



President's Remarks

By: Bernadette Jiron

Happy Spring - Daylight saving time starts on March 13th! AFT Colorado is working on the upcoming AFT Colorado Special Convention to be held on Saturday, April 30, 2022. Information will be coming to you soon, please don't forget to send in your ballots. I hope to see you on the 30th of April. Check with your local president on attending the convention there's a \$5.00 fee for attending.

Our Legislative committee has been meeting on Fridays with our lobbyist concerning upcoming bills regarding educational issues that affect our members. We will be hosting our Lobby Day at the State Capitol on March, 2022. This is an opportunity to meet

your legislator and senator in your district and ask questions on any of the bills on the agenda. Contact your union local to attend this informative (and fun!) event.

Congratulations and welcome aboard to our new AFT Colorado Organizer Lindsay Moraczewski. She will be working with the Douglas County Federation. She will be recruiting members and working with the community and for Douglas County Federation Staff.

Happy Patrick's Day!

In Unity -
Bernadette (Bernie) Jiron
AFT Colorado President
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Collective Bargaining Bill

Members from several of our locals joined us in February for a rally to support our Collective Bargaining Bill. The bill hasn't been introduced yet, but we are continuing to work with bill sponsors to gain collective bargaining rights for as many public workers in Colorado as possible. You may have seen the media about the bill. [Here's the most recent article.](#)



NewsGuard

National Partnership Will Roll Out Crucial News Literacy Tool to Tens of Millions of US Students and Families

The [American Federation of Teachers](#) has launched a [national partnership](#) with a leading anti-misinformation tool [NewsGuard](#) to protect and champion legitimate journalism and fact-based reporting and to help educators and their students navigate a sea of online disinformation.

Under the terms of the pathbreaking licensing agreement, coinciding with [National News Literacy Week](#), the AFT's 1.7 million members, tens of millions of kids they teach, and their families, can now receive free, real-time "traffic light" news ratings and detailed "Nutrition Label" reviews, via a licensed copy of NewsGuard's browser extension, whenever they search the web for news and information.

For years, educators have fought battles against suspect sourcing, with their students often misled by dubious outlets and spam sites posing as "news." NewsGuard offers a practical solution, alerting students and educators to those sites while also providing a valuable lesson in media literacy.

Students and their teachers will be able to see how NewsGuard applies nine criteria of journalistic practice to thousands of websites and will get an immediate read on the truthfulness and rigor of the information they encounter when searching online. Educators [can sign up here](#). (AFT media release.)

AFT Colorado Special Convention

This is a **call** to the [AFT Colorado Special Convention](#) convening virtually at 10:00 am on Saturday, April 30th, 2022. Registration and pre-convention committee meetings will begin at 9:00 am. The purpose of the Special Convention is to elect a president for a one year term.

Members may contact their local union if they are interested in running for president or would like to attend as a delegate. The term of office is for one year. Deadline for nomination of officers is March 30th, 2022 at 11:59 PM.

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.

AFT and AAUP Pursue Historic Affiliation

Unity Agreement Would Strengthen Both Organizations and Advance American Higher Education

The governing councils of the American Association of University Professors and the American Federation of Teachers are pursuing an [affiliation](#) to join forces at a time of momentous challenges to higher education and to democracy.

AAUP has been on the forefront of advancing the principles of academic freedom, shared governance, tenure, and other standards and policies to produce and protect the knowledge and critical thinking skills that sustain American democracy.

The AFT fights for a better life for all—particularly the next generation—and that includes access to affordable and accessible higher education where our students can soar and where faculty are respected and accorded the academic freedom necessary for our country to thrive. Both the AFT and AAUP, in their joint [New Deal for Higher Education](#), are battling the effects of a pandemic that has worsened structural funding cuts to the sector enacted during the global recession.

If approved by the AAUP's delegate assembly in June, the agreement will bring together two organizations representing more than 300,000 faculty overall, the largest such alliance in the country. The partnership will serve as the basis for enhanced faculty voice with nationwide reach and huge potential for future organizing growth and success.

The partnership comes against the backdrop of increased legislative attacks on teaching and academic freedom, as well as persistent public underfunding that has led to an explosion in student debt and adjunct precarity and poverty.

Through the affiliation, the 44,000 member AAUP and the 1.7 million-member AFT will work hand in hand to protect academic freedom, and to unify faculty voice at the state and federal levels. (AFT media release.)



