Welcome Back!

The Back-to-School commercials are here, and many of us find ourselves with that annual “first day of school” jittery feeling. This year promises to be an extremely busy year. Two weeks ago I had the opportunity to address teachers new to DPS. Every year that I have this opportunity, I am reminded of how important a teacher is in the life of a student and how education for children can make all the difference in their lives. We had a fantastic day that ended with many people opting to join DCTA. Growing memberships builds our organization which is faced with many challenges. We are not only tested with the day to day job of teaching, we face important opportunities related to the direction of our profession in Denver: Bargaining our contract and the School Board Election.

Bargaining the contract: This year is a critical one as we are bargaining the entire master agreement. The DCTA Bargaining Team has been meeting since last year and this process is taking time given the significant issues we are dealing with such as teacher evaluation, compensation, class size, etc. Please plan on attending the bargaining sessions. Your presence and participation is essential, because the contract expires on August 31st. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for more updates regarding meeting times, location, etc.

I’d like to thank in advance the members of the Bargaining Team for the countless hours of volunteer time during this school year. This is part of the great work our members do for the collective benefit of everyone.

The School Board Election: The School Board election this fall is critical. The leaders on this board are decision makers about how we do our jobs, receive our resources and the path we choose as a district. It’s important to have a functional school board that works closely with all stakeholders. I encourage everyone to find some way in which they can contribute to the election- walking for candidates, talking with community members about how important it is to vote or making a few phone calls- no contribution is too small. We’ll share more information about this effort soon.

As we enter this challenging year, I also want to welcome the new teachers to DPS and hope that their first year in Denver is meaningful. Finally, thanks to all of the educators of Denver. The work you are doing makes a difference in the lives of Denver’s children every day.

~ Henry Roman, DCTA President
Bargaining Update: How We Spent Our Summer Vacation

As is often the case, it seems like it was only yesterday we were saying goodbye to students for the summer and looking forward to a few precious weeks of R&R before returning to the classroom. For the DCTA Bargaining Team, summer break was a little less restful as the team worked tirelessly throughout the summer to negotiate a new Master Contract on behalf of DCTA members and Denver students.

"Although we’d love to say we accomplished all of our goals this summer, the time was very well spent," said DCTA President Henry Roman. "We did secure agreement on multiple articles of the contract while pressing forward on negotiations for critical issues like LEAP, teacher workload, and compensation."

As the summer began, compensation took center stage as DCTA pressed its reasonable demand of a $50,000 starting salary for all district teachers. DPS returned with an offer that fell far short (about as far short as possible) of DCTA’s proposal. The district offered a pittance of an additional $572 per year to their base salary, just barely above $47 per month. The national average compensation adjustment for 2017 is 3 percent according to Washington, D.C.-based business forecaster Kiplinger.com.

However, by midsummer a private meeting between DCTA representatives and Superintendent Tom Boasberg offered a glimmer of hope on the issue when Boasberg made a verbal commitment to identify a path to the $50,000 starting salary. Unfortunately, DCTA is still waiting to hear details.

Negotiations continued to show promise as the summer progressed. DCTA had fruitful discussions with the DPS team, coming to agreement on multiple articles of the new contract. Yet just days following Boasberg’s commitment to find a pathway to a $50,000 salary, the district declared an impasse in negotiations and called for a mediator to intercede.

“The district’s goal,” DCTA Deputy Executive Director Corey Kern said at the time, “is to keep the public and teachers out of the bargaining process.”

The Master Contract calls for a private mediation company, AAA, to manage any mediation that may be required. DPS attempted to replace that with a federal mediation service that does not allow public bargaining. Since Colorado state law requires public access to negotiations, DCTA demanded that any sessions held in mediation remain open to the public, including teachers, parents, and community members. When the teams returned to the bargaining table following DPS’ declared impasse, bargaining sessions continued as always (without any mediator) – and DCTA remained committed to ensuring an open, transparent process by encouraging attendance at the sessions as well as webcasting all sessions via Facebook. As of today, no mediator has been present at negotiations, and both parties have been able to continue the process, as normal.

Throughout the summer, DPS continued to struggle to provide concrete answers and solutions for questions and concerns DCTA has raised over and over again. They expressed “100 percent” support for DCTA positions in (continued on next page)
Have you had your DCTA Back to School meeting yet?
Reach out today to schedule one! Your staff needs to be updated on:

1) Who is DCTA and what does DCTA do?
2) What happened with contract bargaining over the summer?
3) What is currently happening with contract bargaining?
4) What can they do to get involved?

It is IMPERATIVE that ALL teachers stay informed and knowledgeable – we must practice what we teach!

Contact your Uniserv Director to schedule your first meeting NOW!

Darnell Tingle
Jesus Altamirano
Kate Martin

(If you don’t know who to ask, just write an email to all 3 of us!)

(Bargaining Update continued) many cases. Yet that full-throated expression of agreement fell flat when specifics were requested. As the Association has done since bargaining began in January, DCTA continued to ask the DPS team if and when Superintendent Tom Boasberg or Deputy Superintendent Susana Cordova would be in attendance. And again there was no concrete answer provided. To date, Boasberg has only attended three sessions without actually participating in any way.

