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Lobby your Elected Officials

As you can see from the following items on parental notification and PERA, it is vital that you take the time to speak with your Colorado legislators.

DCTA Lobby Day will be Wednesday, February 7. If you are passionate about educating Colorado legislators regarding students and teachers’ needs, join us as we talk with them in person. These one on one conversations will help shape policy discussions around hot topics for 2018, including proposed PERA changes.

Participants will meet at 8:00 am at the CEA Building (1500 Grant St) with many other Associations and receive a briefing from CEA political staff. After a Q & A session, members will walk over to the State Capitol to flood the building with constituents promoting the needs of public education. Click here to RSVP.

Parental Notification

This year it is imperative that you monitor proposed Colorado legislation and take action when needed. School funding, teacher shortage issues, and changes to PERA are all on the agenda. But there is another important issue that needs to be addressed. Some legislators are considering legislation that would demonize teachers and remove your due process rights. While it is legitimate that we address student safety any parental notification legislation must respect the right of teachers to due process.

In 2011 CEA opposed and challenged a parental notification rule adopted by the Colorado Board of Education. This rule would have mandated a broad notification to parents when any educator was charged with a criminal offense. CEA successfully argued that the State Board overstepped its rulemaking authority when it required parental notification for a list of criminal charges which was overbroad, including non-school related charges such as driving under the influence of alcohol, and the rule was overturned.

The legislature can strike a balance on this issue that does right by students, educators and parents. CEA’s governmental relations and legal teams will assist lawmakers in crafting legislative language that does not interfere with ongoing criminal investigations, protects the safety of our students, and observes the due process rights of educators. Please contact us with questions on parental notification bills moving through the legislature and how you can support a parental notification law that promotes student safety and protects educator rights.

- CEA is committed to maintaining the financial stability of members’ retirement funds through a defined benefit program. Any efforts to destabilize or dismantle it, including through a new or hybrid defined-contribution program, would be opposed.

- CEA will work towards PERA reforms to close the amortization period to within 39 years if possible. (half of current 78 year amortization period for School Division)

- All PERA stakeholders – The state, current and future employees, retirees and employers – must all contribute to the stabilization of PERA either through or via PERA Reforms.

- Employees should not be asked to contribute more to PERA during their time as current/active employees than the costs of their retirement benefits. (technically known as normal costs)

- Any solution should help districts meet GASB (Governmental Accounting Standards Board) standards and maintain or improve bond ratings.

- Any discussion around increasing the retirement age must account for the increased workload on educators that extends well beyond school hours and respective classroom environments for students.

- CEA supports the concept of an “auto-adjustment” provision as long as all PERA stakeholders are involved in each adjustment or “click” and that each “click” is gradual to prevent wild swings from year to year.

PERA Legislative Update

The PERA “fix” bill has not yet been drafted, however, Senate Republicans are adamant in drafting a “PERA Board Plus” bill that includes a new defined-contribution (DC) or 401k style retirement system in for new employees. This would further undermine PERA rather than improving the financial health of the PERA system. This is actually an attack on educator pay, since PERA is part of an educator’s compensation package. Studies by both the legislature and the State Auditor found that a PERA Defined Benefit program provides a better retirement benefit than a DC system regardless of whether you were in PERA for 5 years, 15 years or 30 years.

What can you do? Take Action—Converse with legislators, local influencers, the general public or friends and family, or better yet write a Letter to the Editor on:

- How valuable a Defined-Benefit retirement system is to an educators’ compensation package as deferred pay. Attacks on the DB system should be opposed as it is an attack on educator pay.

- The economic impact of PERA in our communities. $6.1 BILLION in economic output helps sustain 32,800 jobs. $271M in tax revenue for our schools, roads, etc.

- How the state helped put us in this mess by underfunding PERA by $4.5 BILLION since 2001. While the state paid their statutory obligation, they did *not* pay their actuarially required contribution (ARC) or now actuarially determined contribution (ADC) that fluctuates from year to year.

(continued on page 3)
How PERA was 100% funded around 2000 then Gov. Owens offered years of service for pennies on the dollar partly leading to retirements we see today.

That PERA is *not* running out of money unlike 2010 when Senate Bill 1 was needed to ensure solvency. We are however actively seeking solutions now to minimize the risk associated with a trajectory of the PERA Fund being below 20% funded and an amortization period of 78 years in the school division. BUT any solution has to account for the impact on real people and communities. Again, see our CEA Guiding Principles for more.

