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DCTA Elections—Call for Nominations

We look forward to active participation in our election process to promote growth and build the strength of our union. If you are interested in running for a position or nominating a fellow member, fill out and submit the Nomination Form below. Nominations will be accepted February 27 through March 16.

2018 DCTA Election Nomination Form
2018 DCTA Election Calendar

Understanding the RiB Process

The Reduction in Building Staff (RiB) season is upon us, and DCTA wants to make sure that our members understands the process for RiBs.

A RiB happens when the CSC determines that fewer DCTA bargaining unit assignments are needed in a department, grades level, or ELA/specialty department. This decision may occur because of:

- Reduction in funds—usually because student enrollment is projected to be lower next school year; OR
- Change of program (funds may not actually be less). (For example, the CSC decides that instead of dance, they will offer visual arts next year. Consequently, the dance teachers will be RiBed.)

Once that happens, the Personnel Committee establishes the “consideration group” of current teachers who will be considered for the reduction.

A couple of important points on Consideration Groups:

- Group may be grade level, department, or specialty area.
- Group should be defined as narrowly as possible, based on program needs.
- A teacher can only belong to one Consideration Group. If a teacher splits her/his time in two different positions (i.e. second and third grade), the teacher declares her/his consideration group at the beginning of the year. The teacher then is only part of that consideration group. Neither the principal, nor HR can make this decision.
- The Personnel Committee will notify the affected consideration group as soon as possible. (continued on page 5)
Having walked many teachers through the humiliating process of being put on administrative leave at my school this year, I started scrutinizing the protocol, process and procedure in an effort to advocate for teachers as much as possible. What I found was a process fraught with little due process for the individual teacher, a system designed by administration to protect administration and a system that is being misused by parents. What is lost in this process is the humanity, dignity, and rights of teachers – along with the needs of students who suffer while their teachers are out on leave.

The district has been very clear in the past about how parents should register a teacher complaint (from the DPS website "Family and Community Engagement"):

**Have a Concern?**
We recognize how important it is to support your children. Whether there is an issue with your child’s grades, bullying, or other concern, there are common questions that parents ask.

**Who should I contact first?**
If your concern is with a teacher, speak with them first. If you are unable to resolve the issue, contact the school principal. Please remember that school leaders have very full schedules and may not be available to talk with you at your convenience.

**What if the teacher or principal are unable to help?**
We encourage families to work to resolve issues at the school level first. If you cannot come to a positive agreement, please contact the Family and Community Helpline at (720) 423-3054.

If the protocol were followed as stated above most of the incidences that are today resulting in many teachers being placed on leave would be resolved at the school level, and no interruption in classroom curriculum would result.

Unfortunately, the problem is exacerbated when parents circumvent building administration to place a “formal complaint” through HR. All teachers know and agree this protocol is set up in this manner to protect students from a teacher who has received an especially egregious complaint and subsequently to complete a full investigation of the incident. Unfortunately, many parents feel administrations “protect” teachers in such a way that the teacher will not fully feel the wrath of their anger. These parents go directly to the hotline and this is where the abuse begins as you have people outside the building who know nothing about the teacher, student’s history or school culture. Recently, this has been the case at many schools although many of the complaints are in regard to basic student behavior, classroom grades and/or behavior of a student to other students.

Some of the complaints that parents bring forward describe a scenario where the teacher is involved in correcting student behavior and/or attempting to have the student get work in and on time. Most teachers are involved in this scenario on a daily basis and it describes a crucial step to student success. A huge problem is generated however, when the angry student describes the confrontation with their parent and the parent feels appropriate action will not be taken by the building admin and so they go over the heads of building personnel (continued on page 6)

**Special Education Changes**
Changes are coming to the Special Education Department. Would you like to attend a forum to discuss these changes with the District and how they will impact the work you do? Email the DCTA office and let us know!
Susana Cordova Speaking at DCTA Board Meeting on Tuesday

The next DCTA Board Meeting is Tuesday, February 13 at 4:45 pm on the 4th floor of the DCTA/CEA Building (1500 Grant St). Susana Cordova, DPS Deputy Superintendent, will be there to speak about School Performance Framework (SPF). DCTA board meetings are open to members, and we encourage you to attend to hear what she has to say.

We will be providing food to those who RSVP, so please click here to RSVP.

