



President's Remarks

By: Kallie Leyba

We are living history now and it's not all fun! After the insurrection at the Capitol on January 6, the Inauguration came as a most welcome day. The Biden-Harris administration is working quickly to make changes that help workers, support education, and to get through the pandemic quickly and safely. As we await long overdue guidance from the CDC on safe school building opening, we find ourselves in the middle of a philosophical war between parents who want school buildings open with no regard to safety measures and other Americans who are demanding safety. Most of us want more virus mitigation efforts and, frankly, want society to respect us and value our lives. We have become the villain in some versions of this story--when the real enemy is the pandemic. I know that many of our members are near a breaking point. I'm sorry. Resilience is what we get us through this time and resilience is a learned skill--please don't doubt your capacity for resilience!

Now it is more important than ever to organize and advocate for our members. We know that teachers and staff, preschool through higher education, all want to be in the classrooms with our students. We also

know that we have the right to be safe and, without a national strategy or statewide guidance, many of our districts have fallen short in their responsibility to keep their staff and faculty safe. AFT has resources and experts to help us advocate for our members and ensure safety precautions are being followed. The CDC has promised guidance to be published any day now--look to AFT for support with getting safety measures implemented in your district or school. The NFL has been successful in preventing COVID outbreaks and the [CDC published a case study](#). One thing we have learned from this is that there are four quadrants of mitigation: distance, time, mask use, and ventilation. If we can't successfully meet at least two of the four, we are not safe.

Thank you for your solidarity during this extraordinary time. Together we are stronger.

In unity,

Kallie Leyba


AFT Colorado Biennial Convention

This is a **call** for all members to attend the virtual meeting of the **AFT Colorado Biennial Convention** convening at 10:00 am on Saturday, April 17th, 2021. Registration and pre-convention committee meetings will begin at 9:00 am with officer nominations, resolutions and constitutional revisions being the order of business.

Members may contact their local union if they are interested in running for any officer position or would like to attend as a delegate. The terms of office are for two years. Deadline for nomination of officers is March 17th, 2021 at 11:59 PM.

AFT Colorado will be awarding: The Meyer/Mall Award, Ellen Slatkin Union Loyalist Award and Friend of Public Education Award at the Convention. Contact your local union if you know of anyone who deserves one of these recognitions. The deadline for submission is March 17th, 2021 at 11:59 PM.

The AFT Colorado Convention delegates will consider proposed amendments to the constitution or bylaws and proposed resolutions. They will also nominate and elect officers of the State Federation. We encourage you to take part in this process. Please contact your local union leader if you wish to attend, nominate an officer or recommend an award recipient.





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COVID 19 Vaccine for Educators

On January 29, 2021, Governor Jared Polis held a meeting for Pre K-12 union members to share the exciting news that, beginning February 8, all Pre K-12 educators will start receiving their COVID-19 vaccines. Governor Polis believes that, by the end of February, all educators (teachers and staff) will have received their first dose of the vaccine.

Additionally, he shared information about the BinaxNOW COVID-19 at-home testing. Your school district should be communicating information regarding the BinaxNOW testing procedure soon.

Your school district will also send out information regarding the scheduling of your vaccination with a health care provider. However, if you are on the waitlist at Kaiser, you may be hearing directly from Kaiser.

COVID-19 VACCINE DISTRIBUTION			
Winter ❄️		REVISED DATE: 01/29/2021	
PHASE: 1A	Highest-risk health care workers and individuals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who have direct contact with COVID-19 patients for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. Long-term care facility staff and residents. 	
1B.1	Coloradans age 70+, moderate-risk health care workers, and first responders:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health care workers with less direct contact with COVID-19 patients (e.g. home health, hospice, pharmacy, dental, etc.) and EMS. Firefighters, police, COVID-19 response personnel, correctional workers, and funeral services. People age 70 and older. 	
1B.2	Coloradans ages 65-69, pre-K-12 educators and child care workers in licensed child care programs, and continuity of state government:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child care workers in licensed child care programs, teachers (full-time and substitutes), bus, food, counselors, administrative, safety and other support services offered inside the school. Members of the Executive and Judicial branches of state government. *note: members of the legislative branch have already received access to the vaccine People ages 65-69. 	
1B.3	Frontline essential workers and people age 16-64 with two or more high risk conditions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frontline essential workers in food and agriculture, manufacturing, U.S. postal service, public transit and specialized transportation staff, grocery, public health, frontline essential human service workers, faith leaders, and direct care providers for Coloradans experiencing homelessness and essential frontline journalists. People 16-64 with 2 or more high risk conditions as listed: Coloradans with cancer (defined as patients who are currently receiving treatment or have received treatment within the last month for cancer), chronic kidney disease, COPD, diabetes mellitus, Down syndrome, specific heart conditions (heart failure, cardiomyopathies or coronary heart disease, and severe valvular/congenital heart disease), obesity (BMI $\geq 30\text{kg/m}^2$), pregnancy, sickle cell disease, solid organ transplant and people with disabilities that prevent them from wearing masks. 	
Spring 🌸			
PHASE: 2	People age 60-64, people with high risk conditions, and the continuation of operations for state government and continuity of local government:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People age 60-64. People 16-59 with 1 high risk condition as listed: Coloradans with cancer (defined as patients who are currently receiving treatment or have received treatment within the last month for cancer), chronic kidney disease, COPD, diabetes mellitus, Down syndrome, specific heart conditions (heart failure, cardiomyopathies or coronary heart disease, and severe valvular/congenital heart disease), obesity (BMI $\geq 30\text{kg/m}^2$), pregnancy, sickle cell disease, solid organ transplant. People with disabilities that prevent them from wearing masks. Local continuity of local government defined as executives of those branches of government and a limited amount of essential support staff needed to provide for continuity of government. Continuation of operations for state government is defined as those individuals defined by continuity of operations plans that each agency holds to continue to provide services. Adults who received a placebo during a COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial. 	
Summer ☀️			
PHASE: 3	General public:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anyone age 16 - 59. 	*Timeline subject to change based on supply chain. Prioritization subject to change based CDC guidance, data, science, availability.
<div> <div></div> - In progress <div></div> - Upcoming phase </div> <div>⚠️ Please note: As we move through phases, people in previous phases remain eligible.</div>			

