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I choose to work at a “D” school. My kids face significant socio-economic challenges. Getting my 6th graders to care about school is difficult, but I love it. I am extremely worried that, if we don’t do something soon, teachers are going to leave the profession in droves. I am losing instructional hours to testing, and prep hours to paperwork.

– Gabriela Irwin, 6th Grade Science & Social Studies Teacher, McKinley MS

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TEACHERS’ VOICE



PROFESSIONAL
PROGRESSIVE
UNIONISM

March 2014



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albuquerque teachers federation

VOL 16 | NO 6

YOUR ACTIVISM MADE THE DIFFERENCE



The Legislative session is complete. The outcome was greatly influenced by the coordinated efforts of thousands of union educators. The session started with the governor touting “merit pay,” raises for a few, and funding for her political pet projects. Because of your activism, we were able to turn her privatization agenda upside down.

Before the session, ATF COPE initiated its Legislative Liaison program where educators met with their senators and representatives to inform them of the needs of students and school employees. Legislators brought pro-student and pro-teacher bills and budget proposals into the session as starting point. These stood in stark contrast to the governor’s previously-rejected “flunk-the-3rd-graders” idea as well as a limited, “strings attached” education budget.

Our national, state and local unions were active before and during the session. We started with the statewide “Take It Back” Day on November 20th. AFT President Randi Weingarten joined us for a pre-session rally on January 20th followed by educators from around the state testifying before two special House Education Committee hearings on January 25th and February 1st. It was this concerted effort over many weeks and in many venues that set the stage to make this session one in which educator voices were heard.

Throughout their 30 days in Santa Fe, legislators received thousands of your calls and emails; it caught their attention. And, when 2,700 education employees rallied and marched to the Roundhouse on February 15th, the senators and representatives heard you loud and clear. Thank you for your support and your activism. You made the difference in what came out of this legislative session.

Let’s extend this activism in the coming months. We have the Primary Election in June. Then, in November, you have the opportunity to elect a governor who will listen to education professionals. This will be the most important election in your lifetime. I want to close with a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt that has as much meaning today as it did decades ago.

**“IN THE LONG RUN, THERE IS NO MORE LIBERATING,
NO MORE EXHILARATING EXPERIENCE
THAN TO DETERMINE ONE’S POSITION, STATE IT BRAVELY,
AND THEN ACT BOLDLY.”**



AFT RECLAIMING THE PROMISE

It’s time to reclaim the promise of public education—not as it is today or as it was in the past, but as it can be—to fulfill our collective obligation to help all children succeed.

Reclaiming the promise is about fighting for neighborhood public schools that are safe, welcoming places for teaching and learning.

Reclaiming the promise is about ensuring that teachers and school staff are well-prepared, are supported, have manageable class sizes and have time to collaborate so they can meet the individual needs of every child.

Reclaiming the promise is about making sure our children have an engaging curriculum that focuses on teaching and learning, not testing, and includes art, music and the sciences.

Reclaiming the promise is about ensuring that children and their families have access to wraparound services to meet their social, emotional and health needs.

The promise is under attack by those who demand and pursue austerity, polarization, privatization and deprofessionalization.

By uniting our voices—parents, students, teachers, school staff and the community— we can reclaim the promise.

Together, we will ensure that all children have the opportunity to dream their dreams and achieve them. We will put the public back into public education. We will help our public schools become centers of their communities, secure a voice and respect for those closest to the classroom, and fulfill public education’s purpose as a propeller of our economy, an anchor of democracy and a gateway to racial, social and economic justice.

STATEWIDE “TAKE IT BACK” DAY



On November 20, tens of thousands of educators across the State of New Mexico sent a unified message that they are ready to take back the time for teaching, joy of learning and professionalism in public education.

“Educators are alarmed that instead of supporting students and educators,

the PED and Governor Martinez have created an education crisis in New Mexico,” stated AFT NM President Stephanie Ly. “Our students are the future of our state. They need leaders dedicated to real educational policy informed by research and best practices from the field. We need to reclaim the promise for a world-class education system for New Mexico’s children.”

THOUSANDS RALLY IN SANTA FE

Nearly 3,000 educators, students, and community members rallied and marched in support of educational justice on Saturday, February 15, 2014.

After gathering in the Santa Fe Plaza, the crowd marched to the Roundhouse, packing the rotunda and the third floor. If you were unable to attend, there is a link to ATF President Ellen Bernstein’s speech that kicked off the rally inside the statehouse on our website at www.atfunion.org. Excerpts from Ellen’s speech are reprinted on pages 2 and 3.

The rally spotlighted the struggle educators in New Mexico are facing, and showcased that, together, our union can make a difference in our livelihoods and have a positive impact on our communities.



WHEN I STARTED TEACHING, IT WAS AN EXCITING TIME IN PUBLIC EDUCATION. REFORM WAS A POSITIVE WORD AND THE WHOLE COUNTRY WAS TALKING ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUDING THE VOICE OF TEACHERS IN DECISION-MAKING-ENSURING THAT THE CLASSROOM TEACHERS' EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE WERE HONORED AND INCLUDED.



