

# THE ADVOCATE

Volume 7 No. 1

A Communication for Members of the Aurora Education Association

October, 2008

## WHO WE ARE

The Aurora Education Association is the professional organization for teachers working in the Aurora Public Schools. AEA represents over 70% of the dedicated educators working daily to deliver quality education to the students who attend the APS AEA members are part of the Colorado Education Association representing over 38,000 members, and the National Education Association with over 3.2 million members. At the local level, AEA members are served by elected Officers, the Board of Directors and Association Representatives and UniServ staff.

### OFFICERS

The AEA Officers are full time teachers who are elected by AEA members to serve in the positions of President, Vice President and Secretary Treasurer. Officers can serve three, three year terms. The AEA President is released from teaching duties to serve the membership and direct the organization.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The AEA Board of Directors is made up of full time teachers elected to serve members across the district. There are 10 Board Director positions, each serving a two year term. The Officers are also members of the Board. The AEA Board makes all policy decisions for the organization, which are then approved by the Association Representative Council. The AEA Board meets on the 1st Tuesday of the month at the Aurora Chamber of Commerce board room.

### ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES

The Association Representatives are full time teachers who are either elected or volunteer to represent the voice and

interests of members in their building at the AR Council. The AR Council meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month in Conference room C at ESC #4.

### UNISERV PROGRAM

CEA and NEA provide professional staff assistance to AEA through the UniServ Program. There are seventeen UniServ Units in Colorado. AEA and the Littleton Education Association share an office and employ a UniServ Director and a secretary. The UniServ Director works with each local association providing expertise in organizing, membership, bargaining, grievance procedures, member representation, political action and legislative activities.

### WHAT WE DO

AEA serves as the recognized representative for teachers in the Aurora Public

It is the responsibility of every conscientious educator to support their professional organization with their membership and active participation.

Schools. We also serve as a means of effective communication with district lead-

ers and policy makers. AEA advocates for professional salaries, benefits and quality teaching and learning conditions both for teachers and students. AEA is also able to access support and legal representation for AEA members through our affiliation with CEA. Some of the other benefits provided members include:

- problem solving and grievance resolution
- networking and leadership opportunities
- communication on education issues
- advocacy with policy makers and elected officials

- legal referral service
- representation in legislative and political issues affecting public education

### MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

Because AEA is a member driven organization, our work is accomplished through the participation of members who volunteer their time to make the organization more effective. Members serve on the following association and district committees:

- Instructional Advisory Group
- Insurance Advisory Committee
- Joint Steering Committee
- Negotiations Team
- Coaching Taskforce
- Teaching and Learning Committee
- Membership Committee
- Teacher Evaluation Committee

### OUR GOAL

It is imperative as never before that the voices of teachers be included in the decisions affecting them as professionals. Teachers must be able to advocate for themselves and their students in order to offer the best education possible. AEA will continue to work for the inclusion of teacher voices in the decisions that affect not only their work life, but the educational life of their students. AEA will also work diligently to ensure that APS can attract and retain the highest quality teachers by offering competitive salary and benefits packages, and teaching and learning conditions that provide the kind of work environment necessary to deliver a 21st Century education to every APS student.

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## What Association Reps Do and How You Can Help

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Association Representatives (AR's) are full-time APS teachers who along with all their other duties and responsibilities willingly take on the job of being the representative for the teachers in their building. AEA would not exist without these dedicated AEA members.

AR's attend a monthly meeting called AR Council (all members are welcome to attend) to hear information about what is occurring in the district, discuss building issues and concerns, and take positions that direct the action of the Board and Officers.

AR's also meet with building administrators in their buildings to address concerns and problem solve solutions. Last year all elementary principals and AR's attended a full day training to learn how to use interest based strategies in solving problems at the building before they become larger issues.

AR's may serve on ILT and Building Council because these are the two committees making the majority of



decisions at the building level. Often decisions made by these committees have contractual implications, and AR's bring considerable knowledge about the contract to these discussions.

