



# Colorado Connection

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2023



## President's Remarks

By: Bernadette Jiron

Happy Spring!

Congratulations - we made it through another school year.

The AFT Colorado convention was held on Saturday, April 29, 2023. I was honored to be elected AFT Colorado President. Kathy Dorman from Douglas County Federation was elected Executive Vice President and Sarah Mesmer was reelected to Secretary Treasurer. Two new board members join us from Colorado Classified School Employees Association: Wayne Scott and Christy Herrick. The remaining Vice President positions are filled by Lucy Squire, Victoria Pacheco and Sheila Rucki. All these elected positions are 2 years terms. Congratulations!

I want to thank Cheryl Reiling for her hard work in getting this convention together - she always does a fantastic job!!!!

Have a wonderful and relaxing summer (some of us still work!) Be sure to get some well-deserved R & R.

In Unity -

Bernadette (Bernie) Jiron

AFT Colorado President

303-744-9962

A promotional graphic for AFT Union Plus. It features a photo of a male teacher smiling and interacting with a group of young students in a classroom. To the right of the photo is a red vertical banner with white text that reads "Benefits Designed with AFT Members In Mind". Above this text are three circular icons: "CREDIT CARDS", "MORTGAGE PROGRAM", and "CAR RENTAL". At the bottom of the graphic, there is a blue banner with the text "Learn more at [unionplus.org/aft](https://unionplus.org/aft)". To the right of this banner are the AFT logo, the AFT+ logo, and the UNIONPLUS logo.



## From your Executive Director

By: Kallie Leyba

Thank you to all of our members for your work and advocacy this year. For those of you who are on a break for a few weeks this summer—please enjoy your well deserved down time. As teachers, staff, instructors, professors and public employees, your work is crucial to the wellbeing of our state. And yet, sadly, many of you may not feel the appreciation and respect that you so deserve. Here we are in the middle of culture wars where we are blamed; we are accused; we are attacked and we are even threatened. I'm truly saddened by this. Please know that your union, local, state and international—will continue to advocate for our profession and have your backs. Solidarity forever!

Legislative session wrapped up (more on this below) and municipal and school board elections are ramping up, but for now, your State Federation is taking a moment to catch our breaths.

In solidarity,  
Kallie Leyba

## Legislative Session 2023

Have you said “I don’t do politics,” or “I don’t like politics?” I certainly don’t blame you! However, our lawmakers vote on bills that affect our profession and our lives. [What matters to you?](#) PERA? K-12 funding? Higher education funding? Equity for students? Apprenticeships for students? K12 testing or teacher evaluation, or something else?

Below are just some of the bills on which the AFT Colorado Legislative Committee took positions. The 2024 legislative session will be here in a blink and AFT Colorado will be at the Capitol to advocate for our members’ and our students’ needs. Our legislative committee meets weekly during the session to make decisions about which bills to support, oppose, or which require amending. We value your input! Please [take a moment to let us know](#) what issues on which you’d like to see the AFT Colorado engage.

Bill #	Title/Topic	Chamber	Position
SB 84	PSLF Multiplier (passed)	Senate	Support
SB 71	Education Accountability Act (PI'd)	Senate	Support
HB 1168	Legal Representation & Students with Disabilities (passed)	House	Support
HB 1064	Interstate Mobility Teacher Compact (passed)	Senate	Support
SB 84	PSLF Multiplier (passed)	House	Support
HB 1219	Waiting Period to purchase firearm (passed)	House	Support
SB 170	ERPO expansion (passed)	Senate	Support
SB 169	Increase Minimum Age to purchase firearm (passed)	Senate	Support
HB 1176	DC plan option for PERA (failed)	House	Oppose
SB 169	Increase Minimum Age to purchase firearm (passed)	House	Support
SB 170	ERPO Expansion (passed)	House	Support
HB 1212	Promotion of Apprenticeships (written) (passed)	House	Support
SB 202	Wearing of Native American Traditional Regalia (passed)	House	Support
HB 1291	Procedures for Expulsion Hearing Officers (passed)	House	Support
SB 205	Universal High School Scholarship Program (passed)	Senate	Support
SB 202	Wearing Of Native American Traditional Regalia (passed)	Senate	Support
SB 094	School Transportation Task Force (passed)	House	Amend
HB 1078	UI Dependent Allowance (failed)	Senate	Support
SB 296	Prevent Harassment & Discrimination in Schools	Senate/House	Support
HB 1109	School Policies And Student Conduct (PI'd and reintroduced - passed)	House	Support

