

Ski Country EduCator

September – October 2009

A Great Public School for Every Child

The National Education Association's goal is "A Great Public School for Every Child". The Association believes that in order to achieve this goal we need happy, healthy, and well trained teachers and support professionals – which include bus drivers, cooks, janitors, custodians and maintenance personnel, Para-professionals, secretaries, substitute teachers, and student teachers; all of which can be members and are members of our Association.

We believe that when education professionals have a say and can take part in the decisions made about their salaries, benefits, working conditions, and training opportunities this in turn will lead to happy, healthy, and well trained education professionals; which in turn will help us achieve the goal of a great public school for every child.

The success we achieve in gaining a voice in work related issues depends on a strong, active membership. The success you have in gaining a voice in work related issues in your individual school district or school site is directly related to your percentage of membership. I invite and urge all eligible members in Ski Country UniServ to join their local, state, and national Associations; to give us all the powerful voice we need and deserve.

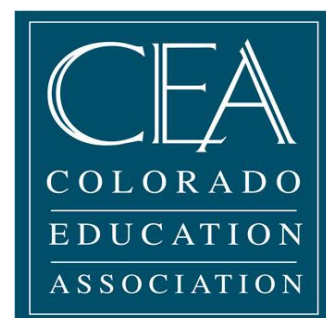
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Ski Country Goal of 1,300 Members

Last March Ski Country reached the membership plateau of 1,200 members. This year we have set a goal of 1,300 members.

Throughout August leaders and staff held meetings, sponsored luncheons, and sponsored training opportunities for new employees and new members. Throughout September members and leaders will continue to approach potential members about the benefits of joining. Several of our locals are developing local membership plans of their own to meet their own local membership goals.

Membership continues to grow in Ski Country which is reflected in the many successes our locals have had recently. The **Summit County Education Association** is getting closer to the goal of achieving a \$40,000 beginning salary. The **Aspen Education Association** and the **Moffat County Education Association** are getting closer to their goal of a Master Agreement for all educational employees in their respected School Districts. The **Eagle County Education Association** is making great strides in having a stronger voice in their pay for performance compensation system through negotiation and district committees. The **Steamboat Springs Education Association** has had great success in redesigning the Negotiated Policies between SSEA and the School District to give them the rights and privileges provided to them in a genuine “Master Agreement.”

Welcome New Local Presidents

We have several new local presidents in Ski Country that have had training from CEA in how to manage and maintain an effective local. Congratulations to the following Association leaders; **Tanya Caruso**, newly elected president of the **Eagle County Education Association**, **Megan Talbott**, newly elected president of the **Roaring Fork Community Education Association**, and **Kathleen Fitzsimmons**, newly elected president of the **Lake County Education Association**.

We would also like to thank **Todd Huck** of the **Eagle County Education Association** who is stepping down from the position of local president after many years of tremendous leadership in that organization.

Amazing Ski Country Members

Congratulations to **Michelle Brune**, newly elected vice-president of the **Roaring Fork Community Education Association** who was recently honored by Virtual High School (VHS), a pioneer in K-12 online learning, with recognition of her work in helping students acquire 21st century skills. Michelle was one of 50 VHS certified teachers in the U.S., United Arab Emirates, Korea, and Indonesia honored this summer by the nonprofit collaboration of high schools, teachers, and students. Michelle’s honor was noted in the August, September edition of the CEA Colorado School Journal – Amazing Members.

CEA offers a great workshop: I Can Do It!

Learn about the elements of successful classroom management; student-teacher-parent communications; interventions for difficult behaviors; hints to make your day go smoothly; help in creating successful relationships with parents. Find out how you can attend this workshop by calling Ski Country UniServ.

CEA's Tips for Teachers

Find a balance: freedom and discipline

Helping students manage their own behavior in ways that help them learn is every teacher's goal. Here are some ideas to try:

- 1. Be friendly.** Be the kind of person children like and trust: firm, fair, friendly, with a sense of humor.
- 2. Keep an orderly classroom.** Maintaining a cheerful, organized classroom encourages good behavior.
- 3. Get to know your students.** If you do, you'll develop a "sixth sense" for anticipating trouble before it begins.
- 4. Make learning fun.** Make students' days in school interesting and fun, as well as relevant to their lives.
- 5. Avoid arguing.** Discussions are invaluable but arguments aren't.
- 6. Keep the rules simple.** Establish only a few classroom rules and state them simply and clearly. Be consistent when applying them. Make sure consequences are appropriate.
- 7. Don't threaten or humiliate.** Try not to use threats to enforce discipline and never humiliate a child.
- 8. Let your students know you care about them.** Determine mutually with your students what is acceptable behavior and what's not. Don't talk about students' misdeeds with other students. Admit it if you make a mistake and apologize.

