

# Shaping Tomorrow Today

## Public Education

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## Three announce for two school board seats

Three candidates met the August deadline and have formally declared their intention to run for the Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education. Those officially approved are: **Dave Thomas** in District 3; **Jane Barnes** and **Jeff Braa** in District 4.



*Dave Thomas unopposed for Dist. 3 school board seat.*

**Dave Thomas**, who is running unopposed in District 3, is a Jefferson County native and graduated from Golden High School. According to the JPS website, "He has a special interest in increasing the graduation rates and in truancy prevention."

**Jane Barnes**, the current board president, has experience serving on the following boards: D'Evelyn Junior/Senior High School Steering Committee, District Budget Workgroups and Operating Expenses Review Committee.

The JPS website says, "In 2003, I was elected to serve on the Jefferson County Board of Education. I have not completed all the work that I have started.... For the past three and one-half years, I have served as the president of the Jeffco School Board.... I bring a balanced approach to this work. I pride myself on being objective. I have built community support for the district through my work in workforce development and in my employment as the manager of Senior Programs for St. Anthony Hospitals.... It is [our children's] right to receive a great public education and our responsibility to provide this for them."

**Jeff Braa** is a lifetime resident of Jefferson County. He attended Alameda articulation schools and received his bachelor's degree from Metro State College.

The JPS website states: "Jeff sees the importance

of the local community schools meeting the needs of all the children and families in their community so that they will find what they need locally without having to go elsewhere. Jeff believes in the importance of keeping communities strong and flourishing so that all of the community members feel they benefit from the local schools. Having strong local schools keep property values strong. Jeff knows the importance of being a team player with the community as a voice to the board to keep education moving in the right direction. Our children are the most important key to our Future. Touching the life of a child is Touching the Future. Let's make our choices count positively for our Future."

To read the candidates complete statements, please visit: <http://sc.jeffco.k12.co.us/education/projects/projects.php?sectionid=19237>.

## Board put 3A on Nov. ballot

The JPS Board of Education has voted to put a measure on the November ballot that will ask voters to repeal a portion of a mill levy authorization approved in 1999. According to the district, this is a housekeeping action that will not have any financial impact on Jeffco voters.

The 1999 mill levy allowed the district to earn \$35.8 million over the course of four years for increasing student achievement. That money went directly into the classroom and has been reflected in increased student achievement scores, according to Superintendent Cindy Stevenson.

"Unfortunately, the mechanics of that ballot measure do not apply today because the state-required tests of our students have changed dramatically in eight years," said Stevenson. The 1999 mill levy was tied to specific student achievement on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP). However, the current measurement standards make the 1999 mill levy language obsolete.

# Keep an eye on NCLB reauthorization

by Nancy Henderson

JCEA President

In Johnson City, Texas, Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. It was a massive federal aid program for education designed,



as Johnson often put it, to allow every student, no matter how poor or wretched, to “get as much schooling as he could take.” Johnson felt it was the cornerstone of the Great Society legislation. “You take it from me,” LBJ later explained, “I worked harder and longer on this measure than on any measure I ever worked on since I came to Washington in 1931.”

As a boy of modest means from a starved and desolate land, he believed education to be the only escape from a life of want and squalor. “Education,” President Johnson instructed the audience at the signing ceremony, “is the only valid passport from poverty.”

I like to remember this account of the signing of ESEA and reflect on the original noble intent of this legislation.

Through the many reauthorizations over the years, ESEA remained true to the original purpose. And then came the reauthorization in 2001, and we all got “No Child Left Behind.”

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, the 3.2 million member NEA had no significant role in shaping the NCLB law. In the aftermath of the 9-11 tragedy, there was a bipartisan effort in Congress to rush through the reauthorization and to pass a sweeping education law by a big majority.

As a result, we have been living under the NCLB reality of testing that crowds out learning, a one-size fits all formula that punitively labels schools, and huge unfunded mandates. The NEA, has been speaking out against these destructive NCLB provisions since that 2001 reauthorization.

We strongly support the stated goals of the law: improving student learning, closing achievement gaps, and ensuring every child is taught by highly qualified, caring teachers. In addition, we believe that public schools improve with increased parental and community involvement. But after five years' experience, let me put it simply, this law is not working.

**Teachers know it's not working; the school districts know it's not working; but does the public think NCLB**

**is working? The answer is "no".**

In the Phi Delta Kappan International poll of public attitudes about education, 7 out of 10 of those who said they had some knowledge of the law said it is either making no difference in the local schools or hurting them. There is widespread agreement that NCLB is presenting real obstacles to improving student learning and closing achievement gaps.

So with an eye toward Congressional action in 2007/2008, the NEA took the proactive steps two years ago to develop a positive agenda for the NCLB/ESEA reauthorization. It called for commonsense accountability/assessments, small class size, adequate tools and resources for educators and programs that foster parental involvement. Those are what we need to educate students better.

Unfortunately, now that we are in the midst of another reauthorization, it feels like, “Here We Go Again, Congress” and the NEA is speaking out against current NCLB draft language.

“The draft that has been provided for discussion makes only minor tweaks in the divisive and dysfunctional law,” NEA President Reg Weaver said. “If the committee is not going to make meaningful changes that truly address the needs of America’s public school students, a major opportunity will have been missed.”

