

TEACHERS' VOICE

PROFESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE UNIONISM

MARCH APRIL 2016



"Experts maintain that the design of every system determines the results it gets. So if the results are not the desired results, then the system needs to be redesigned to achieve what is desired."

"Trusting Teachers with School Success"
- Kim Farris-Berg and Edward Dirkswager

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ALBUQUERQUE TEACHERS FEDERATION

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President's Message

...because we care!



By Ellen Bernstein, ATF President

Educators in APS care about a tremendous number of things. We care whether or not our students have eaten. We care whether or not we have the resources and supplies to do our work. We care about the policies at the school, district, state and national level that have created a test-and-punish context of schooling. We care whether or not our principal respects and supports us. We care about our profession. We deeply care about the quality of the institutions in which we work.

We care, and care, and care. Now we need our district to care.

We want APS to care about us, as individuals and as a collective work force. We want APS to care about the culture and climate of each school and the district as a whole. We want APS to show they care by transforming themselves from an employer focused on micromanagement and mandates, to one focused on trust, kindness and respect—at all levels of the organization.

What does a whole district do when it chooses to change from the usual top-down command and control structure to a more humane and supportive one? How might our leaders focus their efforts so that the district supports its employees to do their work, rather than their employees support the district to do its work? How can these two be one in the same instead of separated by focus and purpose—in other words, the district's focus should be the success of their employees and not the other way around.

The answer is as simple as two words—trust and respect.

Trust and respect are contagious. Every successful classroom is built on these fundamental relational aspects. So is every school. So why not an entire district?

According to the National School Climate Council (2007), "Respectful schools [think district here] are, by definition, democratically informed learning environments where people feel safe, supported, engaged, and helpfully challenged. Respect doesn't happen in isolation; it's based in relationships. As we learn and teach, we are—or are not—respectful in the context of our social, emotional, civic, and intellectual interactions."

AUTONOMY. TEACHERS' DECISION-MAKING POWER OVER ASPECTS RELATED TO THEIR WORK.

This National Council says (and rightfully so) that the first step in developing trusting, respectful, CARING relationships is the public acknowledgement that we don't have one now. "A foundation for respectful schools is to measure—and, thus, publicly recognize—how we treat one another and then use this information to create safer and more supportive, engaging, challenging, and joyful schools. By doing so, we can reinvigorate our democracy and encourage students to better understand the world in which they live—and their role in improving it."

Our union's Organizing for Change actions have started to strip away the curtain of denial that has cloaked central office for so long. APS is not fine because we are not fine. Our actions, words and piles of documentation have started to expose the deep structural status quo of disrespect and lack of trust.

Once we have progressed from system-wide denial, we can start to heal. The first step is to accept that educators are professional and treat us as such.

A new Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report, *Supporting Teacher Professionalism*, based on the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) says it perfectly. Teaching professionalism is comprised of:

- Knowledge base. This is necessary knowledge for teaching and includes formal teacher education, and whether the teacher has incentives for professional development (e.g. receives time release during professional hours) and participates in professional development.
- **Autonomy. This is defined as teachers' decision-making power over aspects related to their work, such as: content, course offerings, discipline practices, assessment and materials.**
- Peer networks. These are defined as opportunities for the information exchange and support needed to maintain high standards of teaching. They include: participation in induction and mentoring programmes, network of teachers, receiving feedback from direct observations.

I purposefully put autonomy in bold type because that one aspect of professionalism is essential to trust and support. Let's start there.

I care about whether or not you all work in the best district in the nation. I care about whether or not APS becomes that district. I care about Organizing for Change because this is the moment in time, this is the superintendent and this is the board that can let you know that they care.

In solidarity,

Ellen

ATF ASKED... WHAT WOULD IT FEEL LIKE IF...

Our District and each school within our District functioned with a pervasive atmosphere of transparency, communication, professionalism, kindness and compassion all of which lead to better learning conditions for our students, and a more welcoming place for parents, and a truly wonderful place to be an educator?

YOU SAID...



"More teachers would want to come to work and then the students would want to come to a happy teacher, classroom, and school!"

TERESA SUMMERS
Kindergarten, Helen Cordero PS

"It would feel like I would work to inspire students to have a passion for the visual arts. I would be willing to do this forever."

SARAH K. MC HAFFIE
Visual Arts Teacher, Cibola HS



"The profession might be more desirable. Teachers wouldn't be complaining all the time, wondering when the next weekend or break was. Children would have better role models. There would not be such a huge shortage."

JASON D'ANGELO
First Grade Dual Language, Duranes ES

"I could focus on the students... remember, those short human beings who look up at us in expectation...remember them?"

FONDA KIRCHMEYER
Counselor, Inez ES



"It would feel like waking up from my greatest nightmare."

STEPHANIE WALSTROM
First Grade, Bandelier ES



ISSUES

INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTS ISSUED... FINALLY!

After waiting nearly seven months, everyone should have finally received their individual contracts. Although much can be attributed to the administrative shake-up early in the school year, the lack of a contract has made making major financial decisions difficult for our members.

Last September, after ATF successfully negotiated step increases and lateral increases for educational attainment, individual contracts were sent to the print-shop. Then, APS discovered that many of the individual contracts included differential compensation and other inaccuracies. The latest iteration of contracts delivered to employees in February had fewer mistakes.

ATF asked employees with mistakes on their contract to report them to us. We delivered a list of over 55 employees that reported their individual contract was incorrect. Some individuals had questions and others had concerns. We appreciate that APS HR got back to each person individually. We continue to receive names of individuals with contract issues and we will continue to follow up with APS HR as we receive the corrections.