AR's generally have a good idea about what is going on in the building and can offer helpful advice on a variety of issues to members. They also know the provisions of the Master Agreement, and can respond to contract questions. If they don't know the answer they can contact the AEA office for advice.

AR's hold monthly building meetings to share information from the AR Council, and gather input from AEA members so they can represent your voice in Association decisions.

You can help your building AR by making it a priority to attend the monthly Association meetings to hear what AEA is doing and give your input. AR's can't represent your needs if they don't hear from you. We encourage you to attend your next AEA building meeting. Yes, it is another meeting, but one that is well worth your time.

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## E-mail, Internet and Social Networking Advisory

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AEA wants to remind APS employees who are users of the APS Groupwise e-mail system that they are not guaranteed privacy in the use of that system. All e-mails sent and received and websites visited, as well as the time these transmissions and visits occur may be a matter of public record and/or accessed by district personnel. District employees should be judicious in the content of e-mails they send, as well as websites they visit, in particular during the duty day. If you want to ensure that your e-mail communication remains private, we recommend using a private system....not the district e-mail system.

AEA would also recommend to members that they restrict membership on their personal websites, MySpace and Facebook accounts to adult friends, and not allow students to register as friends. If you do maintain these social networking accounts we would recommend that you make your pages "private" access only. If you blog, maintain a wiki, or share your thoughts in public discourse on internet forums or chat rooms

it is important to be aware that as a teacher you are expected to demonstrate the behavior of someone in a position of trust by your students, parents, the community and the Board of Education.

Finally, consider carefully any pictures or videos that you record on your cell phone. While your phone is certainly your private property, they are easily misplaced or even stolen in which case anything you have recorded on your phone is no longer private.

We are living in a world that is connected 24/7, and that's a good thing, and, because we are so connected, we need to be very careful about what we share, how and with whom. We encourage you to act wisely about internet use and the new "connected" world we live in.

Visit <http://www.nea.org/neatoday/0810/youtube> for an article on students posting cell phone videos on YouTube.

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## AEA SPED Caucus Offers PD to Address Member Interests

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Two weeks ago over 50 APS teachers, both SPED and regular education attended a professional learning opportunity offered by the AEA SPED Caucus. Lynn Kuhn, national and international consultant presented an informative and interesting perspective on implementing Response to Intervention, an instructional model which the Colorado Department of Education ex-

pects to see implemented in most school districts by August 2009. The session got rave reviews! Through a grant awarded by the NEA National Council of Urban Education Associations the AEA SPED Caucus has planned a series of professional development opportunities for this year.

Carole Walsh, a member of the NEA IDEA Cadre will present the next two sessions in the series. On October

13th the session will address **Autism Spectrum Disorder**. The third session will focus on **Truth in "Labeling" Disproportionality in Special Education** and will be held on November 10th. Interested staff members can get additional information on these professional learning opportunities by visiting the AEA website at [www.auroraea.org](http://www.auroraea.org) and clicking on the SPED Caucus link.

## Association Training/Conference Opportunities

Two opportunities for Association involvement are coming up soon.

On November 13-15 CEA will hold its annual Regional Bargaining Councils' Fall Retreat in Copper Mountain. At this conference bargainers come together to improve their skills in negotiations by participating in a variety of training options and modules. Association leaders attending the Bargaining modules will actually participate in bargaining scenarios for three days. Other



sessions include learning about new trends in health insurance, understanding salary schedules, grievance advocacy, organizing and understanding school budgets, communicating with members about bargain-

ing and alternative compensation models. Because this conference will follow the general election, we will have an Election Debrief during the conference, and a discussion about the impact Election '08 will have on bargaining in 2009.

If you like to think outside the box, are a good problem solver and have ever wondered about what occurs in negotiations, you might want to get more information on this bargaining conference. Application forms will be available on the

AEA website at [www.auroraea.org](http://www.auroraea.org) on 10-6-08.

