

Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA)



Straight Talk about ProComp

The Professional Compensation System for Teachers (ProComp)
An Alternative Pay System

A Primer and a Refresher For opt-in periods

November 7 to December 31, 2005 affecting the 2005-06 school year
February 1 to March 30, 2006 affecting the 2006-07 school year

*The purpose of this **briefing paper** is to give teachers (supporters and non-supporters of ProComp) factual information regarding **the basic essentials** of ProComp realizing that some of the details will not be available until June 30, 2006*

Also available at www.denverclassroom.org

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The Professional Compensation System for Teachers (ProComp)

Note: This paper will address the system as a whole and will address each of the four components: Market Incentives, Student Growth, Knowledge and Skills and Professional Evaluation.

Employees covered by this Agreement include all teachers as defined in Article 1-2 and personnel who are employed half-time or more as nurses, social workers, therapists, psychologists, counselors, speech language instructors, educational audiologists and JROTC instructors, but excluding vocational teachers covered by the Vocational Teachers' Federation Agreement and Type II Authorization Interns.

The System as a Whole

Voluntary for Current Staff

For teachers hired prior to December 31, 2005, the Professional Compensation System for Teachers (ProComp) participation is voluntary. The teacher remains on the traditional salary schedule unless and until he/she chooses to “opt-in” to ProComp.

Seven (7) years worth of opt-in windows are available to allow current teachers to decide whether or not ProComp is right for them. Until such confidence is evident, the teacher is advised not to opt-in because once in the teacher remains in the ProComp system with no opportunity to opt-out ***unless the ProComp components and/or elements are not delivered on time. In such a case teachers will be given the opportunity to opt-out by the Transition Team.***

ProComp Mandatory for New Teachers

The salary system for teachers hired after January 1, 2006, will be ProComp. Attached to the DPS job application form will be a sheet explaining ProComp so the individual will understand clearly that they are under a different salary system.

In the annual evaluation of ProComp, data will be collected as to whether or not ProComp has attracted and retained teachers in the district. Opt-in data by school will also be collected.

Traditional Salary Schedule

The traditional salary schedule remains in effect for as long as there are individuals on the schedule. The Market Compensation Task Force (MCTF) is charged with the responsibility of finding ways to make the traditional schedule more competitive and they continue their work this year by examining ways to develop funding to improve this schedule. Their first recommendation was to return the lost step and we accomplished that in last spring’s negotiations. Their next priority is retaining and rewarding senior teachers.

Cost of Living Adjustments

By contract, cost of living adjustments must be made equally to the traditional salary schedule and the ProComp system.

Safeguard - Funding for ProComp

Mill levy 3A is the funding generator for ProComp. If passed on November 1, 2005, \$25 million (inflation adjusted) will be raised to fund the year to year increases earned by those in ProComp. If 3A is not adopted, ProComp will not go into effect.

The \$25 million is protected by the ballot language and by a 30 page trust agreement. These both have been reviewed by our CEA attorneys to make sure that the \$25 million is only used for intended purposes. It is guarded by an 8 member Trust Board who can literally “turn off the spigot” if the money is misused.

Changes to ProComp

Needed adjustments to the ProComp system can be negotiated as early as October 2007, some 13 months after the system is fully implemented. An internal evaluation of the first year of implementation will be a major factor in those negotiations. Thereafter, negotiations can occur each year in order to improve the system. Every third year the evaluation is completed by an external evaluator.

For Whom is ProComp Most Advantageous?

ProComp is a way that teachers off the salary schedule can have the opportunity to earn something close to what they used to earn on the traditional schedule before they topped out. For teachers in their first few steps on the schedule *with less than a Masters Degree*, ProComp may be advantageous also.

Teachers who possess education credits not already used for advancement on the traditional schedule, a second masters degree, national certification, etc. may find ProComp advantageous.

Teachers who are between step 5 and step 13 on the traditional schedule are advised to be very careful about opting in because they are in the part of the salary schedule where their salary goes up most quickly. Therefore, it may be advisable to wait to opt in.

Before making a decision, **attend a salary setting meeting** arranged through one of our DCTA members on the Transition Team who are located in the HR department or a member of the HR staff.

Earning Salary Increases Under ProComp

The entry level salary for ProComp is the full salary earned under the traditional salary schedule and is determined in the usual manner.