Have your voice heard! Take the 15 minute TLCC Survey! (formerly TELL Colorado)

Your Principal or AR has your “ticket code” needed to fill out this survey. Once you have the code, you can take the survey online. If your principal will not give you the code, contact the DCTA office!

The Teaching & Learning Conditions Colorado survey closes on February 23 and so far, only 4% of DPS employees have completed it. TLCC is an anonymous and confidential survey for Colorado’s school-based staff to share perceptions of teaching and learning conditions. This is the one opportunity teachers have to join together and provide reliable data to our schools, districts, and state policymakers on our teaching and learning conditions. Unlike Collaborate, this survey was not created by DPS, asks the types of questions teachers need to answer and allows comparison across districts (and states, as well). We want every teacher’s voice to be heard to let policymakers know what you need to do your job well. Learn more about TLCC online.

Schools with 50% participation can win money!—CEA will hold two weekly drawings of $150 for all schools with members that have reached 50% participation in the TLCC survey. The drawings will be held Jan. 31, Feb. 7, Feb. 14 and Feb. 21. A fifth drawing will be held Feb. 28 if the survey window is extended. Additionally, a $500 final grand prize drawing will be held after the survey closes for one school that has reached 95% participation in the TLCC survey.

Frequently Asked Questions
TLCC Fact Sheet

2018 Taxes

Union dues are tax-deductible: If you itemize, you can include all but $89.00 ($7.42 per month) from your dues in your deductions.

Do you qualify for free tax preparation? Find out if you’re eligible for free tax preparation assistance and keep more of your hard-earned money.

Are you missing out on these educator tax deductions? Read this before you file your tax return.

Use member-only discounts on tax prep software: Click here to learn more about discounts from H&R Block and TurboTax.
The Bylaws vote passed with 95% approval last week.

Students Protest District Funding Cuts

Students at the Denver Center for International Studies protested district budget cuts by walking out on Wednesday, January 31st. Students took their protest to the Central Office building to request more district funding to support the mission and vision of their school.
Save the Date—Salute to Excellence in Education Scholarship and Awards Gala

The Education Center presents the 9th annual Salute to Excellence in Education Scholarship and Awards Gala—a program to honor educators of color. The Gala is on Friday, March 2 at 7:00 pm at the DoubleTree Hilton Hotel Denver (3203 Quebec St). DCTA will purchase tickets for five teachers/SSPs to attend the event. Would you like to join us there? Email Henry Roman to let him know by February 23...

For more information about the Gala, call 720-326-5176 or visit www.theeductr.com.

Rise Up! NW Happy Hour
Thursday, February 8, 4:30 pm—6:00 pm

Calling all early career educators (8 years of experience or less): Join us for appetizers and happy hour drink specials at "Bout Time Pub & Grill (3392 W 38th Ave).

The first 10 people will get a free drink!

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!

(Understanding the RiB Process continued from page 1)

- The Personnel Committee must interview every teacher in the consideration group. Teachers not in the consideration group do not interview for their positions.
- Teachers in the consideration group who are on leave are still subject to being RiBed.

Once the Consideration Group has been notified, the Personnel Committee will ask for any volunteers. If there are no volunteers, the Personnel Committee will interview all teachers in the consideration group and then make the decision based on the procedure that they have created and provided, in writing. The decision on who to RiB will be made by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, the principal will make the decision.

It is also important to note that:

1) Teachers in the consideration group should be allowed to interview for any vacancy in the school that is posted through the in-building bidding process.

2) If it is determined that a specific reduction is no longer necessary (at any time between the RiB and the conclusion of fall adjustment for the subsequent school year), the reduced teacher has the first right of refusal to his/her former position.

If you have any questions or concerns about your school’s RiB process, please refer to Article 13-10, or reach out to us. Keep in mind that if your school is an innovation school, you may have waived this process. Be sure to check your innovation plan for details.
directly to the district. Many parents are using specific language quoted from Denver Public Schools Board policy JB-R-1 when making a complaint. The policy describes explicit “harassing” behavior that is very detrimental to the learning environment - behaviors that an experienced teacher would never use.