Local Union Updates

Update from the Douglas County Federation

These past few months have been filled with more grievous actions and exploits than have ever been seen in Douglas County Schools and the community is paying attention! Despite the turmoil engulfing our community, we are also seeing the best and brightest among our parents, students, staff and community-at-large stepping up to defend public education and union members' rights. The following is a timeline of our most recent events in Douglas County, Colorado:

- Nov. 29, 2021 - New Board majority sworn in.
- January 25, 2022 - Equity Policy Resolution passed.
- January 31, 2022 - Allegations of Sunshine Law violations by board majority.
- January 31, 2022 - DCF meeting re: Equity Policy Resolution, working conditions, and the revelation of Sunshine Law violations.
- February 3, 2022 - Collective Action with over 1,500 employees taking personal or sick leave to protest the actions of the BoE majority. This was the first time we have seen so many people rally together for public education in Douglas County. We witnessed parents, community members, staff, and students protesting the undermining of the recent District Equity Policy Resolution, the continued difficult if not impossible working conditions facing teachers and staff, and the allegations that the Board majority intended to fire Superintendent Corey Wise. Traffic was backed up onto I-25 to get to the Central Administration building on Wilcox for this event. The energy from this day was powerful and continues to motivate individuals across the district and county.





For over two hours, parents, staff, community members and students gathered, marched, and chanted in support of public education. “We will thrive again” is the mantra our community demonstrated with our collective action. From Monday, January 31 at 7:00 pm to Wednesday afternoon, February 2, there were over 1,500 substitute requests for Thursday. The District called a snow day on Wednesday, February 2, and made the 3rd a staff “workday” instead of completely closing the District.

One of the Douglas County Commissioners contacted me the day before our action in an effort to persuade me to convince staff, our parents, and other community members from following through with our collective

action. As the photo evidence shows, even sub 20°F temps did not prevent our community from standing together!



- February 4, 2022 - The DCSD Board of Education majority fires Superintendent Corey Wise.
- February 7, 2022 - Student-led walkouts at most DCSD high schools and some middle schools.
- February 8, 2022 - Sid Rundle, Director of Special Education Services resigns as a result of the termination of Corey Wise. Numerous teachers and staff members have inquired about early retirement from our district.

- February 10, 2022 - I attended the [rally for Collective Bargaining](#) at the State Capitol.



- February 15, 2022 - Building Representative Training - (Credit for the following flyer goes to member Nadene Klein).



- January 15, 2022 - DCSD announces they will release names of all staff who took the day off on February 3rd, followed by an email from Board President Mike Peterson saying teachers do not have to worry about recriminations.
- February 16, 2022 - I testified in favor of a permanent [Whistleblower Protections Bill SB22-097](#).
- February 16, 2022 - [At Legend High School](#) and at two other Douglas County high schools, notes were left on cars in the school parking lots telling teachers to “get out and leave” and “all teachers unions are bad.”



- February 22, 2022 - I attended a meeting with the Secretary of Labor, Martin Walsh, and with other educator leaders from the Colorado Education Association (CEA). We discussed the challenges of working without a Collective Bargaining Agreement in Douglas County and how local control complicates our efforts to be recognized.
- February 22, 2022 - Board of Education meeting - Board President Mike Peterson says he will not stand for bullying/intimidation of teachers or staff - The BoE majority expressed publicly their interest in hiring Erin Kane for the superintendent position. The Board majority lowered hiring requirements and experience specifically for Erin Kane.
- February 22, 2022 - The apparently uninformed Board majority learns about the law when hiring a superintendent. There is a wait time and protocol to follow. The Board majority wanted to hire Erin Kane “today”, but has to wait until the end of March.
- February 24, 2022 - Testified against [HB22-1203: Income Tax Credits for Nonpublic Education](#) (aka vouchers, education savings plan, choice scholarships). The House Committee on Education has postponed action on the bill indefinitely.
- The Board majority has incurred one year of salary for ousted Superintendent Corey Wise in addition to legal costs associated with the allegations of breaking the [Sunshine Laws](#).
- Corey Wise has retained [Rathod Mahamedbhai LLC](#), the Denver law firm that represented Elijah McClain’s mother. Allen Vellone Wolf Helfrich and Factor P.C. is also representing Corey Wise.
- February 25, 2022 - The first hearing against the majority Board of Education Directors was held and the judge is now reviewing the case.

DCF leadership is coordinating efforts with members to enhance our ability to communicate with each other through meetings and social media. Our current members have created new ways to engage new members and also to support those who have been down this road before. Our goal is to remain focused and connected and to help prevent more collateral damage to our schools and organization.

We are also working with community groups to grow our network of support for public education. Our focus ranges from the equity policy, to staff turnover, having a voice in student learning conditions, and addressing working conditions for staff. The long-term goal is to help provide the best learning and working environment students, staff, and Douglas County Federation members.