JOY IN LEARNING DISAPPEARED AS DID OUR PROFESSIONALISM. TEACHER-PROOFING DAILY INSTRUCTION BECAME NOT ONLY THE NAME OF THE GAME, BUT THE MEANS TO MAKING GREAT PROFITS-SILENCING OUR VOICES AND DRIVING OUR PROFESSIONALISM UNDERGROUND.

I | A | O

ISSUES | ADVOCACY | ORGANIZING

ISSUES

Copy Quota Questions

Many teachers have been inquiring about copy limits at their school. This fall, we were reassured by APS that there is not a copy quota. Then, this semester a district Print Program Committee was formed and another memo about copies was sent to schools. The memo prompted more questions about possible quotas. According to the memo, this year will serve as a "baseline" for copy allocations next year. Although the committee has been asking principals for feedback on the process, they have not imposed a quota. Communicate your copy needs to your principal so that they can provide feedback to the Print Management Committee. If you are asked to limit your copies or pay for "extra" copies, please call us so we can help ensure you have the resources you need to do your job.

3rd Observation Flexibility

You may have heard of new flexibility that has been approved by the PED to excuse some teachers from a third observation. Who qualifies to be excused from a third observation and what is a VAS? VAS is the "Value Added Score" derived from the "Value Added Model."

Word of the flexibility created confusion and generated a lot of questions. Clarification was sent out last month. The bottom line: It is the principal's decision to complete more than the minimum number of observations required. The flexibility waiver states that a teacher "may" be excused from Observation 3 during the 2013-2014 evaluation cycle.

Dossier Rumors Dispelled

ATF recently received questions from a few teachers in schools that received a "D" or an "F" grade. They reported a rumor that they would not be allowed to submit their dossiers because of the school grade. We checked to make sure. This is not true. At this point, nothing has changed. All teachers are free to submit their dossiers. The deadline is 5:00pm on March 31st.

A requirement for submitting your dossier is three previous years of successful evaluations. We recommend, if you meet this standard and are eligible, that you submit this year—before the deadline and before your summative evaluation scores come out from the PED.

The last day to request an individual reading from the ATF PDD support program is March 15th. Open lab for help uploading your dossier will be offered on March 22nd and 29th from 9:00am to 3:00pm.

ORGANIZING

At-Large ATF Officer Elections

Any ATF member in good standing may run for any office, with the exception of the president. In order to run for ATF President, one must have been a member in good standing for a minimum of one year prior to running for this office. All officers are members of the Executive Council which meets monthly.

Positions:

President – Attends all Federation and Executive Council meetings; is an ex-officio, non-voting member of all committees; represents ATF and is a delegate at the state and national conventions; reports to the membership on the state of the union; supervises employees and retains legal counsel when needed.

Executive Vice-President – Presides at Fed Rep Council; performs duties assigned by President; coordinates activities of committees; reports to President.

Secretary – Assists the President with correspondence; keeps minutes of Executive Council and membership meetings.

Treasurer – Carries out and keeps accurate records of the financial transactions of the Federation; reports to the Fed Rep and Executive Councils, and to the membership.

Membership Vice-President – Is responsible for designing and implementing a membership growth plan; reports to the Fed Rep and Executive Councils.

The deadline for submitting nominations for any Federation officer position is Friday, April 4, 2014. Nominations must be mailed by CERTIFIED LETTER, postmarked no later than Friday, April 4, 2014 to:

Albuquerque Teachers Federation
ATTN: Secretary
530 Jefferson Street NE
Albuquerque NM 87108

Fed Rep of the Year:

ATF members: please nominate a Fed Rep for the honor of ATF Fed Rep of the Year! It can be your school's Fed Rep, or another excellent Rep you know. ATF members should have received nomination forms at the beginning of March. Send them through Interschool Mail to: ATF Office, Attention: Organizing Department by April 4th.

AFT NM Convention Delegate Call:

If you are an ATF member interested in being a delegate to the AFT NM Convention, please submit your name and contact information to the ATF office by March 28, 2014. Previously, members were sent more detailed information about the state convention.



WE ARE TOLD THAT WE CANNOT USE OUR PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT, THAT WE MUST TEACH WITH FIDELITY TO PROGRAMS, THAT WE ARE NOT ALLOWED TO USE OUR PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE TO MODIFY METHODS AND MATERIALS.



WE HAVE BEEN MANDATED TO IGNORE SUBJECTS THAT ARE NOT TESTED, WE HAVE TAKEN RECESS AWAY FROM YOUNG CHILDREN AND ELECTIVES FROM ADOLESCENTS.



WE HAVE BEEN THREATENED WITH THE REVOCATION OF OUR PROFESSIONAL LICENSE TO TEACH IF WE VARY EVEN A NANOMETER FROM THE TEST PROTOCOLS. WE HAVE SEEN YOUNG PEOPLE CRY, THROW-UP AND HAVE ANXIETY ATTACKS BECAUSE OF THE PRESSURE OF TAKING THE TEST.



AND NOW WITH THIS GOVERNOR AND HER PUNITIVE, CONFUSING AND UNWORKABLE EVALUATION SYSTEM, WE HAVE HIGH STAKES TESTING ON STEROIDS.



