

## Everyday Hero

When you say the name “**Carrie Coats**,” the first thing that comes to mind is her motto, “If it will benefit children...” Carrie is true to heart in her feelings for everyone that she comes in contact with at her job as principal at Hotchkiss K-8.

She treats all staff equally and well. She greets all students every morning and does either one or two lunch hour rotations, wiping down the tables, and sitting with the students. She knows EVERY student well. She teaches “Citizenship” with every grade every week and puts a lot of effort into these lessons. She stops by each and every classroom every day. Carrie spends many evenings at school; she is a workaholic! Carrie always has something positive to say to everyone – including the janitors, the students, the teachers, and the bus drivers. She is a very giving person and deserves wholeheartedly to be the **EMPLOYEE OF THE WEEK!**



## Calendar

A one-year calendar extension of the current calendar will be recommended to the Board of Education at the January School Board meeting for the 2010-2011 school year.

The only comment that has been received is to move the October break one week later, since days do not correspond with any Colorado hunting season.

Please get any feedback to your Coordinating Council, Classified Council representative, or the District Office.

You may want to provide input on whether the break would be the second or third week of October.

## PERA Retirement Seminar January 27 @ Delta Center at 6:30 p.m.

Carol Wright, an ambassador with PERA, will be on hand to answer many of the questions relative to the PERA changes. District personnel will provide updates on work agreement options, health insurance and others. Please RSVP with Arlene if you plan to attend.

970-874-4438, 970-5744 (fax), or  
E-mail: ahutchins@deltaschools.com

## Delta County Professional Development

January 17—18, 2009

Presenter: Mike Miles

### Agenda

#### Sunday, 17 January—Principals and Assistant Principals

6:00 – 7:00

#### **Instructional Leadership**

Keeping instruction the “main thing”  
A culture of instructional feedback

7:00 – 7:30

#### **Q&A**

#### Monday, 18 January

8:00 – 9:50

#### **Principles of a high performing district**

Introduction – epicycles  
Philosophy first – the organization’s core beliefs  
Keep the quality of instruction the main thing.  
Develop a culture of instruction feedback.  
Expand leadership capacity at all levels.  
Put practices over programs.  
Plan and work systemically.  
Others

9:50 – 10:00

#### **Break**

10:00 – 11:45

#### **Classroom curriculum alignment**

What is curriculum alignment?  
What does it look like in the classroom?  
Alignment scenarios  
The core parameters  
Lesson objectives and demonstrations of learning  
    ◇ Good first instruction  
Assessments and alignment

11:45 – 12:00 **Q&A**

#### **“Take and Go” lunch**

(Sign in at tables in the foyer. Tables will be set up by communities.)





## PERA Legislative Action 2010

(Courtesy of Colorado PERA Topics-December 2009)

(Continued from last week's *Mondays*)

- Revise the existing early retirement reduction factors to reflect actuarial cost. This revision would ensure that the early retirement benefits shall not be greater than the actuarial equivalent of a full service retirement at the earliest date of retirement eligibility. This change will apply to all persons not eligible to draw a benefit on the effective date of the statute.
- Modify the age and service credit requirements for members who do not have five years of service credit to a minimum retirement age of 60 with 30 years of service credit. This Rule of 90 would apply until age 65, at which time a member would be able to retire with any amount of service credit. Eligibility for reduced retirement will not change in order to avoid a negative impact on retiree access to PERACare (retiree health insurance). The age and service differential available to State Troopers compared to non-State Troopers will not change from the existing statutory provisions.
- Repeal the current statute providing that any members who began PERA membership on or before December 31, 2006, and who terminated PERA membership with at least 25 years of service credit, would have their retirement benefits increased by the COLA that would have been granted to the account if a retirement benefit had been paid since the date of termination of membership. This change would apply to members not eligible to draw a benefit on the effective date of the statute.
- Repeal the current statute providing that any inactive member who began PERA membership on or before December 31, 2006, will, upon his or her retirement, receive a payment of retirement benefits retroactive to the date on which he or she first reached age and service eligibility for retirement. Retirement benefits will be paid no earlier than the first day of the month in which the member reaches age and service eligibility and submits a written retirement application. This change would apply to members not eligible to draw a benefit on the effective date of the statute.
- Reduce the COLA to an amount equal to the CPI-W with a cap of 2% for all active and inactive members. Therefore, they would be impacted like all current retirees.