The NEA Western Region Leadership Conference will be held from January 16-18 in Albuquerque, NM. The theme of the conference is **Transi-**

**tioning to a New Year—New Ideas, New Commitments, New Leadership.**

The Regional Leadership Conferences are a great way to meet Association leaders from the nine other Western Region states, to discuss issues with other educators that we are all confronting in public education, and learn new ideas and strategies at a number of well presented training sessions

AEA budgets to send association leaders to these conferences, and would like to encourage participation from emerging and veteran leaders who may not have ever attended an Association conference before. Please look for the application for the NEA Western Region Conference on the AEA website next week.

## How to Become a National Board Certified Teacher

AEA will host two back to back information sessions on National Board Certification process next Thursday, October 9th in Conference room C at the Peoria Admin building.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has been recognized as a means to improve teaching and student learning. National Board Certified teachers are highly accomplished educators who meet rigorous standards in completion of their Board certification. National Board Certification has been found to have a positive impact on student achievement, the retention of teachers and the profession.

NBPTS offers 25 Certificates covering a variety of subject areas and student developmental levels.

Several years ago, AEA negotiated a \$2300 stipend for teachers who achieve National Board certification. In addition to the one time stipend

granted upon achieving their certification, teachers will receive an additional \$1,000 annually for the length of the certificate which is 10 years. Last year HB 1384 created a pilot program to compensate NBC teachers with an additional \$1600 and \$3200 if they work in a low or unsatisfactory school.

The information sessions on October 9th are scheduled for 3:45-4:45 and 5:00-6:00. Interested teachers are welcome to attend either or both sessions.

Linda Barker, CEA Director of Teaching and Learning and a National Board Certified Teacher herself, will facilitate these information meetings. We will also be joined by APS teachers who just completed the process last year and are awaiting notification that their certification



has been awarded. They will share first hand insight to the process and answer questions about how to successfully tackle National Board Certification and keep everything else afloat. Teachers attending the sessions on the 9th will receive a NBPTS guidebook produced by NEA.

AEA is excited to be able to offer this opportunity to our members because we see National Board Certification as a way for teachers to not only achieve high standards of instruction, be reflective about their instructional practice and accountable for the instruction they offer students, but to begin to take charge and responsibility for our profession. Please rsvp by Wednesday, 10/8 to [aeapres6265@aol.com](mailto:aeapres6265@aol.com). We hope to see many of you next Thursday.

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## Article 13—Teacher Plan Time Q & A

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Significant changes in Article 13, sections 12 and 13 occurred as a result of negotiations and subsequently mediation during the 2008 round of negotiations. Below are some questions and answers which will hopefully address questions we have received about what activities can be expected to occur during the 30/70 split of teacher noncontact time. Our intent in this language was to ensure that teachers have the time they need during the duty day to be prepared to offer quality instruction to their students while allowing time for all the other “time” requirements during the duty day.

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**Q:** Is there a general rule of thumb for what counts in a principal's 30% and what doesn't?

**A:** If the principal is requiring an activity, and there is a consequence for not participating, the event should count in the principal's 30%. If the principal is recommending, suggesting, or encouraging participation in an activity, but it's up to the teacher to decide, and there is no consequence for not participating, the event does not count in the principal's 30%.

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**Q:** If participating in a CCL group is a requirement in my building, and there are required readings as part of the CCL, shouldn't the needed reading time be part of my principal's 30%?

**A:** Unless other accommodations are made for required reading time as part of required CCL participation, yes, the reading time should count in the principal's 30%. Principals should determine a specific number of minutes they believe the reading should require and include those minutes in their weekly 30% calculation. If principals do not want to count reading time as part of their 30%, some accommodations might be:

- 1) work with the DOI's Professional Learning department to offer credit for professional reading to be completed outside of the duty day (similar to book studies), or
  - 2) don't require the reading.
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**Q:** My principal asks us to participate on at least one committee each year. If the committee meets during the duty day, shouldn't that count towards the

principal's 30%? If the committee meets after the duty day, shouldn't that come from the time allowed by Article 13, section 16 and 17?