Currently, the value of each element under ProComp is a percentage of an index point equal to the base salary of the traditional salary schedule (\$33,301)

The following elements can build salary for all teachers in ProComp:

Completing Professional Development Units	2%	\$666
Achieving a graduate degree or national certification	9%	\$2997
Earning a satisfactory evaluation		
Every year (probationary teachers)	1%	\$333
Every three years (non-probationary teachers)	3%	\$999
Achieving two student growth objectives per year	1%	\$333
Completing only one of two objectives results in a bonus of \$333 that does not build salary.		

A \$1000 lifetime account for tuition reimbursement is set aside for each teacher but this does not build salary.

The following elements do not always apply to all teachers in ProComp:

- Working in one of the hard to serve schools (3%)
- Working in a hard to staff assignment (3%)
- Exemplary performance on CSAP (3%)
- Exemplary school performance (2%)

With the exception of tuition reimbursement, all amounts are pensionable under the DPSRS or PERA.

Safeguard – Salary Credit

The teacher has the right to appeal the denial of any of the above payments to a Professional Review Panel. A trained teacher and an administrator will review the situation and if both agree, they can override the denial with a binding decision. The building principal makes pay decisions related to evaluation and objective setting only. For process violations the grievance procedure is used as usual.

Opting In during the 05-06 school year

There are two opt in windows during this year. The first begins November 7, 2005, and lasts until December 31, 2005, which is for the 05-06 contract year. The second window begins February 1, 2006, and continues until March 30, 2006, which is for the 06-07 contract year. ***By choosing to opt-in during either window this year the teacher can take advantage of pay for unused education credit to build salary for entry into the system.*** This opportunity will not be available during future opt in windows.

Example of pay for unused education credits: If a teacher is on the BA+30 column on the traditional schedule but in reality has an additional 15 credits (45 hours total), upon entering ProComp the teacher will get credit for the additional 15 hours in determining salary for entry into ProComp.

If in a “hard to serve” school or “hard to staff” assignment and opt in for the 05-06 school year you will be paid the appropriate market incentive(s) for the year if the conditions for each incentive are met.

Component: Knowledge and Skills

Most of the \$25 million of ProComp (57%) is obligated to this component because it involves improving the art and science of teaching.

Element - Professional Development Units (PDU)- Requirements

To be eligible for the PDU salary increase, a teacher's endeavor should take place over time and be directly relevant to the person's job responsibilities, both current and projected. It should reflect best instructional practices and be collaborative. The collaboration can be with colleagues, parents or community members.

Every PDU involves three steps: **study** of a topic that will benefit student achievement, **demonstrating** the technique or project and then **reflecting** on what was learned. The PDU system is based on the successful Minneapolis Schools 1-2-3 system.

ProComp offers a wide range of opportunities for earning a PDU including earning credit for work done during the course of the normal work day/week. If the requirements listed above are met these opportunities include but are not limited to obtaining college credits, credit for studying a new skill or concept, teaching university courses, serving as a cooperating teacher, online study groups, action research, taking professional development, presenting professional development and taking district in-service classes. Teachers who complete PDUs as part of paid district in-service receive hourly pay, plus salary increases for training received during the week.

Librarian Example of PDU

The sample PDU for a middle school librarian proposes a study of the role and value of young adult literature in the lives of urban teenagers to provide a wider range of resources to engage students. The project includes reading and synthesizing young adult fiction and books on teaching teens in poverty. The librarian would also form a young adult book study group with other teachers in the school.

The "demonstration" involves developing a database of books read by the study group with an annotated bibliography to aid instruction. It would be posted on a website. The "reflection" would take place through a presentation to other middle school librarians and literacy coaches.

Other sample PDUs have been developed for elementary literacy and computer technology teachers, special education and physical education teachers, as well as counselors, math coaches and high school biology and Computer Aided Drafting and Design (CADD) teachers.

PDU Testers can earn graduate credit this year

A field test of the ProComp Professional Development Unit will be conducted this year (05-06) with 150 volunteer teachers, student services professionals and coaches. Those completing a PDU during this field test year will be able to earn four hours of graduate credit paid for by the district. This credit may be applied to CDE recertification or toward the required 30 credit hours to advance on the traditional salary schedule.

Participating teachers who opt-in to ProComp may apply the PDU earned this year to a permanent salary increase during 2006-2007, following passage of the ProComp mill levy election.

The PDU process may well be different in 06-07 based on information gathered during the field test.

One-Time Opportunity for Unused Education Credit Hours

Teachers who opt-in during either of the first two opt-in windows during the 05-06 school year will receive their full salary increase and credit for graduate hours earned, but not yet applied, for advancement to the next education lane, including pro-rated credit.

