We’re pleased to be back in your inbox with our monthly Communication Matters newsletter, in which we highlight district successes, provide updates on relevant news, and pass along pertinent information to bolster your CASE membership.

With that said, we love hearing about innovation in your districts! Is your school or district doing something worthy of a shout-out? Be it a district-wide project, a school-specific milestone or even a staff member who goes above and beyond, we want to know! Be sure to contact CASE Communications Specialist Elisa Wiseman with your story or shout-out for a chance to be featured in a future Communication Matters. Email her at ewiseman@co-case.org.

**Spotlight On: Telluride School District’s Affordable Teacher Housing**

Superintendents have hard jobs. From maintaining relationships with school boards, families and teachers, to making tough decisions and serving as the face of a school district, days off are few and far between.

So, adding ‘landlord’ to the job description can’t make things easier.

But, in an effort to attract and recruit teacher talent from out of state, that’s exactly what some superintendents are doing. In fact, Telluride School District is nearing the end of its latest construction project: six three-bedroom, three-bathroom affordable housing units, designed especially for teacher use.

"The challenge is that teacher salaries and their compensation and ability to get into housing is based on the constraints of school finance," said Telluride superintendent Mike Gass.
“If we can’t pay them more, we have to find ways to make it cheaper for them to live, and one of the ways to do that is to make your own rental pool and use that piece to recruit them.”

This latest batch of units—the first set of three-bedroom apartments owned by the school district—bring Telluride’s pool of teacher housing up to about 11 available rentals. Gass expects they will be finished with construction by October 2018.

While teachers with families can certainly apply to rent the larger units for themselves and their families, they are also designed for single teachers to combine incomes and live together.

“Teachers or staff that have families that need a bigger place [can use them] but that’s probably about half of what the market is,” Gass said. “Teachers are allowed to stay there for a defined period of time, typically it’s two years. If someone’s coming from out of town, I may give them for a reduced rent for a period of time.”

Telluride is not the only school district to build housing specifically for school staff—and the concept is not a new one. The school district first started building these units about 15-20 years ago, Gass said, and they weren’t the first to do so.

The new units are large, and like Telluride’s other housing units, their prices are competitive. The smallest units range in rent from about $700-$800, the midsized level go for about $1,200, and the new largest units will be priced at $1,800. While they don’t come furnished, they are stocked with all major appliances and—here’s a perk—they include garages.

“In Telluride, that’s like the holy grail,” Gass said.
CASE Executive Director Lisa Escárcega visited the units recently to take a look for herself. In a word, she said, "they’re fabulous."

"It’s no secret that Colorado needs to be better about recruiting and retaining great teacher talent," she said. "Finding affordable housing in higher-end resort towns, like Telluride, can be impossible—especially when you consider the salary level we’re able to offer our people. These units aren’t just functional; they’re beautiful places to live, and I imagine they’ll be a major highlight for moving to Telluride, which is a beautiful town, in and of itself."

Her hunch isn’t wrong—the units have been pretty successful so far, Gass said. "I think it allowed us this year to get some high-need positions filled, like math, especially, and dual immersion," he said.

Eventually, he’d love to see Telluride build out even more units. But the constraints of a resort community are challenging, he added.

"It comes down to if I can find a place to do it. Certainly, I would expand our housing if I had the ability to find the land. [In a resort community], you’re competing with open market, high-end housing units."

For now, though, as Telluride teachers and students start gearing up for a new school year, Gass is hopeful that these units will allow him to bring even more great talent to the district. "We’re trying to do everything we can to help make our district a place where people can enjoy life while they’re trying to help our kids," he said.

**Highlights from our 49th Annual CASE Convention**

CASE appreciates everyone who joined us for our CASE Convention last month in Breckenridge! Your enthusiastic participation, combined with our expert presenters, once again made for a successful professional learning event. [Click here for a breakdown of this year’s Convention, by the numbers.](#)

**Great Schools, Thriving Communities Campaign Letter to School Boards**

The Great Schools, Thriving Communities campaign sent a letter to school boards this week encouraging them to pass the Amendment 73 resolution. CASE encourages our members supportive of the amendment to attend and speak as taxpayers at school board meetings at which the resolution is being considered. CASB also provided an income calculator to see how the resolution might affect you; [access it here.](#) Please find the letter from CASB below:

*Dear School Board Members and District Superintendents:*
Two years ago, I was among those who believed passing a statewide school funding measure in 2018 would be an impossible dream. I still think it a dream, but no longer impossible. However, for the dream to become real, school boards across Colorado must engage with their communities about the importance of sustainable revenue for Colorado’s public schools. I write now to encourage every board to do so.

The journey began when Great Schools, Thriving Communities (GSTC) delivered nearly 180,000 signatures to the Secretary of State on July 11. It was an unprecedented accomplishment. The initiative made history as the first measure in Colorado to qualify for the ballot by obtaining signatures from every senate district. The initiative will be on the ballot and known as Amendment 73. No other ballot measure in the modern era has made it onto the ballot without all or almost all signatures gathered by hired hands. A majority of those 180,000 signatures were gathered by 1400 volunteers all across Colorado. No serious political observer believed this could happen.

