

TEACHERS VOICE

PROFESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE UNIONISM



MARCH/APRIL 2020



To change the culture so that the teaching profession is marked by trust, respect and the freedom to teach, there are three essential areas:

1. Developing a culture of collaboration;
2. Creating and maintaining proper teaching and learning conditions; and
3. Ensuring teachers have real voice and agency befitting their profession.

The Freedom to Teach
AFT president Randi Weingarten
National Press Club
Washington, DC • April 18, 2019

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



THE ONE TRUE "REFORM" A POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

By Ellen Bernstein, ATF President

When we say that something matters, what we mean is that it is important. It is important enough to pay attention to. There is a sense of urgency to address it soon. There is awareness that if we ignore it, there can be significant, and quite possibly, negative, consequences.

School climate matters.

School climate matters in the ongoing efforts to retain educators in all roles. It matters a great deal to student learning. Study after study shows that the contexts in which we do our work impacts our decision to stay in a school, in the profession, and ultimately matters in the effectiveness of our work. If we could make all the school-based changes necessary to engage students from diverse backgrounds in relevant learning crafted to meet the demands of a changing world, and we don't address the impact of school climate, then nothing else will take hold.

In some ways, the context of our work is changing. As our Governor and legislators work to "get to the moon" by reversing punitive policies, creating positive policy, and adding funding, morale is improving; more people are staying; and our state is beginning to attract new people into education. These advancements are important, yet they don't directly impact our daily experiences.

Our members and leadership have been tackling really important issues in the necessary evolution of public schooling. We have taken positions, and written newsletters to promote, the importance of the structures and staffing to meet the needs of students who experience trauma (2018 v.21.2 Nov-Dec TV, Crisis In The Classroom); culturally relevant pedagogy (2019 v21.4 Mar-Apr TV, Intersectional Education); and social emotional learning (2019 v.22.2 Nov-Dec TV, Schooling For The Kids We Do Teach). Tackling these issues is crucial; however, if we neglect the primacy of school climate, very little can create deep and lasting change. Why? School climate matters.

Consider just a little of what has been written about the significance of school climate:

Teaching conditions—which also define learning conditions for students—are a strong predictor of teachers' decisions about where to teach and whether to stay. According to the Learning Policy Institute (LPI), four factors are consistently cited:

1. School leadership and administrative support: Administrative support is often the top reason teachers identify for leaving or staying in the profession, or in a given school, outweighing even salary considerations for some teachers.
2. Opportunities for professional collaboration and shared decision-making: Teachers' career decisions are shaped by their connectedness to a team working toward a common shared purpose. Opportunities for teacher collaboration and input are key factors.
3. Accountability systems: Approximately 25% of public-school teachers who left the profession in 2012 reported that dissatisfaction with the influence of school assessment and accountability measures on their teaching or curriculum was extremely important, or very important, in their decision to leave. Many teachers have said that the focus on testing, test preparation, and a narrower, mandated curriculum has reduced their ability to teach in ways they feel are more effective.

4. Resources for teaching and learning: Schools with sufficient instructional materials and supplies, safe and clean facilities, reasonable student-to-teacher ratios, and adequate support personnel can positively affect teacher retention rates and influence the kind of teaching and learning that can occur. The reverse is also true: Inadequately resourced schools are a factor in teacher turnover.

The quality of administrative support is often the top reason teachers identify for leaving or staying in the profession, often more important than salaries. Several studies have found that support from principals and other school leaders is one of the best predictors of teacher attrition.

- First, teachers are more likely to remain teaching when they feel supported by administrators. Support from administrators can take many forms, including providing emotional, environmental, and instructional support.
- Second, teachers are more likely to remain in their school and in the profession when school leaders effectively communicate with them.
- Third, a principal's leadership style is associated with teachers' decisions to leave the school or profession. Most of the leaders in the schools with low attrition rates did not "view themselves as traditional, omnipotent, 'top-down' administrations." Instead, these principals described their responsibilities as facilitators, collaborators, team leaders, or leaders of leaders (LPI).

Based on a review of an extensive body of research on teacher recruitment and retention, five major factors and related policies that influence teachers' decisions to enter, stay in, or leave the teaching profession have been identified. One of those factors is working conditions, including school leadership, professional collaboration and shared decision-making, accountability systems, and resources for teaching and learning.

A 2016 study by Gillian Kiley found that a school is more likely to retain effective teachers if it is led by a principal who promotes professional development for teachers, is characterized by collaborative relationships among teachers, and has a safe and orderly learning environment.

"School Organizational Contexts, Teacher Turnover, and Student Achievement: Evidence from Panel Data," a study published in the American Educational Research Journal, studied how changes in the quality of individual school climates were linked to corresponding changes in teacher turnover and student achievement over several years.

The researchers examined changes over time in leadership and professional development, high academic expectations for students, teacher relationships and collaboration, and school safety and order.

Matthew A. Kraft, assistant professor of education and economics at Brown University and lead author concluded, "Teachers do not work in a vacuum; their school's climate can either enhance or undermine their ability to succeed with students."

Linda Darling Hammond and the LPI report states, "Administrative supports have a large effect on teachers' decisions to stay in a given school and in the profession. Policymakers can reduce this source of turnover by supporting principals' preparation to create supportive, collegial teaching environments that enable teachers to be effective."

A report from the LPI, *Teacher Turnover: Why It Matters and What We Can Do About It*, finds that 90% of the nation's annual demand for teachers is created by teachers who leave the profession. Some are retiring, but about two-thirds of teachers leave for other reasons, most due to dissatisfactions with teaching.

Teacher turnover in the U.S.—which is about twice that of high-achieving jurisdictions like Finland, Singapore, and Ontario, Canada—exact a high price from districts and the students they serve. Financially, the new report estimates that each teacher who leaves, on average, can cost an urban district more than \$20,000. High turnover in schools also harms student achievement, as churn disrupts efforts to create a coherent curriculum and set of practices, and inexperienced and underqualified teachers are often hired to fill empty spots. Low-income students and students of color are disproportionately impacted because they generally attend schools where teachers leave at higher rates.

... continued on page 4.

"We define climate as the quality and the characteristics of school life, which includes the availability of supports for teaching and learning. It includes goals, values, interpersonal relationships, formal organizational structures, and organizational practices".

Measuring School Climate for Gauging Principal Performance (AIR), April 2012



ISSUES

School Discipline Plans: Justice for All

Our union is advocating for change. We want to see positive school cultures. But systemic change doesn't happen overnight. First and foremost, each school should have a positive discipline plan that works for all staff and students by developing clear rules and responses through our Instructional Councils. We can achieve this by enforcing Article 21 of our APS/ATF Negotiated Agreement wherein the duties of staff and administration are clearly delineated as related to student discipline.

