



Colorado Connection

1st Quarter 2023



President's Remarks

By: Bernadette Jiron

Happy February members!

We have started our Legislative meetings monitoring the bills from the senate and house that effect our members, community, and families lives with Carolyn Siegel lobbyist team.

During the legislative session, we've had members, who have spoken on bills with the senate and house which that we agree or disagree with regarding our members, community and members. We will keep you updated. If you have a bill that you want us to look over, please let us know!

AFT Colorado welcomes the new president of Denver Federation Paraprofessionals & Nutrition Service Employees, Local 4463, Deidre (Dee) Smith she took office in January 2023. Also, welcome Lucy Squire the new president Douglas County Federation, Local 2263. Welcome to both of you!

If you have any news, you'd like us to consider for AFT Colorado newsletter. Please contact us.

A quote to start your day

"Every day is a new beginning, take a deep breath, smile and start again" by Winston Porter

In Unity -
Bernadette (Bernie) Jiron
AFT Colorado President
303-744-9962



From your Executive Director

By: Kallie Leyba

I hope your year is off to a great start. Colorado's legislature has big plans for our state and the AFT Colorado Legislative Committee is making decisions about bills – which to support, which to oppose, and which to monitor. Some of this great legislation that supports our members is due to your hard work during the election season and your donations directly to candidates and to AFT COPE.

The AFT Colorado Biennial Convention is on April 29, 2023. I encourage all of you to consider joining us for this important meeting where we will elect our leaders for the next two years, present awards to those who fight for public education, work tirelessly for our unions, and who are stellar volunteers. In addition to all of that—it's a great opportunity to come together in solidarity and meet members from other locals in our state. Our keynote speaker is Josette Jaramillo, the President of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 1335, who works as a Casework Manager for the Pueblo County Department of Social Services. Josette is the former president of AFL-CIO, is active in the Southern Colorado Labor Council, and other organizations. Josette is a true public servant and an inspiring leader. I know everyone will enjoy hearing from Josette. See more information below about the convention and how you can join us!

In solidarity,
Kallie Leyba



AFT Colorado Bi-Annual Convention

Saturday, April 29, 2023

This is the **call** to the **AFT Colorado Biennial Convention** convening at 9:00 am on Saturday, April 29, 2023 at the AFT CO office located at 925 S. Niagara St., Suite 600, Denver, Colorado 80224. Registration and pre-convention committee meetings will begin at 8:00 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. Terms of office are for two years. Deadline for nomination of officers is 11:59 pm March 29, 2023.

AFT Colorado will be awarding The Meyer/Mall Volunteer, Ellen Slatkin Loyal Unionist and Friend of Public Education **A**wards at Convention. Contact your local union if you know of anyone who is deserving of one of these awards. The deadline for submission is 11:59 pm March 29, 2023.

The AFT Colorado Convention delegates will consider proposed amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws, and proposed resolutions. Delegates will also nominate and elect State Federation officers.

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.

Legislative Session 2023

This is an [informative video](#) about how laws are made in Colorado. If you don't want to watch the video, [this page](#) has an outline of the process to pass a bill.



The AFT Colorado is involved in this process in varying ways. Sometimes we monitor bills that may affect our members indirectly. We may choose to oppose bills which will harm our members (attacks on PERA, for example), we often choose to support bills that support public education, higher education, workers' rights, etc. Less frequently, we will take an active role in bringing a bill idea to a legislator and working to help pass that bill. This year we are excited to be working with Senators Janice Marchman and Julie Gonzales and Representative Mary Young to pass [SB 23-084: "Full Time Employment for Higher Education Faculty."](#) AFT Colorado is excited to help pass this law that will finally acknowledge the hours our adjunct faculty members are working and up until now haven't been able to qualify for the Federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program. Below is what you need to know about this bill:



A Union of Professionals
AFT Colorado

Support SB 23-084

Sponsored by Sen. Janice Marchman, Sen. Julie Gonzales, and Rep. Mary Young

WHAT IS PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS (PSLF)?

PSLF is a federal program that qualifies full-time public and nonprofit employees for federal loan forgiveness after ten years of making payments. Public workers need to work at least thirty hours per week either at one employer or multiple part-time qualifying jobs.

WHAT IS A MULTIPLIER FOR ADJUNCTS AND WHY DO THEY NEED IT?