Colorado engaged on by lobbying or testifying. Green highlighting indicates bills that passed, red indicates bills that didn't pass.

AFT Colorado members and staff at the Capitol to testify in support of SB 23-084





Kallie Leyba, with Rep. Mary Young after the House hearing on SB 23-084 (at 10:45 PM!)



Kallie Leyba giving testimony on a bill in the 2023 session



Kallie Leyba speaks at a rally to celebrate the signing of four gun violence prevention bills in 2023 legislative session.

## Colorado Democratic Party Annual Obama Dinner with the AFL-CIO





# Local Union Updates



## DCF: Professional Development

The Douglas County Federation (DCF) has had great success providing professional development support for our members and potential members this past school year. The year started in August with our participation in “Welcome to DCSD,” the new teacher orientation. We taught five sections of “Beginning of the Year Classroom Management” which was well received by the 150 people who attended. In the fall we ran a section of ELL 589 and presented a second section in the spring. The teachers who successfully completed the course material received a 45 hour certificate for ELL training required by the State of Colorado. In addition, the class qualifies for three graduate level credits from Adams State University. Many of the attendees chose to work with Adams State to get the credits. The DougCo School District recently brought back a salary schedule with steps and lanes so our members are eager to advance themselves with professional learning.

Additionally, the newly revised “Foundations of Effective Teaching” class was launched by four of our members who attended Summer Educator Academy to become trained instructors. Our participants were impressed with the class and were able to do a deep dive into the topics of equity, diversity and inclusion - very timely in today's social climate! Those participants were also able to opt into three graduate level credits from Adams State University.



Lastly, during the weekend of May 6th-8th, DCF hosted approximately thirty people that included AFT National Staff, AFT Trainers, DCF members, as well as educators from New Mexico and Illinois. We participated in a pilot class “Deepening Civics Skills Through Classroom Dialogue.” We discussed how to create a safe space for learning, examined how to distinguish truth from falsehoods in the media, as well as learned and practiced classroom strategies that can be used to implement discussion around difficult topics. Bravo to the AFT trainers and staff who challenged us, entertained us but most importantly helped us to grow and learn! This class will be available once all the pilots and revisions are completed. I also need to mention that we continued the conversations and deepened our camaraderie during a reception at Maggiano's Saturday evening. This was a well deserved and welcomed break from the hard work of learning!

Our professional development continues this summer as we are running two sections of ELL 589 and one section of Foundation in June. If your local is interested in a custom designed training

opportunity for your members, please contact Kathy Dorman, the Local Site Coordinator of DCF at [ksoutardorman@gmail.com](mailto:ksoutardorman@gmail.com). We are proud to offer these research based, classroom? vetted courses for the educators in our communities.



### **DCF Member Receives Meyer/Mall Award**

Congratulations to Matthew Solak who was presented the Meyer/Mall Outstanding Volunteer Award in recognition of outstanding volunteer service at the 2023 AFT Colorado Convention on March 29th. This award is given every two years to a member of an AFT Colorado local who performs significant volunteer service including promoting the benefits of membership, committee work, political action, promoting the union, and assisting in other union activities.

Matthew teaches Chinese at Legend High School and is a long-time DCF member. He has consistently stepped up as a volunteer regardless of the task or event. Matthew truly exemplifies the spirit of the Meyer/Mall award. He has walked miles canvassing, is a member of the DCF Organizing Committee, rarely misses a DCF event, and frequently steps up in giving public comment at Board of Education meetings. Matthew has been a DCF champion and a model for new members!



## 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](http://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.