

Opportunities for Involvement

Expand your leadership skills while making a big impact in your Association! The CSEA Organizing Committee is expanding its work and has openings for the following positions:

- **Building Reps/Organizers**—Each building should have a CSEA Representative that acts as a liaison to our executive and negotiations teams. You help make sure information gets to the ESP in your building.
- **Communications Team**—If you can write short articles for our website or newsletter, do layout/design, graphics, photography, or help with research, we want you!
- **Clerical Volunteers**—Easy and fun! Put together packets of information, label, and other tasks.
- **Community and Political Action** - Work with community partners and elected officials to advance our CSEA mission.

Training is provided. No experience necessary. If you are interested, submit an email to jeffcocsea@coloradoea.org describing your interest and an Organizing Committee team member will be in touch with more details.

next
issue:

Get to know your
Sub-Association!



Classified School Employees Association

910 Loveland Street
Golden, CO 80401

Pony: CSEA Office

Email:
jeffcocsea@coloradoea.org

Stay in Touch!
Give CSEA your Contact Info!
<http://bit.do/jcsea>



Be Assertive: FROM YOUR JEFFCO EAP

Learning to be assertive can help in expressing our feelings and needs. If we are passive and discount our feelings as being less important than someone else's, things get bottled up inside and we feel miserable. On the other hand, expressing our needs and feelings aggressively, or resorting to insults and criticism will not improve relationships or our ability to communicate effectively. Remember that you can't change another person's style, but you can learn to deal with others assertively.

Passive Style:

- Allowing others to treat you, your thoughts and feelings in any way they choose without challenge; doing what others want regardless of personal desires.
- Avoids the problem.
- Viewing the rights of others as superior to yours.
- Establishing a pattern of allowing others to take advantage of you.
- Building anger and resentment.
- Talking respectfully to others without respecting yourself.
- Hoping for favors, services, etc.

Aggressive Style:

- Standing up for what you want regardless of the rights and feelings of others. An aggressive style may be expressed verbally, or physically.
- Attacks the person.
- Viewing your rights as superior to others'.
- Establishing a pattern of fear and avoidance of the aggressor.
- Acting out anger and resentment.
- Talking to others with respect for yourself only.
- Demanding favors, services, etc.

Assertive Style:

- Thinking and acting in ways that advocate legitimate personal rights; expressing thoughts and feelings in ways that define your perspective without discounting others.
- Attacks the problem, not people.
- Recognizing that the rights of others' are equal to yours.
- Establishing a pattern of mutual respect.
- Dealing with anger and resentment.
- Talking to others in a way that shows respect for that person and yourself.
- Requesting favors, services, etc.

If you would like further information or to speak with an EAP counselor, please contact your confidential Employee Assistance Program at 303-982-0377 or visit our website at <https://sites.google.com/a/jeffcocochools.us/eap/>. Your EAP offers no-cost assistance to all Jeffco Public Schools employees, their family members over age 15, and retirees. "Confidential help from caring professionals..."

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To educate, unify and advocate
for the Education Support Professionals of Jeffco Public Schools

THE classified VIEWPOINT

ISSUE NO. 3
VOL VI

From Pop Machines to Gym Memberships

Pam Nichols, Bus Driver, JCTA 2nd Vice President

After the election, I had the opportunity to spend time in a workshop given by the St. Paul Federation of Teachers. The Saint Paul Federation has been an inspiration to many of us here in Jeffco who have been active in Stand up For All Students. We have studied and followed groups like the St. Paul Federation to see how they worked to educate and involve the community at large in their community schools. They fought and won. We fought and won.

There is still a lot of work to do to transform our community, and it starts here at home with CSEA. We have many challenges we will face, even with a brand new school board.

At a certain point in the labor movement, unions started functioning as pop machines. The member puts their money in and expects to get what they want immediately. They barely have to lift a finger. Pay your dues; receive a service in return.

In the current challenging landscape significant changes are necessary to achieve our goals. Is CSEA exactly what you want it to be? Are we meeting our goals? We can, but **we need a better plan.**

There is another model we can work towards, the gym membership model. Gym members pay a monthly fee and results are only possible if you show up and get active.

So, which model do you think we should use moving forward? Which type of member do you think will strengthen our association and achieve our goals? We have successfully elected a new school board, but now we need to be strong and energized and work together to get the respect we deserve.

We have put this plan in place and two years ago, we started an Organizing Committee. Come put your membership to work and get involved!

FROM THE PRESIDENT school board report

Nancy McCanless, President

I hope everybody enjoyed their winter break. As we move through the second half of our school year, we are watching how the district is run. In November we elected 5 brand new school board members.

The learning curve is steep. Our new board may have had a misstep or two, but that's part of learning. I am looking forward to the change. I am hoping that these 5 people who have committed to this big job have heard our voice, but we must continue to make our voice heard.

I am looking for respect, collaboration, and a coming together of all the people who love Jeffco. What a great opportunity this is for all of us. As we build relationships we will get stronger. As always, thanks for the dedication, hard work, and professionalism you bring every day.



My daughter Cici on her first day of school in 2011.