THE BUBBLE BURDEN OF STEPPING STONES

Elementary teachers, You might appreciate how ATF Elementary VP handled the bubble burden of Stepping Stones. Below is the letter Dwayne Norris wrote to APS.

Ms. Andrews,

Enclosed you will find completed bubble sheets (except the 2 for students who are exempted in accordance with their IEPs) for the STEPPING STONES 2nd Quarterly Exam for students in my 5th grade class at Bandelier Elementary.

I have not scan/snapped these results into my computer because I do not believe that this would be an appropriate use of my planning or instructional time during the school day. Adding this step to the teacher's portion of the administration and scoring of this assessment is an example of an additional unpaid and meaningless task that unnecessarily increases teachers' workloads.

I certainly do not intend to cause your staff additional work. I feel that complying with this assignment would be to acquiesce to future workload demands that might be requested from various departments within APS.

*With the utmost respect,
Dwayne Norris, M.A., N.B.C.T.
Bandelier E.S.*

APS MIDDLE SCHOOL MASTER SCHEDULE 2016-17

Recently, middle school principals were given a set of parameters for developing master schedules for next year. This is preferable to the alternative – which would be APS simply imposing a mandated district-wide schedule for all schools.

ATF has worked hard over the years to negotiate contract language which guarantees that all school-based instructional decisions should go through your own school's Instructional Council (IC). This elected body needs to review the APS Parameters, discuss various options and review proposals as they relate to your individual school's needs.

Several items on the list of parameters are considered "tight" (providing regular advisory periods, teacher teaming, student access to electives, and PLC time), but HOW they are implemented should be a decision made by the IC, in collaboration with the staff members they are elected to represent. In fact, one of the "tight" requirements is for each school to build a schedule that is in compliance with the Negotiated Agreement – and by definition, that means through your IC!

The parameters, if implemented through the collaborative process, should make your school a better place to work, and in many ways ease the current burdens of our members. Most schools already do most of what is on the list, and there are many rewarding and enriching ways to incorporate the new ones into your school processes and culture.

If you feel that the IC process is not being followed at your school site, or if you believe your principal is planning to inflict significant schedule changes next year without IC input, please contact your union for assistance.

ADVOCACY

LET THE GAMES BEGIN... AND MAY THE ODDS BE EVER IN YOUR FAVOR!

Now that the short session of the 2016 Legislature has ended, ATF and APS will head to the bargaining table. Your ATF team consists of the following ATF officers: President Ellen Bernstein; Executive VP Sonya Romero Smith (Lew Wallace ES); Treasurer Sean Thomas (Eldorado HS); Middle School VP Jason Krosinsky (Cleveland MS); High School VP, Tanya Kuhnee (West Mesa HS); Elementary VP Dwayne Norris (Bandelier ES); and ATF staff, John Wallace and Simon Cao.

If all goes according to plan, ATF and APS will begin negotiating in March and finish before the end of the traditional school year. Our goal, as always, is to ratify in May so that individual contracts can be signed in August. After a short legislative session, we traditionally focus on salaries and other money issues, however, this year, because of the deficit budget passed by the legislature, we may be having a shorter conversation than what we'd like.

As a negotiating team, we will continue to focus on issues and role group concerns that we have been working on throughout the year and revisit relevant issues that we put on the table last year, such as the high school schedule.

ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE

The ATF *Organizing for Change* committees held three different "teach-ins" at the Board of Education meetings so that board members and APS Administration could hear from their employees about what is really going on in schools.

Topics have included undoable mandates, over-testing and most recently, APS broken systems, which included the high school schedule as an APS system in need of repair. Each of these "teach-ins" brought to the forefront the struggles that APS teachers face because of the increased amount of testing and paperwork mandates that have diverted our energy and attention from our preferred focus—meeting the needs of our students.

ATF staff also visited schools to give information about the *Organizing for Change* campaign and to update members about the legislative session, the bills we supported and those we managed to fend off this session.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Recently, the APS Board of Education invited ATF President Ellen Bernstein to present the work that AFT has been doing on restorative justice practices. Across the nation, AFT has been partnering with parents, students, district officials, community organizations, and policymakers to move away from harmful and counter-productive zero-tolerance discipline policies and toward proven restorative approaches to address school conflicts and misbehavior.

Restorative justice practices empower students to resolve conflicts on their own and bring students together in peer-mediated small groups to talk, ask questions, and air their grievances. Some types of restorative justice practices focus on community conferencing, community service, peer juries, preventative and post-conflict resolution programs, peer mediation and social emotional learning as alternatives to traditional school discipline policies.

In January, ATF members received their copy of the AFT *American Educator*, which focused on restorative justice practices. A copy of

this issue of *American Educator* was given to each of the members of the Board of Education to use as a resource as they go through the process of revising student discipline policies.

Advocates contend that there is a need for restorative justice practices. This need stems from a history of systematic racism and the use of traditional school discipline policies that create inequitable environments—particularly Zero Tolerance. The research supports this contention. A national trend among middle school students reveals that Black youth are suspended nearly four times as often as white youth, and Latino youth are suspended or expelled at rates roughly twice the amount of white youth. Research on traditional discipline policies also shows that a single suspension or expulsion doubles the risk that a student will repeat a grade, and that grade retention, especially while in middle or high school, is one of the strongest predictors of dropping out. In one national longitudinal study, youth with a prior suspension were 68 percent more likely to drop out of school.

By having informed discussions using research-based resources as we update and revise policies and practices for our schools, we create an environment that intervenes in deficit-based policies before they criminalize our students or feed into the school-to-prison pipeline.


