



Colorado Connection

3rd Quarter 2015

DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS BASE SALARY INCREASE



PSRPs in Denver are celebrating a big win on pay and benefits because of their work with school officials and their engagement in Colorado's political process.

Starting Sept. 1, members of the Denver Federation of Paraprofessionals and Nutrition Service Employees will see raises of up to 33 percent, thanks to teamwork in bringing school funding issues to light. PSRPs in the Denver public schools will see raises from a minimum of just over \$9 an hour to at least \$12 an hour—a hike that will benefit 700 paraprofessionals and 500 food and nutrition workers. The minimum wage in Colorado is \$8.23.

In addition, the adjustment will provide extra instructional support for high-poverty and struggling schools, double school employees' family health insurance

subsidy from \$750 to \$1,500 per year, add 300 teachers over two years and expand a teacher leadership program.

Here's how it happened: After two public pension systems merged in Colorado, a review of finances revealed that the Denver schools had paid way more into the pension fund than other school districts. HB 1391, signed into law in June, equalizes Denver's contribution and frees up more than \$20 million per year for the Denver public schools.

On a separate track, the Denver AFT affiliate representing paras and food service workers had maintained good working relationships with local and state officials. In fact, the federation's president, Bernadette Jiron, had met with

Superintendent Tom Boasberg in April to discuss a top concern: living wages for paras and cafeteria workers. For example, school nutrition workers were being paid so little, and given so many responsibilities, that they had been leaving their jobs to make more money at McDonald's or Wendy's.



By raising awareness of PSRPs, union members helped bring about this result: In

a bipartisan bill, state lawmakers rebalanced the pension fund, making the money available for Denver schools, which in turn used it to pay for 4.55 percent to 33 percent raises for PSRPs. The district's pension contributions will be re-evaluated in another five years.

Raises will go to about 1,700 employees in all, improving their schools' learning environments and upholding the district's values by creating a living wage.

Statewide Retiree Chapter in the works!

AFT Colorado is in the process of forming a statewide retiree chapter for those members interested in their community and the future of public education in Colorado.

We have appointed a steering committee that includes Colorado educators and staff, as well as, AFT members who worked in other states and now live in Colorado. We have close to 700 AFT retirees living in Colorado who, we know, are valuable resources.

Our first order of business is to conduct a survey to find out what issues concern retirees and how they would like to get involved. The information will be kept completely **confidential** and will **not** be shared. All responses will be compiled together and analyzed by the steering committee. If you would like to make sure you get the survey please contact Cheryl Reiling at creiling@aftcolorado.org or at 720.440.9759.

The survey is for AFT retirees only.

We plan on having our first meeting on October 15, 2015 at the Colorado AFL-CIO 140 Sheridan Blvd, Lakewood, CO 80226 from 1 pm – 3:30 pm. We will go over the results of the survey and also do a screening of Education, Inc. a documentary about how money and politics are changing our schools.

If you would like to join us, please RSVP to Cheryl Reiling at creiling@aftcolorado.org or at 720.440.9759.

We hope to see AFT retirees there.



Denver Public Schools Board of Education Election



Three seats of the seven member Denver Public Schools Board of Education are up – District 1 (currently held by Ann Rowe), District 5 (currently held by Arturo Jimenez), and At-Large seat (held by Happy Haynes).

The Denver Federation of Paraprofessionals and Food Nutrition Service Employees (DFPNSE) endorsed two candidates through the Denver Area Labor Federation’s (DALF) process which involved an education forum, questionnaire, and an in-person interview. Labor chose to support candidates who will reclaim the promise of strong neighborhood schools and who will challenge the status quo.

DFPNSE endorsed the following candidates. For more information concerning each candidate’s vision for public schools, click on the link.

District 1 candidate – [Kristi Butkovitch](#)

District 5 candidate (Jimenez is termed out) – [Michael Kiley](#)

Election Day is **Tuesday, November 3rd** and ballots will be mailed to ALL registered voters starting October 13th. If you need to update your voter registration information or register to vote for the first time, please visit www.govotecolorado.com

Vote by Tuesday, NOVEMBER 3rd!



On September 1st the Denver Federation for Paraprofessionals and Nutrition Service Employees meet with Superintendent Boasberg to discuss the contract and the wage increase.