Our school discipline policies must be informed by an understanding of students' social/emotional needs. That is why we are doubling down on advisories for secondary students and recess for elementary schools.

Both of these commitments offer a wealth of opportunities to build a positive school culture.

Advisories afford staff and students the time to build strong relationships so that our young people know they have an adult at school who deeply cares about them. By developing lessons steeped in Social Emotional Learning and employing strategies like restorative circles, in which our youth can learn to express their feelings and respect the opinions and feelings of others, we can begin to head off trouble before it starts.

Likewise, in the elementary setting, we are advocating for an increase of free play in the form of three recesses per day at every elementary school. This allows students time to learn to problem solve on the playground, use their imaginations, and give those growing, hungry brains some time to rest and prepare for academic tasks. Instituting, or re-instituting, peer mediation on the playground will train students to solve problems for themselves and build empathy.

Woven throughout these efforts is a growing commitment to restorative practices in our school discipline plans. The experiment known as Zero Tolerance has failed and actually served to fuel the School to Prison Pipeline. That doesn't mean there are no consequences for infractions of the school's discipline plan. On the contrary, students are taught to own responsibility for their actions and commit to repairing the damage they may have caused to another.

There are many details to work out as we blaze a new path forward to restore the humanity to our school environments that took a backseat in the test-driven era of No Child Left Behind/Race to the Top. In the past two decades, we've tried the assembly line approach to education, and it has failed. Let's learn from the mistakes of the past and build the responsive schools our students deserve.

Extended Learning Time Expands in APS

In 2019, the New Mexico Legislature provided \$62 million for schools to add 10 teaching days and 80 hours of PD to the traditional school year. Due to the tight turn-around from when the bill was signed to the first day of school in summer 2019, only eight APS schools took the option to extend their school term.

For the 2020-21 school year, 14 elementary schools and one alternative high school voted to extend their calendar by 10 days, while one high school chose to return to a traditional calendar.

Barcelona, Carlos Rey, Duranes, Marie Hughes, Pajarito, and Sierra Vista elementary schools voted to extend their calendar, adding five days to the beginning of the school term and five days to the end.

Hawthorne, Kirtland, Kit Carson, Los Padillas, Mountain View, Navajo, Tomasita, and Whittier elementary schools, along with School on Wheels High School, also voted to extend their calendar by 10 days. Each of these schools chose to begin their school year in mid-July and end in mid-June with breaks throughout the term.

New Futures High School reverted from the extended calendar to the traditional calendar for 2020-21.

Through the efforts of ATF members organizing and lobbying the school board, Cochiti, Eugene Field, Mark Twain, Mary Ann Binford, Oñate, and S.R. Marmon elementary schools were able to retain their alternative (year-round) calendar, which best suits their families and staffs.

We know that some educators work at multiple schools that may have conflicting calendars and scheduling may become difficult. If you are in this situation, please reach out to ATF Staff and/or Leadership so that we might help head off problems before they begin.

ADVOCACY

Hand-in-hand: 90-day plan & Instructional Council

The 90-day plans are state mandated by NMPED and serve as a replacement for the EPSS. The intent of the 90-day plan is to develop an actionable plan that will increase student achievement and is created by a core team, with input from the staff that includes achievement goals, an area of focus, desired outcomes, and critical actions.

The 90-day plan team does not work in a vacuum. Like all other school committees, this work needs to be done in conjunction with the Instructional Council (IC). From the Negotiated Agreement:

Article 7

G. Instructional Councils: Connection to School Committees and Other School Structures

1. All school committees, task forces and work groups will communicate directly with or through the Instructional Council in order to coordinate planning and implementation of their work. It is recommended that committees follow protocols similar to those for the Instructional Council.

When looking at contract language, it is always important to take note of words such as "all" and "will." Every word in the Negotiated Agreement was agreed to by ATF and APS and those types of words are directives. Just like any other committee or instructional decision, the 90-day plan is something that is **required** to be done in conjunction with the staff, not to the staff, and is subject to the approval of the Instructional Council.

The 90-day plan can be used as an opportunity to bring in new and innovative ideas that help shape the future culture and climate at your school. It's time to move beyond math and language arts and include a focus on Restorative Justice Practices, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, or Social and Emotional Learning, all of which can be powerful tools of transformation. Compelling research is clear; well-implemented programs designed to foster SEL are associated with positive outcomes, ranging from better test scores and higher graduation rates, to improved social behavior.

It is imperative to get input from the staff when discussing the focus of the 90-day plan, otherwise it is meaningless. A fully engaged staff, with ownership, is key for success. How will your school use this opportunity?

ATF Ideas & Positions Drive Legislative Session

With the end of the 2020 Legislative Session, Moon Shot Year 2 is set to see more investment in our students, staff, and schools. Many of the best bills in the session were based on, or mirrored, ATF positions and/or motions passed by our Fed Rep Council. There were some tremendous victories for educators and communities in this 30-Day session. Attraction and retention of educators was at the forefront of the successful bills with Beginning Teacher Mentoring funding reinstated, investment in teacher residency programs, and raises for all educators. Although we didn't receive the amount of mentoring stipend money we need to make the program readily available for teachers over multiple years, the funding is a welcomed foothold for future advocacy. Likewise, though the money allocated for educator raises was not as significant as we had hoped, the increase marks a second year of commitment to better pay for educators across our state. A re-emphasis on professionalism was evidenced by the creation of a National Boards Candidate scholarship as well as some investment in professional development.

The importance of public schools to our communities was recognized in the session. Changes were made to the At-Risk Formula for funding public schools that will infuse \$50+ million more dollars into the 89 districts of New Mexico. Community schools received funding that will benefit our students and communities. Our state and its youth will also reap the benefits of a continued expansion in the revitalization of Career and Technical Education, offering students more choices in career preparation and providing our state the trained workforce we so desperately need.

These issues have been planks of our union's platform for many years and we have never stopped advocating for them at the bargaining table, the Roundhouse, and the ballot box. We never will. Further, we will continue to push for more of what educators and students need to build a world-class education system in New Mexico.

We would especially like to thank ATF/AFT-NM members and retirees who serve in both chambers of the legislature. They were instrumental in helping to make these changes. And, on that note, the 2020 election is looming. It will soon be time to put boots on the ground and voices on the phones as every legislative seat in the state will be on the ballot. Stay tuned! Get involved!

Looking for opportunities to become more active in your union? Email our Organizing Team: Dwayne@atfunion.org.