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE: What we really want

Jenny Fischer, Parent of a Jeffco Student

Four years ago, when we were setting up the IEP, transportation, teachers and therapy plans for my now 8-year old severely disabled daughter, I don't think I truly understood what it all meant, and how critical each piece is. On that first day, it was very hard to send my non-verbal, non-ambulatory, medically fragile 3-year old on a school bus. I admit, on that very same day, I hopped in the car, and I followed the bus to school. I also KNOW I am not the only parent who has done this!

Now I understand how important transportation is.

home, and have three other children who also need to get to school and don't have transportation plans! By some logistical miracle, they all get to where they need to be. Without bussing, the whole chain is broken.

I want all of the transportation teams to know how much you matter: not just to the kids, but our entire family. What you do makes all the difference in our kids accessing the education that we have carefully and thoughtfully prepared. If they can't get to school, all that work is pointless. I know it isn't always easy working with children and parents.

What helps us parents the most is knowing that our children are valued and treated with dignity. In particular, my favorite

people have been the ones who really get to know the kids **and** the parents – they understand when it has been a particularly rough morning, or forget to call and cancel because we've been up all night with a sick child or in a hospital room. They know to make sure that we have all of the equipment and supplies that are necessary for our kids, and to watch the kids closely to make sure they are safe and protected and also use kindness and patience to connect with them.

We are especially grateful when we walk out to put our child on the bus with folks who are happy to see us, and really care about our children. It truly eases our minds. After all, you have our very most precious treasure on that bus – and we really just want to know that you know this.

You see, if kids cannot get to school safely, they cannot access anything else in their IEP and cannot access school at all. Everything that we work so hard in the IEP meetings to make sure was in place is not used at all.

The transportation teams have been an integral part of accessing an education for my daughter. The years have not been easy. But, every year my daughter progresses, and while at school she has grown in ways we could not have imagined at home. We have been able to unlock methods of communication, and learned that there is a regular 8-year-old girl inside the body that doesn't work very well.

This would not have been possible if we did not have transportation to get her safely to and from school. I work full time from

School Superhero: Dan Palese, Special Education Paraprofessional at Brady

Dan works in our SPED program. Dan's calm and caring attitude helps students navigate around problems and encourages them to do their best.

As Dan puts it, " My goal is to help them see the value in earning their high school diploma and instill a lifelong love of learning. I feel I'm successful if I can help students focus on their class work and assist as requested

with assignments they may find difficult or overwhelming. I also work with our students to try and get them thinking about their future goals and possible career paths."

Thanks Dan for all you do for the students at Brady. You are changing lives.

Submitted by Mary August, Building Rep



Dan also enjoys the outdoors!

Professional Learning for Paraprofessionals

Lara Center, JCAP President & Professional Learning Coordinator

The New Year is here and so is a renewed interest in focusing on the professional needs of our paraprofessionals. As a paraprofessional and as President of JCAP, I have taken a particular interest in expanding training opportunities after hearing from members about their desire for more professional development.

I am working with CSEA and collaborating with the Colorado Education Association to develop resources and trainings specifically for paraprofessionals.

The first step in planning for future trainings is to find out exactly what our members need. This is where you all come in. Please take a few minutes to

fill out the online survey and tell us what kinds of trainings you need. The survey link is available at jeffcocsea.org/jcap.html.

Paraprofessionals are also encouraged to attend a focus group that will be meeting at Lakewood High School on Thursday, January 21st from 4-6pm where we will share our insights/expertise in the areas where we work. To RSVP for this event please go to jeffcocsea.org/jcap.html.

If you are not a paraprofessional, but have interest in more training, please express your interest to the CSEA office at jeffcocsea@coloradoea.org

Achieving Professional Pay

Most of our members would agree that it harder than ever to make ends meet.

The fight for fair salary increases in Jeffco has been ongoing. A common question we hear when we visit schools is, "When are things going to get better? When will we get a DECENT raise?"

The only easy answer is - **when we make change.** We've started to do that by getting more of our members involved in the association, in the community, and in the political arena, where the decisions about our jobs and pay are made. **If we don't have a seat at the table, we will end up on the menu.**

The solution is not easy, but it is possible with the hard work of our membership. Gone are the days we can sit back and assume someone else is doing it (see Pam Nichols' article).

To win, we must really organize to affect change!

Steps to achieve professional pay:

1. Change attitudes in my own school and community - ESPs are Professionals. We are not disposable.
2. Change attitudes in my own district about the value of ESPs and our priority in the budget.
3. Work to increase state funding for education as well as transparency and accountability in education spending.

What can you do to help?

"If you think it's expensive to hire a professional to do the job, wait until you hire an amateur."

- Red Adair

The Value of a Professional

We who work in education have important jobs. For most of us, this is not just a job, it's a career choice. As Education Support Professionals, we take our jobs very seriously.

We are professionals committed to the success of Jeffco students!

We make sure they have a safe, clean, and warm learning environment.

We make sure students are engaged and assist teachers in the classroom.

We are there early shoveling snow, starting buses, answering phones.

The parents trust us, the kids love us, teachers count on us, the community needs us.

When we tell folks what we do, they say "I could never do that, it must be very challenging".

We deserve to be respected and professionally compensated year after year. We want professional development opportunities. We want respect. Why? We are professionals. We take care of children every day: your family's, your community's...everyone's!!!

Member Editor:

Steve Gaskin, JCTA

CSEA welcomes your comments, suggestions and article submissions.