Phase 1B.2 includes:

- Coloradans 65-69 years old
- Child care workers in licensed programs
- PreK-12 educators and school staff
- Teachers (full-time, student teachers, and substitutes)
- Bus drivers, school food service workers, counselors, administrative staff, safety workers, and other support services offered inside the school.
- State Government
- Members of the Executive, *Legislative, and Judicial branches of government.



**Members of the legislative branch have already received access to the vaccine.*

Beginning on February 8, everyone in Phase 1B.2 will be eligible to receive the vaccine.

Sign-up for PreK-12 educators and child care workers in licensed programs:

- School districts, schools, and child care providers are working with healthcare partners, including hospitals and local public health agencies to schedule vaccinations. Employers will be in touch with more information about how to schedule your vaccine.
- Employers who have not already partnered with a provider to vaccinate staff should contact their local public health agency or a health care provider.

For more information contact <https://covid19.colorado.gov/vaccine>



[Remote learning community: Prepare & engage](#)

Legislative Updates and Actions



Due to ongoing concerns surrounding the coronavirus pandemic, the Colorado General Assembly will delay the start of the 2021 legislative session until the third week of February. The General Assembly did meet briefly in January to pass a handful of non-education related COVID-relief bills.

There is information trickling out of the legislature on bills that will be considered and we have identified one particular issue that requires your attention. There likely will be a bill introduced that would instruct the Colorado Department of Education to request a waiver from the federal government's requirement under the [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#) to perform standardized testing during the 2021-2022 school year. Read this [article](#) from the Colorado Sun about the ongoing debate over testing.

As you know, the past two school years have been anything but normal. We have been listening to feedback from members telling us that now is not the time to divert focus away from instructional time for standardized testing. So our response, in collaboration with the Colorado Education Association, has been to put together a petition campaign urging the Colorado General Assembly to cancel 2021 CMAS testing. Please take a moment to sign the petition. Your voice goes a long way! **You can sign the petition [HERE](https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/cancel-cmas-2021)** (<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/cancel-cmas-2021>)

And as we begin this year's legislative session, we would also urge you to send a personal message to [your representatives](#) telling them that the best thing for our students is to pause CMAS testing during the 2021-2022 school year.

If you would like to receive regular updates on the latest happenings at the Capitol and learn more about avenues where your voice can be heard, sign up for our legislative updates by emailing AFT Colorado's political director, Ryan Case, at rcase@aftcolorado.org.

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Freedom for All to Thrive

#IamAFT

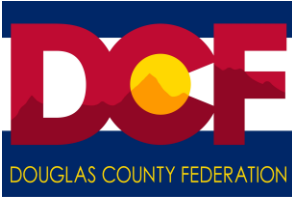
Every person in America deserves the freedom to thrive, fueled by opportunity, justice and a voice in our democracy. That requires not only addressing the multiple crises affecting our country—COVID-19, the economic fallout and inequity, racial injustice, the climate crisis and threats to our democracy—but also creating the just and equitable conditions for economic and educational opportunity for all.

A “freedom to thrive” agenda requires bold action to promote an economy that works for all, including the ability to form and join a union; high-quality, accessible healthcare as a right; retirement security; great public schools and affordable, world-class higher education; civil rights and anti-racism in all aspects of our lives, including unfettered access to the vote; a vibrant democracy; and safe, welcoming and healthy environments and communities for all, regardless of who you are, your gender identity, who you love, your immigration status, how you worship or where you live. The crises gripping our country are affecting young people deeply, and schools must be supported and well-resourced to address the trauma, social and emotional needs, and developmental and academic recovery of our children, who are the future of our communities and our country.

With President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and the new Congress, we will now have partners in working to achieve this agenda. We will do our part through our work in education, healthcare, public service and the labor movement. **The AFT will fight for that freedom to thrive for our members, our families and our communities—by caring, fighting, showing up, teaching and voting. Together we can accomplish what is impossible to do alone.**



Local Union Updates



Update from the Douglas County Federation

The members of the Douglas County Federation have been advocating for safe and effective education in the pandemic but unfortunately, our district leaders continue to deny the necessity of including teachers and staff as partners in problem solving. Our School Board is also facing a potential recall of a majority of the members. And, while the group behind the recall admits to not even knowing the name of the superintendent six months ago, they now believe they are better suited to lead our district! We believe that, if the district leadership had been partnering with teachers, the education for our students this year would have gone more smoothly and our Board wouldn't be undergoing this threat. Unfortunately, Douglas County is once again fighting for the soul of public education through this potential recall and in the upcoming November election. Rest assured that the DCF will again be calling on all our brothers and sisters in AFT Colorado for your support. Thank you!



Support the American Rescue Act!

If passed, the American Rescue Act would put money in working families' pockets, invest in states & localities, fund public schools, and help curb the spread of #COVID19. Tell your Senators to vote YES on President Biden's \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Act.

Click here to call your Senator now

<https://actionnetwork.org/forms/tell-your-senator-support-the-american-rescue-act?source=aftorg>

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.

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BILLING CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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

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PAYMENT

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

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

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CREDIT/DEBIT CARD: CARD TYPE: ☐ VISA ☐ MC

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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.