Adjunct professors—who account for more than one-third of Colorado's higher education faculty—aren't considered full-time employees. They are part-time because they only get paid for the time they spend inside the classroom—so the hours spent grading, planning, and meeting with students isn't considered work. As a result, adjuncts in Colorado don't qualify for PSLF, despite working full-time hours.

A MULTIPLIER MAKES THE HOURS OF GRADING AND PLANNING COUNT.

Each hour of direct instruction the faculty provides is multiplied by 4.35, more accurately reflecting their full-time work and qualifying them for the PSLF program. That's what this bill does—it recognizes ALL of the work that adjunct professors do and allows them to apply for relief from their student debt, the same as other public employees.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Because getting a college degree shouldn't mean your kids can't get one.



I have taught for over twenty years, almost every year of that time as an adjunct, and always at a public institution. If my debt was reduced (or erased), I would know that I would be able to pay for my own child to go to college. ”

—Neccee Matthews-Bradshaw, Community College of Denver

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES?

The law will require all public and private non-profit universities and colleges to give employees enrolled in the PSLF program an annual notice of renewal and a copy of the employment certification form required by the Department of Education, with the employer portion already completed.

HAVE OTHER STATES HAVE DONE THIS?

California, Oregon, New York, and Washington have passed similar laws to help adjunct faculty qualify for PSLF.

Support SB 23-084.

For additional information please contact

Carolyn Siegel, Siegel Long Public Affairs: carolyn@slpublicaffairs.com or 303-710-2856

Chae Park, Siegel Long Public Affairs: chae@slpublicaffairs.com or 720-636-1845





Our bill passed out of the Senate and is working its way to the House. We had an impressive number of AFT and AAUP members show up to testify in support of the bill. If you are willing to testify, or submit written testimony, please email Umesh Pakalapati at upakalap@aft.org. You can testify in person or virtually.

Thank you to our members:

Dr. Rachel Sefton, Community College of Denver

Katy Byrd, Front Range Community College

Kristin Quadracci, Front Range Community College

Dr. Richard Wagner, Metropolitan State University

Dr. Nate Bork, Colorado State University Fort Collins

Andrea Troncoso, Community College of Denver

Joi Lin, University of Denver

David Chatfield, Arapahoe Community College

Felicia Brown, Community College of Denver and Community College of Aurora

Charles Von Tagen, Front Range Community College

Dr. Aaron Schneider, University of Denver

Franklin Sticker, Community College of Denver

And thank you to the following for reading testimonies of those faculty members who were unable to attend the hearing:

Kathy Dorman, AFT CO Executive Board member

Justin DePaolis-Metz, AFT CO Organizer

JoAnn McCarthy, AFT CO Organizer

Dr. Ellen Kress, AAUP Organizer

Nik Arnoldi, AFT CO Organizer






There are lots of bills to watch this session. If you want to learn more, email me at KLEYBA@AFTCOLORADO.ORG.







