Welcome Back to School SVVEA Members!

I trust that your transition from summer time back to school is going well for you and your family and for your students. Enjoy the long Labor Day weekend – you’ve earned a short break before the school year really begins to take off.

**MASTER AGREEMENT  Know Your Rights:**

**CLASS SIZES**   Your school’s schedule may be changing, perhaps as additional FTE is allocated to address class sizes. Or maybe your school has a good case for adding FTE but the need hasn’t been addressed. Our negotiated Master Agreement has language (Article 8.13, p.17; see link below) for a process to address this type of building issue. Please contact SVVEA if you do not think this process is being followed or you find it ineffective at your school.

**MASTER AGREEMENT   SVVEA - SVVSD**   Members’ copies for this year are almost completed by the printer. They will distributed by your school’s Association Representative(s) later this month. You can always access the 2015-16 Master Agreement online under SVVEA Documents in [Member Resources](http://svvea.org/?page_id=107) on our website [svvea.org](http://svvea.org/).  On our website you can also find a copy of the negotiated changes to the Master Agreement for this year. Read a summary of your Negotiations Team’s bargaining with the District/Board of Ed in “Tentative Agreement Reached” as well as the “Memorandum of Understanding” of revisions and the new salary schedule approved by SVVEA members last May. You’ll find these documents under [Member Updates](http://svvea.org/?page_id=319) on the website.

**STAFF MEETING TIME**   Master Agreement Article 8.10, p.16.  NOTE: The Memorandum of Understanding for the past two years regarding the 29 hours of additional collaborative time *has expired* by agreement between SVVEA and SVVSD. New for this year, an additional hour has been added to each of seven months throughout the year as *teacher-directed* collaborative time related to professional responsibilities. This time is truly teacher-directed. Unlike the past MOU, your school’s Leadership Team is *not* determining topics for teams or committees, nor is there any requirement to document this time (the stipend for this expired).

Beyond your contractual days, two hours per month of supervisor-directed staff meeting time for topics related to school/district goals returns this year. While this time is supervisor directed, as is the monthly Late Start time, your school’s Leadership Team should have developed a “general plan” for the anticipated use of these meeting times. A general plan provides teachers an idea of where their school is headed with professional development for the school year. It should list meeting dates, times and anticipated topics. During meetings you should be provided the purpose and objectives for information presented and tasks completed, just as you provide these for your students. It’s best practice for learning.  Finally, supervisor-directed meeting time does not mean that your school administrators must conduct all professional development. In fact, teacher leadership of professional development is often best!

Master Agreement language regarding staff meeting times and Collaborative Decision Making was reviewed with principals during their Districtwide Leadership Council meeting in early August. They should be familiar with these school-level expectations.

**COLLABORATIVE DECISION MAKING**   Master Agreement Article 39, p.44.   SVVEA and the District agree that collaborative decision making is necessary for effective professional practice in our schools. How collaborative is your staff regarding school decisions that affect you? Is your voice represented through your school’s leadership team? Check out the collaborative language and see how your school measures up to it.  Don’t hesitate to let us know if you feel your school is not meeting collaborative decision making expectations, or if you have any questions about this process.

**FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act)** If you are taking time off for the birth of a child or an adoption, time for bonding, or perhaps if you have to deal with extended illness of you or a family member, contact SVVEA for clarification of your rights before you contact Benefits in Human Resources. Have the facts you need when you apply for this leave.

**OTHER NEWS:**

**District Health Insurance Advisory Committee**    This advisory group, consisting of members from employee groups throughout the District, meets four times per year. Currently, there is *an opening* needing to be filled by *a teacher who participates in the Kaiser health plan*.   Email Trip if you have an interest in serving on this committee. The next meetings are scheduled for Wednesday, Sept.9, 4:30-5:30 and Tuesday, Sept.29, 4:30-6:30 pm at the ESC. This is an outstanding opportunity to learn how health insurance may best benefit District employees. Provide recommendations for how the District’s health care dollars and benefits should be allocated.

**SVVEA MEMBERSHIP**    Our number continues to climb above last year’s, with membership pushing past 70%. We had a very successful New Teacher Orientation recruiting event thanks to the many member volunteers. We had a strong early enrollment last spring and membership forms come in almost daily. Please help with the recruitment of colleagues who are potential members. Encourage them to join us in supporting efforts to continue investment in the new salary schedule, maintaining protections detailed in the Master Agreement, and making a difference by promoting public education and our profession. SVVEA is the only professional educators’ organization that truly makes a difference in the St. Vrain Valley School District.

Look for the SVVEA Member Update next week covering hotly contested school board elections in nearby districts. This is a watershed election year for two neighboring school districts, whose outcomes have definite implications for SVVEA and SVVSD, and for every other large school district in Colorado and their local education associations. ELECTIONS MATTER. You can contribute to positive outcomes for our neighboring school districts in need during their elections. Find out how next week.

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