

Dear SVVEA Member,

More than ever, I am firmly convinced that education is among the most difficult professions. I trust your summer plans exceeded expectations for rest and relaxation as we welcome students back to another new school year.

The updated Master Agreement for 2014-15 is currently available on our website at svvea.org under Member Resources. Individual member's copies are being printed and will be distributed through your building Association Representative(s) in early September.

In preparing for your students you may have participated in District summer professional development opportunities. In the following information you will find important changes to compensation for these activities as well as existing and revised Master Agreement language that is relevant as the year begins.

Teacher-Directed Work Days: During the first three (3) Teacher Work Days last week, from Wednesday through Friday, your principal/supervisor had up to 5 hours available for staff meetings and professional development activities. If this time was exceeded you may want to have a discussion with your administrator about how the extra time will be compensated: is it coming out of August building and/or teacher-directed collaborative time or being compensated at the hourly rate?

Two of your Work Days this year are "Flex Place", meaning reporting to school is optional on these two days. You should already know which calendar dates these two full work days are scheduled for your school.

Monthly Collaborative Meeting Time: This is the second and final year of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the \$1200 annual stipend for an additional 29 hours per year. (Up to 2 hours per month of professional development activities, with the exception of August, already existed prior to this MOU, and those hours were/are compensated as part of salary). Your feedback will be essential to any revisions, or even the continuation, of this MOU.

Using the Collaborative Decision Making Process of Article 39, your principal/supervisor and building leadership team should have completed (or should very soon) a general plan for the use of this monthly collaborative time. The general plan may be revised as needed throughout the year.

There are up to 5 hours of meeting time per month (except December; up to 2 hours), contiguous with the contract day:

2.5 hours are for building-level activities tied directly to school/district goals.

2.5 hours are teacher-directed collaborative meeting time. The topic(s) of the Teacher-Directed Collaborative Time are determined by your principal/supervisor and building leadership team, but the teachers of a group (e.g. committee, grade level team, department, etc.) determine *when* and *where* they will meet, along with *how* they will implement the plan for this time. This time is in addition to the seven hour contract day. Teacher-directed meetings may be scheduled during lunch as this is not a part of the seven hour contract day.

Hourly Rate: The hourly rate has increased to \$30/ hour, and in general it applies to work beyond the seven hour contracted day (e.g. existing co-curricular and extra-curricular duties, additional meeting time beyond the MOU, and a choice for some professional development compensation). NOTE: Other than the required MOU Collaborative Meeting Time, with few exceptions, attendance at meetings beyond the seven hour contract day is *optional* even when the hourly rate is offered.

Teachers reassigned by their principal/supervisor to a different classroom or transferred to a different building will be compensated for 7 hours at the hourly rate. Though the new Agreement did not go into effect until July 1st, this new language and hourly rate applies to a move required at the end of the 2013-14 school year (school renovations excepted). You should submit a time card as soon as possible if you meet the criteria for this compensation.

Compensation for Professional Development and Curriculum Committees – new Article 13 language The District and SVVEA agree that the implementation of ongoing curriculum development and professional development requires an investment of valuable time and incurs financial costs.

When the District designs, adopts and/or implements a District initiative, the District shall prioritize scheduling required Professional Development (PD) during contracted time (which includes PLC, faculty meetings, etc.). However, if training must occur outside contracted time, teachers shall be given the choice of compensation pursuant to the hourly rate OR district professional development credit.

Online Training required by the district, feeder system, or a grant driven program, scheduled outside contracted time, shall offer teachers the choice of hourly compensation or PD credit.

Voluntary Curriculum Committee work scheduled outside contracted time also offers choice of hourly compensation or PD credit.

Class Sizes/Case Loads: This week building principals and their Area Assistant Superintendents have been counting “butts in seats” to make adjustments to FTE. For the past few years the district relied on late hires in a conservative approach to projected growth. For this year there was more hiring in advance to match projected growth, but early indications are that most schools have experienced even more growth than the district anticipated. FTE requests from buildings will be considered by the Superintendent’s Cabinet next Tuesday, 8/26 and again on 9/9. The state’s October Count will also play into bringing up FTE to match actual growth. The superintendent has stated that priority will be given to elementary schools initially as secondary student numbers are more fluid at the beginning of the year, but do not let that stop you from speaking up early and often about your class size/case loads.

While we were unable to settle on exact class size numbers in negotiations, the new language in Article 8.13 is a step in the right direction. Please communicate with your building AR if you are unable to make head way resolving overloaded classrooms through this process as we will be gathering class size information through them. The SVVEA president is a part of these discussions at the Superintendent’s Cabinet and will be strongly advocating for those in need of relief from unreasonable class sizes.

Our Board of Ed adopted Staffing Ratios: K-5 = 24.5:1; K-8 = 25:1; Middle Schools = 25.5:1; High Schools 25:1 Given these ratios and the new language below, what is a reasonable class size? While we were not able to settle on that number during negotiations, use the ratios above and common sense as a guide. It may also be helpful to frame your conversation in terms of *unreasonable* class size.

The new Language of Article 8.13 regarding class size provides for this process to continue at any time during the year.

Negotiated Compensation, Step Freezes and their impact: While St.Vrain and other surrounding districts continue to lose some great teachers to Boulder Valley Schools and their

new compacted schedule with a starting salary of over \$40K/year, we have also hired many great teachers from surrounding districts under duress with poor relations between their local associations and school boards. It remains a high priority of SVVEA to remain competitive with our peer districts and to address the negative impacts of salary freezes. Please realize that Boulder is an anomaly with maxed out mill levies and very high property values and that our other peer districts find themselves in very similar situations to our own. BVVSD may be the envy of surrounding districts, but they also have resources to work with that the rest of us do not. The Great Recession was a major hit to public school funding in Colorado, and the failure of Amendment 66 just over a year ago still stings. We remain one of the lowest funded states regarding adequate funding of public education.

Thompson, Adams County District 12, JeffCo and DougCo all have school boards with extreme agendas. Elections matter. Public education critics oppose collective bargaining, support market based pay, would like to have full vouchers, and generally silence the voice of associations. While our next school board elections are in November of 2015, with three seats open, and we are already preparing.

Other News: This is another TELL survey year. You may check your school's results from the spring of 2013 at TELLColorado.org. Also, the format of last year's survey for teacher input of their principal (required by SB 191) was extremely cumbersome. Look for a revised survey format this year.

There were significant changes to Article 6 – Supervision & Evaluation. Updated information regarding these changes will soon follow.

Finally, we had extremely successful membership recruitment at New Teacher Orientation this year. Our numbers continue to buck the state and national trends. We ended last year at 1105 members and are already at 1128 this year. Please welcome our newest members but also encourage all of our colleagues to join.

Thank you for being a part of SVVEA. You are a valued member and there is strength in numbers!

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