Setting norms with your students

You will probably have a set of classroom rules already written before the first day of school or your school may have written rules. You may have success using these. Or you may want to try setting norms with your students instead.

Norms are structures a group imposes on itself, instead of rules that someone imposes on the group. Norms are somewhat more fluid than rules and they can be altered by the group if they don't serve the purpose for which they were created.

You may want to set norms a couple of weeks after school begins, rather than at the start of the new year. Setting norms can take 10 minutes or 60 minutes, depending on how much work you want to put into the task. You need some chart paper and markers.

The steps are:

- *Brainstorming:* Give students time to think before they start telling their ideas. Write down every idea. Try to get every child's voice into the room.
- *Discussing:* Acknowledge the brainstormed list; invite discussion; ask questions.
- *Synthesizing:* Ask questions about combining items on the brainstormed list in order to develop a list of fewer items that are clear; help students clarify if there's disagreement.
- *Seeking consensus:* Try to reach agreement that the group agrees to use these norms and try them out, revisiting and evaluating their usefulness regularly. Agree that **these** are working norms and can be changed if the group agrees to change them.

The discipline of desire is the background of character.

John Locke
English, Philosopher Quotes

NEA's Position on Health Care Reform

NEA's three priorities are 1) support for quality, affordable health care for all, 2) opposition to the taxation of health care benefits and 3) support for the inclusion of a government-sponsored public health insurance option.

NEA is very active in the health care debate. Our Government Relations, Collective Bargaining, Public Relations, and Campaigns and Elections Departments are working closely together to ensure a coordinated Association message and strategy. We are playing a leading role with health care coalitions that help promote our agenda, developing policy proposals, mobilizing members, and promoting our interests in the legislative process. NEA staff and leaders are currently meeting with key people at the White House, in the House of Representatives, and in the Senate. On Monday, July 13, NEA President Dennis Van Roekel will join other labor leaders in a meeting with President Obama to discuss health care reform. President Van Roekel will reiterate NEA's position, emphasizing NEA's continued strong opposition to any taxation of health benefits.

Delegates at the NEA RA wrote 8,000 postcards to the Senate with NEA's message. The postcards will be hand-delivered by NEA. In addition, delegates sent over 1,300 e-mail messages to Congress on health care reform.

Health Care For All

Healthy students are crucial for great Public Schools



NEA Rallies for Health Insurance Reform

By [Mary Ellen Flannery](#) and [Amanda Litvinov](#)

It wasn't the 94-degree weather that had Harriet Phelps and a lot of other people hot under the collar at an August 20 rally in D.C. It was the idea that affordable, high-quality health care remains out of reach for 45 million Americans.

Even as the White House and legislators continue wrestling over basic principles of health-care reform, roughly a thousand protesters—including hundreds of staffers from NEA and other unions—sent a clear message at the afternoon rally just blocks from the U.S. Capitol. And the message was this: Everyone in American should have low-cost, high-quality health care. At the same time, NEA believes legislative reform should include a public option, but not taxes on employer-provided health care.

“I want the public option, absolutely,” said Phelps, a retired biology professor from Greenbelt, Maryland. “That’s the key.”

Signs held aloft on Thursday announced, “Health Care Reform is Patriotic!” and “Public Option= Affordable Health Care.” Despite the high temperatures, spirits did not wither and the heat couldn't stop the singing and chanting.

“I’m here because many of our members can’t afford their health premiums. . . and many of their family members aren’t covered under their plans,” said Carol Malone of NEA Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy. And it’s [not just an issue for educators at home](#) – it’s also an issue for educators at work, facing a classroom of students who might not have access to adequate health care. How do you learn to read if you’re too sick to come to school?

The reform-minded felt confident Thursday that President Obama heard their collective voice as he drove by in a pre-scheduled Presidential motorcade. But you too can be heard in the health care debate – with just a click of your computer. [Tell Congress to craft health care reform proposals that will ensure quality, affordable health care for everyone in America.](#)