

President's Update

By: Kallie Leyba



As we wrap up 2019 I'd like to reflect on the positive events of the year. School board elections in Denver and Douglas County resulted in wins for public education. Thank you to everyone who volunteered and/or donates to COPE for helping to make this happen (if you don't donate to COPE, please [email Ryan](mailto:rcase@aftcolorado) (rcase@aftcolorado) right now to begin or to increase your donation). Denver's election was historic both because Tay Anderson is reportedly the youngest school board member Denver has elected, but also because this marks the first time in ten years that Denver Public Schools has a pro-public education school board--the majority of board members are supported by the unions. Douglas County maintained the pro-public education make-up of their board. In fact, election results across the metro area overwhelmingly favored pro-public education candidates and candidates who were endorsed by the unions.

Congratulations also to our DFP-NSE local for significant growth this school year. We hope all of our locals will see continued growth in a time when workers' rights are supported more and more across our nation.

I hope you have been receiving communications from AFT regarding the 2020 Presidential Primary endorsement process. If you are not receiving regular emails from AFT, please [let Sarah Hamilton](#)

[know](#) and she'll help update your contact information with AFT.

The legislative session is just around the corner and we are hopeful that Colorado WINS will have collective bargaining codified into law by the end of the session. It's still early but our fingers are crossed. It's likely we will see some legislation around SB10-191/teacher evaluation introduced, although it's not predicted to have any major changes our members would like to see. We are hopeful the bill will begin to make small changes in the right direction.

The Governor's budget has a slight increase for K-12 public education funding--but the legislature is the body that determines funding and the budget won't be introduced and passed until later in the session. Unfortunately, Amendment 73 did not pass so we don't anticipate any additional funding for higher education in Colorado this year. Most people are likely unaware of how broken Colorado's budget is, but our higher education brothers and sisters certainly do--as higher ed has taken the brunt of the cuts for years.

I hope you have a productive December and enjoy any time off you may have over the holidays.

In solidarity,
Kallie Leyba President

Election 2019

The 2019 election brought several key victories in local school board elections and a disappointing loss for public education in the resounding defeat of a statewide ballot initiative, Proposition CC. AFT Colorado and our locals endorsed all of the winning school board candidates, as well as, Proposition CC.

Proposition CC would have permanently “[de-bruced](#)” state tax revenues in Colorado, in other words, lifted the TABOR-mandated revenue cap currently limiting what money our state government is legally allowed to collect in taxes. Over the coming years it would have brought hundreds of millions of dollars to higher education and K-12 education in Colorado. Unfortunately, Proposition CC lost 54.7% to 45.3%, so it’s back to the drawing board for the education community to find future solutions that will address the gross underfunding of our public schools in Colorado.

On the bright side, all six of the school board elections, in which our Denver and Douglas County locals endorsed candidates, were resounding victories for public education. In Denver, Tay Anderson, Scott Baldermann, and Brad Laurvick won their highly contested elections, ushering in a new era for the Denver school board that will, for the first time in years, have a pro-public education majority that has vowed to significantly address the failed past reforms of DPS.

In Douglas County, DCF-endorsed first-term School Board Directors Susan Meek and Elizabeth Hanson, in addition to incumbent David Ray, were successful in their election bids. We are looking forward to following the continuing and encouraging progress made in Douglas County since the board was flipped to a pro-public education majority in 2017.



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2020 Legislative Preview

The upcoming legislative session could be the most consequential session in recent history for public education in Colorado. If you would like to receive weekly updates from AFT Colorado covering the latest developments in the 2020 legislative session that kicks off this January, sign up [HERE](#) for our weekly legislative updates.

Several major issues will be at the forefront of AFT Colorado's attention during the 2020 Colorado legislative session - the fight for collective bargaining rights for state employees, the potential overhaul of the school funding formula, and the effort to mandate that school districts more equitably fund their schools on the local level (often referred to as mill levy equalization).

The latter two issues would fundamentally change how we fund our public schools in Colorado, without taking the additional step of bringing in much-needed revenue. Changing the funding formula would change how we categorize at-risk students, how much

additional funding ELL students would command, whether districts would receive cost of living adjustments at current levels, and other categorically based funding metrics, among other things. Mill levy equalization would, simply put, mandate a minimum level of local funding from all school districts derived from property taxes. There is also a good possibility Colorado's teacher evaluation system is changed, or at least tweaked, but stay tuned on that specific issue.

Finally, there is a real possibility that continuing talks between the governor's office and Colorado WINS (the state workers' union) will result in a bill that will codify the current loose agreement between WINS and the state into law. For far too long state workers' ability to have a meaningful voice in their workplace has been contingent on a flimsy and unprotected executive order allowing their union's existence. Movement towards meaningful collective bargaining would mark a new day for Colorado's hardworking and underappreciated state employees.