### *Recommended Change for PERA Employers:*

- Continue to escalate the Amortization Equalization Disbursement (AED), beginning in 2013, for a total increase of up to 2% beyond the current rate schedule. Currently, the AED will increase by 0.4% per year through 2012, to the existing 3% cap. The total amount of the AED in 2017 would equal 5%. The Local Government Division and Judicial Division AED would be frozen at the 2010 level (2.2%).

### *Future Adjustments Based on Funding Status:*

- Adjust the COLA cap automatically based upon the year-end actuarial funded status of the plan. Once the total fund reaches a funded status of 110%, the COLA cap will increase by a designated amount, and subsequently, if the funded ratio of the total fund falls below 90%, the COLA cap will decrease by a designated amount. These increases and decreases will occur each year that the total funded status of the plan reaches 110% or drops below 90%. The COLA cap will not decrease below 2%.
- Mandate an automatic decrease in AED and SAED contributions to a division when the division's year-end actuarial funded ratio reaches 110%, and subsequently, if the funded ratio of the division subsequently falls below 90%, the contribution will increase. These decreases and increases will occur each year that the division's funded status reaches 110% or drops below 90%. The AED and SAED contribution rates will not exceed 5% each.

## State Finance Projection—Another Dark Day

In a webinar today, Chief School Finance Officer, Vody Hermann, announced both additional budget cuts for this fiscal year (\$125K more than the first rescission of \$685K) and increased the anticipated budget shortfall from 6.12% to 7.75% for next year (2010-2011). The 6.12% caused our budget to be reduced by \$1.5 million. An additional \$500K to \$700K was added by the 2010-2011 50/50 split in special education costs (previously 70/30 under ARRA and the loss of students—enrollment).

Previously the projected reduction was about \$2.2 million when considering all three areas of reduction (state funding, enrollment, and special education). Today it looks like \$2.6 million.

These new figures increase our state cut to approximately \$1.9 million instead of the first estimate of \$1.5 million. The net impact of today's announcement adds \$400K to the Delta County budget reduction. We will continue to keep you informed as we best we can.



**You know your children are growing up when they stop asking you where they came from and refuse to tell you where they're going.**



## PLC Focus Work

On January 6 and 7, 43 teachers and literacy coaches met to do some in-depth focus work around the new Colorado State Language Arts Standards recently adopted by the State Board of Education. These Standards will begin implementation next fall and a new type of CSAP exam, given in grades preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, will follow in the spring of 2012.

Our PLC group came together to accomplish three major items. First, we did a vertical articulation of the new standards across all the grade levels. We used the categories of Poetry, Fiction, Nonfiction, Word Study and Conventions to group evidence outcomes from the Standards by grade level. Members of the PLC were asked to develop their list and then discuss these with grades on either side of their particular grade to make sure there was indeed alignment and that skills grew in difficulty as grade level increased. Our second area of work was to identify essentials from the total of the evidence outcomes, using leverage, endurance, and our state tests as the measure of what was essential for our district. In some cases outcomes were combined with others to create fewer essentials per grade level. These were written as "I can" statements from the student point of view and listed under each of the four standards. Finally, we determined which quarters each essential would be measured and which items would be placed on a district assessment and which would be measured in the classroom, but not necessarily on a district exam. We began to create our four quarterly assessments that would correlate with each of these "I can" statements, trying with our assessment questions to provide a way for students to prove that they can indeed show evidence of essential mastery.

Everyone attending the focus group worked very hard to create a set of seamless district documents that will provide every teacher in our system with the kind of focus needed to increase student achievement. This work will be shared with the greater district PLC group later this spring and completed before the end of the 2009-10 school year. This was a great effort by a lot of professionals in our district. Each is owed a big "thank you" for his/her very hard work.

**Smile and Move Idea....** How many excuses do you allow yourself to give others when you don't deliver? How many do you enjoy hearing from others?

Difficulty is the excuse history never accepts.....Edward R. Murrow

How can we help one another create and contribute more value each day? What if we started by eliminating the TGIF sentiment from our workplaces and schools? What if Fridays became another day of opportunity for service and contribution? What if we pushed it further and stopped perpetuating the idea that Monday is a day of drudgery?