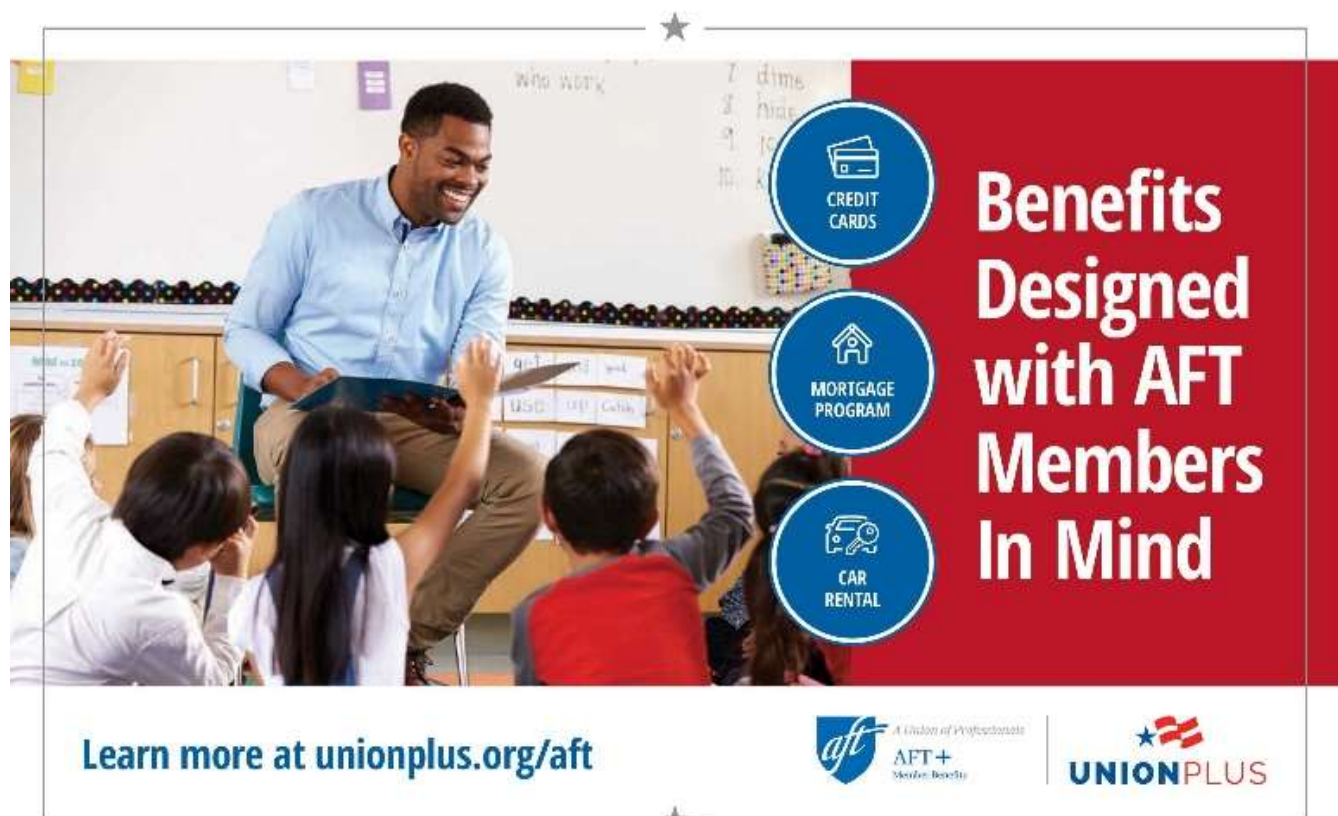
A recently formed parent group, [DougCoCollective](#) is organizing volunteers to inform the community about the recent actions by the School Board majority.

Various parents throughout Douglas County have publicly stated their support for the Douglas County Federation and unions in general through [DougCoCollective](#), [Douglas County Speakeasy](#) on Facebook, and other local community pages on social media.

We have had parents in the community support teachers/staff by offering free yoga classes, providing meals/coffee at school, and placing flyers in support of our educators. Thanks to all of you who are making a difference during these trying times!

Kevin DiPasquale

President Douglas County Federation



The advertisement features a photograph of a male teacher sitting on a desk, smiling and interacting with a group of young students in a classroom. The teacher is wearing a light blue button-down shirt and khaki pants. The students are seen from behind, reaching up towards the teacher. In the background, there is a whiteboard with some writing and a colorful border. To the right of the photo, there is a red vertical banner with white text and three circular icons. The icons represent credit cards, a mortgage program, and car rental. The text on the banner reads 'Benefits Designed with AFT Members In Mind'. At the bottom of the banner, there is a white bar with the text 'Learn more at unionplus.org/aft' and the AFT Union Plus logo.

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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 80224 www.aftcolorado.org 303-947-6709

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: 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.