



THE ADVOCATE

A Communication for Members of the Aurora Education Association

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NOT SO FAST! NO on SB 191

Think teaching is a risky job? Just wait till you read what a Denver legislator has in store for Colorado educators. You, your best friend, or your colleagues down the hall could lose your jobs if Senator Michael Johnston (D-Denver) passes his anti-teacher, anti-union bill. Evaluations will be used to hire, fire, pay, assign, and dismiss teachers in ways that you cannot even imagine today. Read on to see what SB 191 will mean for you, public education, students and our profession if it passes, then seek out your building Association Rep and ask how you can help!

***SB 191** requires all teachers (probationary and nonprobationary) and all principals to be evaluated every year, not every three years. The bill changes the purposes of evaluations to include supporting the state in the “equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals” (though it does not say how this distribution would occur). The bill says that evaluation will be the basis for decision making in hiring, compensation, promotion, assignment, professional development, earning and keeping probationary status, dismissal, and contract nonrenewal. The bill bases teacher evaluations on “effectiveness,” although this term is not defined.

***SB 191** requires principals to evaluate teachers with “multiple methods that are fair, transparent, timely, and rigorous.” Again, these terms are not defined, nor are the methods. The bill also allows principals to designate others to do teacher evaluations, perhaps opening the door to peer reviewers who would have the authority to recommend dismissal of a teacher.

***SB 191** requires that at least 50 percent of a teacher’s evaluation be based on student academic growth. The multiple measures mentioned above will be used to determine a teacher’s “effectiveness” and shall include (but are not limited to) measures of student longitudinal academic growth and achievement levels on any statewide assessments in the relevant subject and grade level (i.e., CSAP) or locally adopted interim assessments approved by the State Board of Education to assess student academic growth in the relevant subject and grade level (in other words, tests that districts develop and that must be approved by the State Board). This requirement appears to apply to every teacher even if he/she teaches in a subject or at a grade level where CSAP is not given.

***SB 191** defines a probationary teacher as one who has not yet completed three consecutive years of “demonstrated effectiveness.” Under the bill, teachers win and lose non-probationary status. A non-probationary teacher loses due process with two consecutive years of “demonstrated ineffectiveness.” Then this teacher must build three new consecutive years of “demonstrated effectiveness” in order to win back non-probationary status. Presumably, one proceeds through one’s teaching career like this, winning and losing non-probationary status based on the performance of students on various assessments.....*cont’d*

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*Non-probationary teachers who lose non-probationary status would be subject to the same statutes that allow non-renewal of probationary teachers for any reason, or no reason.

*Under SB 191, probationary teachers may never achieve non-probationary status, but be held in limbo as they strive every year to achieve three consecutive years student academic growth.

***SB 191** stipulates that no teacher can be hired or transferred into a school without the “school’s” consent. This would supersede current collective bargaining agreement provisions and current board policy. If a teacher cannot get an assignment after two hiring cycles – because he or she cannot get the consent of a receiving school – the teacher goes on unpaid leave.

*Under **SB 191**, school boards would have to develop and implement new evaluation systems based on “effectiveness.” District systems must meet or exceed the state’s measures of effectiveness. District systems must provide that all teachers and principals are evaluated annually, and the systems must serve as the basis for “ineffective performance dismissal” (a new term that would be in the state due process law). The systems must also provide that any teacher whose performance is deemed ineffective be given a remediation plan. The bill says these teachers will get two things besides a remediation plan - a reasonable period of time to remediate deficiencies and a “statement of the resources and assistance available for the purpose of improving effectiveness.”

***SB 191** requires school boards to adapt their principal evaluations so that at least 66% of a principal’s evaluation is based on a combination of student academic growth and the effectiveness or increased effectiveness of the teachers who work in the principal’s school.

*RIF is changed under SB 191. The bill requires using “teacher ineffectiveness” to determine RIFs. The law would no longer state that probationary teacher contracts are cancelled first in a RIF.

***SB 191** does not codify the Governor’s Educator Effectiveness Council, but it gives the council more jobs. It also makes the council work closely with the State Board of Education and allows the State Board to take over the council’s work if that work is not completed by December 31, 2010. Instead of the Effectiveness Council making recommendations to the Legislature, the council will make recommendations to the State Board.

WE NEED YOUR HELP! CEA, along with AEA and every other local association will be fighting this bill, and we need your help to succeed Building AR’s will be holding meetings this week and next to make sure every member has heard this information and to engage you in activities to help us “kill the bill.” Please make sure to attend the AEA meeting at your building. Remember this is about whether you will work in an environment where you can make a difference for students, or where your primary focus will be chasing test scores.

National Teacher Day—May 4th

This is a reminder that Tuesday, May 4 is National Teacher Day. The whole week, from May 4th-10th is designated Teacher Appreciation Week by the National PTA. This year's theme is "Great Teachers Make Great Public Schools."

