Teacher Voice Overwhelming: Let’s Walkout

Yesterday, after the overwhelming results of the walkout survey, DCTA announced that we are asking teachers to take a half-day on April 27 to walkout and rally for public education funding at the state level. Much like in West Virginia, Kentucky, and Oklahoma, teachers in Colorado are frustrated with the levels of education funding from the state, because every year, our students go without the resources they need.

Our schools should start conversations with their principals now in order to make this walkout a success. Teachers should notify their principal, in writing, that they will be absent on the afternoon of April 27. We encourage all teachers to read our FAQ and RSVP for the rally. We are still working with the District to determine the type of leave teachers should use and will notify everyone once we have that information.

Finally, for those teachers planning on attending the Shakespeare Festival, know that that event will not be impacted. We encourage you to go to the Shakespeare Festival, wear red if you are able, and come to the rally after the event if you can.
The Two Campaigns
In public education, there is rarely an opportunity to focus on one venue to solve a problem. Currently, we are in the middle of negotiations for a new compensation system. Teachers in Denver are underpaid and undervalued as professionals. Although having a fair compensation system is important, we have to recognize that this problem is really a double-pronged issue.

We have heard two arguments during negotiations, both last year during the Master Agreement negotiations, and this year during compensation bargaining. The first issue, which has been a major issue of discussion for the DCTA Bargaining Team, is the issue of how the District allocates the money it receives from the state. We strongly believe that the District has the wrong budget priorities. We see more administration each year and more resources poured into experimentation with school governance structures, and not enough resources used to directly impact the classroom. This includes how teachers get paid. DPS must change its priorities. It will take Teacher/SSP work actions to make that happen.

The second issue, which both the DCTA Bargaining Team and DPS have raised, is the big picture issue with the level of funding for public education in Colorado. Despite being one of the richest states in the country, we lag far behind the national average in funding our schools. This issue is also very real and very important. To truly make the change we need to see in DPS, we have to attack both of these issues and not just focus on one.

For that reason, we are running two concurrent campaigns. The first began in November and will continue until we get a new compensation system. In the last month, you have been asked about your willingness to strike in order to get a fair compensation system, and you’ve been asked to take action at your school to support the bargaining team. This campaign will not end until DPS teachers ratify a new compensation system.

The second campaign is aimed at increasing education funding at the state level. While there is no direct correlation between this campaign and the first, the fact is that the amount of funding the District receives does impact its ability to pay teachers more. This campaign is the focus of the walkout scheduled for April 27.

In order to be successful, teacher voice needs to be heard both at the District level and at the state level. Making change at both levels is the surest way to make the change our students need. Our teachers need more money, and so do DPS schools.

Do You need Re-Certification Credits?
Learn how to teach Black History with a focus on Colorado! You can earn 6 credit hours (90 clock hours) in one semester and learn about Colorado’s African American History! It starts with a ½ day workshop in Denver, visiting the Black Cowboy Museum, the Denver Main Library historical archives and the Blair Caldwell Historical Library. Then you will visit the UNC campus and tour Dearfield. The next tour is to the Pikes Peak area to see where African Americans lived near Colorado Springs. At the final full-day workshop you will share materials, write lesson plans and discuss your journals.

To register: Ask for Dr. Sills-Brown at 720-326-5176 or go to www.TheEduCtr.com

Retiring Teachers---Join DCTA-R!
Attention: Free Membership for one year!

Are you planning to retire? We have a deal for you!

The DCTA-Retired advisory council just approved (for a limited time) your first year free when you sign-up as a new member.

If you or someone you know is retiring, contact Susan Pinkney-Todd, DCTA-R treasurer, to receive your first year as a DCTA-Retired member for free. (NEA/CEA membership is not included in this offer).

Click here for the DCTA-R Membership form.

Open Enrollment for Health Benefits!
You must elect your healthcare options starting April 23 – May 11. This year all employees who are eligible for benefits must either select or waive benefits regardless of whether or not they intend to make changes. Go to this site for more information: http://thecommons.dpsk12.org/openenrollment
DPS Would Like to Know How You Feel About Changes to the School Calendar

If you had additional comments regarding the calendar that you feel you were not able to express, including issues with the holiday break schedule, you can also click here to email the DCTA representative on the calendar committee, Robert Gould.
April Rep Council

Rep Council is tonight at DCIS Baker from 4:30 pm—6 pm. All are encouraged to attend. Come hear what’s next for job actions! This is an opportunity to return your building’s completed ballots.

DCTA Elections: All ballots have been distributed. Your building should have held its election or should be holding an election now. Completed ballots MUST be returned to the DCTA office by 6pm on Wednesday, April 18th to be counted. Please be sure to include your sign in sheets with the ballots!

Volunteers needed for New Educator Welcome!

If you enjoy meeting new educators and helping them understand the importance of union membership, come to the New Educator Welcome Event on July 30, 2018. It is an exciting event, where we get our first opportunity to welcome hundreds of new educators into the DCTA family. We have raffles, lunch on the lawn and offer free drinks at The Limelight! Let’s continue to grow our membership as we continue to fight for our new compensation system! Please email us if you are interested.

Association Representative Training

Want to really know your contract, what was recently added at bargaining, how to help with work actions to improve teacher pay and education funding? Then take a union day on Wednesday, April 25th and attend Rep Training at the PipeFitters Hall, 6350 Broadway from 9 am – 3 pm. Click here to RSVP so we know to send your secretary a leave form to cover your substitute.

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Support for African-American Educators?

DPS recently sent you a list of upcoming events and opportunities to become involved with the African-American Equity Task Force: celt.dpsk12.org. If you are on this Task Force or are attending the April 20-21 CBRT Black Community Mobilization Weekend, the April 30 ED Talk, or the May 1-2 Equity Boot Camp, please let us know by emailing DCTA@Coloradoea.org. We would like to know what resources are available to our students and would like to review district supports for our educators of color.

2ND ANNUAL
SANCTUARY SCHOOLS SUMMIT

SCHOOLS COMMITTEE | IMMIGRATION RESISTANCE TABLE
SATURDAY, MAY 5
8:30-1:00
DCIS FAIRMONT

We are coming together to explore what schools are already doing to support their immigrant families. We will leave knowing and feeling confident in next steps for improvement.

The Immigration Resistance Table is holding its 2nd annual Sanctuary Schools Summit at DCIS at Fairmont on May 5th from 8:30-1pm. Please send questions to and RSVP with Rachel Sandoval.