 The central office has three key tasks in leading professional learning communities: Limit initiatives, build capacities and monitor progress.
"Learning By Doing"
 DuFour DuFour, Eaker and Many (2010)


ROUND 2 OF OBSERVATIONS

The second round of observations are currently underway, and although we can collectively breathe a sigh of relief that our preliminary injunction eliminated the most atrocious consequences of the PED's evaluation system, there still is work to be done.

This year's alteration in the PED's observation rubric and the sudden changes in the date for the release of summative evaluation information (changed to next September) demonstrate the PED's propensity to arbitrarily rate teachers and make changes based on politics rather than sound policy.

Because of the injunction, teachers throughout the state will no longer suffer the consequences of an arbitrary rating based on student test scores. APS and ATF have an agreement that only observation scores will determine whether or not a teacher is struggling and needs support. All teachers with observation scores in Domains 2 and 3 that average less than 2.5 will be put on an improvement plan. If a teacher has an average observation score of 2.49 or less, Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) will be provided and a Consulting Teacher will be assigned to provide one-on-one help.

Teachers have always wanted a fair evaluation system that actually provides useful feedback and helps them grow in their practice, not one that demoralizes them. ATF continues to support a research-based evaluation system created *with* educators that does not have high-stakes attached to the outcome.

APS will provide a summative report, minus PED test-based VAM scores, at the end of the year. These reports will satisfy contract language and state law requirement that address notifying employees that they have received satisfactory evaluations and will be offered reemployment.

ORGANIZING

JOIN THE UNION

In 1962, educators in Albuquerque Public Schools successfully founded and chartered the Albuquerque Teachers Federation. Early members of our union understood that a lone individual would be powerless against the district and state/federal government, so they joined together to fight for more rights, better pay, and better working conditions. Our union's strength has always been solely supported by dues-paying members.

Together, we have achieved a great deal. In fact, we are the only state in the nation that was able to suspend the negative effects of the VAM evaluation system. During a time in our nation's history when unions are under attack, our local is surviving and thriving. There is no better time to add to our collective strength.

We are fighting a radical education agenda based on merit pay, high-stakes testing, and the de-professionalization of teaching. Our classrooms are overcrowded, our students are over-tested, and we, as professionals, are undervalued.

Now is the time we fight back. Now is the time to add your voice and power to our union. Now is the time to stand with our union and end the era of "teachers are the enemy." Now is the time to join the Albuquerque Teachers Federation.



ATF Treasurer Sean Thomas speaks about the high school schedule during Organizing for Change at the BOE meeting.



"Organizing for Change" t-shirts.

COPE

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Sara Attleson, Kennedy MS, ATF COPE Chair



If you've felt frustrated, disrespected and dejected over how you, as an educator, have been treated, there is a remedy. If you've seen your profession kicked around like a football

by elected officials and policymakers, there is a way to stop the meanness. Your recourse is political action. The voters put lawmakers in their positions, and it is the voters that can replace them or return them. Now it's your turn to determine who will be given the position and authority to support you and your students or, conversely, to continue the disrespect. The 2016 Elections will have far-reaching consequences.

This election season, all 112 seats in the state legislature are up for election. Legislative candidates must submit their petitions for candidacy on March 8th. The Primary Election is on June 7th; and the General Election will be held on November 8th. There is much work to be done between now and then.

The ATF Committee on Political Education (COPE) is your union's political action wing. In March, this group of dedicated members begins the process of investigating and identifying which candidates for office will best support public education. Their task is not easy. However, the committee knows that so much depends on their work, so they gladly accept the challenge.

After the filing deadline, COPE will send to every legislative candidate—Democrats and Republicans—a questionnaire on important education and labor issues. All candidates are invited to complete and return the questionnaire, and to schedule an interview with the COPE Screening Sub-committee. Incumbents' voting records are also considered in this process. The sub-committee will compile a list of recommendations for possible endorsement by the ATF Federation Representative Council. This process will be completed by April at the Council's monthly meeting. At that point, we will send information about the endorsed candidates to union members for their consideration as they vote.

We invite you to become a COPE member and participate in this important political action. You can join by signing up to make a regular contribution (of any amount) to COPE. (ATF does not use union dues to fund political activities.) But, while financial contributions are important, the most significant step you can take is to volunteer your time for COPE actions, like phone banking fellow members. Now it's your turn to make a difference for your students and your profession.

AROUND THE NATION

SCHOOL 'WALK-INS' DELIVER A NATIONAL WAKE-UP CALL

Neighborhood by neighborhood, building by building, AFT members joined with parents, students and the community in 30 cities across the nation on Feb. 17 to hold an estimated 800 school "walk-ins"—bringing national attention to challenges facing public education and, equally important, to the community-generated, community-backed solutions and supports that could transform every public school into a building that every child deserves. Gathering outside buildings before the national day of action began, school stakeholders from Los Angeles to Newark, N.J., rallied briefly. Then they walked into the schools together—a positive, hopeful act that signaled commitment, neighborhood solidarity and the power of collective action. Called "Walk-Ins for the Schools All Our Children Deserve," the events were coordinated by the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools.

The AFT is part of this national coalition of organizations that are banding together for educational justice and equity, particularly in schools serving low-income and working-class communities and neighborhoods of color.

SCALIA'S DEATH LEAVES UNCERTAINTY ON KEY CASES

The Feb 13 death of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia will have a profound impact on the court and the cases still before it.

The cases deal with critical issues ranging from workers'

rights, immigration, and affirmative action to *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, the pending case that attempts to weaken our unions and deprive working people of a voice on the job.

