



Colorado Connection

3rd Quarter 2024



Welcome back educators!!!

Summer went by too fast; it was a busy summer.

We have increased our membership in Colorado. We need to continue recruiting members to protect our rights as a union.

I attended the [AFT National Convention](#) in Houston Texas in July with Deidre Smith, president of Denver Federation Paraprofessional and Nutrition Service Employees and Christina Garcia organizer from DFPNSE and myself as AFT Colorado State President. It was one of the best conferences I have attended. The workshops and the speakers were fantastic.

They had wonderful presenters speaking on any subject you could think of dealing with education for our students. Important topics included the need to stop school violence and the need to protect our students in our schools. Please vote on November 5th. It is urgent that we protect our students. If you are not a registered voter, please let us know and we'll help you get to be a registered voter. Contact AFT Colorado for more information

Kamala Harris is our nominee for president. She attended the AFT convention and it was magnificent. Her speech hit every point that we as AFT work on. Please vote ❤️❤️. We were the first union to endorse her and we should be proud of that.



The Paraprofessionals' Bill of Rights was up for discussion and it passed. The proposal was passed unanimously for all paraprofessionals to have rights in our schools.



Christina Garcia speaks at AFT Convention 2024

Christina Garcia, organizer from DFPNSE, spoke about healthy food for healthy kids and free lunch for all students in all schools.

AFT Colorado's convention will be held next May of 2025. I am encouraging all locals to have at least one representative there to hear what we've done, what we're going to do and to vote on your new executive board.

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

WE HAVE MOVED

1777 S. Bellaire St.
Suite 440
Denver, CO 80222

From your Executive Director

By: Kallie Leyba

DO SOMETHING. That is what Michelle Obama told us at the Democratic National Convention. It's not enough to vote or to be frustrated and vent, or to dream of what laws would make our state and country better. We all have to DO SOMETHING. I urge you to get involved in this upcoming election. You can [complete this form](#) to let me know what your SOMETHING will be.



The AFT Colorado COPE Committee (Committee on Political Education) is composed of volunteer members who make endorsement and donation decisions for candidates (other than Federal candidates). The committee members often attend candidate interviews and read candidate questionnaires to help them make these decisions. The committee also discusses past legislative sessions for incumbents who have voted on bills that affect our members.

Our committee has met several times to vote on endorsements and donations to candidates in Colorado who support our values and will champion policy that improves the working conditions and lives of our members. The endorsements are shown below.

AFT Colorado Endorsements

State Senate

SD 2 Jennifer Brady
SD 5 Cole Buerger
SD 6 Vivian Smotherman
SD 12 Marc Snyder
SD 13 Matt Dean Johnston
SD 14 Cathy Kipp
SD 16 Chris Kolker
SD 18 Judy Amabile
SD 19 Lindsay Daugherty
SD 21 Dafna Michaelson Jenet
SD 26 Jeff Bridges
SD 28 Mike Weissman
SD 29 Janet Buckner
SD 31 Chris Hansen
SD 33 James Coleman

State House

HD 1 Javier Mabrey
HD 2 Steven Woodrow
HD 3 Meg Froelich
HD 4 Cecelia Espenosa
HD 5 Alex Valdez
HD 7 Jennifer Bacon
HD 8 Lindsay Gilchrist
HD 9 Emily Sirota
HD 10 Junie Joseph
HD 11 Karen McCormick
HD 12 Kyle Brown
HD 13 Julie McCluskie
HD 16 Stephanie Vigil
HD 17 Regina English
HD 18 Amy Pascal
HD 19 Michael Pierson
HD 23 Monica Duran
HD 25 Tammy Story
HD 26 Meghan Lukens
HD 27 Brianna Titone
HD 28 Sheila Lieder
HD 29 Shannon Bird
HD 30 Rebekah Stewart
HD 32 Manny Rutinel
HD 33 William Lindstedt
HD 34 Jenny Willford
HD 35 Lorena Garcia
HD 36 Michael Carter
HD 37 Chad Clifford
HD 38 Gretchen Ryden
HD 39 Eric Brody
HD 40 Naquetta Ricks
HD 41 Iman Jodeh
HD 42 Mandy Lindsay
HD 43 Robert Marshall
HD 44 Alyssa Nilemo
HD 45 Chad Cox
HD 49 Leslie Smith
HD 50 Mary Young
HD 52 Yara Zokaie
HD 53 Andrew Boesenecker
HD 57 Elizabeth Velasco
HD 59 Katie Stewart
HD 61 Eliza Hamrick
HD 62 Matthew Martinez

