



*A Union of Professionals*

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Dear Valued Member,

As teachers and school employees, we share a commitment to opening the door to a brighter future by providing a great education for the students we serve. As public school educators, our life's work is about ensuring an excellent education for all children. The idea that all children deserve great schools and a high-quality education is just one of the missing pieces in a just released documentary film, "Waiting for 'Superman.'" The film, which was released in local theaters last week, fails to tell the real story about public schools, and it doesn't offer any real solutions.

"Waiting for 'Superman,'" by filmmaker Davis Guggenheim, tells the very moving stories of five children and their families as they seek to find better schools. Their stories demonstrate, in a real and emotional way, that the opportunity for a great public education should come not by chance or by choice, but by right. The problem is that Guggenheim's film misses what could have been a unique opportunity to address the full and accurate story of public schools.

The overriding narrative of the film is that all public school teachers are bad. It unfairly and inaccurately places all blame for failing schools on teachers' unions. There are no interviews of good public school teachers and no visits to successful public schools during the entire two-hour movie. Had these been included in the film, it would have been clear that teachers—like other professionals, such as doctors and lawyers—recognize the importance of setting and meeting high standards of practice. The director's failure to show a single successful public school creates an incomplete, misleading picture of public education. The focus on a few bad apples does a disservice to millions of us around the country who are on the frontlines every day, working our hearts out to meet the needs of the kids in our schools and classrooms.

As "Waiting for 'Superman'" is viewed in cities around the nation and released here in Denver, we hope the interest generated by the film will result in greater, more thoughtful public dialogue about how we can make schools better. We welcome the opportunity for open discussions—with parents, elected officials, school administrators and community members—on creating great public schools for all our children. We, and our national affiliate the American Federation of Teachers, have been working hard to make sure our voice is heard in these conversations. The AFT also has created a webpage, [www.aft.org/NotWaiting](http://www.aft.org/NotWaiting), which outlines our solutions and gives everyone an opportunity to promote their great public schools. I encourage you to tell your stories, and I commend you for the work you do and the dedication you bring to your students and public education. It is essential that our voices—the voices of those of us who work in public schools and classrooms around the country—be heard.

In Douglas County, we have neither failing schools nor uncaring school staff. "Waiting for Superman" is not a descriptor of DCSD. However, its criticisms of the public school system have a demoralizing impact on our employees, just as it does on the hard working school employees of other districts, and we therefore must show support for all of our colleagues in public education.

Teachers and school employees aren't fictional superheroes like "Superman." We are genuine everyday heroes working for the future of America - one student at a time.

In unity,  
Brenda Smith  
President, DCF