**From:** Merklein, Trip [CO]
**Sent:** Monday, May 23, 2011 12:28 PM
**Subject:** Member Update 5/23

SVVEA Colleagues:

As it has been for you, the last few weeks have been extraordinarily busy for me as we close out the school year.

**Advocating for Teachers** - Fran Docherty, your UniServe Director, and I have been working non-stop to support dozens of teachers with a variety of year-end matters: non-renewals, district-initiated transfers, principals reassigning teachers within buildings, improper procedures followed for evaluations, poorly written summative evaluations, recommendations for improvement plans and remediation, and denials for leave requests, among others. We have been meeting continuously with affected teachers, their principals, and often with Human Resources. What has been consistent is the inconsistency of how principals handle these issues. If principals closely followed the Master Agreement and the Supervision and Evaluation Guidelines many of these concerns could have been prevented. Fran and I will be sitting down with HR in early June to address how many of these problems can be prevented next year.

**Negotiations** - Your Negotiation Team appreciates the input and support members have provided throughout the process this spring. Details about the Tentative Agreement for 2011-12 were emailed last week and ballots for the ratification vote are in buildings. Check with you AR for information. It is a short ballot turnaround with results emailed to members no later than this Friday, 5/27, to district email addresses. If you would like to receive a home email, please contract our office manager, Kay Burkett. Burkett.kburkett@coloradoea.org

**Job Postings for Internal Candidates** - Overall, there is no other way to describe this year’s building staffing plans and job postings than inexcusably delayed and chaotic. District officials have blamed the state budget problems, but I am not convinced this is the case. Partly, at least, seems to be the BOE’s decision to raise class sizes at the middle and high school levels. If you are in Special Education or in a building where the process has been particularly flawed, you understand firsthand the tension the delay has created. There are additional implications for teachers wanting to transfer to another building.

HR Ast. Supt. David Burnison emailed last Wednesday, 5/18, about the first classroom teaching postings. Take special note of this information he provided for internal candidates (renewed probationary and non-probationary teachers): “ . . .  apply for transfer consideration by selecting the “Apply” tab and following the on-line instructions to *complete the minimum application information*.” [Emphasis added.] <http://www.applitrack.com/stvrain/onlineapp/>  You are guaranteed an interview. Keep in mind that there will be a ripple effect created as internal candidates are hired at a different schools, so continue to check postings daily through the summer. Among the negative aspects of these delayed postings is teachers’ input in their schools’ hiring process may be reduced because of conflicts with summer plans.

**State Sen, Rollie Heath’s 2011 Ballot Initiative**

You may have heard of the petition efforts to gather signatures to get this initiative on the November 2011 ballot. It would raise corporate and personal income and sales tax rates to 1999 levels for five years, beginning in January 2012. This initiative has many merits, but CEA has chosen to put its efforts into a 2012 ballot initiative that would provide a permanent fix, supported by the “Take the Lead” campaign that will kick off in earnest next fall. (Details are in this year’s final SVVEA Bridge newsletter emailed tomorrow.) CEA polling shows minimal voter support for any 2011 tax increase measure and this initiative does not have the kind of coalition support that helped defeat the “Ugly 3” in November 2010.  Initiative campaigns are quite expensive and CEA believes that the best use of members’ dues is a 2012 initiative.

That said, Rollie’s initiative is truly a grassroots effort and members are encouraged to take part if they choose. Details about this proposal, where to sign a petition, and how to get actively involved over this summer (petitions are due August 1) are available at <http://www.greateducation.org/>

**Response to Times-Call Editorial** – In case you missed it, here is the link to the Saturday, 5/14, T-C editorial “CSAP results are a good foundation” <http://www.timescall.com/print.asp?ID=26960> . Below is my response to it printed on Thursday, 5/19.

**Teachers deserve credit for better CSAP scores**

Over the past couple of years the Times-Call has improved its coverage of our local public schools with prominent articles featuring positive stories of teachers’ and students’ academic achievements. However, this past Saturday’s editorial “CSAP results are a good foundation” misses the mark.

The editorial cites a number of factors, including the St.Vrain District’s new full-day kindergarten program, the Literacy by Design reading program, or the district doing a better job of teaching to the test, that may have individually or in combination resulted in the most significant improvement in third grade CSAP reading scores since the program’s inception in 1998. Teachers as a factor in these gains are mentioned directly only in the context of perhaps “having more success reaching students who are still learning English.”

While not disputing the effectiveness of a variety of new education programs and technology, none would have any potential to succeed without highly qualified teachers in the classrooms dedicating many extra hours beyond the school day. Programs and technology can’t operate independently of teachers or cultivate the interpersonal relationships essential to student success.  The professionals in the classroom are the foundation for the success of an extraordinarily diverse student population despite the increased micromanagement by non-educators in the state legislature and local school boards and central administrators who are far removed from the classroom.

In these times of limited budget resources which have led to increased class sizes and reduced classroom support personnel, those who determine the allocation of education resources should remember that in the final analysis, education’s success is far more about people, not programs.

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