

May 7, 2020

Dear Governor Polis,

As the COVID-19 crisis has made plain, many people here in Colorado are just barely getting by, either literally living paycheck to paycheck or as in the case of our already understaffed school systems, are just one serious crisis away from catastrophe.

We are coming to you as a coalition of 6 local Educational Support Professional unions, representing over 10,000 workers in Colorado's K-12 public schools and as citizens of Colorado to share several concerns. We come to you in response to hearing that we may soon be sent back to work without proper staffing and equipment to battle the COVID-19 pandemic, and that we may also very soon be losing our jobs or taking pay cuts due to the negative impacts of COVID-19 on our state budget.

We are the people who drive kids to school, support their study, keep the lights on and the HVAC running, prepare and hand out meals, communicate directly with parents, clean buildings, assist students with special needs, provide first aid and health room care, and do many other things. In short, without us, our schools don't function. And yet, we are the first to be sent "back in" to potentially dangerous conditions and the first to be "let go" when the financial going gets tough.

As it is in the interest of all Coloradans to have a healthy and financially stable citizenry, we wish to discuss with you the following demands:

- Adequate PPE is guaranteed for all employees **and students** *before* their return to buildings.
- Custodial staffing is fulfilled at pre-2003 levels to sanitize entire building daily.
- Bus Drivers and Assistants will be increased to safely transport students to school while maintaining social distancing.
- Direct learning supports-*ie.*, paraprofessionals and paraeducators will not be cut and will maintain hours to coincide with students' time in educational spaces (either remote or in person).
- Should there be further breaks in in-person classroom instruction due to COVID-19, support staff will continue to be paid.
- The state legislature should prioritize education funding, which is notoriously behind already, when writing the budget for 2020-2021.

We appreciate your attention to these issues, especially considering that as Governor it must be difficult to even think beyond the short term issues impacting all Coloradoans at this time. As a parent yourself we know that you share our dedication to the children that are placed in our care and that we want everyone to be as safe as practically possible as we finish the 2019-20 school year and look ahead to the unknown this fall. All families that have had to suddenly shift educating their children at home, while still maintaining their own jobs, have come to the obvious conclusion that keeping kids safe, fed, and entertained while being taught during a

normal school day involves many more people than they may have realized a few weeks ago. We ask that you extend this insight formally by expressing your support for our demands above.

Sincerely,

Six local Educational Support Professional Unions



ABGW - Association of Buildings, Grounds, and Warehouse Workers
Jamal Love, President



BVPA - Boulder Valley Paraeducators Association
Chris Beckman Co-President



DAEOP - Denver Association of Educational Office Professionals
Veronica Martinez, President



FMA - Facility Managers Association
Dave Borrego, President



JESPA - Jeffco Education Support Professionals Association
Lara Center, President



WEA - Westminster Education Association
Fran Groff-Gonzales, President