Principal Surveys: Response Rates Matter!

In 2013, ATF negotiated Principal Surveys as a means of providing feedback to administrators. These surveys become critical sets of data when your union advocates for better working conditions. The data is collected by ATF and is anonymous. Your employee ID is used only as a means of verifying employment and is not attached to your responses.

The survey instrument (Appendix K, pages 116-117, of the APS/ATF Negotiated Agreement) applies to building-level principals, assistant principals, and heads of departments.

The survey is not just for classroom teachers, we want to be sure that our members who serve as diagnosticians, social workers, nurses, and counselors, etc., as well as in programs such as Fine Arts, are also able to provide meaningful feedback about their supervisors.

Principals play an important role in the climate and culture at the school site. Is your principal helping or hurting?

The window for completing Principal Surveys opens Monday, April 6th and closes Friday, April 17th.

All educators will receive a link in their email. It's essential that we receive responses from all educators, including non-members. Please encourage your colleagues to share their experiences with us.

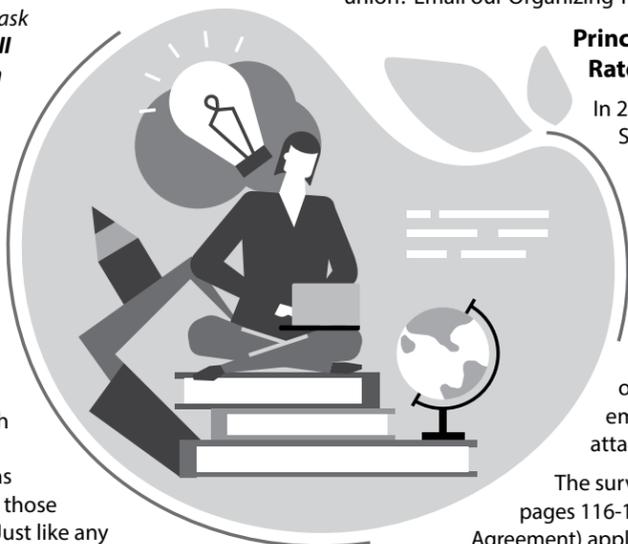
Negotiations

In even numbered years, after the short session of the legislature, our annual negotiations between APS and AFT traditionally focus on money. Fortunately, this year, unlike the many years since the recession, schools in NM have been funded again.

Negotiations with APS started earlier this month and will likely continue until May, and perhaps into the summer. AFT President Randi Weingarten often says, "We build power for people through success at the bargaining table and at the ballot box." At the table, that power comes from the strength of our team and the strength of our membership numbers. If you are an ATF member, ask your colleagues to join us in our ongoing work to ensure that all APS employees have the rights, raises, and respect they deserve.

Collective bargaining has always been the bedrock of the American labor movement. I hope that you will continue to anchor your movement to this foundation. Free collective bargaining is good for the entire Nation. Those who would destroy or further limit the rights of organized labor—those who would cripple collective bargaining or prevent organization of the unorganized—do a disservice to the cause of democracy.

— John F. Kennedy



IC's and School Budgets

Did you know you and your colleagues have a contractual right to make decisions on your school budget? You do! The exact language is rooted in Article 7 of your Negotiated Agreement.

A. Instructional Councils: Connection to Budgeting

1. School budgets are open and public documents. It is the responsibility of the Instructional Council to work in collaboration with the staff to set priorities for discretionary funds in the school's budget and in developing and overseeing the implementation of a budget that places resources where they will effectively support the school's goals.
2. When using discretionary money for a full or partial FTE, in order to ensure decisions are program-based, a change in the agreed use of that money must wait until the current position is vacated.
3. Training in Budgeting may be requested of the District and the Federation for Instructional Councils.

B. In the event that differentials are provided for positions on the school's Instruction Council, the Federation Representative position will be eligible.

This language allows staff at the school to make decisions on how your school's discretionary monies are spent. These monies also include Title 1 monies and School Improvement Program (SIP) monies. Schools generally receive their projected budgets for the coming school year in February. It's imperative to start these conversations as early as possible. Schools are expected to turn in their budget plans to the district by the end of March.

To begin making spending decisions your IC, and the whole staff, need to have access to the FULL school budget. Just as it states in the language above, school budgets are public documents in the first place.

Next, your IC needs to identify all money in the budget that is considered "discretionary" while also being aware of any rules that need to be followed. For example, SIP monies have specific items it can and cannot be spent on.

The IC needs to clearly communicate with their constituents and come to consensus about spending priorities, BEFORE the budget plans are due. If an IC cannot come to consensus on a topic that has deadlines the decision will default to administration.

An important note about ALL IC decisions, once they're made and recorded in your IC minutes, they are contractually protected. This means that the principal(s), or anyone else, cannot unilaterally change those decisions or their implementation without going back to the IC for the adjustment.

New Contract Language

ATF works year-round trying to improve working conditions for all educators in our bargaining unit. To that end, this past February we signed two new pieces of contract language involving Nurses and Advisories in Middle and High Schools.

Nurses

We negotiated a change in the percentage ADN Nurses can enter into the CPS. The old language stated that ADN nurses with 3 years of experience entered at 75% of Level II pay. The percentage is now 90% of Level II pay and that equates to an average \$3,995 increase!

Advisories

A task force was convened to discuss advisories at both the mid and high school levels. Based on their recommendations, new language has been agreed upon. The changes are intended to make advisories meaningful to students, educators, and the school community. Some highlights:

The primary purpose of Advisory is to focus on building relationships between students and a significant adult, but the time may require addressing other issues.

- Advisory shall include the Next Step Plan in grades 8-12.
- Advisory shall not be tied to a curricular course of study and shall not be attached to a graded course.
- Advisory shall not be graded, including pass/fail.
- Advisory may not be used for academic interventions and remediation.
- Advisory groupings may not be organized based remediation for student behaviors.

To the extent practicable, students shall loop with their advisory teacher for three years in middle school and the entirety of their education in high school.

Is It Time to Do Your Dossier?

Whether you're new to the teaching profession or new to teaching in New Mexico, if you want to move to the next license level, you need to complete your professional development dossier (PDD). Level 1 teachers must move to Level 2 any time after their third year and before they reach the end of their fifth year.

ATF provides support for teachers. The next Dossier Overview Session is April 14. If you're seeking to advance, submit an "Intent to Advance Form" to APS Human Resources. An HR staffer will review it and notify you of your eligibility for advancement. PED is extending the deadline for educators to submit their dossiers. The submission due date was March 31, 2020. Here are the new Spring 2020 deadlines:

- May 15, 2020: All initial submissions
- June 1, 2020: All resubmissions

If you are unable to resubmit on time, the new window opens July 15.

