years that she may teach, unless she be advanced to the position of assistant superintendent of a school.

Instead of being started out at \$50 a month, they claim that they should draw at least \$75, with proportionate yearly increases, for they are professional women who have spent years in preparation for their work. At that they are required to have twenty-seven months experience in other schools before they can get positions in Denver schools.

The nucleus for a union is at hand in the Denver Grade Teachers' Association, which has about 500 members, comprising practically every grade teacher in the city. If this organization were affiliated with the labor unions of the city the teachers could get their demands by going on strike and they would be backed by all the labor unions in the country.

"Without a union, backed by a strong labor organization, the teachers will never get the wages which are due them in view of their years of preparation and the way in which they are expected to live," said Mrs. Homera McPherson, county superintendent of schools.

Mrs. Mary C. Bradford, state superintendent of public instruction, who was in Chicago at the time that the teachers of that city formed a union and affiliated themselves with the American Federation of Labor, is also an urgent advocate of a similar step for the teachers of this city.

"I am heartily in favor of any organization that will give the teachers the power to demand and get their just rights in the matter of salary," says Mrs. Bradford. "They should be paid salaries commensurate with a teacher's dignity, and they are not at present. The minimum law which is now pending before the legislature will be a great help because it will affect about 2500 teachers, raising their salaries from as low as \$30 a month to the minimum of \$60. It does not affect Denver teachers, however. It is heartily that teachers, with all the demands made upon them, both for professional preparation and after they have begun the work, should receive such small wages."

United Labor Bulletin, (Denver) Volume 7, Number 29, February 20, 1913

COLORADO TEACHERS TO ORGANIZE TO URGE BETTER WAGES

Denver, Colo., Mar. 2.—The teachers of the entire state are to organize into a Colorado Classroom Teachers' association for the purpose of increasing their salaries, initiating a national tenure bill and procuring a national retirement fund.

"Rural teachers," Mr. Atkinson, chairman of the interests committee of the Denver Grade Teachers' association, says, "have interests just as we city teachers have, and these interests should be protected."

"Why is it," continues Mrs. Atkinson, "that rural teachers are so transitory? Because they do not get a salary that is commensurate with the cost of living and the hardships that they must endure. If rural teachers are getting lower wages because they are not competent, they should be made competent and then given a decent wage."

"If there were a proper salary connected with the teaching profession girls would be willing to take their training and become more efficient. At present a policeman is better off than a school teacher. He starts with \$30 a month while a school teacher teaching in the grades never gets beyond that same \$30 a month."

The enactment of a tenure office bill would make teachers independent of the whims and caprices of school boards. They would hold their places as long as they were efficient and capable, and would not be dependent upon outside influences which have in reality little to do with their merit or personality.

A national retirement fund would, believes Mrs. Atkinson, take care of a teacher, regardless of where she is now and where she might have been before. The only question would be, "Has she served long enough to be entitled to her pension?"

Early in the spring the teachers of the entire state will send a delegation to Denver, when the details of the plan will be definitely worked out. Mrs. Mary C. C. Bradford and Professor Mooney of the State Teachers' College have heartily endorsed this plan of state-wide organization. The Colorado School Journal and the Grade Interests, a paper published by the Denver Grade Teachers' association, will for the present be the official organs of the organization. A state journal will be started as soon as the Colorado Classroom Teachers' organization becomes strong and able.

The Chronicle-News, (Trinidad) March 2, 1914



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