



Board News

Denver Public Schools Board of Education
board.dpsk12.org

Joint Task Force Completes Bold, New Teacher Compensation

The DPS-DCTA Joint Task Force on Teacher Compensation presented to the Board of Education this week its groundbreaking plan for reforming how teacher pay is structured.

Under development for more than two years, the plan offers teachers an opportunity to significantly increase their career earnings through actions and activities that advance the district's instructional goals.

Teachers would be rewarded for improving student achievement, receiving successful professional evaluations, working in the most academically needy schools and improving their skills and knowledge.

The recommendation was developed by a task force of 12 teachers, administrators and citizens commissioned jointly by the Denver Public Schools and the Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA). The two parties are now negotiating the collective bargaining agreement that will be the basis of the vote whether to adopt the new system. To be implemented, the system must be approved by DCTA members and the school board and funded with additional revenues that would need to be approved by Denver voters.

Current teachers would be able to choose whether to join the new system or remain in the existing salary system dur-

ing a seven year "opt-in" window. New teachers hired by the district would enter the new system.

The plan creates a fair system to reward teachers who meet and exceed rigorous expectations with uncapped annual and career earnings. It pays annual salary increases to teachers whose students demonstrate academic growth. It awards bonuses to teachers in schools judged distinguished based on academic gains, while eliminating guaranteed increases for years of service.

The system would also pay salary increases as teachers demonstrate acquisition of knowledge and skills related to student growth and their instructional discipline. The plan offers annual bonuses to teachers of demonstrated accomplishment who agree to teach in schools with the greatest academic needs.

Board president Les Woodward characterized the proposal as "truly innovative" and said the Board is "very anxious" to see this move forward. "This is a big, big step," he added.

The system was developed using an economic model that projects costs 50 years into the future, to ensure that the system is affordable and sustainable. ■

Information on the compensation recommendation can be found at: www.denverteachercompensation.org

Board Considers Reassigning Ebert Students

The Board of Education this week received a proposal to consolidate Ebert Elementary School enrollment with three nearby schools. If approved, Ebert students would be reassigned to Whittier, Wyman or Gilpin elementary schools as their neighborhood school for the 2004-2005 school year. The program serving the homeless population would move to Gilpin Elementary School.

Concerns have been raised about the viability of Ebert because of declining enrollment and ongoing fixed costs of operating a very small school. Ebert serves 47 kindergarten through fifth-grade students. Another approximately 60 students in the district's program for homeless children also are served at Ebert.

The reassignment of Ebert students would allow the Polaris Program at Crofton Elementary School, which is looking for room to expand, to move into Ebert beginning with the 2004-2005 school year.

Community Forums Planned

Two community forums from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. and 7 to 8 p.m. are planned on Tuesday, Feb. 10 at the school to gather community feedback. A Spanish translator will be available. Comments will be summarized for the Board, which ultimately will decide on the plan. Community members, parents and staff from all schools are invited to attend one of the forums.

Proposal Would Shift High School Students To RTD, Lead To 9 A.M. Start Time

The Board of Education agreed this week to consider using the Regional Transportation District (RTD) to transport high school students.

Under the plan, the district would provide eligible students with a bus pass to ride RTD.

The shift to RTD would allow high schools to move morning bell times from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. High schools would be able to provide a more flexible class schedule, including offering some classes before 9 a.m. so students with afternoon athletics or extra-curricular activities would not miss those opportunities.

Board members indicated that community feedback is necessary prior to a vote. The Board of Education's next monthly public

hearing is at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 4. To sign up to speak that evening, please call 303-764-3211. Written comments may also be sent via e-mail to board@dpsk12.org or write to Board of Education, Room 705, DPS, 900 Grant St., Denver, CO 80203.

DPS serves about 17,500 high school students. Currently, about 3,000 students are eligible to ride a school bus. However, only about half of the eligible riders (1,600 students) use the DPS fleet to reach school. (To be eligible, students must live 3.5 miles or more from school.)

The vast majority of high school students walk, drive a car, share rides, get dropped off by parents or friends, or use RTD. In fact, 2,400 high school and 1,200 middle school students currently use RTD.

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34 Elementary Schools Would Start At 8 A.M.

