



# Ski Country Educator

September - October 2011



## Take the Lead, Meet the Challenge, Together

This is a time of great challenge for public education and public education employees. We are being attacked from many sides. Along with the standard criticisms that we only work 9 months out of the year, we only work from 8:00 to 3:00, and we feed from the public taxpayer trough; we are now being labeled as responsible for the greatest recession in 60 years.

Teachers and school employees across the nation are losing their collective bargaining rights, being forced to accept sub standard insurance benefits, cuts in salaries, and reductions in their public pension plans. Funding for Public

Education is being slashed all across the nation as well as here in Colorado. Over the last two years per pupil funding for K-12 schools has been cut by nearly \$1,000 per student. This is not only unacceptable, it is down-right wrong, and should be an embarrassment to our legislators and state leaders.

It's time to fight back. We need you to remain or become a member of the greatest advocate for public education, teachers, and school support professionals in the nation. We need you as a member of your Local Education Association, Ski Country UniServ, The Colorado

Education Association, and the National Education Association. With a collective voice we will force our elected officials to hear us. Enough is enough. We need to find a stable way to fund public education.

CEA is working on a plan to increase funding for education through the "Take the Lead" campaign and to find a way to stabilize school finance so we never have to experience this again. In order to make this happen we need you as a member, an advocate, and a participant in the cause.

...Dennis Carlson

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## Amazing Ski Country Members

**Cassie Harrelson** and **Caroline Hanson** of the **Aspen Education Association** attended the NEA Representative Assembly in Chicago this summer. Cassie was elected to the CEA Board of Directors representing Ski Country UniServ in April of this year and Caroline is the current Chairperson of the Ski Country Unit Council.

**Michele Conroy** of the **Moffat County Education Association** was term limited out of her position on the CEA Board and is now the Association Representative at Sandstone Elementary in Moffat County Schools. Michele was awarded the CEA Award at April's CEA Delegate Assembly. The CEA Award is the highest award a CEA member can achieve. Congratulations to all three of our amazing Ski Country Members.

## Reflections - Moving On (Reprinted from the March - April 2011 SCE)




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**Professional associations are generally viewed as furthering a particular profession, the interest of individuals engaged in that profession, and the public interest.**

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Are we a union or a professional association? Unions are generally viewed as employees acting together to achieve common goals related to salary, benefits, and working conditions. Professional associations are generally viewed as furthering a particular profession, the interest of individuals engaged in that profession, and the public interest. There is currently an internal conversation taking place at the state level (CEA) regarding messaging and the best way to support teachers and promote public education. The thinking of your local leadership team is that we are a professional association that works collaboratively with the Summit County community to "champion" quality education for our students, advocate for a fair salary and benefit package, and actively work to ensure that working conditions and priorities promote shared goals. So, are we a union? I would suggest it is time to be moving on, beyond the typical focus of unions. Are we a professional association?

I would emphatically say YES!

Why does it matter? The typical focus of unions has been primarily "bean counting;" making sure that the "beans" (money, time, work load) are equitably distributed internally and in relation to comparable occupations. While these are critical tasks, if our focus stops there we have relegated our daily efforts to nothing more than a job; and a professional is concerned about more than "beans." A professional is concerned about being part of something larger, something of value. A professional is concerned about the direction the profession is headed, the value to society, the ethical decisions that are being made, and yes, they still have to count "beans." To illustrate this point, I would call your attention to the United Auto Workers. While the union was negotiating "beans" (a necessary task), their "jobs" were becoming endangered because the US auto industry wasn't aligned with current and emerging needs. I would suggest

that this "bean counting" focus is a primary reason many in the general public equate unions with a self-serving purpose whereas professional associations are more likely to be seen as promoting a public interest.

Where does that leave us? Fortunately our name, Summit County Education Association, says we are a professional association. Unfortunately, our past efforts have focused primarily on the "bean counting" part of our responsibilities. With significant changes on the horizon (SB 191 just to name one), it is time for us to formalize our collective thinking about where our profession should be headed and take action to make sure that we are doing the best job possible for our students, our community, and our families. And yes, we still have to count the "beans."

... Mark Clark, President - Summit County Education Association

## What is Colorado Proposition 103 and what will it do?

- **Proposition 103 asks voters for a five-year increase of sales and income taxes.**
- **Sales taxes would rise to 3 percent, up from the current 2.9 percent.**
- **Income taxes would go up to 5 percent, from a current 4.63 percent.**
- **The change would raise \$536 million in its first year.**
- **Proposition 103 is intended to raise \$1.6 billion for education in Colorado.**

## Problems with the Use of student test scores to evaluate teachers Executive Summary from the Economic Policy Institute, August 29th, 2010

Every classroom should have a well-educated, professional teacher, and school systems should recruit, prepare, and retain teachers who are qualified to do the job. Yet in practice, American public schools generally do a poor job of systematically developing and evaluating teachers.

Many policy makers have recently come to believe that this failure can be remedied by calculating the improvement in students' scores on standardized tests in mathematics and reading, and then relying heavily on these calculations to evaluate, reward, and remove the teachers of these tested students.

While there are good reasons for concern about the current system of teacher evaluation, there are also good reasons to be concerned about

claims that measuring teachers' effectiveness largely by student test scores will lead to improved student achievement. If new laws or policies specifically require that teachers be fired if their students' test scores do not rise by a certain amount, then more teachers might well be terminated than is now the case. But there is not strong evidence to indicate either that the departing teachers would actually be the weakest teachers, or that the departing teachers would be replaced by more effective ones. There is also little or no evidence for the claim that teachers will be more motivated to improve student learning if teachers are evaluated or monetarily rewarded for student test score gains.

A review of the technical evidence leads us to conclude that, although standardized test scores of students are one

piece of information for school leaders to use to make judgments about teacher effectiveness, such scores should be only a part of an overall comprehensive evaluation. Some states are now considering plans that would give as much as 50% of the weight in teacher evaluation and compensation decisions to scores on existing tests of basic skills in math and reading. Based on the evidence, we consider this unwise.

Any sound evaluation will necessarily involve a balancing of many factors that provide a more accurate view of what teachers in fact do in the classroom and how that contributes to student learning.

For more information and to read the entire brief go to the following web page.

<http://www.epi.org/publications/entry/bp278>

## Tips for New 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 if you've treated a student unjustly.





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### Who and What is Ski Country UniServ?

Please visit us at

www.  
skicountryuniserv.org

Ski Country UniServ is the Northwestern Field Office of the Colorado Education Association, an affiliate of the National Education Association.

The Ski Country UniServ Unit encompasses the CEA/NEA local associations in 12 school districts within nine northwestern Colorado counties. Our 14 locals include a Higher Education Local and an ESP Local.

The Higher Education local is the Mountain EA at Colorado Mountain College. The ESP local is the Summit County Educational Support Professionals.

The local education Associations are the Aspen Education Association, the Eagle County Education Association, the East Grand Education Association, the Hayden Education Association, The Jackson County Education Association, the Lake County Education Association, the Moffat County Education Association, the Roaring Fork Community Education Association, the South Routt Education Association, the Steamboat Springs Education Association, the Summit County Education Association, the Summit County ESP Association, the West Grand Education Association, and the Mountain Education Association - Colorado Mountain College.



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