Regardless of how the court proceeds, AFT President Randi Weingarten says the AFT will continue the effort to engage and mobilize every AFT member behind our vision for reclaiming the promise of education and other vital public services for all Americans. Weingarten also is urging the Senate to move forward in considering the person President Obama will nominate to serve on the court. "The Constitution is clear," she says. "President Obama has the right and the obligation to put forth a nominee, and the Senate has a duty to hold hearings and vote."



ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE



This fall, ATF Federation Representatives passed a motion called *Organizing for Change: Just Let Me Teach*. The motion, followed by the Organizing for Change (O4C) campaign grew from both frustration and hope.

We were all frustrated when, after several years of providing former Superintendent Brooks ongoing evidence that indicated a saturation of workload requirements for all educators, an unnecessarily burdensome amount of district-mandated assessments for students, along with added school-based mandates, created a pervasive culture of frustration, fear and fatigue in our district.

We offered a solution by asking the superintendent to agree that all APS departments should submit any proposed changes in work processes and procedures to the scrutiny of both the superintendent and the union president. In addition, we proposed that APS departments or administrators adding the work coordinate with other departments so as not to add more than one requirement at a time. Finally, we requested that one or more previous mandates should be removed from the employee's workload if any new requirement is added. Our pleas for change fell on his traditional, top-down, bureaucratic deaf ears.

Our frustration grew during the short, chaotic tenure of Luis Valentino. Although we were all very hopeful that the new superintendent would fix our broken system filled with over-the-top mandates, his time here ended in a flood of controversy. As always, the educators in APS provided the strength and stability students need in our schools.

When the Board of Education appointed Raquel Reedy as the acting superintendent, we decided it was time to continue our essential pursuit. We have faith—because our acting superintendent has a long history in APS, deep institutional knowledge, and has seen the same chaos our educators have witnessed—she will be able to hear our voices and support our plea to **JUST LET US TEACH**.



The APS Board, who traditionally only hears rosy reports from the very departments that created the unreasonable workloads and the instructionally-disconnected layers

of testing, needed to hear our truth so they would support the changes our superintendent needs to make. So, our campaign started with a series of Teach-Ins at the board meetings.

Everything we are teaching the board is interconnected. The unnecessary requirements and undoable mandates include an unreasonable amount of testing, especially at the elementary level, which is intertwined with the broken systems. Before each of the Teach-Ins, we supplied the board members and the superintendent with documentation that supported the words of each speaker.

We gave them lists of the tests required by APS—not the state, not the feds, just APS. Each grade had a separate list: When in kindergarten, every student in APS will take the following tests, then first, second and so on. It is truly upsetting to see how we are treating our students and forfeiting our teaching time.

TEACH-INS

UNNECESSARY REQUIREMENTS & UNDOABLE MANDATES



My name is **Christy Jewell-Roth**. I teach students identified as gifted at North Star Elementary and I am here to teach you about writing IEPs on Synergy.

IEPs require many pages of documentation and time to prepare them ahead of the meeting. All the necessary forms are NOT included in Synergy requiring some to be obtained elsewhere. For example, the consent form that requires a

parent signature for a student to receive services has to be pulled from the Special Ed website—a site that itself is a challenge when looking for the correct form.

As a result, one runs the risk of forgetting this important form. Secondly, Synergy has the capability of allowing teachers to save their library of possible IEP goals in the system, but this feature does not currently work. Therefore, teachers, again, have to go outside the IEP document to access their saved goal statements.

When I inquired about this feature, I was told the Synergy team didn't understand why it didn't work and their solution was to hide the button, so users can't access it at all. The real solution is to fix Synergy so that all the necessary documents are in one place. TieNet, the old system for writing IEPs, did not have either of these problems and was much easier to use.

I'm working, but the system isn't, and I'm spending more time writing IEPs than previously. I am organizing for change, because I care.

My name is **Karen Baehr**. I work at Georgia O'Keeffe Elementary School. I am here to teach you about technology and teacher workload. At the elementary school level, the breakdown of technology and software is disruptive to quality of instruction and student learning on a day-to-day basis. This is especially impactful with Synergy, the Stepping Stones Math curriculum, the iReady curriculum for Special Ed students, DIBELS testing, and using iPads in the classroom.

For teachers at schools lacking adequate tech support, much time is lost due to dealing with restarting, fixing, and finding work-arounds for non-working technology. This adds to stress and silently contributes to teacher work-load.

With use of technology as part of teacher evaluations, break-downs in technology heighten stress levels and create the possibility of negative and inaccurate evaluations. Thank you for considering the role IT plays in the classroom and giving attention to strengthening our internal IT support within the district.

I am here today because I am an APS teacher, and I care.

BROKEN SYSTEMS



Good evening. My name is **Tanya Kuhnee** and I teach at West Mesa. I spoke to you last month about high school teachers' concerns about continuing to teach 6 of 7 classes. You advised me to find money to fund our return to 5. I emailed you my suggestions. However, finding money to appropriately manage our school district is not my job,

it's yours.

No only do you have a budget crisis, but you have a teacher shortage crisis. Teachers continue to leave the profession as they are mistreated by corrupt decision-makers and demoralizing policies. Teachers are beat down by excessive workloads that often leave them working 12-hour days, dysfunctional systems that waste hours of their time, unfunded mandates that increase their stress and frustration levels, a ridiculously arbitrary evaluation system that seeks to blame them for society's perceived shortcomings, and constant disrespect from the media and the so-called education leaders in Santa Fe.

Please, as the leaders of our district, do everything you can to support teachers so they can effectively educate our children. Make funding a high school schedule that best supports teaching and learning a priority.