ORGANIZING

Westside Membership Meeting

ATF held its first general membership meeting for those who work and/or live west of the Rio Grande on Thursday, February 27. A total of 18 members convened at the Central and Unser Public Library to engage in conversation with President Ellen Bernstein, ATF Leadership, and staff. ATF will continue to host periodic west-side membership meetings to ensure our members are engaged and that ATF Leadership hears their concerns and solutions.

Career Pathway System: Ensuring Advancement for All through Solidarity

The Career Pathway System (CPS) provides an equal opportunity for significant career advancement and raises for our Essential & Related Service Educators (E&RSE). Unfortunately, this program is not mandated or funded by the state. It is a co-creation of ATF and APS.

The CPS is the product of over 15 years advocacy from union members and leadership. The creation of the 3-Tiered Licensure System in 2002 set licensed teachers on a firm footing toward regular career advancement. However, it left essential colleagues behind: Counselors, Social Workers, Nurses, Interpreters, OTs, PTs, OMTs, SLPs, and Audiologists. Time and again, the NM State Legislature funded raises for teachers that were greater than those given to E&RSEs. It soon became obvious that support staff deserved the same opportunities for career advancement that benefitted classroom teachers.

Inequity breeds division. As some educators are deemed to be "worth more," for whatever reason, it follows that others are "worth less." As funding for different role groups' raises continued to be unequal, ATF members declared an impasse with APS during negotiations in 2006 – demanding that a parallel program be set up for support staff. Union teachers were ready to forego raises and contract changes to stand in solidarity with their colleagues. In case you missed that last sentence, your colleagues, fellow educators, were willing to jeopardize their raises, unless ALL educators were given similar opportunities. Because of that solidarity, our union successfully negotiated the CPS, which is unique to APS, and guarantees equal advancement opportunities for all licensed employees.

That was not the end. The union's negotiating team went to impasse again in 2014 to obtain equal raises for all the workers we represent. Thanks to our union's tenacity over many years, and member activism, all Essential and Related Services Educators, including COTAs and PTAs, in APS have a way to advance in their careers and have gained hundreds of thousands more dollars in income! That is the power of solidarity. That is the power of membership.

In order for teachers to advance on the 3 Tiered System, they are required to demonstrate their competence through the Professional Development Dossier (PDD). The PDD offers teachers a chance to reflect on their daily practice in the classroom. Through the CPS, E&RSEs also have this opportunity for professional growth and the pay increases that come with their completion of the dossier.

Repeatedly, we have negotiated with APS to obtain equal raises for all certified staff and ATF calls on the State Legislature to codify the equivalent of a 3 Tiered System for E&RSEs that mirrors the Career Pathway System so that all of our boats may rise together.

Strength in Solidarity (or Fear of a United Planet)

Union membership matters. It is the source of our strength in the workplace and at the bargaining table. As the 2020 Legislative Session winds down and contract negotiations with APS ramp up, it's time to ask ourselves, "Why are we unionists?"

The simple fact is that we are stronger together. As unionists, we fight for a more democratic place of learning for educators and students. We know that when educators are involved in professional decision-making, we will, first and foremost, consider what works for our students. It is for this reason that our union stands for educators' autonomy to use strategies and materials that inspire our students and that appropriately address their cultures, identities, and developmental needs.

Our Instructional Councils, whether school-based or district-wide, are the vehicles for this assertion of our power and professionalism. The positive discipline policies we forge in our ICs and implement in our classrooms should model our commitment to democracy and the right of all voices to be heard. Who better to control the narrative at our schools than the practitioners in the trenches every single day?

When it comes right down to it, we are unionists because, through joining together, through solidarity, through our union, we fight for Our Future! When we consider the kind of world we want to build for our students and for our own children, we must declare that we want just and democratic workplaces where all people's identities and opinions are honored. Through our strength in solidarity, we can set the course, and right the ship.

Simply put, paying union dues is not an expense or a burden. It is an investment in our careers and our future. Remember, membership matters. Joining the only organization in the district that has the power to negotiate for you is a form of activism and bolsters our strength and solidarity. Join the solution. Get active! Ask your ATF Fed Rep to sign you up, join online at <https://atfunion.org/join> or call 262-2657.



COPE

By Sara Attleson - Kennedy MS - ATF COPE Chair

Voting our Values, the Primary and Beyond

As we watched the 2020 NM Legislative session, it was evident that our hard work getting good candidates elected made a difference. Every member of the New Mexico House and Senate, along with our New Mexico Congress, and the US president are up for election this November. If we want good outcomes, we must elect good candidates, those who share our values.

What are your values? What do you value for your students, your family, and yourself? What do you value for your community? There is never a time to breathe easy when it comes to funding our future and doing what is best for our kids and our communities. We must coalesce around our values and work to elect candidates who share those values.

We need to hear from you. With 2020 elections looming, we'll be working with incumbents who have shown they support our values. We will find and interview candidates to see if their values align with ours. We'll be working to get candidates who support our values elected. We'll be knocking doors and making phone calls. We'll be walking and talking to support our values. Can we count on you? Contact: Dwayne@atfunion.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

... continued from page 1.



Principals tend to have authority in controlling school-level conditions, such as school climate, and

principals influence student learning by creating conditions within a school for better teaching and learning to occur.

Richard Ingersoll, Lisa Merrill, and Henry May found that the data shows large school-to-school differences in the four working conditions they examined: the quality of school leadership, the amount of classroom resources and support provided to teachers, the level of school wide faculty influence over decision making, and the degree of autonomy teachers have in their classrooms. And these differences in working conditions mattered for retention. Teachers in schools with higher levels of leadership support, classroom resources, school wide influence, or classroom autonomy all had significantly lower turnover, after controlling for the background characteristics of the teachers and schools, as well as school performance, rewards, or sanctions.

"One of our four working conditions—classroom teacher autonomy—was especially powerful in ameliorating the effects of accountability in low-performing schools. The relationship of sanctions to teacher turnover in these schools strongly depended on how much autonomy teachers were allowed in their own classrooms over key issues: selecting textbooks and other instructional materials; choosing content, topics, and skills to be taught; evaluating and grading students; selecting teaching techniques; determining the amount of homework to be assigned; and disciplining students."

In her book *Empowered Educators* (2017), Linda Darling Hammond reported that teaching attractiveness in New Mexico was low in the areas of collegiality within school, testing-related job insecurity, and administrative support.