Presidential Endorsement 2020

To ensure the AFT is actively shaping the debate for 2020, the national AFT executive council unanimously approved a guiding resolution on our presidential endorsement process. The resolution is rooted in transparency and strives to generate the greatest level of meaningful member participation ever in our presidential endorsement process.

The resolution builds upon what has worked in the past including new initiatives to lift members' voices and help elect a candidate who shares our values and vision. The key points of the AFT's 2020 endorsement process include:

Maximum member engagement, input and feedback: This includes live and telephone town halls with members and candidates and a designated endorsement website (aftvotes.org). **Please take a moment to take the members-issues survey.**

Candidates engaging directly with AFT members: Our members need to be able to engage directly with the candidates to ensure the candidates understand and value the issues affecting our members. Such events can take-and have taken-many forms, including member-candidate town halls and Facebook Live forums.

Pre-endorsement engagement with campaigns by affiliates and members: AFT affiliates and members are strongly encouraged to engage with the presidential campaigns including working with the campaigns and running for delegate to the party's national convention. Having our members get involved in campaigns and serve as delegates strengthens our ability to shape the debate.

When appropriate, we come together: We are strongest when we speak with one voice. So, after a thorough endorsement process that includes extensive communication and input from members and consideration of many factors - such as the candidates' positions on our issues, timing, the state of the race, and each candidate's ability to win - the AFT executive council or AFT convention delegates may determine it is in the best interest of our members, our communities, and our country to endorse a candidate. At that time, the AFT and our affiliates will work together in every possible way to elect the AFT's nationally endorsed candidate.

Visit AFTvotes.org to complete the member surveys and obtain information on the endorsement process, including candidate information. If you have additional thoughts, please email aftvotes@aft.org or call the AFT political department at 202-879-4454.

Ryan Case
Political Director | AFT – Colorado
rcase@aftcolorado.org

What is the **AUTOMATIC ADJUSTMENT** Provision?

The automatic adjustment provision is an innovative approach to pension funding that keeps PERA on a path to full funding. Under this approach, changes are included in statute that make automatic adjustments to four components: member contributions, employer contributions, the annual increase (AI) paid to retirees, and the direct distribution from the State. Every June, PERA reviews the progress toward its funding goal. Economic conditions, changes in demographics, and the volatility of investment markets in 2018 were factors in the automatic adjustment triggering upcoming changes in contributions and the AI.

PERA IS BEHIND ITS FUNDING GOAL



The automatic adjustment provision is reviewed on an annual basis to help ensure the long-term stability of benefits today and in the future.

As indicated in its 2018 financial report, PERA is behind its funding goal. This means the phased-in legislative provisions and the automatic adjustment will trigger changes to the various components as explained below.

Changes to Keep PERA Moving Toward the Goal



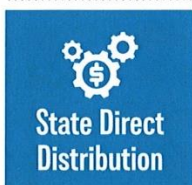
	State, School, Judicial, and Denver Public Schools Divisions	Local Government Division	State Trooper/CBI Agent
Current (As of July 1, 2019)	8.75%	8.00%	10.75%
As of July 1, 2020	10.00%	8.50%	12.00%



	State, School, and Denver Public Schools Divisions	Local Government Division	State Trooper/CBI Agent	Judicial Division
Current (As of July 1, 2019)	20.40%	13.70%	23.10%	20.71%
As of July 1, 2020	20.90%	14.20%	23.60%	22.01%



AI suspended for 2018 and 2019; AI paid to eligible benefit recipients in July 2020 will be 1.25 percent.



No anticipated change for 2020; distribution from the State budget will remain at \$225 million.