TEACH-INS

THESE UNION ACTIVISTS TAUGHT THE BOARD ABOUT OVER-TESTING ON FEBRUARY 3RD

Then, we created a way for employees to report to their union about broken systems. In just a few short days, we received over 124 reports. We found that the broken systems not only affect teachers and their ability to do their job, we learned that:

- Teachers are losing credibility with parents because of malfunctions in District systems.
- Employees think APS should care because the broken systems are reflecting poorly on the District.
- Classroom time is lost; prep time is lost.

We are **Organizing for Change** because:

- More and more teachers are thinking of quitting or retiring.
- Teachers and all professional educators deserve a better work-life balance.
- Morale in the profession plunged dramatically.
- Our working conditions have become increasingly toxic. As a result of the chronic stress, kindness and caring among adults is decreasing and is often replaced with fear and suspicion.

We are **Organizing for Change** because to improve the quality of teaching, the system must improve the quality of the teaching job.

We are **Organizing for Change** because we are tired of supporting the District. It's the District's turn to support us.

We are **Organizing for Change** to demand that our District and each school within our District function with a pervasive atmosphere of transparency, communication, professionalism, kindness and compassion all of which lead to better learning conditions for our students, and a more welcoming place for parents.

We are **Organizing for Change** because we deeply care about the quality of the institution in which we work.



Shelly Goodman (Hodgin) said she has been a Special Ed teacher for 8 years and in General Ed for 4 years. She is considering leaving the state because of time lost to testing.



Pamela Irvin (Alamosa) described students crying when taking DIBELS and is demoralized when having to administer it every two weeks. Other testing includes: weekly Treasures; Stepping Stones; Foundations. Her proposed solution is to get rid of DIBELS.



Rachel Baucom (East San Jose) clearly described "in threes" the DIBELS testing ordeal for teachers (if the internet even works): First, reassure, redirect and try again. Then, bubble, report and analyze. The tests are demoralizing and culturally questionable, destroying student-teacher relationships. She told the Board, "Let teachers teach."

Lisa Wishard (Georgia O'Keeffe) gives up to 5 tests each week. She said the testing windows are too short. Her 4th grade daughter summed it up: "Let our teachers teach."

Candace Gurnett (Wilson), a Special Ed teacher, explained that multi-part test questions are convoluted and wishes she could show the Board the test.

Annie Huggins (Georgia O'Keeffe) said that, when a test score of 17% came back for a student, he was ashamed and said, "I am so sorry. I did really bad. I am so sorry." She expressed the frustration of many, stating we are setting up to make students and teachers fail.

Veronica Medina (AHS) was on the High School Schedule Task Force, and is a parent and teacher. She said current schedule isn't working and reminded the Board that the task force made a decision and presented the results. She said her daughter is a junior in APS who has not had the same schedule for her entire time in high school.

Cynthia Bowra (Itinerant Art Teacher) described testing periods as a time of inconsistency and lack of control, saying kids can't sit still due to the testing atmosphere. She said when testing dominated the schedule, she didn't see one class for two months out of that year.

Jennifer Coughlin (Eldorado) said to the Board that we are seeking their help. She asked them not to expand charters, but instead to fix the high school schedule.

Nadine Morales (Lavaland) described her testing routine in 3rd grade: 3 days of DIBELS; 2 days of Stepping Stones; 3 days of Access; one day of Stepping Stones module post test; 1 day of pre-test, 3 days for students to be pulled for make-up tests; tests 13 out of 19 days at school.

TEACH-INS

THESE UNION ACTIVISTS TAUGHT THE BOARD ABOUT BROKEN APS SYSTEMS ON FEBRUARY 17TH

Veronica Medina (AHS) thanked Dr. Peercy for sending her a response. She said the time is now for a decision because principals need to start building schedules in high school.

Tanya Kuhnee (WMHS) was emailed and told to give financial suggestions to fund the high school schedule, but said that's the Board's job. She cited the teacher shortage crisis and budget crisis, unfunded mandates, over-testing, evals, constant disrespect. She asked the Board, as the leaders of district, to support teachers.

Richard Faulkner (LCHS) thanked the Board for the Task Force and was glad it was a community effort. He said teachers are tired, doing more prep work, writing letters of reference for students, and performing extra curricular work. He emphasized to the Board, "Listen to the Task Force that you put together."

Lancing Freeman (LCHS) said he served on the Task Force and urged the Board to adopt the recommended schedule on behalf of all community stakeholders, including overworked/underserved students. He stated that a poor education provided by a flawed schedule would be more costly.

Erin Bower (SHS) explained that the current schedule has had an adverse impact due to increased workload for teachers, and that the protests have fallen on deaf ears. She emphasized that teachers are overstressed and overworked, saying, "I love to teach and I am good at it, but it's now impossible to do it well."

Karen Baehr (Georgia O'Keeffe) described a huge breakdown of systems: Stepping Stones; DIBELS; iPads in classroom; tech support hard to find. Non-working technology is now part of teacher evaluations, resulting in negative and inaccurate evaluations.

Sean Thomas (EHS) made it clear that teachers do pay attention and know what has happened in the legislature. He said the issue is with APS in prioritizing. He stated that the community has spoken: The schedule is the priority; the Board must make a decision so parents can trust the District again.

Ray Quintana (EHS) urged to Board to hurry in making its decision because waiting until the budget process time may be too late.

Abel Galindo (RGHS) taught the Board about the broken pay system and explained that his differentials are late and other teachers were not paid. He stressed that teachers depend on this income—they are not wealthy—and he is worried about teacher burnout, reminding them that computers don't replace teachers.

Glen Wellman (EHS) was clear that the last place to look for cuts should be in the classroom—teachers can only do so much; students deserve proper resourcing. He is not in favor of selling prep as a partial solution and suggested the need for an outside audit to find the needed money.