DCTA entered last week with high hopes as Association and District representatives began a marathon four-day stretch of Bargaining Sessions to finalize an agreement on a Master Contract. Unfortunately, as the sessions continued it became increasingly apparent that DPS representatives present at the meetings were unable to provide concrete solutions or make decisions surrounding key remaining concerns over LEAP, workload, maternity leave, teacher salaries or classroom materials.

In complete disregard of DCTA’s demonstrated full commitment to the bargaining process, DPS continued to obfuscate, delay and downright ignore the Association’s good-faith efforts at coming to agreement on key provisions of the contract.

“It’s been at least 23 years since our relationship has been in such peril,” DCTA bargaining team member Rob Gould said at the close of Thursday’s session, which ended with the DCTA Bargaining Team walking out, clearly frustrated with the Districts inability to bargain.

DCTA remains committed to the bargaining process, pushing the District to schedule additional days for sessions leading up to the Aug. 31 expiration of the current contract and expressing hope that the District will work in good faith to come to an agreement as quickly as possible.

At the present time, the two parties have agreed to language on fifteen articles, with eighteen articles still outstanding, many of which involve the most important issues to DCTA members, such as whole child supports, lower classroom sizes, real self-directed planning time, paid maternity, paternity, and adoption leave, an evaluation system that is founded in a coaching model and is not predatory, a living wage for Denver teachers, and adequate health insurance benefits.

An update from yesterday’s bargaining session is coming soon!
On August 31, our Master Agreement is set to expire. On that date there are really only three possibilities as to what could happen, and for two of them, our members have the final vote.

**Scenario 1:** The first possibility is that we have either reached an agreement on all articles previously, or that we do on that date. Those agreements would then go to the bargaining unit for a ratification vote. This is the best case scenario, and the one that the bargaining team is working toward.

**Scenario 2:** In this scenario, the contract is not settled, but the bargaining team feels that they are very close to finishing. If that happens, the bargaining team could decide to extend the current contract for a set amount of time to allow both teams to work through the remaining issues without a work stoppage. This scenario could happen multiple times.

**Scenario 3:** Scenario three is the worst-case scenario. In this scenario, the two bargaining teams have not gotten a settlement on all of the remaining articles, and the DCTA Bargaining Team feels that there is no longer any room to negotiate. If this happens, the team would declare impasse and take a strike vote to the members of the Association. Strikes can either be for a set period of time (like the one-day strike that took place in Chicago) or for an indefinite amount of time that ends when an agreement is reached. Either of these would have to be voted on by the members of DCTA. While this is the worst-case scenario, and one that the bargaining team hopes to avoid, it is a possibility. We encourage all DCTA bargaining unit employees to consider when making any big financial decisions while the contract is still open.

Hopefully, knowing the possible outcomes will allow our members to make strategic choices. We all know that scenario one is the best outcome, and something that should be the goal for both bargaining teams. One easy way that our members can help our bargaining team meet that goal is to support the bargaining team in all possible ways. This includes attending bargaining sessions, wearing your DCTA t-shirts and buttons, and participating in actions in the workplace. The involvement of our teachers and community has already put pressure on the District to consider ideas that it has not in the past. We must keep this pressure up so that we can get a Master Agreement that our teachers and students deserve.

### March for Schools Students Deserve

On Thursday, September 21, after school lets out, we will March for Schools Students Deserve! Hold the date on your calendars. More details to come soon.
Welcome New Educators!
Welcome to the 444 new DPS teachers and SSPs who joined DCTA in the past few weeks! We have enjoyed our time with new members who already joined us at bargaining this summer and can’t wait to get to know you all better. DCTA is a family, here to support teachers and elevate the teaching professional. Don’t hesitate to contact your DCTA leaders or staff. We are so glad you are with us!

And thank you to everyone who volunteered during New Educator Institute two weeks ago. You did a tremendous job of introducing new teachers to their union and building strength.

Are you an Early Career Educator?
Rise Up is a diverse and active group of early career educators providing practical and emotional supports. We are active, social justice-oriented educators working to engage and empower others in advocating for our students and communities! Come join teachers from across the district and let’s work together to be the change we want to see for our students!

Rise Up Happy Hour, Friday, August 25
Celebrate surviving your first week of students with us at Ace Eat Serve on Friday, August 25 starting at 4pm. The first 10 new educators who arrive will receive a free drink! Add Rise Up Happy Hour to your Facebook calendar.

Rise Up Meeting, Tuesday, September 5
Our first meeting of the 2017-2018 school year is at 5pm on Tuesday, September 5 at the Colorado Education Association/DCTA building, 1500 Grant Street. All early career educators are welcome! Click here to RSVP.

Were you a Non-Probationary teacher in another Colorado district last year? Transfer your Non-Probationary Status now!

Why is having non-probationary status important? State law says Probationary teachers can be non-renewed (laid off), for no reason as long as it is not illegal (such as discrimination). If a Probationary Teacher's job is cut, the district owes them no help in finding another position. A Non-Probationary teacher in good standing can only lose their position because the school had to reduce positions – not just because administration would prefer someone else. The district owes a Non-Probationary teacher a 12 month placement if he/she is unable to find a new position on his/her own. Probationary teachers must get 3 consecutive years of effective ratings and return to the same district for the 4th year in order to gain non-probationary status. Even if you have accepted a job at an innovation school, you should port your Non-Probationary Status.

Click here to learn how to transfer your Non-Probationary Status!

Call the DCTA Hotline for advice at (303) 243-5221. Remember, you only have 30 days!