YOUNG PEOPLE NO LONGER SEE TEACHING AS A VIABLE FUTURE FOR THEMSELVES. TEACHERS WHO USED TO BE ROLE MODELS OF EXCITEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT ARE NOW MODELS OF STRESS AND WORRY. THE PURPOSE OF SCHOOL HAS BECOME PERVERTED.

WE BELIEVE THAT THE PURPOSE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IS TO ENABLE EVERY STUDENT IN EVERY SCHOOL TO FULLY PARTICIPATE IN A THRIVING DEMOCRACY-TO DEVELOP THE THINKING SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS THAT WILL SUPPORT THEIR FULL HUMAN POTENTIAL.



TODAY WE'RE TAKING IT BACK.
NO MORE CORPORATE REFORM.
NO MORE MEANINGLESS SLOGANS ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY.
TODAY, WE ARE TAKING BACK THE PURPOSE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLING.
TODAY, WE ARE TAKING BACK OUR PROFESSIONAL POWER.
TODAY, WE ARE TAKING BACK OUR SCHOOLS AS HUMANE PLACES IN WHICH TO TEACH AND LEARN.
TODAY, WE ARE TAKING IT BACK.
WE ARE TAKING BACK THE PROMISE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN NEW MEXICO.



“ Students need teachers, not assessors. I am worried that many wonderful individuals will leave teaching or not enter the teaching profession. Teachers must be supported, not belittled. And evaluations should make sense and give real feedback. ”
 – Marion Woolam, Kindergarten Teacher, Sierra Vista ES



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Special COPE Meeting

What happened during the session? Where do we go from here? How do we build on the momentum that made a real difference during the legislative session?

House Education Committee Chairwoman Mimi Stewart will speak to these issues at the ATF Committee on Political Education (C.O.P.E.) meeting on Wednesday, March 12th at 4:30pm. Join us.

ATF Joyce Briscoe NBCT Award

ATF will host the Fifth Annual Joyce Briscoe NBCT Award Reception on March 21st. The program recognizes and awards up to \$1,000 to members who achieve National Board certification for the first time. The scholarship award helps offset the \$2,500 National Board fee. Congratulations to our ATF members!

Thanks to our ATF support program, APS is one of the top districts in the nation for the number of Board Certified teachers, with 50 teachers achieving this year alone.

Thank You Volunteers!

Dozens of ATF members volunteered throughout the session phone banking fellow members to inform and activate them. Thanks to our volunteers we were able to call every ATF member!



HELP STUDENTS START THE YEAR OFF RIGHT...

Remind them to call Dial-A-Teacher for free homework help offered in English or Spanish.

DIAL-A-TEACHER MON-THURS | 5:30-8:30 PM

TEACHERS' VOICE

march

12	COPE Committee (with special guest House Education Chair, Representative Mimi Stewart) 4:30PM
13	Common Core Workshop (no cost) 4:30-6:30P
18	Ready, Set, Retire (registration required) 4:00-6:00P
19	National Board Large Group (for current candidates) 4:30-6:30P
20	Common Core Workshop (no cost) 4:30-6:30P
22	Open Lab Dossier Support 9:00A-3:00P
25	Mentor Group (no cost) 4:30-6:30P
27	Common Core Workshop (no cost) 4:30-6:30P
27	Career Pathway System Overview (members no cost/non-members \$50) 4:30-6:30P

CALL 262-2657 TO REGISTER

PED WATCH

Skandera Confirmation

With 4 "Yes" and 6 "No" votes, the Senate Rules Committee did not confirm Hanna Skandera as Secretary of Education in the last days of the session. Additionally, the committee tied 5-5 on a motion not to recommend Skandera. However, don't let the vote fool you. Due to Governor Martinez's disregard for Constitutional Law, Hanna Skandera will keep her job.

The vote was mostly symbolic as the Governor has already said Skandera is not leaving, whatever the vote. It simply means she would no longer be called "Secretary Designate"; she would have to be given the position and title of an Assistant Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Education.



BY TEACHERS | FOR TEACHERS | FOR FREE

The AFT Share My Lesson site includes more than 200,000 resources across grade levels and subject areas and has a section devoted to the Common Core. It's a tool that helps teachers find the free, high-quality resources they are looking for to help them do the best job possible with their students.

www.sharemylesson.com



albuquerque teachers federation
 professional progressive unionism

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Ellen Bernstein

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Sonya Romero Smith
 Lew Wallace Elementary School

SECRETARY

Pamela Irvin
 Alamosa Elementary School

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MIDDLE SCHOOL VP

Pat Halama
 John Adams Middle School

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL VPs

Stephanie DeBellis
 Emerson Elementary School

Miriam Martinez
 Emerson Elementary School

CONTACT INFO

Albuquerque Teachers Federation
 530 Jefferson Street NE
 Albuquerque, NM 87108
 [phone] 505-262-2657
 [email] atf@atfunion.org
 [interschool mail]
 Attn: Ellen Bernstein
 ATF Office



www.atfunion.org