Bill Tiwald (HHS) spoke strongly in favor of the 5/7 schedule.

Ronald Neuser (LCHS) advocated for 5/7 schedule. He showed the Board stacks of student papers to grade from just one day of teaching.

Matt Smith (VHS), who has been teaching for 19 years, said he was lobbying legislators in Santa Fe last week. He said that, despite difficult budget times, the Board should consider the high school schedule a priority.

Natalie Thomas (SHS) said her 2nd year teaching was harder than her first, due to the 20% increase in workload, and has taken on more stress and guilt. She asked the Board what they are going to do to retain quality teachers, and how much does she have to sacrifice personally to feel that she is good enough as a teacher.

David Darling (EHS) said, in his 32 years, he has never seen a more demoralized faculty. He said he received a "highly effective" rating, but was threatened to switch schools. With no pay increase, he said he will be retiring much sooner than expected.

Karen Morgan (LCHS) pleaded for action, told the Board she couldn't believe the low morale, and warned the Board that they are going to lose teachers. She emphasized that teachers can't keep up with the grading, and asked that the District go back to the 5/7 schedule.

Lena Eddings (LCHS), as the science department chair, asked the Board to spend the money for a workable schedule, and that cuts can be made in other places. She clearly stated that this current schedule is not sustainable.

... TEACH-INS continued on page 7.



ATF Organizing Team member Theresa Illgen and Early Educators United Organizer Katie Silva

“WE ARE ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE BECAUSE WE DEEPLY CARE ABOUT THE QUALITY OF THE INSTITUTION IN WHICH WE WORK.”



ATF members Organizing for Change: Tanya Kuhnee, Pam Irvin, Joe Hartssock

2016 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PATCHES AND CAN-KICKING

The 2016 NM Legislative Session can be characterized by two main actions: applying temporary patches onto gaping state budget holes and kicking the can (of responsibility) further down the road—but only as far as the next session. The day of reckoning has now been moved to another calendar year.

The legislature sent the governor a \$6.2 billion state budget for fiscal year 2017. (It is very telling to note that this figure represents the same spending level as 2009.) Of this total, \$2.75 billion is appropriated for public education—or 44% of the state budget. Many remember when spending on public schools accounted for at least one-half of the budget. So, we see a continued widening of the gap between what is needed for children and what is provided.

New Mexico's budget was ultimately pieced together partly by taking various unspent amounts—totaling \$129 million—in this fiscal year from a number of state agencies and “sweeping” those dollars into next year's spending plan. Needless to say, this is a temporary, one-time-only fix for a deeper, long-term problem of insufficient state revenues. In conjunction with the so-called sweeps, cuts were made in spending on Medicaid—likely resulting in higher co-pays for health care recipients who can least afford it. This is another example of a now-common practice of balancing the budget on the backs of the neediest residents of our state.

The last temporary patch applied to the budget quilt involved diverting the entire Tax Stabilization account to bolster operating reserve funds. Another fund-shift occurred when money from the tobacco settlement fund was moved into the state Medicaid program. With “sweep” patches sewn on top of “fund-shift” patches, look for the FY17 Budget to be featured as a prize-winning quilt at the next New Mexico State Fair.

All this would be amusing if it weren't such a serious and possibly devastating matter that will affect all New Mexicans. The patches, shifts and cuts will only help this year—we have given the can its last kick. In the next session, lawmakers have to take on the burning issue of finding sufficient revenue for state needs. If revenues drop in one category, then the need exists to make up the shortfall in another. That means taxes must be raised AND/OR previously-enacted tax cuts must be delayed or eliminated. In this session, legislators expressed frustration that bills to increase taxes were not even allowed to be considered in committees. The day of reckoning is upon us.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION REVIEW

Once again, our successes in the legislature can be best be defined by what didn't happen. We didn't have education cuts. We didn't pass more punitive test-based policies. We didn't lose ground. That said, we'd prefer to see progress in both policy and budget. Progress will continue to be our union's goal from the upcoming elections through the next session. Below

are just a few of the pieces of legislation that we championed – or worked to defeat:

REDUCTION OF TESTING: *House Bill 97 (Romero; D)*

This bill would remove the requirements for short-cycle exams for 9th and 10th graders. This bill had bi-partisan and unanimous support in the 2016 session and now awaits the Governor's signature.

PROFESSIONAL WAGES: *House Bill 89 (Varela; D); Senate Bill 152 (Ivey-Soto; D); Senate Bill 14 (Stewart; D)*

This trio of bills sought to recognize the work that we do as professional educators. From a 1% across-the-board raise for all employees to a \$15/hour education employee minimum wage to an increase for Level II and Level III educators, each of these bills were an attempt to raise the wages for educators in New Mexico. Of the three bills, only SB 14 was able to achieve an appropriation in the final version of the budget. We will continue to advocate for professional wages for educators in the 2017 session.

MANDATORY FLUNKING: *House Bill 67 (Youngblood; R)*

This bill would have mandated retention of students in the third grade who were not deemed “proficient” based on a standardized test. HB 67

was TABLED in the Senate Education Committee on a bipartisan vote.

BUDGET: *House Bill 2 (Larrañaga; R)*

The projections for the budget were very low due to the fall in oil prices, however, that didn't stop Governor Martinez and Secretary Skandera from requesting a disproportionate amount of money for below-the-line test-based PED programs. The House version of HB 2 was heavily amended in the Senate Finance Committee in order to strip some of the below-the-line projects, while providing for an increase of about \$10 million to the State Equalization Guarantee. HB2 was finally passed, as amended by the Senate.