As the teacher is being placed on leave they are told that they cannot contact any students, parents, administrators or teachers from their school – basically being “excommunicated” from their professional life – while the administrators undertake a tedious investigation of the teacher’s actions. Unfortunately, other complaints may come to light through the active investigation as administrators ask open-ended questions to students and parents alike leading to, in many cases, years of previous behavior of the teacher being scrutinized as well. Our DCTA contract states:

11-2-3 At the teacher’s request a meeting will be held within three (3) school days. The purpose of the meeting is to give the teacher an opportunity to respond. The teacher may have Association representation at the meeting.

11-2-4 The investigation will be completed as expeditiously as possible. If an investigation must extend beyond seven (7) calendar days, or if the administrative leave must be extended, the teacher and the Association will be notified by phone calls from the Department of Human Resources or designee the reasons for the extension and the expected date of completion of the investigation and/or leave.

Much of the time a meeting cannot be held within 3 days because the investigation is just getting underway. The investigations are exhaustive and time consuming, much of the time taking the building administration’s attention off things that are crucial for the healthy maintenance of the school. Many of the investigations consume 2 to 3 weeks, but in the case of 2 teachers in my building it lasted 3 months. When the teacher is finally asked to come in and respond many times they are completely unaware of the scope of the questions and surprised at complaints they are hearing for the first time. Rarely will the district interview anyone suggested by the teacher. The way the administrative leave process is currently being implemented is reckless and destructive, often when unfairly destroying a teacher’s career.

Don’t forget that while a teacher is on leave, curriculum usually comes to a halt in their classroom as the students and parents wonder what happened to their vanished teacher.

We all know that there needs to be a fair, robust process to investigate serious allegations of abuse and keep our students safe. But, we cannot continue to let this process be used as a tool against good teachers who are setting high expectations for their students. Teachers need to stand up, come together, and get serious about fighting for a better admin leave process. Please contact Uniserv Director Brock Grosso if you are interested in talking more about this.

Want to know what is happening in the State Legislature? Text @dctapol to 81010 to receive political updates!
School Visits

**Café Chihuahua Open House**
Wednesday, February 21, 4—6 pm
2250 S Federal Blvd
Hill Middle School
Wednesday, March 7, 4-6pm
451 Clermont St

**'Bout Time Pub & Grub Open House**
Wednesday, February 28, 4—6 pm
3392 W 38th Ave

**CANCELED—GVR Beer Garden Open House**
Wednesday, March 14, 4—6 pm

**Regional Open Houses**

Drop in to an open house near you to receive current information about your new contract, upcoming ProComp negotiations, etcetera from a Uniserv Director. Have your voice heard and join the conversation for what matters most for our students.

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(Latest Compensation Bargaining Session [continued from page 4])

“What’s more,” said DCTA team member Rob Gould, “is this would be a great way to validate that we have great schools in every neighborhood.”

Up next was a much-needed conversation focused on how any new compensation agreement could better aid the needs of filling hard-to-staff positions across the district. Today, many SSP positions are contracted out due to the challenge of finding personnel with the qualifications and desire to work within a school district environment. Many of these roles, both teams noted, are difficult to fill because qualified applicants can find more financially rewarding work elsewhere in the private sector.

Contracting out SSP work weakens the power of those SSPs that are hired by the district, DCTA argued. In addition, the current practice requiring some SSPs to work in multiple schools throughout the week makes these individuals less effective in their roles – and less satisfied in their positions, which creates unproductive turnover rates. Some potential solution options discussed included creating tiered levels of incentives for particular roles based on education levels or other factors.

In order to fully discuss the issue, DCTA suggested additional data was needed on retention and recruitment rates for specific roles, as well as retention trends for both SSPs and teachers. DPS committed to  ([continued on page 8])
obtaining this data for further discussion.

**The next Bargaining Session is on Wednesday, February 7 from 5:00 pm to 9 pm at the Acoma Campus (1617 S. Acoma St).** There are only 3 sessions left—Wednesday, February 7; Monday, February 26; and Wednesday, March 14.

***Contact your UD Kate Martin, Alizay Furtado, or Brock Grosso to schedule a meeting to discuss a new teacher compensation system in DPS. Changes are being bargained now, and it is imperative that you know where we are headed on YOUR compensation system.***

With Valentine’s Day around the corner, we want to remind you that as NEA members, you receive 20% off at all the 1800FLOWERS.com® family of brands. [Click here to learn more.](#)