



Ski Country Educator

November - December 2011



In This Issue:

Proposition 103 Defeated	1
Amazing Members	1
When will it End? - Opinion	2
Pros on Teacher Tenure	3
American Education Week	4
Relief from NCLB	4

Ski Country 50–50 on mill and bond issues Proposition 103 goes down

Ski Country locals passed two of the four tax issues on the November ballot. Roaring Fork passed a much needed mill levy override and Jackson County (North Park School District) passed a 1% sales tax increase to help fund public schools. Lake County failed on their bond issue and Eagle County voters struck down the mill levy override for the district. Proposition 103 also failed by a fairly large margin.

Many thanks to our members across Ski Country who worked diligently in trying to pass the various tax issues.

Lake County's bond was a matching fund bond that would have provided much needed revenue to improve infrastructure in their schools; plumbing and heating issues as well as structural damage in their four buildings.

Eagle County desperately needed the override. They will now have to cut an additional 5 million out of the budget after last year's cut of similar proportion.

Most or all of our districts in Ski Country have had to cut budget in the last two to three years. Now that Proposition 103 failed and the

governor has put forth another cut of 89 million for next year, it looks like we can expect more of the same.

So far we have managed to survive without having to use Reduction In Force policies in most of our locals. Next year we may not be so lucky. Please review your district's RIF language and policy. Make sure your administrations follow the specified guidelines. If you are an association member who has been notified that you are being rified contact your local president or the UniServ office immediately.

Amazing Ski Country Members

Cassie Harrelson of the **Aspen Education Association** and Ski Country CEA Board representative is featured in the October - November edition of the CEA Journal.

Alan Ward, local president of the **Jackson County Education Association** has been selected to attend the Western Leadership Conference in Oklahoma as a State CEA delegate.

Tanya Caruso, president of the **Eagle County Education Association** is featured on the CEA website in the You Tube production of "CEA Education Conversations ". To view this interview click on the following link.

C:\Documents and Settings\dennis.carlson\My Documents\CEA Education Conversations - Tanya Caruso_wmv - YouTube.mht

When will it ever end?

Reading local newspaper opinion pages over the last two months, in reference to Proposition 103 and the various tax proposals across the state was like a roller coaster of absurdity and ignorance.

An editorial column writer in one of our local papers came out opposed to the local mill levy increase because he didn't "buy" that the district was really tightening it's belt, and there was still more to cut.

An opinion printed in the Denver Post by a representative of the Independent Institute said the increase in money from Prop. 103 would all go to the teachers union.

Various writers were trying to convince the increase proposed in 103 was an 8% spike in taxes, when in reality it was a very modest increase that would sunset in five years.

A local anti-tax group in Eagle County distributed a list of all teacher and administrator salaries in Eagle County schools

just before the election. I guess trying to convince voters that teachers make too much money already. Never-mind that many teachers are working second and third jobs to be able to live in the communities and the county in which they teach.

So, here we go again. The Governor wants to cut another 89 million from K-12.

When will this ever end?

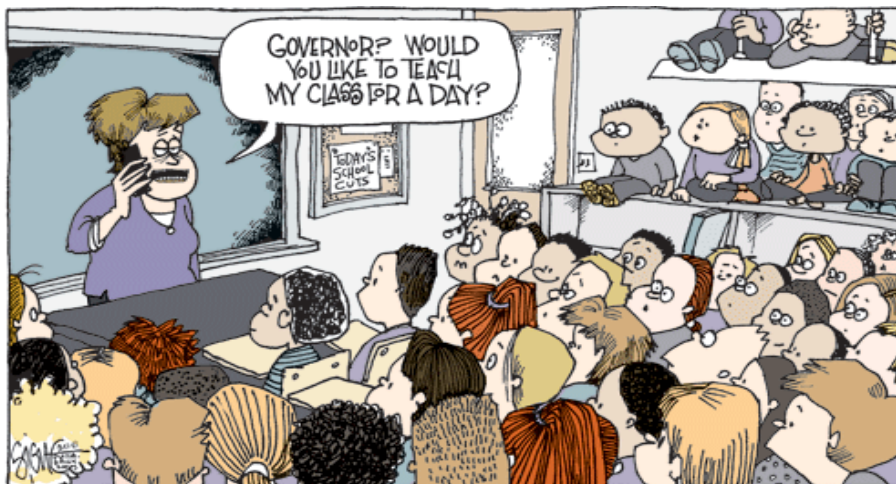
A study from one of our higher education institutes in Colorado has reported that Colorado is in dire straights now and well into the future. A situation that will worsen over time.

Why don't our elected officials, including our Governor, come out and admit the we need to raise revenues in order to properly fund education in Colorado. I guess we have to be at the very bottom in the country for education funding before someone finally opens their eyes. We are not far from there now. Governor Hickenlooper's comment about Prop. 103 was only that there was no appetite for raising taxes at this time.

The longer we wait, the more we cut, the less opportunity our children will have to succeed in the world. A child only gets one chance at third grade or one chance to be a sophomore in high school. Our children are not receiving the same opportunities that we received when we were in school.