Amendment 73 is, given the constraints of Colorado's Constitution, surprisingly sound public policy. Amendment 73 cuts property taxes significantly for beleaguered small businesses and farmers, generates over $1.5 billion in new tax revenue for our public schools, builds more equity into Colorado's tax system, and stabilizes the local property tax contributions to school finance to ensure these new revenues are sustainable far into the future. More importantly, Amendment 73 requires that decisions be made by local school boards on how the new revenues will be spent.

School boards, of course, cannot use public resources to campaign. A board can, however, educate itself on how Amendment 73 would work, and adopt a resolution expressing its support or opposition. Boards can educate their communities on this amendment and on its pros and cons. Boards can also engage their business and school communities on how best to use the new resources locally if Amendment 73 should pass in November. Our hope is that every school board will adopt a resolution which reflects the conversations the board has had with its community. Please email your resolution to the CASB office in care of Ana Navratil at mailto:anavratil@casb.org.

CASB has prepared tools and resources to explain what Amendment 73 is and how it would impact your local community, including a sample board resolution. A good place to start is the Seven Steps to Prepare for Amendment 73 flowchart. Of course, as always, your CASB team stands ready to answer any questions or provide any assistance we can.

Dreams do not become reality without hard work and elbow grease. We hope every school board in Colorado will take on the task of educating its members and community about
Amendment 73. CASB would appreciate a resolution on file, whether pro or con, by mid-September.

Sincerely,
Kenneth A. DeLay
Executive Director

Key Takeaways from PDK Poll

This week, PDK (Phi Delta Kappa) released its 50th Annual Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools. Click here for the complete poll report, and here for PDK’s results summary. Some key takeaways include:

- Two-thirds of Americans say teachers are underpaid. According to PDK, this is a new high in data since the first poll in 1969. Teacher salaries emerged as a major issue when Americans were asked to identify the biggest problems facing public schools.
- 78 percent of public school parents say they’d support teachers in they were to strike for more pay—but a majority of parents said they would not want their children to become teachers, “most often citing poor pay and benefits as the primary reason for their reluctance.
- The poll found that the public sees major gaps in public education opportunities and expectations facing student groups. 75 percent of Americans say public school students in low-income communities have fewer educational opportunities and 55 percent say schools in low-income areas have lower expectations for their students.

Click here to read AASA’s response to the report’s findings.

Save The Date

CASE is excited to offer several upcoming professional learning opportunities this fall. Make sure you save the date for these great, fast approaching events:

- **Member Day at the Capitol | January 18:** Mark your calendars for this opportunity to walk the halls of the Capitol and meet with legislators to make your voice heard.
- **Leadership, Equity and Diversity Program | October 2018:** Our Leadership Diversity Development Program (LDDP), now known as LEAD, will launch this October. Applications for the program will become available by the end of the month. We encourage you to recognize and nominate aspiring leaders of color in your district for this 5-seminar, exploratory leadership program by using the nomination form at this link. Click here to access the LEAD webpage, or here to download a PDF of the event flyer and application.
- **Regional Principal Meetings:** These upcoming regional meetings, sponsored by CAESP, CASSP and CALET will focus on social media use and its implications in schools, including legal issues, and other digital technologies. CASE Executive Director Lisa Escárcega will also attend to update attendees on anticipating
upcoming legislation and other statewide issues. Please find the different dates and locations below. Please register for this complimentary networking event by emailing Brittany Greunke at bgreunke@co-case.org.

- **Alamosa**: Tuesday, September 11, 1:00-4:00 PM, 209 Victoria Ave. Alamosa, CO
- **Grand Junction**: Friday, October 19, 1:00-4:00 PM, 743 Horizon Drive, Grand Junction, CO
- **Limon**: Wednesday, October 24, 1:00-4:00 PM, 820 2nd Street, Limon, CO
- **Greeley**: Thursday, November 1, 1:00-4:00 PM, 2020 Clubhouse Drive, Greeley, CO

- **19th Annual CASE Winter Leadership Conference | February 6-8, 2019:**
  Featuring keynote speaker Gretchen Rubin, this year’s Winter Leadership Conference, *Excellence by Association*, is gearing up to be another great professional learning and networking opportunity for our members. We look forward to sharing more information with you! We anticipate registration to open in late October.

**CASE News**

- The last few weeks have been busy at CASE. Barb Albright retired earlier this month, and we’ve been very excited to welcome Karen Ryan to the team as her replacement. She can be reached at kryan@co-case.org.
- Earlier this month, we announced that we joined CASB and six school districts in a lawsuit challenging the transportation section of HB 18-1306. Read our press release here.
- We’re so proud to support Amendment 73, known as the Great Schools, Thriving Communities campaign. The Secretary of State’s office announced a few weeks ago that it has approved the historic education initiative for the 2018 ballot. Read the campaign’s press release here.
- **CASE is turning 50!** As we prepare for our 50th Annual CASE Convention next year (we can’t believe it, either!), we want to hear from you! What are your favorite CASE Convention memories? How can we make sure our 50th Convention is a special one? Click here to let us know.

**In The News**

- *Gates Foundation gives $92 million to networks of schools in latest reform effort* (Chalkbeat)
- *Higher teacher pay and more school safety are up for a vote with November tax requests* (Chalkbeat)
- *Education Secretary Considers Using Federal Funds to Arm Schools* (New York
Colorado student test scores show improvements, but persistent problems remain for some groups (Denver Post)