The PERA Board met their statutory and fiduciary responsibility by proposing their package of reforms. HOWEVER, the legislature can account for the human impact of changes to PERA – how it affects 500,000 Coloradans directly – and pass a reasonable solution that minimizes the pain felt by all.

**DCTA Elections are Approaching**

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, stay tuned for materials coming soon. Nominations will be accepted February 27 through March 16.

**Innovation Schools Voting to Approve New Plans—Have you seen your new plan yet?**

According to the new language in the DPS/DCTA contract, all teachers should receive the new plan AT LEAST 2 WEEKS before the staff vote on the plan.

**Does your Innovation Plan throw away your right to non-probationary status?**

Make sure you take the full 2 weeks to read your innovation plan before voting on it. Innovation Plans need to be voted on by Wednesday, February 21 so they can be sent to the Denver School Board for action at the 2/22 School Board Meeting.

1. When a vote of employees is required to approve a new innovation plan and its associated waivers or renew an innovation plan:
   a. The school shall provide the final version of the school’s innovation plan including all waivers to all teachers two weeks or more prior to a staff vote on such plan; and
   b. The vote should be administered in-person by means of a secret ballot to confirm that greater than 50% of the bargaining unit employees (60% if collective bargaining agreement waivers are included in the innovation plan) approve the innovation plan and waivers that apply to them; however, the school can provide an alternate method for teachers who are not in the building during the day of the vote to cast their ballot; and
   c. Prior to the vote, the school shall send the innovation plan to the school’s Association representative with an invitation for a DCTA representative to observe the secret ballot voting process. Communication may be sent to the DCTA President, Henry Roman at Henry_Roman@dpsk12.org;

Read the complete August 31, 2017 MOU posted on our website.
Have your voice heard!—TLCC Survey launches Wednesday

The Teaching & Learning Conditions Colorado (formerly TELL Colorado) is an anonymous and confidential survey for Colorado’s school-based staff to share perceptions of teaching and learning conditions. This year it has been reduced to only take about 15 minutes and can be completed in one or multiple sessions online, even from your mobile devices. TLCC is from the state and it’s the only data source Colorado has on school 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. We want every teacher voice to be heard to let policymakers know what you need to do your job well. Learn more about TLCC online.

School Visits

Last Friday: We spent time at Barnum, Cheltenham, DCIS Montbello, Doull, Holm, Place Bridge, Sandra Todd-Williams ECE, South, Stephen Knight, and Traylor.

This week: We will be visiting Colfax Elementary, Denver School of the Arts, Emily Griffith, Grant Beacon, Grant Ranch, Hallett, Lake, Skinner, South, Summit, and Teller.

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.

Café Chihuahua Open House
Wednesday, January 24, 4—6 pm
2250 S Federal Blvd

Hill Middle School Open House
Wednesday, February 7—CANCELED due to Bargaining that evening

‘Bout Time Pub & Grub Open House
Wednesday, January 31, 4—6 pm
3392 W 38th Ave

GVR Beer Garden Open House
Wednesday, February 14—CANCELED for Valentine’s Day

Susan McHugh, AP Government & Politics teacher at East High School, and DCTA member, was on 9 News last Thursday evening to answer questions about a government shutdown. Click here to watch the video!
Schedule New Compensation Presentation for your School
The ProComp Agreement now expires in 51 days, on 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.***

The next Bargaining Session will be on Tuesday, January 30 from 5 pm to 9 pm at the Acoma Campus (1617 S. Acoma St). February and March session dates are on Wednesday, February 7; Thursday, February 22; and Wednesday, March 14.

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**Last Week’s Mindfulness Workshop**

Last Thursday, 25 teachers came together for Rise Up’s Mindfulness Workshop at Lincoln Elementary School. DCTA members learned about stress management and mindfulness techniques from Kaiser Permanente’s wonderful trainers. Teachers left the room feeling more equipped to manage stress, both inside and outside their classroom. A special thanks to Jennifer Holtzmann and Rachel Sandoval from the Rise Up! committee for their hard work on this event. Be on the lookout for more Rise Up! events and reach out to Jennifer at if you are an early career educator who would like to get more involved in the committee’s work.

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“We are the collective voice lifting up the individual.”

SAG-AFTRA president Gabrielle Carteris gave an impassioned speech at the 2018 Screen Actors Guild Awards this past Sunday, "Unions play a significant role in the lives of workers across the country. Our commitment to safe workplaces, inclusion, and creative and economic equality; these are the things that make us stronger”, Carteris said. "We are the collective voice lifting up the individual."

[Click here to watch her entire speech on YouTube.](#)