State Board of Education

At Large: Rhonda Solis



A Union of Professionals

AFT Colorado

Union members understand that big D Democracy takes INVOLVEMENT, and isn't a spectator sport. How do you like to get involved?

- Donate through COPE
- Serve on the COPE Committee
- Write postcards for candidates
- Phone or text bank – for general voting public or other union members
- Canvas (knock doors) for candidates or initiatives

There is something for everyone and as a union member in Colorado, YOU know more than most voters how important your involvement is. [Please complete this survey](#) to let me know how you would like to engage politically and I'll reach out.

In August, I traveled to Chicago for the AFT/Microsoft Symposium on AI in Education, along with Dee and Christina from DFPNSE. This was a phenomenal experience—AFT presented the [AI Common Sense Guardrails](#) – a working document that is already being revised based on some things that came out of the meeting. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the [guardrails](#). AFT and Microsoft are willing to come out to your district and local for a deep dive. If you are interested, talk to your local president and they can work with me on this. I left the symposium knowing



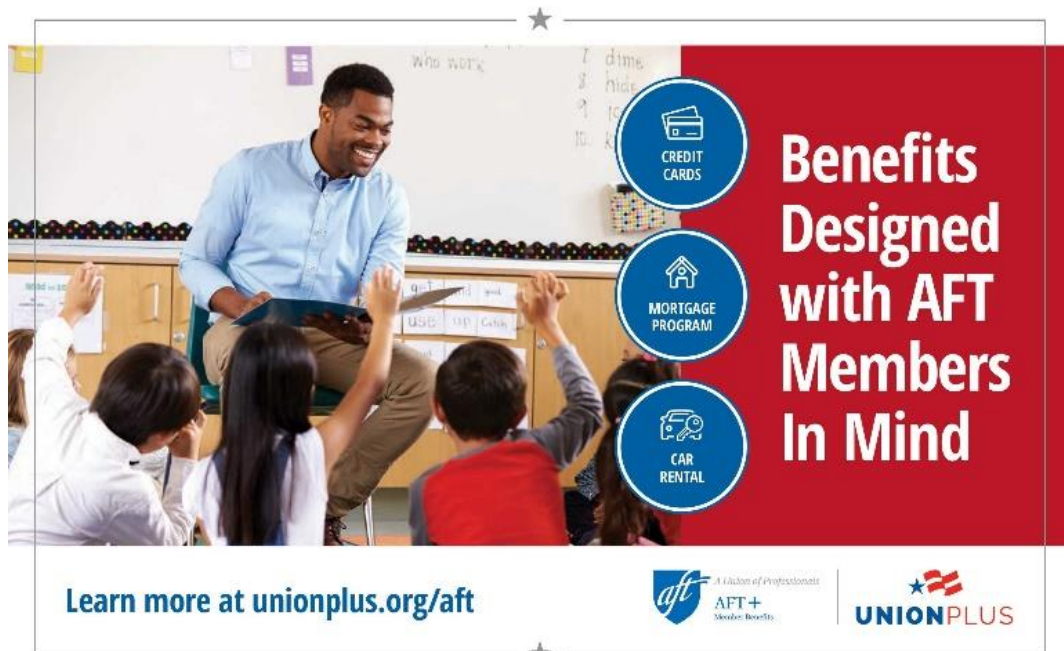
Dee Smith, Kallie Leyba & Christina Garcia
AI in Education Conference 2024

- Educators are being included in discussions and developments with Microsoft,
- The AFT is not waiting for issues to come up, but is being pro-active,
- AI technology has the potential to cut down on our workloads in a significant manner.