I ran across this question as I was researching for the content of this edition of the ATF Teachers' Voice: "What does it take to transform a large, bureaucratic institution with a fractured culture and a compliance orientation into a nurturing, collaborative, vision-directed organization?" The answer is found in these simple words and phrases that appear again and again throughout the literature:

- Trust
- Agency
- Support
- Autonomy
- Collaboration
- Self-determination
- Quality of relationships
- Influence over decision-making
- Freedom to use professional judgment and creativity

Based on our collective experiences, a large body of research, and common sense, a positive school climate is the fertile ground, the linchpin, the cornerstone, the crux, and the foundation necessary for any reform, idea, policy, or practice, to make a real difference. Our collective energy must be invested in the one true "reform" in which all change can take root—the climate of the workplace.

In solidarity,

Ellen



Fostering Self-Determination

An ever-increasing body of research shows that professionals are rarely motivated when they have little autonomy. Researchers have illuminated why autonomy is essential for motivation and why exclusively top-down approaches to change are almost always guaranteed to fail (Amabile et al., 1996; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Pink, 2009; Seligman, 2012).

Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (2000) synthesized their decades of research on motivation into what they referred to as *Self-Determination Theory*. They proposed that people have three innate human needs—competence, autonomy, and relatedness—that will increase motivation when met and decrease motivation when not met. That is, people will feel motivated when they (a) are competent at what they do, (b) have a large measure of control over their lives, and (c) are engaged in positive relationships. The opposite is also true: When people are controlled and told what to do, aren't in situations where they can increase their competence, and aren't experiencing positive relationships, their motivation will decrease, and they will be "crushed" (p. 68). Research in education has firmly established that this dynamic applies to teachers (Sparks & Malkus, 2015).

Despite evidence of the importance of autonomy, however, research suggests that autonomy is decreasing in schools. One survey-based study found that teachers' perceptions of their autonomy decreased significantly from 2003 to 2012 (Sparks & Malkus, 2015). Close to one in four teachers reported they had no control or only minor control over the books they used, the content they taught, teaching techniques, student evaluation, student discipline, or the amount of homework they gave students.

Why Teacher Autonomy Is Central to Coaching Success • Jim Knight Educational Leadership, November 2019

Professional Autonomy Matters

What Does Teacher Agency Look Like in a School?

Teacher agency, defined by Learning Forward as, "the capacity of teachers to act purposefully and constructively to direct their professional growth and contribute to the growth of their colleagues," is one of the eight design elements we believe school systems should consider as they address teacher retention in their schools. On a tactical level, districts addressing teacher agency need to build systems that empower teachers to be decision-makers and innovators, which is an easy thing to embrace in theory, but a more difficult thing to execute.

When considering where to start, think of the ways in which you empower teachers at the systems level, give teachers a role in making decisions at different levels, and teachers' ability to innovate.

- Systems: Teachers co-design, implement, and adjust processes that drive classroom and school operations.
- Decision-Making: Teachers make meaningful decisions about how their classrooms and school are run.
- Innovation: A culture of risk-taking built on psychological safety and dedicated resources to enable experimentation and learning helps to drive innovation.

If educational institutions can shift their practices to support and strengthen teacher agency, they will go a long way toward addressing one of the key reasons teachers choose to leave the classroom.

Excerpts from an article by Megan Campion • Education Elements February 25, 2020 www.edelements.com/blog

At its core, our education system succeeds by virtue of its professionals. We have been calling for complex changes in our system without understanding how change happens. To ensure the people with expertise stay to do the important work of leading schools, supporting teachers, and educating our children, leadership competency must include learning how to develop trusting and collaborative relationships among all educators within schools and school systems.

Understanding the Effects of Leadership Churn in School Districts

Kara S. Finnigan & Alan J. Daly AFT American Educator • Summer 2017

The Freedom to Teach

Teaching is unlike any other profession in terms of mission, importance, complexity, impact, and fulfillment. Teachers get the importance of their work. So do parents and the public. But teachers know that some people don't get it—whether it's the empty platitudes, or the just plain disingenuous. And this has taken a huge toll.

Teachers and others who work in public schools are leaving the profession at the highest rate on record. There were 110,000 fewer teachers than were needed in the last school year, almost doubling the shortage of 2015. All 50 states started the last school year with teacher shortages.

This is a crisis, yet policymakers have largely ignored it.

And it's getting worse. Enrollment in teacher preparation programs is plummeting—dropping 38 percent nationally between 2008 and 2015.

More than 100,000 classrooms across the country have an instructor who is not credentialed. How many operating rooms do you think are staffed by people without the necessary qualifications? Or airplane cockpits? We should be strengthening teacher preparation programs, not weakening teacher licensure requirements, leaving new teachers less and less prepared. Why are we doing this to our kids?

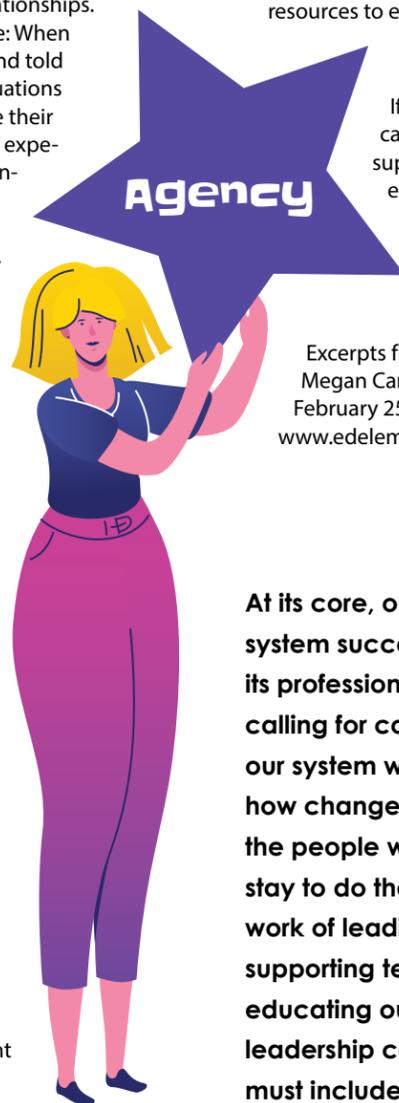
Teaching has become so devalued that, for the first time in 50 years, a majority of parents say they don't want their children to become teachers.

The challenge is not just attracting people to teaching. The United States must do a much better job of keeping teachers in the profession. Every year, nearly 300,000 leave the profession; two-thirds before retirement age. Attrition in teaching is higher than in nursing, law, engineering or architecture. Schools serving majorities of students of color and students living in poverty experience the highest teacher turnover rates. Losing so much expertise has an enormous negative impact on students' education. The financial consequences are also steep—more than \$2 billion annually, and that's a conservative estimate.