Our concerned friends at the National PTA said: “This reauthorization of the ESEA must encompass all aspects of improving student achievement and not mandate a system where schools are forced to choose which sections of the law should be enforced. PTA recommends each State set up a method of meaningful oversight to ensure LEAs [Local Educational Authorities: school boards] and schools are complying with the parent involvement requirements of the law. This oversight should not just be punitive in nature but should provide the necessary resources to help when a school is found to be in need of some assistance.” We agree!

So, what can you do to help in this effort? For now we are asking you to become more informed. We ask that you communicate with members of Congress to determine their willingness to preserve meaningful accountability while correcting NCLB's deficiencies.

Our message on NCLB is clear: It's time for a change! Congress needs to enact fundamental changes in this law, correct its flaws, and add positive provisions so that it truly works for all children.

# 'Believe in a Better Colorado' campaign begins

Nearly 200 CEA local presidents, school board presidents, and superintendents from across the state met August 3 in Breckenridge to launch **Believe in a Better Colorado (BBC)** – an unprecedented alliance among the state's three largest education associations—CASB (school boards), CASE (administrators) and CEA (teachers).

The initiative aims to inform public school employees and citizens about the need to more effectively fund essential public services such as K-12 and higher education, health care, and transportation.

JCEA President Nancy Henderson joined superintendent Cindy Stevenson, and school board president Jane Barnes to represent Jeffco at the conference. "We are very proud," said Henderson, "that Jeffco was one of the districts that had the leadership of all three associations attend. We are united in this joint effort to increase resources for



public schools and other essential state programs and services."

At the August training, CASB, CASE and CEA unveiled the Believe in a Better Colorado DVD, Web site, and tool kit.

The first phase this fall is to energize and educate our 40,000-plus members and other public school employees. In September, the Colorado PTA joined the alliance. The next phase is for educators to share information with neighbors, friends, and others in every Colorado community.

At the same time, BBC is working to build a huge statewide coalition of elected officials, business leaders, community groups, and educators that will identify solutions that we can take to the ballot.

There's no time to lose. Our ultimate goal is to adopt a new tax system by 2011 – the same year today's high school freshmen will graduate. Learn more at our project Web site: [www.believeinabettercolorado.org](http://www.believeinabettercolorado.org)

## JCEA welcomes new readers

JCEA is continually updating the mailing list for Shaping Tomorrow Today. If you are a new reader, welcome!

Obviously, this is a newsletter that reflects the thinking of the 5,000 teaching professionals in Jefferson County. We hope you find the information in this newsletter helpful and at times provocative. We want you to be able to trust the information you read in this newsletter and know that it reflects the integrity of our profession and JCEA.

## NEA celebrates 150th anniversary

The National Education Association (NEA) was founded in Philadelphia, PA, in 1857. One hundred and fifty years later more than 9,000 NEA delegates—representing 3.2 million members—returned to this historic city over the 4th of July holiday to celebrate the Association's 150th anniversary and to conduct the Association's 145th Representative Assembly (RA).


The theme of this year's convention was "**Team NEA: Fighting for Great Public Schools — Yesterday. Today. Tomorrow.**"

Along with setting NEA's agenda for the coming year, delegates heard eight presidential candidates, seven Democrats and one Republican, lay out their vision for the future of America's public schools (All announced candidates were invited to speak.)

Led by NEA President Reg Weaver, delegates discussed, debated, and voted on critical issues facing public education, such as teacher recruitment and education funding.

A major topic at the NEA Representative Assembly was the reauthorization by the U.S. Congress of ESEA, the so-called No Child Left Behind act.

The NEA RA has the distinction of being the world's largest deliberative governing body. For more information about the convention, go to: [http://www.nea.org/annual meeting/index.html](http://www.nea.org/annual%20meeting/index.html)



### *Shaping Tomorrow Today*

**Shaping Tomorrow Today** is the community newsletter of the Jefferson County Education Association (JCEA) and is published periodically throughout the year. Comments may be mailed to: JCEA, 1050 Wadsworth Blvd., Lakewood, CO 80214. Our phone number is 303-232-6405; our FAX number is 303-238-2215. Visit our web site at [www.jcea-cea.org](http://www.jcea-cea.org).

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# JCEA's new building undergoes renovations

JCEA's new home at 1447 Nelson Street is undergoing renovation. The building has been gutted and will eventually contain a large hall for trainings/meetings, as well as offices and conference rooms.

The new building is now empty. Totally. The interior demolition is complete, and we are waiting on permits and final construction documents to begin construction. Once the hammers are flying, it will be about seven weeks to completion.

The plans include 2,700 square feet for offices, two conference rooms, storage, and work space. No longer will we be shuffling up and down the stairs of our current four-level building. We will have well-organized spaces, close proximity to a work room for our support staff, and all on one level.

The training/meeting space is about 2,700 square feet and will seat at least 150 at tables. JCEA plans to

make the space available for community groups and organizations. Significantly, both the offices and the meeting rooms will be ADA compliant.



This year's free parenting conference is called: **"Parenting... You have the job, we have the tools!"** It will be held on Thursday, November 8 at Lakewood HS from 5:30 - 9 p.m. Registration, resource tables and snacks will be at 5:30 p.m. The first session starts at 6:45 p.m.; the second session at 8 p.m.

Each parenting conference provides positive, practical empowering support for parents to help children reach their full potential. Helping Kids Thrive is presented by Jefferson Center for Mental Health. Major funding is provided by Jefferson County Education Association (JCEA). JCEA is proud of the continuous leadership it has provided in this area since 1985.



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