ALLOWING UNLICENSED TO TEACH: *House Bill 145 (James; R) and Senate Bill 114 (Griggs; R)*

These bills would allow for instruction of students in public schools by non-licensed people with “expertise” in a subject area. SB 114 was TABLED in the Senate Judiciary Committee and HB 145 passed the House of Representatives, but never was heard in the Senate.

CHARTER SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY: *Senate Bill 141 (Morales; D and Roch; R)*

This bill would have removed the “Small School Adjustment” as it relates to charter schools in New Mexico and would have curbed the practice of charter schools keeping their enrollment artificially low in order to cash in on additional funding from the state in order to run their facilities. Despite being a bill endorsed by the LESC and having wide support in the Legislature, Rep. Nora Espinoza refused to have this bill heard in House Education Committee, and it DIED. Rep. Espinoza has been a “teacher” in a small, private religious school. (She is now running as the Republican candidate for Secretary of State.)

VOUCHERS: *House Bill 207 (Powdrell-Culbert; R)*

An ALEC bill that would create a voucher program for low-income students to attend private schools. It also creates a tax credit for individuals and corporations to fund a “scholarship organization.” The House Ways and Means Committee TABLED HB 207.

‘RIGHT TO WORK’: *Senate Bill 265 (Moores; R)*

This bill, plain and simple, presented the most serious challenge to organized labor in New Mexico in decades—union busting at its worst. We, along with other unions in New Mexico, joined together to plan and execute a highly coordinated field/legislative campaign to ensure that our union remains strong for generations. SB 265 was TABLED in the Senate Public Affairs Committee.

SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR EARLY EDUCATION AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS: *Senate Joint Resolutions 2 & 3 (Padilla; D)*

This pair of bills would have opened up two pathways in which to fund education in New Mexico. SJR 2 called for 1.5% of the interest of the Land Grant Permanent Fund to be disbursed in order to provide universal early education for New Mexico's youngest learners. This measure was TABLED in the Senate. Similarly, SJR 3 would have restored 5.8% of the interest from the Land Grant Permanent Fund to fund public education in New Mexico. SJR 3 cleared the Senate, but DIED in the House Ways and Means Committee with the Republicans refusing to hear the bill in committee.

We thank every member across New Mexico that took the time to write a letter, make a call, travel to Santa Fe, or stand in solidarity with our students, schools and communities during the 2016 Legislative Session. It is your hard work that helped to block harmful bills from impacting our students and profession.

Please re-commit to standing strong throughout 2016 in order to elect pro-public education, pro-labor candidates to our Legislature!

Apparently there's a [teacher] shortage. Who could have predicted that demonizing them, cutting salaries and benefits, and reducing job security might make it a slightly less attractive option for people?

“Where Did All the Teachers Go?”
<http://www.eschatonblog.com/2015/10>

MARCH **16** APRIL

3/21	LEARNING SNACKS FOR UPPER GRADES: POWER LESSONS FOR PROBLEMATIC SCHEDULES	ATF MEMBERS FREE/NON-ATF \$10
3/24	CAREER PATHWAY SYSTEM	ATF MEMBERS \$75/NON-ATF \$150
4/1	ATF AT-LARGE OFFICER NOMINATIONS DUE	
4/5	AFT NM CONVENTION DELEGATE NOMINATIONS DUE	
4/7	TEACHER LED SCHOOLS SYMPOSIUM - FEATURING KIM FARRIS-BERG AND JEFF AUSTIN	FREE/REGISTRATION REQUIRED
4/11	ATF SPECIAL WORKSHOP ON BULLY PRINCIPALS	FREE/REGISTRATION REQUIRED
4/12	AND JUSTICE FOR ALL: SOCIAL LITERACY IN THE CCSS CLASSROOM	ATF MEMBERS FREE/NON-ATF \$10
4/14	DOSSIER OVERVIEW CLASS	ATF MEMBERS FREE/NON-ATF \$50
4/18	ATF SPECIAL WORKSHOP ON BULLY PRINCIPALS	FREE/REGISTRATION REQUIRED
4/19	THEY LIKE TO MOVE IT, MOVE IT: KINESTHETIC LEARNING AND THE COMMON CORE	ATF MEMBERS FREE/NON-ATF \$10
4/21	ATF NM OFFICER NOMINATIONS DUE	
4/27	ATF GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING	
5/3	ATF AT-LARGE OFFICER ELECTION DAY	

ALL EVENTS BEGIN AT 4:30 PM AT THE ATF OFFICE (530 JEFFERSON STREET NE) UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.



ATF Fed Reps Kathryn Stern and Jason D'Angelo organize for change at the board of education meeting.

TEACH-INS ... continued from page 5.

ACTIVISTS TEACH BOARD DISTRICT REALITIES

These union activists taught the board about APS unnecessary requirements and undoable mandates on January 20.

Jason D'Angelo (Duranes) spoke about: over-testing; having only English language tests; no tech support; not enough supplemental materials.

Ira Cooper (AHS) spoke about scripted programs that do not work and the need for supplemental materials and tech support.

Bobbi Mauldin (John Adams) spoke about excessive documentation and the lack of supplies/equipment; and all this with no EA.

Tanya Kuhnee (WMHS) spoke against the current HS schedule and Springboard as a prescriptive program, demanding respect and support for professional teachers.

Christy Jewell-Roth (North Star) said that doing IEPs in Synergy is not streamlined; paperwork is excessive and time-consuming.