CREDIT CARDS




MORTGAGE PROGRAM



CAR RENTAL

Benefits Designed with AFT Members In Mind

Learn more at unionplus.org/aft

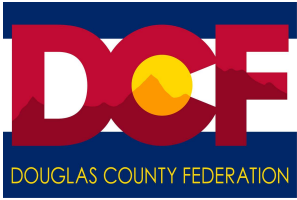


AFT+ Member Benefits



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Local Union Updates

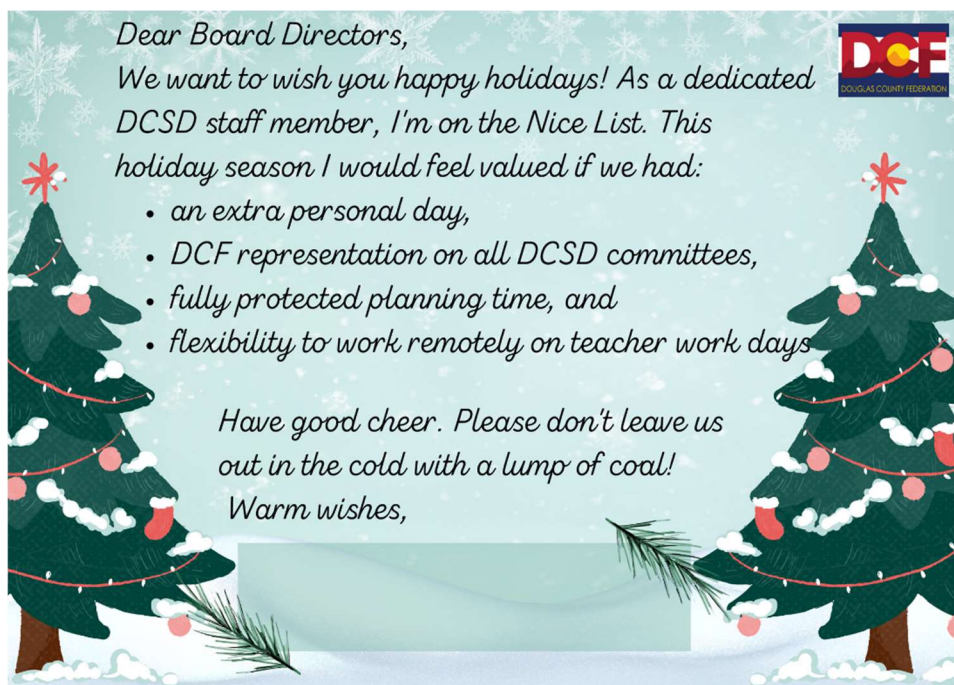


Douglas County Federation President Lucy Squire



Things are looking up for DCF! Our pursuit of positive, more collaborative relationships with the Douglas County Board of Education Directors and Superintendent is working. While we will never agree on everything, we have agreed to disagree without being disagreeable. Thus far our conversations have been direct but respectful. Relative to our relationship and acknowledgement by the District, we are in a better place than we have been in over a decade!

In November, both a Bond and Mill Levy Override (MLO) ballot initiatives failed to pass. The large increases in compensation that would have occurred through a successful MLO did not come to fruition. It was not unexpected, but disappointing nonetheless. In response, DCF conducted a survey of our members asking for ideas that would help alleviate stress and not require funding. The survey resulted in a list of approximately sixteen ideas. At a meeting in late October, our membership narrowed the list down to the top four requests that we would make to the Board Directors and Superintendent. The question then became how to present these requests. While the option existed to write a letter or make demands during public comment at a board meeting, the members decided to present the request in the form of a holiday card. The cards were distributed in the schools, staff signed them, and at the December board meeting our President,



Lucy Squire, gave each Board member a stack of cards during public comment.

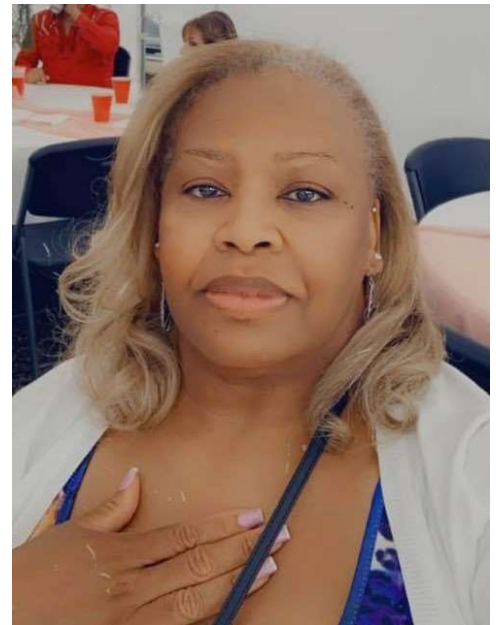
To say that the cards were well received is an understatement. At this point staff will be receiving an additional personal day next year, building administrators have been asked to be conscious of planning time, and we now have a designated seat on one of the Board committees with more to come. Additionally, DCF has been publicly recognized by Board Directors as well as the Superintendent. Lucy is also sitting on both the Employee Council and the Superintendent's Teacher Connect, a cadre of employees that will talk with her monthly about what is happening in buildings and at worksites.



Denver Federation for Paraprofessionals and Nutrition Service Employees

Greetings,

My name is Deidre Smith - most people call me Dee. I've lived in Colorado for 37 years. I have been with Denver Public Schools for 32 years. I've been an active member of "Denver Federation of Paraprofessionals and Nutrition Service Employees" (DFPNSE) for 13 years. I was also an active member of "United Auto Workers" (UAW) for Caterpillar Logistics in Denver. I am the new President of DFPNSE Local 4463. Additionally, I am honored to serve as your new President. I have some big shoes to fill since the retirement of Bernie Jiron. I hope that I can continue to carry on the excellent service that Bernie has provided our members with and keep building strong relationships with our school administration and board members. I enjoy supporting my current and previous students in their life endeavors, but most of all, I just enjoy life!



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.