



## ELA Think Tank / Leadership

Welcome back! I'm looking forward to our work this year and hope you have had a restful, reflective, and rejuvenating summer! Those first days back with students are so important for so many reasons! I included some links to stimulate your own thinking about rituals, routines, and expectations. I wish you the best in 2017-2018 and know that the year with your students will have a positive start!

## News from the Office of Standards & Instructional Support

The major news is the work done by the [Standards Review and Revise Committee](#). The [Reading, Writing, and Communicating \(RWC\) Committee](#) met in two face-to-face meetings, in May and June, to lay the foundation and launch the work by discussing the various input collected via the online feedback system, benchmark reports, and letters received from stakeholders around the state. Since then, they have been meeting virtually throughout the summer to review the RWC Standards and consider specific revisions that would enhance teaching and learning.

The members of the Committee live up to the root of that word: **commit**. They are working hard, honoring the multiple viewpoints gathered throughout the process, mindful of the charge to make well-informed decisions in the revision process (including to minimize revisions, as necessary).

## CDE News

Over the summer, the Colorado Department of Education has developed and refined some resources that you will find supportive of your efforts. The [Professional Development website](#) has on-demand resources as well as the schedule of upcoming PD opportunities offered through CDE. The [Educator Talent website](#) offers information for current and future educators, as well as information on Ed Prep program and for Districts and local BOCES leaders. Finally, I'm excited to watch the work done by the [Commissioner's](#)

[Teacher Cabinet](#). This Cabinet will have a great opportunity to be the "teacher voice" in implementing state education policy.

## NCTE, CCIRA, CLAS Notes

**CLAS:** The [Colorado Language Arts Society](#) has information posted for its [2017 Regional Fall](#)

[Conference: Teaching in the Balance](#). What a great line-up of keynote speakers: [Matt de la Pena](#), [Dave Stuart, Jr.](#), and poet [Toluwanimi Obiwole](#).

**Conference date is October 7, 2017.**

**CCIRA:** The [Colorado Council International Reading Association](#) is looking forward to its 2017 Conference: "[Literacy Renaissance: Invention, Intention, and Close Study](#)," February 7-10. From their website: "The inspiration for the theme of the 2018 CCIRA Conference is Leonardo DaVinci. He was an artist and a scientist, an inventor and a passionately curious human being. Like DaVinci, educators are driven to learn, to explore, and to continuously work to master our craft. We believe there is joy in challenge. We understand that details matter. The how and the why are as important as the what. We knew we get better at teaching (and learning) by what we do on purpose."

### Research & Resources

Those **first days back** help us set the expectations, rituals, routines, and lay the foundation for the classroom culture and environment for learning.

[Planning for Your First Day at School](#)

[Routines and Schedules](#)

[The Value of Classroom Rituals & Routines](#)

[Routine, Ritual, and School Community](#)

[Who, What, When, and Where of Writing Rituals](#)

[Building Relationships with Students](#)

[A Crash Course in Building Effective Learning Relationships With Students](#)

[Developing Positive Teacher-Student Relations](#)

[Back to School Quotes](#) & [\(more\) Back to School Quotes](#)

## First days back ...

I asked some teacher friends for their thoughts as they head into the new school year. Here's what they shared ...

### Make room in your plans for joy.

It's far too easy to get caught up in the data, the standards, the "must-dos." Neither you nor the students will remember the worksheets (not matter how brilliant); you will remember the joy in learning together. ~~ Suzanne S., High School English

Relationship First. Took me long enough to learn! ~~ Eva S., Middle School

### Get students started on Day 1 with a writing invitation.

I've used a number of them over the years, but the most successful ones have usually started with a mentor text like George Ella Lyon's *Where I'm From* or Cynthia Rylant's *When I was Young in the Mountains*. I also used Barry Lane's snapshots and thoughtshots. I wrote with the kids, by the way. My hope was that students and I would get to know each other, and would begin to think about revision as something organic. ~~ Nancy P.

Don't forget to **celebrate** the small successes! ~~ Jari S., HS Interventionist

Focus on relationships first. Your curriculum will flow easier when you and the students trust each other. ~~ Elizabeth M., HS English

### Make time to read something aloud, daily, no matter what grade level you teach.

For some kids, this is the only "reading to" they get and the modeling is so very important! It can be a poem, an article, a paragraph, a joke, ANYTHING. It's just very important!. ~~ Jari S.

## Contact Info

Please feel free to contact me at [puzick\\_v@cde.state.co.us](mailto:puzick_v@cde.state.co.us) or (303) 866-6583. I would love to have feedback on the monthly e-update or hear suggestions for topics you would like to have addressed.