Together, Monday and Friday are 40% of a work week. Imagine the impact if we could get these days back for all those who tend to lose them.

Write it on your heart that **every day is the best day** in the year.....Ralph Waldo Emerson

## Teachers Get Paid Too Much..

I'm fed up with teachers and their hefty salary schedules. What we need here is a little perspective.

If I had my way, I'd pay these teachers myself-I'd pay them baby-sitting wages. That's right-instead of paying these outrageous taxes; I'd give them \$3 an hour out of my own pocket. And I'm only going to pay them for five hours, not lunch or coffee breaks. That would be \$15.00 a day. Each parent should pay \$15 a day for these teachers to baby sit their child. Even if they have more than one child, it's still a lot cheaper than private daycare.

Now, how many children do they teach every day-maybe 20? That's \$15x20=\$300 a day. But remember they only work 180 days a year! I'm not going to pay them for vacations! \$300x180=\$54,000. (Just a minute, I think my calculator needs new batteries.)

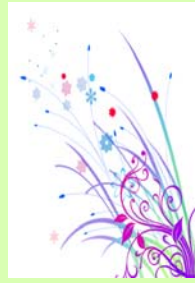
I know you teachers will say -What about those who have 10 years experience and a Master's Degree? Well, maybe (to be fair) they could get the minimum wage, and instead of just babysitting, they could read the kids a story. We could round that off to about \$5 an hour, times five hours, times 20 children. That's \$500 a day times 180 days. That's \$90,000....HUH?

Wait a minute; let's get a little perspective here. Babysitting wages are too good for these teachers. Has anyone seen a salary schedule around here?

~Anonymous

## Thoughts and Concerns

- ◆ Congratulations to **Meryn Harris**, teacher at Cedaredge Elementary School, and her husband, on the arrival of their new daughter, Sophie Marie.
- ◆ Congratulations to **Holly Rupp**, teacher at Cedaredge Middle School, and her husband, on the arrival of their new son, Carson.
- ◆ Our thoughts go out to **Nancy Carlson**, special education teacher at Hotchkiss High School, who recently had surgery. We wish Nancy a speedy recovery.



## Calendar

- January 12**    **Principals' Meeting @ D.O.**  
at 8:00 a.m.  
**Coordinating Council @ D.O.**  
at 4:00 p.m.
- January 13**    **Delayed Start Day**
- January 18**    **Staff In-service**
- January 21**    **School Board/Vision HCP Work Session @ The Delta Center**  
3:30 p.m. North Fork Vision  
4:00 p.m. Delta Vision  
4:30 p.m. Surface Creek Vision
- January 21**    **School Board Meeting @ Delta Center**  
6:00 p.m. Policy Review  
7:00 p.m. Regular Meeting
- January 26**    **Budget Task Force Meeting @ D.O. at 5:30 p.m.**
- January 27**    **Classified Council Meeting @ D.O. at 12:30 p.m.**
- January 27**    **PERA Meeting @ Delta Center**  
6:30 p.m.

**Question:** *All of the budget conversations each week are driving people crazy. When will the staff know if they have jobs or what the cuts will be for next year?*

**Answer:** The entire conversation is causing stress and uncertainty. With today's projected cuts, the problem is increased an additional \$400K. The figure we are now looking at is about \$2.6 million less next year. A number of budget suggestions are currently under discussion by various networks: Coordinating Council, Principals, Classified Council, and Accountability. The Budget Task Force will meet again on January 26 to consider and develop a consensus on the Big 18 suggestions (over \$50K).

From the larger items, we need to find cuts of approximately \$1.5 million. Unfortunately, the largest percentage of our budget goes to personnel. This leaves about \$900K that must come from employment of certified and classified staff.

It is our ambition to solve many of those personnel cuts through attrition (retirements and resignations). If a financial need still exists, we will reduce staff through a system that attempts to be equitable throughout the district in looking at student/teacher ratios, as well as student/employee ratios. We will use these numbers to work toward a solution that uses real figures and circumstances, not just beliefs.

The heart of your question is: When will we know? Our current estimate is early to mid March for certified staff and early May for classified staff. Unfortunately, people would be benefited by an earlier date. This is just not possible until the March revenue picture is fully understood. We will work on this issue daily and will most likely have and make adjustments through April as we receive final budget figures from the state.

