**From:** Merklein, Trip [CO]
**Sent:** Monday, August 15, 2011 11:20 AM
**Cc:** Burkett, Kay [CO]; Docherty, Fran [CO]
**Subject:** SVVEA Back-to-School Update 8/15/11

Dear SVVEA Members,

Welcome back to a new school year!  I trust you have taken some summertime R&R for yourself and family – there is another challenging year ahead.

TEACHER WORK DAYS and TRAINING:

Whether today is your first day back at school, or you have already volunteered time for school-related matters, the next three days are clearly defined in revised Article 8.12 of the Master Agreement:

            “ . . . Teacher Work Days, *the use of which shall be determined by the teacher*. [However] during the first three (3) teacher work days, up to one and one half (1.5) hours may be used for staff meetings and up to three and one half (3.5) hours for district-directed professional development**/**collaboration . . . “

Many of you spent part of your summer taking district professional development courses, for which you should have been compensated with salary credit or $25 per hour. If you were unable to attend any essential training over your summer, contract time must be provided as per Article 13.1:

             “ . . . when the District implements a District-wide initiative (e.g. program, curriculum, and**/**or technology, . . .), the district shall provide training and appropriate time and/or compensation for such training. Compensation for any training outside of the contract day or year that is required by the District shall be paid pursuant to the hourly rate . . . “  Up to 3.5 hours over the next three Teacher Work Days may be used for training about the new email system, curriculum mapping, etc. The remainder of the time during these days shall be determined by you. Beginning in September, up to 2 hours of monthly professional development time (Art. 8.11), Late Start Days (8.13), or substitute release time, may be used to provide training for new initiatives.

As daily schedules are being developed and communicated, note that you should not have more than 2.5 hours of continuous instruction, duty, etc., without a break. This has been a concern at the elementary and middle levels in the past. Article 8.2 states:

            “Teachers shall not be assigned more than 150 consecutive minutes of student contact each work day.”

The 2011-12 Master Agreement has been proofed by SVVEA and only awaits final district approval. Updated hard copies will be printed and should be in all members’ and principals’ hands shortly.

NEWS ABOUT THE YEAR AHEAD:

Implementation of the new building level Collaborative Decision Making language will be an important focus for the upcoming year. This will present more of a challenge in some schools than others, but transparency in decision making is an essential element for establishing and maintaining trust in this new era of state mandated Educator Effectiveness (Colorado SB 191).

Also, the continuing work of our District Evaluation Task Force will become more important this year as full  implementation of SB 191 approaches for 2014-15.

Contract negotiations will begin early in the fall this year. With our Agreement set to expire June 30, 2012, it is crucial that membership be active and united. Please welcome our new members in your building and encourage potential members to join our Association. This is not the time to be passive as public education faces numerous threats.

Initiative 25, which would temporarily restore for five years corporate income, personal income, and sales tax rates to their 1999 levels to primarily benefit education, is likely to be on the ballot this November 1st.  CEA is joining the [Bright Colorado coalition](http://brightcolorado.com/) and SVVEA will be involved in efforts to pass this proposal.

School Board President John Creighton has stated a desire to maintain the community mandate from the 2008 mill-levy override. With a stagnant economy and Colorado’s public education funding crisis, the district’s promises to maintain reasonable class sizes, increase instructional programming for the 21st century, and establish competitive salaries, have been a challenge. SVVEA’s expectation is a balance among these promises, not an emphasis of programs over people.

I will continue advocating for teachers while furthering collaborative relationships to ensure you receive the essential support necessary to thrive professionally. That is best for you and our students.

I’m looking forward to working together for a great year ahead!

Trip Merklein

President

St. Vrain Valley Education Association

255 Weaver Park Road, Suite 202

Longmont, CO   80501

Office (303) 772-3666