Please email me with any questions or thoughts you may have. I'm looking forward to meeting lots of you as we canvass and phone bank for candidates that support the issues that are most important to our membership.

In solidarity,

Kallie Leyba

A promotional graphic for AFT member benefits. On the left, a teacher in a light blue shirt sits on a stool, smiling and interacting with a group of diverse students in a classroom. On the right, a red background features three blue circular icons: 'CREDIT CARDS' (with a credit card icon), 'MORTGAGE PROGRAM' (with a house icon), and 'CAR RENTAL' (with a car icon). The text 'Benefits Designed with AFT Members In Mind' is written in white on the red background. At the bottom, there is a white banner with the text 'Learn more at unionplus.org/aft', the AFT logo (with the tagline 'A Union of Professionals'), the 'AFT+' logo (with the tagline 'Member Benefits'), and the 'UNIONPLUS' logo.

Local Union Updates



Douglas County Federation Mounts New Organizing Campaign with the Goal of Collective Bargaining

Over the summer, DCF members went through the AFT one-on-one organizer training and honed their skills knocking doors of potential members. DCF organizers were out knocking doors and calling phones every week this summer, using the MiniVAN app to track conversations and create a list of leads to follow up with during the school year. DCF signed up 20 new members during June and July and built great momentum in August during “Back to School” events.

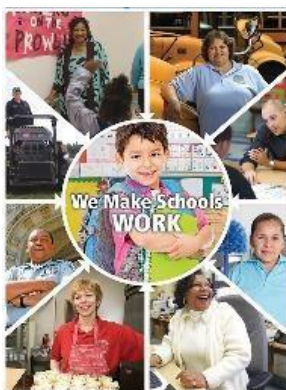
On August 1st, DCF members set up tables at New Teacher Orientation with the goal of educating new employees about DCF and the plan to get collective bargaining restored. New employees were so excited to see the union on their first day of work, setting the tone for the rest of their career in Douglas County.

When it came to reaching current employees who had not yet joined DCF, building reps were tasked with holding ten minute “Back to School” meetings. The purpose of the meetings was to welcome everyone back to school and to educate them about the plan to get collective bargaining. Reps covered the following points:

1. DCF is working toward restoring collective bargaining and getting teachers and staff a binding contract that we negotiate.
2. We have an opportunity to elect a union friendly school board in 2025 who will recognize collective bargaining.
3. We need to demonstrate strong union membership numbers to potential school board candidates so they feel pressure to work with us.
4. By joining today, you are helping to build our collective strength.

These talking points are resonating and more people continue to join DCF. Since August 1st, DCF has signed up over 40 new members and forms continue to come in. DCF is so proud of the member organizers and building reps that stepped up to the plate to take risks and put themselves out there. DCF hopes to continue these organizing efforts as the school year progresses.

In Solidarity -
Fiona Boomer
Executive Director
Douglas County Federation



Denver Federation Paraprofessionals and Nutrition Service Employees

The 2024-2025 school year for Denver Public Schools is off to a promising start. We have successfully concluded our contract negotiations with DPS, achieving several significant improvements as well as some smaller wins. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the members who dedicated countless hours to advocating for enhanced working conditions.

Additionally, I am grateful to AFT for the grant that enabled us to purchase books from First Book, which will greatly contribute to promoting literacy. We recently held our inaugural book giveaway at Marie L. Greenwood, and it was a resounding success. The students were enthusiastic about their new books, and the parents expressed their gratitude.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to the administration of Marie L. Greenwood for their support in facilitating this event.

In Unity -
Dee Smith, President, DFPNSE



First Books 2024 - Denver Federation Paraprofessionals and Nutrition Service Employees

STANDING TOGETHER: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Committee on Political Education (COPE) Deduction

1777 S. Bellaire St., Suite 440, Denver, CO 80222 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.

SIGNATURE: _____ Date: _____