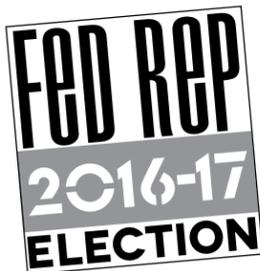
Matthew Smith (VHS) spoke about his concerns if APS ignores recommendations on the high school schedule. He said a scripted curriculum is the death of public education.

Sean Thomas (EHS) reminded the board that his warnings about high school schedule came true—teachers and students are overwhelmed. He said a five-classes in a 7-period schedule is best and asked that they honor the work of the committee.

Rafael Alvarez (Armijo) spoke against canned curriculum in dual language program, emphasizing that curriculum-writing by teachers is best.

Maria Anderson (Georgia O'Keeffe) spoke against Stepping Stones, and said there are 19 items on bubble sheet for each student. She said too much time is needed to complete and scan.

Katherine Stearns (Double Eagle) clearly explained that Stepping Stones is too time-consuming.



IT'S ALMOST FED REP ELECTION TIME!

Our federation representatives are the lifeblood of our union. They understand what it means to have power as a union through our collective voice, care deeply about the future of our profession and are teacher-leaders at their school. They are the face of our union at each worksite.

Each work location is allowed one Fed Rep per 20 members or part thereof. Each school should conduct their elections before the end of the school year. Information about Fed Rep elections will be sent to your school in April.

Interested in serving as union leader at your school? Call us!

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.

According to Article 5 of the ATF Constitution the duties of officers are as follows:

The President is the chief officer of Albuquerque Teachers Federation and shall execute faithfully the Constitution and Bylaws of the Federation.

The President shall:

1. Preside at all meetings of the Federation and of the Executive Council.
2. Be an ex-officio non-voting member of all committees.
3. Represent the local when and where necessary and be spokesperson for the local.
4. Serve as a delegate to the state and national conventions.
5. Make a report to the membership at least once each year summarizing the accomplishments of the Federation and outlining plans for the next year.
6. Supervise all employees and be responsible for retaining the services of legal council when needed.
7. Develop structures and activities that support the Federation's objectives.

The Executive Vice-president shall:

1. Perform such duties as designated by the President.
2. Coordinate the activities of committees.
3. Report to the President.

The Secretary shall:

1. Assist the President with correspondence.
2. Keep minutes of Executive Council, Fed Rep Council and membership meetings.

The Treasurer shall:

1. Oversee the financial transactions of the Federation.
2. Oversee accurate records of all transactions.
3. Make regular reports to the Executive Council and the membership.

The Membership and Involvement Vice-president shall:

1. Coordinate organizing and recruiting efforts, as well as involvement opportunities, for the Albuquerque Teachers Federation.

The deadline for submitting nominations for any Federation officer position is April 1, 2016.

Nominations must be mailed by CERTIFIED LETTER and postmarked no later than April 1, 2016 to:

Albuquerque Teachers Federation
 Attention: Secretary
 530 Jefferson Street NE
 Albuquerque, NM, 87108

**BECOME AN AGENT
 FOR CHANGE
 JOIN YOUR UNION!**

"We would never let businessmen design warheads.

Why would you cut out educators
when you're designing education policy?"

- Matt Damon, Actor, son of a union teacher and union member



ATF UNION

PRESIDENT

Ellen Bernstein

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Sonya Romero Smith
Lew Wallace Elementary School

SECRETARY

Pamela Irvin
Alamosa Elementary School

TREASURER

Sean Thomas
Eldorado High School

MEMBERSHIP VP

Katya Adams
CEC/Early College Academy

HIGH SCHOOL VP

Tanya Kuhnee
West Mesa High School

MIDDLE SCHOOL VP

Jason Krosinsky
Cleveland Middle School

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL VPs

Dwayne Norris
Bandelier Elementary School

Miriam Martinez

Emerson Elementary School

NEED HOMEWORK HELP?



También podemos ayudarle en Español



FED REP OF THE YEAR

Do you know a Fed Rep who has gone above and beyond the call of duty to keep their colleagues informed? Nominate them to be ATF's next Fed Rep of the Year!

ATF members will receive nomination forms at the beginning of March and they are due back to the ATF office by April 5, 2016.

Please send all nominations via interschool mail to : ATF Office
Attention: Organizing Department

AFT NM CONVENTION DELEGATE CALL

This year marks AFT New Mexico's 54th Annual State Convention. It will be held on May 6th & May 7th in Albuquerque, location TBD.

ATF members in good standing are eligible to run for K-12 Vice President and COPE Vice President. Nominations for officer positions must be submitted by April 21st to the AFT NM Office and must be accompanied by the signatures of at least ten other AFT NM members in good standing. Nomination forms are available in the AFT NM Office, 530 Jefferson St. NE, 87108.

Submission for changes to the constitution, bylaws and/or resolutions must be submitted by April 7th.

If you would like to participate as a delegate at the AFT NM convention, please submit your nomination on or before April 5, 2016.



SHARE MY LESSON 2.0 IS HERE

Share My Lesson is a free platform that gives access to high-quality teaching resources, providing an online community where teachers can collaborate with, encourage and inspire each other.

Share My Lesson 2.0 is faster, smarter, better and still free.

New features include eye-popping visuals, easy-to-read forms and simple navigation that makes it much easier to find and contribute lessons; additional subjects and grades (we now have an expanded toddler and pre-K section); and a much stronger connection to educators through social media.

Visit us @ sharemylesson.com



AFT 'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY AND CONVENTION

At this year's bi-annual AFT Convention delegates will celebrate our union's 100th Anniversary. Information for members interested in attending will be sent to schools later this spring. The AFT convention is July 18-21 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.



iColorin colorado!

A bilingual site for educators and families of English language learners

CONTACT US

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