The 34 elementary schools that would move to an 8 a.m. start plan under the proposed changes to high school transportation are: Asbury, Ashley, Barrett, Bromwell, Brown, Centennial, Columbian, Cory, Del Pueblo, Eagleton, Ellis, Fairview, Fallis, Force, Goldrick, Grant Ranch K-8, Hallett, Harrington, Kaiser, Lowry, Marrama, Maxwell, Moore K-8, Munroe, Newlon, Oakland, Park Hill K-7, Sabin, Samuels, Schmitt, Slavens K-8, Steck, Swansea, and Valdez.



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Bradley Elementary To Drop Sixth-Grade

The Board of Education on Thursday approved a request from the Bradley Elementary Collaborative School Committee to discontinue its sixth-grade program starting with the 2004-2005 school year.

Sixth-grade enrollment at the school has declined significantly from the first year of implementation five years ago. Continuing the sixth-grade program at Bradley has been a topic of discussion in the Bradley community for over a year.

Bryant-Webster Elementary Seeks K-8 Model

The Board this week heard a plan to convert Bryant-Webster from an ECE-5 to a K-8 school, extending choice offerings in northwest Denver by adding one grade level per year beginning with sixth-grade in 2004-2005. The Board will vote on the recommendation on March 4.

Principal Pat Salazar said the school is responding to its changing community and is considering ways to attract more students.

Based on the experiences of K-8 models in DPS overall, it is expected that the program can retain existing students and attract new ones. Measured community support also indicates that this program will be sustainable.

The school would determine enrollment in sixth- through eighth-grade by lottery, with priority given to current Bryant-Webster students. Procedures would be consistent with other K-8 schools. Transportation would not be provided for middle school grades.

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Transportation for special education students would not change and DPS buses would be used for athletics and other activities.

Denver School of the Arts (which serves both middle and high school grades) would still receive DPS transportation support but all other high school magnets would shift to RTD, too.

High schools across the district must now use a 7:30 a.m. morning bell time because of the way the district's bus schedules are structured.

Buses make two trips each morning – the first for middle and high schools, the second for elementary schools. After dropping off either high school or middle school students at about 7:15 a.m., buses have time to start another route and drop off elementary students at about 8:45 a.m., in time for the 9 a.m. bell times at elementary schools.

By not relying on DPS buses to deliver some of the students, high schools could start at 9 a.m. Additionally, 34 elementary

schools could move their bell times an hour earlier in the day, to 8 a.m. Those 34 schools are located in parts of the city where buses would be able to make three trips – one for middle schools and two for elementary schools.

An analysis by district staff shows that the average ride times might increase by about three minutes if the switch is made from the DPS fleet to RTD. In some cases, average ride times would shorten by 12 minutes. In other cases, average ride times might increase by 16 minutes.

School districts in Baltimore, Boston, Buffalo, Dayton (Ohio), Milwaukee, San Diego, and San Francisco are among big cities where public transportation is used to transport students to high school. ■

A complete copy of the proposal is available online following the Feb. 5 agenda at:
www.dpsk12.org/board/meetings/agenda_archives

Elementary Arts And Music Ideas Take Shape

The Board received a prelude this week from the 86-member Elementary Arts Accountability Committee for proposed guidelines to spend the \$6.5 million elementary arts mill levy funding next year. The committee will submit a formal motion to the Board on Feb. 19.

The focus is to provide approximately 97 new arts teachers in elementary schools – that's an average of one art teacher in every elementary school. The committee recommends that every school receive a new mill-levy funded teacher allocation in the arts and add the new allocation to their

current level of arts staffing, resulting in an overall increase rather than maintenance of effort.

The premise is that over the course of their elementary education, students will attain standards-driven levels of arts awareness and experience in visual arts, vocal music, instrumental music, drama and dance. ■

The committee's informational report is available online following the Feb. 5 agenda at:
www.dpsk12.org/board/meetings/agenda_archives

Board Notes

In other action this week, the Board of Education:

- Recognized members of the Black Education Advisory Council.
- Recognized 10 female athletes and adopted a proclamation supporting National Girls and Women in Sports Day.
- Approved a \$955,888 construction contract with the firm of MW Golden Corporation for Centennial Elementary School's four-classroom addition and parking lot expansion.
- Approved the joint venture of Heery International, Inc., Empire Construction Services, Inc. and AMI Mechanical, Inc. as the construction program management team for the 2003 General Obligation Bond.
- Approved a three-year contract with Qwest Corporation to provide high-speed data, voice and video communication lines to Abraham Lincoln, East, George Washington, John F. Kennedy, Manual, Montbello, South, Thomas Jefferson and West high schools and Martin Luther King Efficacy Academy.