



Public Funds Release Teachers to Perform Union Business

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June 2004

Issue Backgrounder 2004-N

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Colorado school districts reroute many thousands of taxpayers' dollars to the teachers' unions every year, by granting paid release time for representatives to attend union activities and by financing union presidents and other officers to take extended leave from regular duties. This funding is done primarily through collective bargaining agreements but also through school board policies and administrative practices. Release time for union activities may include attending local union meetings or workshops, negotiating bargaining agreements, or sending representatives to the Colorado Education Association Delegate Assembly. Many school districts agree to pay a certain number of days per school year for their teachers to participate in these activities. The union either repays the district for the much lower cost of a substitute teacher or pays nothing at all.

A separate but related subsidy to the union involves paid leave for union officers. This practice includes granting extended leave to local union presidents (and another local officer, in at least two cases). In most districts where this occurs, the district pays the released teacher's regular salary while the union reimburses a significantly smaller amount to the district. Some union presidents, who are performing full-time labor advocacy, receive advancement on the salary schedule as if they had taught in the classroom. Also, several districts have agreed to pay their teachers for days of service as officers in the state or national union.

I. Teacher Release Time for Union Activities

- ✓ Examples of district policies (district expense includes payment for substitute teachers):
 - *Boulder Valley*—100 paid release days entirely at district expense; additionally allows up to 5 teachers paid release time to bargain at district expense
 - *Jefferson County*—275 paid release days entirely at district expense
 - *Denver*—250 paid release days, the first 150 entirely at district expense
- ✓ Public school districts should be prohibited from providing any paid release time for union business in one of two ways:
 - by requiring the union to pay the complete per diem salary cost for teachers using individual release days; *OR*
 - by requiring teachers to deduct release days from personal accumulated leave.

II. Leave for the Union President and Other Officers

- ✓ At least 10 districts that grant extended leave to union presidents also give them full teaching "experience credit" for advancement on the salary schedule—for up to 6 years in Aurora.
- ✓ Six districts grant paid release time for state or national union officers, from 9 to 20 days in 2003-04.
- ✓ Public school districts should be prohibited from providing any paid extended leave to union officers by requiring the union to reimburse the complete cost proportional to the officers' time on leave—perhaps by offering teachers the option to donate accumulated personal leave days, as done in Westminster School District.

(OVER)

Release Time Subsidies by Colorado School Districts with Collective Bargaining Agreements

School District (in order by size)	2002-2003 Student Enrollment	Tax Dollars Subsidizing Teacher Release Time for Union Activities	Tax Dollars Subsidizing Leave for Union President & Other Officers	Total Annual Subsidy in Dollars	Dollar Subsidy per Student
Jefferson County	87,925	\$69,542.00	\$0.00	\$69,542.00	\$0.79
Denver	71,972	\$46,891.00	\$12,575.00	\$59,466.00	\$0.83
Cherry Creek	45,738	\$20,596.40	\$19,298.67	\$39,895.07	\$0.87
Douglas County	40,511	\$9,156.50	\$0.00	\$9,156.50	\$0.23
Adams 12	33,522	\$6,170.49	\$52,446.50	\$58,616.99	\$1.75
Colorado Springs 11	32,368	\$0.00	\$17,538.25	\$17,538.25	\$0.54
Aurora	32,253	\$8,787.00	\$32,948.00	\$41,735.00	\$1.29
Boulder Valley	27,764	\$26,177.00	\$42,513.24	\$68,690.24	\$2.47
Poudre	24,538	\$3,006.90	\$56,557.36	\$59,564.26	\$2.43
St. Vrain Valley	21,335	\$20,349.00	\$22,161.94	\$42,510.94	\$1.99
Mesa Valley	20,084	\$0.00	\$28,079.00	\$28,079.00	\$1.40
Pueblo 60	17,875	\$33,171.75	\$0.00	\$33,171.75	\$1.86
Weld County 6	17,131	\$7,037.10	\$27,096.96	\$34,134.06	\$1.99
Littleton	16,408	\$8,100.50	\$22,517.50	\$30,618.00	\$1.87
Thompson	14,974	\$5,515.44	\$17,477.00	\$22,992.44	\$1.54
Westminster	11,012	\$9,163.70	\$0.00	\$9,163.70	\$0.83
Pueblo 70	7,827	\$8,554.98	\$0.00	\$8,554.98	\$1.09
Brighton	7,277	\$13,540.80	\$9,459.42	\$23,000.22	\$3.16
Adams 14	6,702	\$7,802.40	\$3,794.25	\$11,596.65	\$1.73
Mapleton	5,623	\$7,450.40	\$0.00	\$7,450.40	\$1.32
Montrose	5,581	\$5,728.20	\$0.00	\$5,728.20	\$1.03
Durango	4,761	\$5,407.25	\$1,271.61	\$6,678.86	\$1.40
Fremont RE-1	4,215	\$7,266.90	\$0.00	\$7,266.90	\$1.72
Englewood	4,200	\$7,996.04	\$0.00	\$7,996.04	\$1.90
Ft. Morgan	3,309	\$3,351.60	\$0.00	\$3,351.60	\$1.01
Summit	2,775	\$2,430.00	\$729.00	\$3,159.00	\$1.14
Moffat County	2,585	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Alamosa	2,280	\$3,437.28	\$1,432.20	\$4,869.48	\$2.14
Sheridan	1,936	\$2,121.00	\$4,497.03	\$6,618.03	\$3.42
Weld County RE-5J	1,916	\$1,517.50	\$0.00	\$1,517.50	\$0.82
Fremont RE-2	1,915	\$1,605.80	\$0.00	\$1,605.80	\$0.84
East Otero	1,820	\$3,971.40	\$0.00	\$3,971.40	\$2.18
Gunnison	1,644	\$3,249.40	\$0.00	\$3,249.40	\$1.98
Trinidad	1,466	\$1,019.94	\$0.00	\$1,019.94	\$0.70
Salida	1,120	\$1,415.68	\$962.64	\$2,338.32	\$2.09
Huerfano	830	\$4,147.00	\$0.00	\$4,147.00	\$5.00
Center	666	\$680.04	\$2,266.80	\$2,946.84	\$4.42
Las Animas	634	\$1,243.40	\$0.00	\$1,243.40	\$1.96
Telluride	563	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
South Conejos	340	\$989.10	\$0.00	\$989.10	\$2.91
Centennial	296	\$1,400.64	\$0.00	\$1,400.64	\$4.73
TOTALS	587,691	\$369,991.53	\$375,622.37	\$745,573.90	\$1.27

To learn more, read *Take Public Funds off the Negotiating Table: Let Teachers' Unions Finance Their Own Business--*
<http://www.i2i.org/articles/5-2004.pdf>

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