**A:** To answer this question, it's important to be clear on whether the principal is "asking" or "requiring." Principals can and do ask teachers to be involved in the activities of the school beyond the classroom. However, if the participation is not required, and there is no consequence for not doing so, the principal does not need to count the activity as part of 30%, paragraph 16 or 17. If the participation is required, and there is a consequence for not participating, the activity should count in either the 30%, or should come from the time allowed in Article 13, section 16 or 17.

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**Q:** My principal requires attendance at data team, vertical team and grade level team meetings. Where does the time for these meetings come from?

**A:** If a principal requires attendance at any meetings during the duty day, and teachers don't have the option of not attending the meetings regardless of their nature, the time must come from the principal's 30% for that week.

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**Q:** What can teachers choose to do during the 70% of noncontact time?

**A:** The 70% of weekly teacher noncontact time can be used by teachers to complete any work related to their job. This can include planning for instruction, contacting parents, returning emails, organizing materials and their classroom and meeting with colleagues at their discretion. Teachers are not required to attend meetings unless they choose to do so regardless of who schedules the meeting if it occurs during the teachers' 70% of noncontact time.

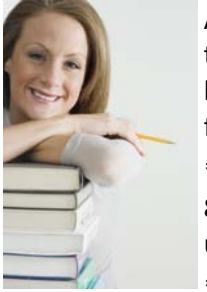
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**Q:** Where does the time for SPED staffings, Evaluation pre and post conferences, Student Intervention team meetings or similar kinds of meetings come from?

**A:** Since these events are part of the professional responsibilities of individual teachers, the time for these meetings would come from the teacher 70% of noncontact time.

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## From the Master Agreement—Article 13 Teacher Duty Day



Article 13 of the Master Agreement establishes the duty day and teaching hours for APS teachers. Some highlights from this Article follows.

\*The duty day for teachers at all levels is 8.0 hours inclusive of at least a 30 minute duty free lunch.

\*The duty day is to be one continuous period of time unless agreed to by the teacher involved.

\*The student contact time for all teachers cannot exceed 30 hours per week including passing time.

\*Elementary teacher have 90 minutes of daily non-contact time immediately preceding or following the instructional day in blocks of time no less than 30 minutes.

\*In consultation with the Building Council, individual elementary schools may decide to change the blocks of non-contact time before or after the duty day to less than 30 minutes.

\*Principals may require attendance at meetings or in-service activities during the student non-contact time for no more than 30% of any teacher's student non-contact time per week.

\*Teachers have 70% of the student non-contact time per week to use at their determination. Teachers cannot be directed to attend meetings by anyone during this time.

\*Principals can require teacher attendance at meetings held contiguous to the duty day for 1 hour once a month.

\*Principals can require teachers to attend up to a total of 6 two hour instructional or informational meetings, and/or parent or school-related community meetings per school year. These meetings do not have to be held contiguous to the duty day. The time cannot be separated into 12 one hour meetings however.

\*Principals can schedule up to four meetings outside of the duty day for the purpose of parent-teacher conferences. These meetings should not exceed three and three quarters hours each. For every seven and one half hours of conference time held outside the duty day, teachers will be compensated by the elimination of one teacher duty day per year.

\*There are four workdays, one at the end of each quarter. The primary purpose for workdays is to provide time to complete report cards. Teacher workdays are to be teacher directed.

### AEA Officers & Board Directors

Laurie Foster, Kenton  
Gwynn Moore, Paris  
Micki Amick, Quest  
Jaime Green, Park Lane  
Lee Ann Gott, Kenton  
Michelle Spikes, West  
Monica Wilbanks, Columbia  
Amy Nichols, Hinkley  
Angie Willsea, Gateway  
Tony Bullock, Central  
Sue Pollak, Secretary-Treasurer  
Vicki Reinhard, Vice President  
Brenna Isaacs, President  
Frank O'Hara, UniServ Director  
Laura Scott, Executive Assistant

*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.*

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