It is a failure of leadership to discard so much experience and so much potential—and to lose so much money—to this endless churn.

We are losing the teacher diversity battle as well. A new analysis by the Brookings Institution found America's teaching workforce, which is overwhelmingly white, is growing less representative of those they teach, who are now a majority students of color.

AFT president Randi Weingarten National Press Club Washington, DC April 18, 2019





Principals Matter

Organizing Schools So Teachers Can Succeed: A Conversation With Susan Moore Johnson

Rafael Heller, February 24, 2020

Kappan's editor talks with renowned scholar Susan Moore Johnson about teaching as a career and the working conditions under which teachers can thrive.

KAPPAN: Spoiler alert: You found a lot of similarities in teachers' working conditions across the successful schools, including the amount of care that they put into hiring teachers and supporting their induction; opportunities and time for teachers to design the curriculum and plan instruction together; efforts to create consistent behavioral norms and rules throughout the school (so individual teachers aren't left to fend for themselves in out-of-control classrooms); a teacher evaluation system designed mainly to inform and improve practice, not call teachers out for their deficiencies, and clear opportunities for teacher leadership and career development. It seems like on every level, these schools were organized with teachers' professional needs in mind. What accounts for that consistency? Were there any common threads that tied everything together?

JOHNSON: I would say there are at least three major findings that span all of the chapters in the book.

The first is that the principals in these successful schools viewed teachers as genuine partners in defining and addressing the challenges their school faced. And by "partners," I don't mean that teachers were just allowed to participate. Administrators knew it wasn't enough to ask for their buy-in. The key was in working side by side with them. Several principals pointed out that teachers have distinctly valuable perspectives on what's going on in the school. Simply put, they know and understand things administrators don't notice or grasp. So whatever the problem at hand — a jumbled curriculum, persistent turnover, unproductive meetings, or disorderly hallways — these schools relied on teachers to help diagnose that problem and decide what to do about it.

Second, not only were teachers fully involved in identifying the challenges their school faced, but they also worked with administrators to create their own systems to address them. They weren't interested in hiring consultants who would study their problems and recommend changes. In the successful schools, teachers and administrators devised their own ways to do things, whether it was a process for recruiting and hiring teachers, guidelines for working in teams, or a new approach to handling student behavior. Sometimes they borrowed and adapted practices that worked in other schools. But they always tailored those to their school's needs and realities. In short, the adults working in these schools were personally invested in developing "the way we do things here."

Third, in every one of these successful schools, the principal was key to establishing the positive working conditions that teachers valued. That's no surprise, given decades of research showing just how much the principal matters. But we were able to see a lot of very specific ways in which principals influence the quality of the workplace, through both skilled management and effective leadership. For instance, in these schools, teachers devoted significant amounts of time to collaborating with colleagues. Most worked on teams, meeting at least once a week with colleagues in the same grade level or subject area. And this could never have happened if principals hadn't recognized the benefits of collaboration and created schedules to make it possible.

One of the things that struck me most was that team time in successful schools was absolutely inviolable. Teachers could count on it every week. And because they could count on it, they would prepare for it and use the time productively. In less effective schools that purportedly have teacher teams, principals often create a schedule for team meetings, but then fail to convey its purpose and protect it from interruption. As a result, little gets done. Unless the principal is absolutely committed to protecting teachers' team time, it will be whittled away. Maybe it's no surprise, but all of the principals in successful schools had themselves been successful teachers, and they understood how valuable it is for colleagues to work together to plan instruction, review student work, decide which teaching applicants to consider, and so on. So if teachers are going to play these roles, then the principal has to make teamwork a priority and ensure that nothing gets in the way. That's just one example of how the principals of the successful schools were true instructional leaders.



Administrators Can Make Or Break School Culture. Here's How To Spot The Best Ones

Excerpts from an article in Education Week by Mary Alicia Lyons • August 8, 2018

Four Types of Difficult Administrators

1. The Unrealistic, Out of Touch Administrator: This leader has forgotten what it is like to teach in a classroom. She layers in new initiatives and expectations with little regard as to how they all work together.

2. The "I Know Everything" Administrator: This leader thinks he has all the answers, even on topics he has little or no relevant knowledge about. He typically does not consult others and often ends up making unsound decisions.

3. The Bully Administrator: This person appears to enjoy making life difficult for staff. She targets those who are willing to speak up when her decisions are questionable or have unintended consequences. She makes judgements about staff based on rumors and the opinions of a favored few.

4. The "It's for the Children" Administrator: This person often justifies the decisions he makes by implying or stating they are based on what is best for students. The message is sent that alternate viewpoints have little or no value, leading teachers to feel like their input is not welcomed.

Four Qualities of High-Impact Administrators

1. The Administrator Considers Teachers' Opinions: The leader weighs staff input and is willing to make adjustments if something is not working.

2. The Administrator Plans Ahead: Before implementing a new initiative, the leader considers what could present challenges. He consults with staff members that have relevant knowledge to consider angles he might not have considered.

3. The Administrator Is Empathetic: The leader understands how demanding the job of teaching can be. She is an active listener who cares about staff members at a professional as well as a personal level.

4. The Administrator Develops Talent: The leader values all staff members and recognizes the strengths they bring to the table. He works to build leadership capacity and expertise across the staff.

Mary Alicia Lyons is a National Board-certified educator who currently works as a literacy coach in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools in North Carolina.

Through our interviews, we found that their decisions to stay in teaching, change schools, or leave the profession, hinged on the same few questions: Did their school support their work? Was their workplace collegial or isolating? Was their principal a good, fair leader? Whether they could achieve what one teacher called "a sense of success" depended far more on the professional environment of their school than on the population of students they served, the size of the school, the grade level, the teacher prep program they attended, or any other factor. Again and again, teachers told us that if they felt connected and supported, then they would stay; if they didn't, they would leave — and, unlike my generation, they could leave because they had many other career options.

Where Teachers Thrive • Susan Moore Johnson • Research Professor Harvard Graduate School of Education



Unquestionably, schools need smart, skilled, and committed teachers. However, by focusing on those individuals while ignoring the schools where they work, reformers failed to address a major source of the problem: the outdated, inefficient, compartmentalized school organization that rarely provides teachers with the resources and support they need to improve teaching and learning, both in their own classroom and schoolwide.