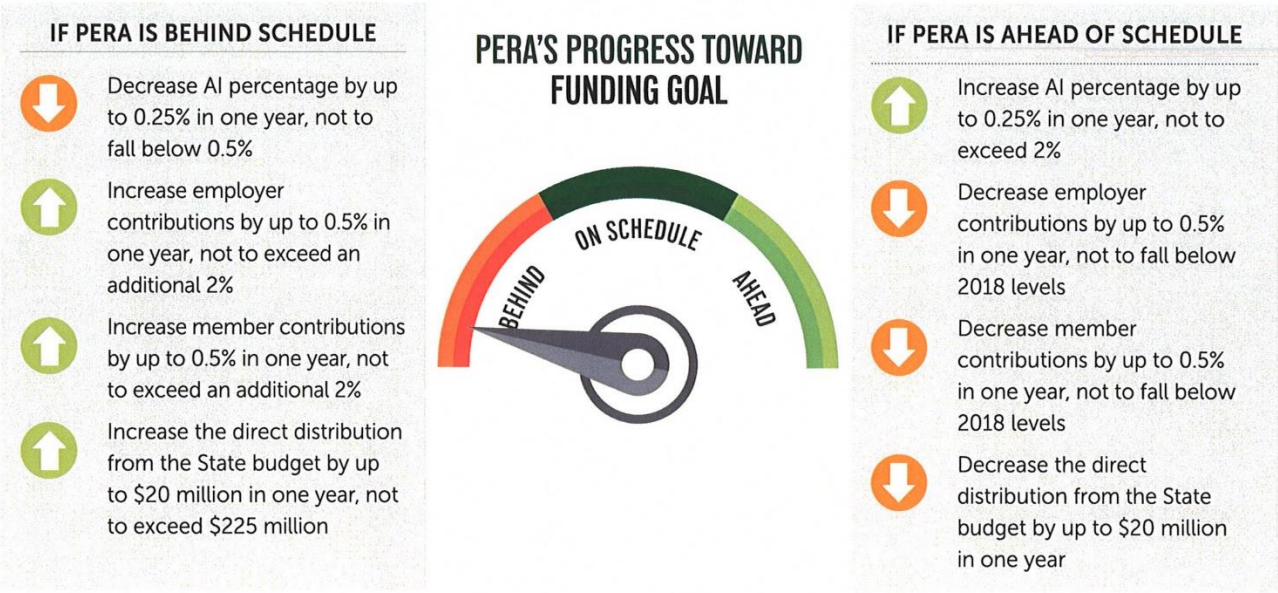
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Colorado Public Employees' Retirement Association
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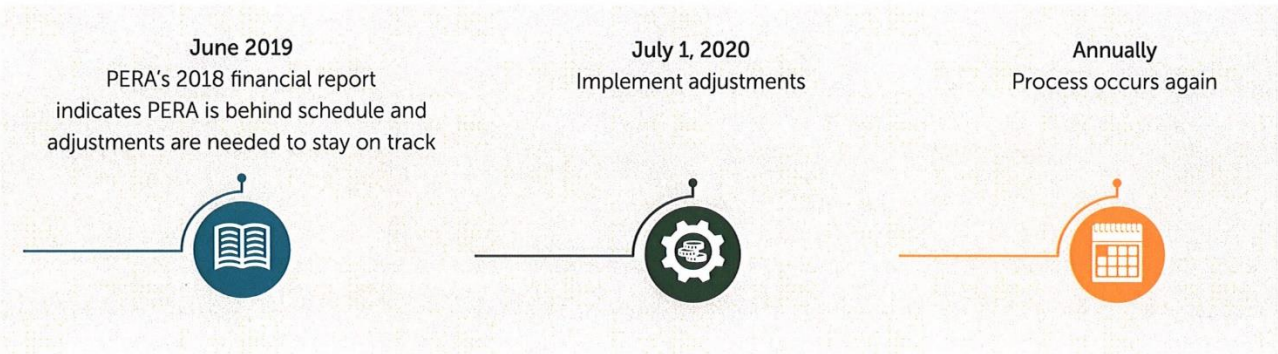
June 2019

How Does the Automatic Adjustment Keep PERA on Schedule?



When Do These Changes Take Effect?

PERA announces the progress toward its funding goal each year in June, along with any automatic adjustments to contributions or the AI, which would take effect the next July.



This fact sheet provides information about the automatic adjustment provision. Your rights, benefits, and obligations as a PERA member are governed by Title 24, Article 51 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, and the Rules of the Colorado Public Employees' Retirement Association, which take precedence over any interpretations in this fact sheet.

Local Union Updates



Research is clear that education is one of the most significant components in creating a path out of poverty for kids in need. You may be surprised to learn that, even though Douglas County is one of the wealthiest in the nation, we do have several Title I schools. We know one of the significant barriers standing in the way for kids in low income communities is

scarcity of learning materials in the home. This fall the DCF, in conjunction with the national AFT office, partnered with the non-profit group First Book to help address this need. The mission of First Book states: *“First Book believes all children have a right to a quality education, no matter where they live. We provide brand new books and educational resources to schools and programs in low-income communities, so every child has everything they need to reach their full potential.”*



Through our partnership with First Book, DCF was able to provide a new book to every student in both Sedalia, and South Ridge Elementary Schools. Nearly 1,100 students had the opportunity to select a book during a book fair event in their respective school libraries. Excitement and smiles filled the room as classes arrived to make their selections. At the end of the fair, staff members reported once the students had their books, they refused to put them down and carried them throughout the day. It was a great reminder of why we do what we do!



DENVER FEDERATION TEACHERS

The high level of teacher turnover continues to be problematic. Fortunately, the November elections have flipped our school board against the corporatization of Denver Public Schools and returned us to

a student-centered board. Our new Board members, Tay Anderson, Scott Baldermann, and Brad Laurvick are committed to prioritizing student achievement, rather than Pearson profits. We look forward to working with the new Board and achieving the excellence Denver Public Schools espouses, rather than the corporatization, school closures, testing, and turnover that have led to something short of excellence.

Mike Cerbo, President

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AFT COLORADO

STANDING TOGETHER: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Committee on Political Education (COPE) Deduction

925 S. Niagara St., Suite 600, Denver, CO 80204 www.aftcolorado.org 720-443-8032

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.

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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: 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.