Through CEA's "Take the Lead" campaign we are working to find a method of adequate and sustainable funding for public education. Please take the time to learn about "Take the Lead" and when you are asked to help please get involved. This association is about collective action. Together we can do this. We can convince our elected leaders to get on board and assure that every child in this state is guaranteed an education in a great school with the resources necessary to really leave no child behind.

*...Dennis Carlson
Director, Ski Country UniServ*



The Pros of Teacher Tenure - From ProCom.org - 10/24/11

1. Tenure protects teachers from being fired for personal, political, or other non-work related reasons. Before tenure, teachers could be dismissed when a new political party took power or a principal wanted to make room to hire his friends. Women were dismissed for getting married, becoming pregnant, wearing pants, or being out too late in the evenings.

2. Tenure prohibits school districts from firing experienced teachers to hire less experienced and less expensive teachers. The threat of economic firing has increased in recent years with so many school districts facing budget cuts.

3. Tenure protects teachers from being fired for teaching unpopular, controversial, or otherwise challenged curriculum such as evolutionary biology and controversial literature.

4. The promise of a secure and stable job attracts many teachers to the teaching profession, and eliminating teacher tenure would hamper teacher recruitment. Starting salaries for teachers are frequently lower than other occupations requiring similar levels of education and training. The Economic Policy Institute found that public school teachers received 15% lower weekly earnings than workers with comparable education and work experience.

5. Removing tenure would reduce innovation in teaching. Without the protection of tenure, teachers may feel pressured to use the same lesson plans and teach directly to standardized tests.

6. Instead of weakening or abolishing tenure, administrators should create a more thorough and meaningful teacher evaluation process. The existence of inadequate teachers should be blamed on the poor judgment of administrators, not teacher tenure. Administrators are responsible for evaluating teachers before granting tenure and helping to develop struggling teachers.

7. Eliminating tenure will not reduce class sizes or make schools cleaner and safer. Tenure has become a scapegoat for problems facing education. If tenure is abolished, problems of underfunding, overcrowding, and lack of control over students' home lives will persist.

8. Tenure allows teachers to advocate on behalf of students and disagree openly with school and district administrators. Award-winning history teacher Kerry Sylvia said that without tenure, she would be afraid of being fired because of her public opposition to initiatives by administrators.

9. Contrary to public perception, tenure does not guarantee a teacher a job for life. Each state's tenure laws establish strict requirements and processes for removing a tenured teacher. Tenure also guarantees teachers a termination hearing before the board of education or an impartial hearing panel.

10. Tenure protects teachers from being prematurely fired after a student makes a false accusation or a parent threatens expensive legal action against the district. After an accusation, districts might find it expedient to quickly remove a teacher instead of investigating the matter and incurring potentially expensive legal costs. The thorough removal process mandated by tenure rules ensures that teachers are not removed without a fair hearing.

11. Tenure encourages the careful selection of qualified and effective teachers. Since it is difficult to remove tenured teachers, tenure encourages school administrators to take more care when making hiring decisions. Additionally, tenure prompts administrators to dismiss underperforming teachers before they achieve tenure and cannot be removed as easily.

12. The formal dismissal process guaranteed by tenure protects teachers from punitive evaluation systems and premature dismissal. It allows underperforming teachers a chance to improve their skills rather than be hastily fired.

13. Many teachers work better when they do not have fears of being fired. Without the anxiety and fear of losing employment, teachers can focus their efforts on providing the best education for students.



Ski Country Educator



14 AEW Kick-Off Day

Organize activities at your school for neighbors, families and community leaders

15 Parents' Day

Invite parents and family members into the school for a first-hand look at a typical school day.

16 Education Support Professionals Day

Recognize individuals such as bus drivers, paraprofessionals, cafeteria workers, maintenance staff and other who provide invaluable services and outstanding work.

17 Educator For a Day

Encourage elected officials and community leaders to serve as “educators for a day” for a hands-on school experience.

18 Substitute Educator Day

Honor the educators who are called to substitute for the regular classroom teacher in their absence.

Ski Country UniServ
P.O. Box 4472
Dillon, Colorado
80435
Phone (970) 668-0830
1-800-545-4916
scuu@coloradoea.org

Caroline Hanson
Unit Chair

Dennis Carlson
Unit Director

Barb Hodson
Associate Director

PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES RELIEF FROM NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

President Obama has announced a plan to provide relief to states from many of No Child Left Behind's more onerous provisions. States can apply for waivers of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) timelines and school improvement and accountability requirements; and can also request flexibility in using federal education funds in the way that best meets their needs.

NEA believes that President Obama has taken a welcome step forward with this plan. It sets much more realistic goals for schools, while maintaining ESEA's original commitment to civil rights, high academic standards and success for every student. Educators have been sounding the alarm on NCLB's test-label-punish approach for more than 10 years. Now, there is an opportunity to move forward with real reform, especially for the most disadvantaged students