AFT COLORADO STANDING TOGETHER: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Committee on Political Education (COPE) Deduction

www.aftcolorado.org 720-440-9759

What is COPE? COPE is how AFT Colorado raises and collects voluntary political contributions from members. COPE is a non partisan political education committee. These voluntary funds are used statewide to help back candidates and committees that support education and labor. There is one reason AFT Colorado needs to grow our COPE program, **YOU**. With the current economic environment our priorities are vulnerable and are constantly being targeted for reduction. Education budgets, programs, and services are often first on the chopping block when states face dwindling tax revenues. Along with decent working conditions, retirement, and health care. All vitally affect our lives. A strong COPE program will protect our various interests.

At the local level COPE is essential. AFT Colorado will use your voluntary funds to assist in school board races, levies, and referendums in your district. Reductions in state education aid and inflation have made local budgets even more of a challenge. We use COPE dollars to work with labor and education friendly supporters on both sides of the aisle.

FIRST NAME _____ LAST NAME _____

BILLING ADDRESS _____

BILLING CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____

MOBILE PHONE _____  wish to receive periodic text messages and accept the associated charges.

HOME EMAIL _____ LOCAL _____

WORK LOCATION _____

PAYMENT

*Due to the associated fees, we prefer that you sign up for **bank draft** payment.*

MONTHLY COPE AMOUNT \$5 \$10 \$15 \$OTHER _____

BANK DRAFT ****PREFERRED METHOD****

Fill out below or simply attach a voided check.

BANK NAME _____

ROUTING NUMBER _____ ACCOUNT NUMBER _____

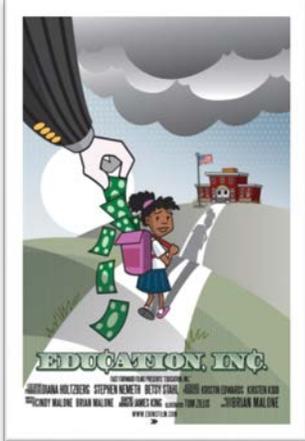
CREDIT/DEBIT CARD: If you choose this method, we will follow up with you to change to bank draft at a later date.

CARD TYPE: VISA MC

NAME ON CARD _____

CARD NUMBER _____ EXP DATE _____

I hereby authorize a monthly contribution to the AFT CO COPE (AFT CO COPE) in the amount indicated above. This authorization is signed freely and voluntarily and not out of any fear of reprisal, and I will not be favored nor disadvantaged because I exercise this right. I understand this money will be used to make political contributions by AFT CO COPE. AFT CO COPE may engage in joint fundraising efforts with AFT COPE and/or the AFL-CIO. This voluntary authorization may be revoked at any time by notifying AFT CO COPE in writing of the desire to do so. Contribution or gifts to AFT CO COPE are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Contributions cannot be reimbursed or otherwise paid by any other person or entity.



Education Inc.

Dear AFT Colorado Members,

As you know, all levels of public education are under attack by well-funded groups on both sides of the political spectrum. Therefore, we recently gave each AFT Colorado local president a copy of a new film by award-winning filmmaker, and Douglas County parent, Brian Malone titled Education, Inc.

This film is a clear representation of the privatization of public education. It focuses on Douglas County, Jefferson County, and other communities across the United States whose residents, parents, and education professionals are fighting the corporate takeover of their schools.

If you are interested in viewing the film, please reach out to your president so they can share their copy or visit the Education, Inc. website to order one.

It is the responsibility of all of us to tell the story of the plight of our schools and universities and help work to end the degradation of our profession at the hands of outside corporate interests whose only goal is to profit off of students and their families. This film helps share this message.

Please contact the AFT Colorado office or email me directly (cksmith@dougcofed.org) with any questions or concerns

In Solidarity,
Courtney Smith
President, AFT-Colorado
President, Douglas County Federation
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Here's one more thing
union families can share.

Everyday savings add up with Union Plus programs. Union Plus offers exclusive discounts on a long list of home, travel, and health care products and services, available only for union members and their families. Including three credit card options from Capital One. Check our site for the card that best fits your family—and for details on the exceptional collection of discounts from Union Plus.



A Union of Professionals

AFT +
Member Benefits

Learn more at
UnionPlus.org/AFT