The origins of National Teacher Day are somewhat unclear. Around 1944 Arkansas teacher Mattye Whyte-Woodbridge began corresponding with political and education leaders about the need for a national day to honor teachers. Woodbridge wrote to Eleanor Roosevelt, and in 1953 she persuaded the members of the 81st Congress to proclaim a National Teacher Day. NEA next lobbied Congress to create a national day to celebrate teachers, and in 1980 Congress declared March 7 as National Teacher Day for that year only. At the 1985 NEA Representative Assembly delegates voted to change the event to Tuesday of the first full week of May.

This year we encourage association members to participate in the NEA Teacher Thank-You Project. How? Copy and paste this link into your web browser <http://www.teacherthankyoucard.com/> and click on the tab titled **A big project**. Even though YOU are a teacher, wouldn't it be nice to say thank you to that special teacher who made such a difference in your life? You can add a card to that favorite teacher, read featured cards, and view the gallery video.

A founding principle of our country is a free public education for all citizens. And, that's what teachers do every day.....ensure that their students get a great education! Why not recognize that special teacher by posting your own thank-you on the NEA Thank-You Project site?

NEA President Dennis Van Roekel Visits APS Pilot School

NEA President Dennis Van Roekel will be in town on Thursday for the CEA Delegate Assembly. But before delegate assembly begins President Van Roekel will be visiting metro area schools. This year, Wm Smith High School, the first Pilot school in APS is the fortunate recipient of this visit.

Members of the Joint Steering Committee already had a scheduled walkthrough at Wm Smith as required by the Pilot school guidelines. President Van Roekel will get to participate in the walkthrough as well as learn about how the autonomies Pilot schools are afforded allow them to meet the needs of their students in different ways.

AEA is excited to have the opportunity to share the work our collaboration with the district resulted in creating the concept of Pilot schools. With 3.2 million members and hundreds of schools to visit, it is an honor to have President Van Roekel visit our first Pilot school this Thursday.

TELL Colorado Survey Results Are In

Last week the TELL Colorado survey results were released to the State Board of Education. The results can be found at www.tellcolorado.org. Recommendations to policymakers, educators and stakeholders include: 1. Create systemic opportunities for teachers to grow professionally and participate in decisions that impact their schools and classrooms. 2. Ensure that every new teacher is inducted in to the profession and receives frequent support to improve instruction. 3. Help school leadership establish positive teaching and learning conditions in every school. 4. Support schools in understanding and improving teaching conditions. 5. Support schools in engaging the broader community in effort so understand and improve working conditions. 6. Use TELL Colorado and other mechanisms to collect educators' views on teaching and learning conditions.

Annual Meeting of the Corporation & CEA Delegate Assembly

The Annual Meeting of the Corporation will be held during the AEA AR Council meeting on Tuesday, April 20, 4:30-6:45. All AEA members are welcome to attend.

The CEA Delegate Assembly will be held at the end of this week, on April 22-24, when over 700 association members from across the state of Colorado will convene in order to do the business of our state organization. This is the annual meeting of our state organization where we elect officers, debate new business items, constitution and bylaw amendments, and resolutions that have significance to our association, educators and public education.

AEA will be well represented by twenty-seven association leaders, including the AEA Officers, Board Directors and elected delegates from the membership.

This year we will also elect a new Secretary-Treasurer as Nancy Popenhagen, as our current Secretary-Treasurer completes her final term. Two candidates running for this office are Jeff Marshall from Colorado Springs, and Kim Ursetta from Denver. Specific units will elect Board Directors to represent them on the CEA Board of Directors, and regional representatives to the Fund Council will also be elected.

Delegate Assembly will open on Thursday night with nomination speeches from the candidates for Secretary-Treasurer, a speech from our own state President, Beverly Ingle, and a keynote from NEA President Dennis Van Roekel.

AEA ELA Caucus

Rosana Trujillo, Chair

Denise Alcalá

Linda Bay

Manley Daniel

Lee Ann Gott

Jaika Klein

Maria Romero

Judy Stephenson

Aurora Education Association
Pavilion Tower I
2851 S. Parker Rd. #1000
Aurora, CO 80014
Phone: 303-696-6265
Fax: 303-696-0104
E-mail: aeapres6265@aol.com
Web: www.auroraea.org

The Aurora Education Association is the exclusive representative for all teachers full and part-time hired on contract in APS in matters involving collective negotiations with respect to wages, hours and other conditions of employment.

The mission of the Aurora Education Association is to empower licensed educators to advocate for students and themselves in order to provide quality education, professional excellence and economic security.

Our vision is to be an exemplary organization working together as powerful professionals. Through solidarity we are a collaborative and proactive Association. We are unified by our strengths and commitment to advocacy for children and to empower our members.

AEA is an affiliate of the Colorado Education Association and the National Education Association.