Where Teachers Thrive • Susan Moore Johnson • Research Professor Harvard Graduate School of Education



Hey Principals, When You Lose Good Teachers, That's on You

Principals (and just like I use "teachers" to mean everyone who works with kids, I'll use "principals" here to mean everyone who is supposed to be supporting teachers), the number of teachers you keep year to year says something about you. I know you'd like not to believe that, I know your job is easier if you ignore it, but teachers matter, and keeping them around is your job. When you lose good teachers, it's on you.

Tom Rademacher (Mr. Rad to his students) is an English teacher in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In 2014 he was named Minnesota Teacher of the Year.

Posted Mar. 20, 2017 educationpost.org/conversation/blog/better-conversation



Teachers working in schools with strong professional environments improved, over 10 years, 38 percent more than teachers in schools with weak professional environments.

Developing Workplaces Where Teachers Stay, Improve, and Succeed
Matthew A. Kraft and John P. Papay, Brown University • Albert Shanker Institute

Trust Matters



What general characteristics are evident in trusting environments?

- Open door policy
- Sense of community
- Consistent structure
- Freedom and trust
- Collaborative
- Safe—physically and emotionally
- Doors are open, people moving around
- Absence of egos
- Supporting each other
- Nurturing
- Teachers popping their heads in each other's rooms
- Flexible
- Accepting everyone
- Approachable
- Everyone is a professional

How do leaders and peers create a trusting environment?

- Sharing
- Being present, no matter what the rush
- Not judging
- Opportunities to share
- Sense of humor
- Free sharing, open conversation, no fear to speak
- Forgive
- Assume positive intent
- Helping each other
- Forget—in a productive way
- Being able to go to the bathroom
- Calm to ease the freak-out
- Not being afraid to ask for help
- Welcoming
- Not being afraid to not know or not understand
- Listening to each other
- Not being afraid to fail, and to learn new things
- Honesty—open and gentle
- Being heard—opinions respected/valued

What contributes to a low level of trust?

- Dishonesty
- Changing rules, harsh consequences
- Bad attitude
- Instability
- Not valuing people and their ideas
- Unfriendly environment
- Constant change
- Unapproachable
- Paranoia/Defensive
- Disingenuous
- Power trips
- Mean criticism
- Micromanaging
- Petty
- Unsafe environment
- Betrayal of confidence
- Not keeping conversations confidential
- Not following through with your word

What are the consequences of a low level of trust?

- Hate your work
- Loss of quality teachers
- Hostile environment
- It affects the students
- Low morale
- Veneer of “fine-ness” even when things suck
- No will to do better
- Going through the motions
- Teachers start hiding in their classrooms
- People stop being honest w/admin/peers
- No growth
- Cynical about anything important being accomplished
- Student learning suffers
- Creativity is stifled
- Protective attitude
- People call in sick a lot more
- People don't take risks

*Source unknown

The Primacy of the School

Eventually we realized the obvious: although there were notable similarities among the fifty teachers of this new generation, what mattered much more was what they experienced within their particular school. Those schools differed as work environments, even within the same district, and those differences mattered.

Many of these new teachers had made a conditional commitment to teaching. They said that, if they achieved a “sense of success” in their work, they would probably stay, but if not, they would (and could) move on to a different school or turn to another career. Their satisfaction with teaching was determined almost entirely by what happened at their school. If they were not assigned to courses that matched their areas of expertise, if they did not get support from their colleagues and principal, if they did not have an adequate curriculum, or if their students were disruptive, they might leave. Although state and district officials were making consequential decisions that substantially affected their work, such as setting licensing requirements or pay levels, what mattered most to those teachers occurred day to day in their school.

Where Teachers Thrive • Susan Moore Johnson
Research Professor • Harvard Graduate School of Education

Teachers Are Burning Out from Toxic School Environments – Know When to Leave

Posted by Angela Williams Glenn
www.boredteachers.com/members

I knew that to fight for my lost passion for teaching I needed change. I was gone within two years, and though everyone was convinced I was going somewhere much “worse”, what they didn't know was the quality of character that existed within those school walls.

Because within the walls of every school is its own story. Just like within the walls of every family's home there's good and bad and highs and lows. We can't always control what happens to us, but we can do good with what we can control and from there we can rewrite any story for good.

Within three years from one school to the next, it was like a 180 and by the end of my second year of rebirth in education, I was named Teacher of the Year. Though I doubted if I was really worthy of such a noble honor, I realized that school gave me so much more than a Teacher of the Year nomination.

I worked hard for them because people believed in me. I worked hard because I felt like I was a part of something so much bigger than myself. I felt appreciated and valued by my students, my coworkers, my administration. It felt like a school family again and one I very much wanted to be a part of in whatever way my skills and talents could serve the group.

Angela Williams Glenn is a sixteen year veteran English teacher. She is currently happily teaching English and Journalism in Essex, Maryland, for Kenwood High School

The District Matters

Most important for the new APS Superintendent (according to our survey):

1. Address workload issues. (For some time, educators have described their workload as “unmanageable.” Many teachers report frustration about tasks that do not directly inform teaching and learning or improve outcomes for children.)
2. Hold administrators accountable for a positive work-site culture.
3. Focus on supportive and positive employee working conditions.
4. Provide schools with individualized supports and resources based on the unique needs of students.

Educators believe the next superintendent should work to create a system of schools rather than a school system. In a system of schools, the central office and offshoots of the centralized administration know that they are there to support the employees who work every day with students. This is very different from the traditional “school system” where employees are viewed as being there to support the work of the district's central office.



announcements



Call for Candidates: ATF Elections for At-Large Positions

In even numbered years, at-large ATF Officer positions are up for election. All union members are eligible to vote for officers, who serve two-year terms.

Any ATF member in good standing may run for office, with the exception of the ATF President, who must have been a member in good standing for a minimum of one year prior to running for election.

Positions up for election in 2020 are: President, Executive Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Membership and Involvement Vice-President. If you meet the qualifications and would like to run for a union leadership position, please submit a letter declaring your candidacy via Certified Mail, postmarked no later than April 1, 2020, to Secretary of the ATF, 530 Jefferson St. NE, ABQ, NM, 87108. The election will be held May 5, 2020.

Shout out to ATF members Veronica Forester (Emerson ES), Ben Steiner (Osuna ES), Ginger Koning (Barcelona ES), Dave Clare (Roosevelt MS), and Cheryl Haase (Grant MS) for serving on the Election Committee.

Nominate the Next ATF Fed Rep of the Year

ATF Members, please nominate a Federation Representative for the honor of ATF Fed Rep of the Year! It can be your school's Fed Rep, or another excellent rep you know. The ATF Executive Council will consider all nominations and make a final determination, to be announced May 8th, at our Annual Fed Rep Dinner.

Considerations of the ATF Executive Council Selection Committee:

- Attendance at Fed Rep Council Meetings
- Recruitment of new members
- Participation in leadership activities
- Contract language knowledge
- Volunteerism/activism

*ATF Executive Council members are not eligible for Fed Rep of the Year.

ATF members received an electronic nomination form in early March. Members can submit nominations on our website (atfunion.org) through the Fed Rep of the Year Nomination story on our homepage, send them electronically to Dwayne@atfunion.org, or by sending the Fed Rep Nomination form back via Interschool Mail to Dwayne at "ATF Office" no later than April 9th, 2020.

Delegate Call: AFT NM Convention

The 58th Annual AFT New Mexico Convention will be hosted on Wednesday, June 17th at the Sandia Resort. If you are a member in good standing and are interested in being a delegate to the convention, please let us know by Monday, May 18th. All delegate fees are paid by the local. Call the ATF office at 262-2657.

AFT-NM Summer School will be held in the same venue the day before on Tuesday, June 16th.

Delegate Call: AFT National Convention

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) National Convention will be held in Houston, Texas July 27-30.

If you would like more details about how to represent the Albuquerque Teachers Federation as a delegate to our national convention, call the ATF Office at 262-2657. Delegate expenses are not covered by the local.

National Board Scholarship Money-NB support

Have you ever considered work toward National Board Certification? In New Mexico those who achieve certification receive a differential of \$6,500 a year for the life of the credential. Thanks to ATF member Representative G. Andres Romero who sponsored HB 102, there is now a scholarship fund for the approximately \$2,000 National Board fee. We'll keep you posted as we get more information about how the scholarships will be dispersed.

Mentors Needed

The APS/ATF Mentor Program is looking for Level 2 or 3 general and special education teachers. The role of the mentor is to offer support and practical advice to beginning teachers. Math and special education mentors are a high needs area. For more information visit: www.aps.edu/human-resources/mentor-program-for-teachers

Or contact: The Mentor Program Office at 505-253-0335
Email: mentorprogram@aps.edu

Retired but not tired? Get involved with the AFT NM Retirees!

Your public education activism doesn't have to stop at retirement! Join the AFT New Mexico chapter of Retirees and continue your activism protecting and preserving our public schools! Dues are just \$25.00 a year. Join online at nm.aft.org.



More often than not, institutions that want to change start by cultivating employees' understanding of the need for change and by implementing strategies to affect change that will also increase efficiency and satisfaction through changed structures and policies. Assumptions undergirding these more traditional approaches view employees as cogs in the institution that can either muck up the works in opposition to change or ease the turning of the wheel by demonstrating compliance. Few would suggest taking time for meditation, personal reflection, and relationship building would be an efficient and productive approach to educational improvement. The sole focus is most often on employee as object, rather than employee as human.

One leader—no matter how competent, charismatic, and compelling her vision—does not a sustaining organizational change make. Organizational change "going to scale" sustainably requires changing the hearts and minds of the people within an organization, the culture of the organization, and finally how the organization better meets its mission.

Friedlaender, D. (2019)
A Humanistic Approach to Scaling Up
Stanford, CA: Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education



AROUND THE NATION

Active Shooter Drills Are Harmful for Students

Last year, AFT joined with the Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund and the National Education Association to lay out a comprehensive safety plan that combines carefully tailored gun safety policies with school-based intervention strategies, including proactive measures schools can take to prevent mass shootings. Now, since many schools continue to rely on reactive solutions, we have jointly created an overview of the detrimental impact of active shooter drills, as well as considerations and recommendations for schools that decide to include students in these exercises. In an NPR story, AFT President Randi Weingarten says, "Those terrifying and traumatizing drills—they have no basis in fact and they harm more than they have ever helped."

Community is Our Responsibility

by Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers

In the narrow streets of Guánica, Puerto Rico, last week, I cried with a teacher whose home had collapsed in the recent wave of powerful earthquakes. I saw tarps where roofs should be, reminders that the island is still struggling to recover from the devastation Hurricane Maria wrought two years ago. I talked with children living in tent camps, some whose homes are uninhabitable and others who are too afraid to go inside. As I veered from sadness to anger, the words of Elie Wiesel, the writer and Holocaust survivor, came to mind: "The opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference."

In Puerto Rico, after Hurricane Maria, the AFT distributed 100,000 water filters so people would have safe drinking water. Now we are providing earthquake survivors food and other essentials, supplies for students, and mental health counselors. And we are raising funds for tents and other portable classrooms and materials so students can return to school and some semblance of normalcy.



"A world without teachers is one without a future."

— Louisiana teacher Alice Trosclair • Answer Sheet, Washington Post



MARCH

- 21 ATF/AFT-NM Union Leadership Program • 9 AM - 4 PM
- 30 Spring break (through April 3)

APRIL

- 6 Principal Survey Window (through April 17) • 2 weeks
- 7 Fed Rep Council • 4:15 - 6:30 PM
Childcare and snacks provided
- 8 Managing Behaviors in the School Community:
Intervening in the Roles that Enable Bullying
4:30 - 6:30 PM • \$20 Members / \$25 Non Members
- 9 Question. Persuade. Refer. Suicide Prevention Workshop
4:30 - 6:00 PM
- 10 Vernal Holiday (no classes)
- 14 Professional Development Dossier Overview
4:30 - 7:00 PM • \$10 Members / \$65 Non Members
- 18 ATF National Board Component 1 Boot Camp
8:30 AM - 12:30 PM • \$50 Members / \$75 Non Members
- 20 Student Debt Clinic • 4:30 - 6:30 PM • Free • Members Only
- 25 ATF National Board: Tech Lab • 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM
Desert Ridge MS • \$50 Members / \$75 Non Members
- 25 ATF /AFT-NM Union Leadership Program • 9 AM - 4 PM

*All classes are held at the ATF Office unless otherwise noted.



Owned and operated by the AFT, Share My Lesson is the premier digital platform where educators can collaborate and share standards-aligned learning resources such as lesson plans, classroom strategies, and professional development webinars—at no cost.

sharemylesson.com



Colorín Colorado is a national multimedia project that offers a wealth of bilingual, research-based information, activities, and advice for educators and families of English language learners

DIAL-A-TEACHER



ATF Dial-A-Teacher is a free homework service available to students statewide.

Just call Monday through Thursday, from 5:30 – 8:00 p.m. and receive homework help from a licensed teacher.

Callers can get help in English or Spanish.

344-3571

**Monday – Thursday
5:30 PM – 8:00 PM**

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