Element- Degrees/National Certification

Under ProComp an advanced degree (or a second advanced degree that was not credited to the traditional schedule) will be accepted under ProComp and 9% of the ProComp Index added to the teachers salary. The same is true for a recognized national certification.

Element -Tuition Reimbursement

Each teacher in ProComp will be allocated the sum of \$1,000 to be used to offset tuition costs during his/her career.

Component: Professional Evaluation

Element - Improvements in Evaluation

The revision to the evaluation process of the master agreement is called for in Article 10 and is actually overdue. The goal of this revision effort is to make a comprehensive professional learning environment that will support students' learning and will ultimately improve the achievement for all students. There are three ways the professional evaluation committee (1338) has tried to do this.

1. Customization. New evaluation forms have been created for student services professionals. Before, student service professionals were evaluated on the same form as classroom teachers. Now, a nurse will be evaluated on standards and rubrics designed by nurses for nurses. Fourteen different forms have been developed tailored to the jobs performed by various student service professionals.

2. Consistency and accountability. A more accurate and detailed process has been implemented through joint trainings to have better consistency and accountability across the district. Before the new process was designed, teachers and principals told DCTA and DPS that there was too much variance in the implementation of the evaluation process across the district. The evaluation handbook, guidelines and training are designed to make the expectations clearer so there is greater consistency in the process.

3. Voice in one's evaluation. The process now has an educator component where the teacher and specialist bring evidence to support their performance. Previously, the main documented evidence was a minimal 20-minute observation with no required teacher input.

Characteristics

The new system will make clear distinctions between evaluation and corrective action.

Non-probationary teachers are evaluated every three years and receive a 3% Index Salary increase for satisfactory evaluation. Probationary teachers are evaluated each year and receive 1% if satisfactory.

Detailed rubrics have been developed that describe different levels of teacher performance, a fall to spring evaluation cycle, emphasize rater consistency and peer assistance for teachers whose performance is found unsatisfactory.

Element – Unsatisfactory Evaluation

Under the current system, teachers can have a 4% step increase (\$2,000) or longevity increase (\$1,275) delayed for unsatisfactory evaluation. Under ProComp, there is a delay of 3% of the ProComp Index or \$999 for a year when the development unit is completed.

Safeguard –Education Salary Credit. A teacher and a principal from a trained Professional Review Panel will conduct a binding review when pay is denied if requested by the teacher.

Pilot Year

The new professional evaluation system is being tested during the 05-06 school year with three volunteers from each building. These individuals will use both the new evaluation forms and the new process. ***All other teachers under evaluation will use the new forms but not the new process (see below).*** Following a successful field test a new Article 10 (Evaluation) will be put before the members for a vote in the spring of 2006.

Professional Evaluation Process and Form Comparison

Old	New
Pre-conference/orientation with teachers to be evaluated about professional evaluation process	Same
Evaluate three areas of performance objectives: Instruction and Support, Climate and Management, Professional Responsibilities	Evaluate five standards: Instruction, Assessment, Curriculum & Planning, Learning Environment, Professional Responsibilities
Four point rubric: Advanced, Proficient, Partially Proficient, Unsatisfactory	Four point rubric: Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, Developing Towards Meeting Expectations, Not Meeting Expectations
Criteria with no guidelines	Criteria with three or more indicators as guidelines
One formal observation with applicable conferences for non-probationary teachers	Same
Two formal observations with applicable conferences for probationary teachers	Same
Required pre formal observation conference	Same
Required formal observation	Same
Require post formal observation conference	Same
Artifacts/records of teaching (Optional)	Three records of teaching related to the standards (Required).*
Mid-year conference ONLY for objective setting	Midyear Conference (Required)*
No self-evaluation	Self-evaluation (Optional)
Action plan for objective setting and improvement plan for all evaluations	Action plan for all teachers on evaluation.*
Post conference after formal observation	Same
Two forms for licensed employees: Teacher and Specialist	Multiple forms for licensed employees, job specific, (e.g., nurse, social worker, library/media specialist, psychologist, audiologist, coach)

* ONLY teachers who volunteer for the new professional evaluation process in 2005-2006.

Component: Market Incentives

Element - Hard to Serve Schools

Twenty eight such schools have been identified using the following criteria:

- % of students on free and reduced lunch
- % of students qualifying under Medicaid
- % of students in special education center programs
- % of students with ELA needs
- Denver police crime statistics on students' neighborhoods

These criteria will be reviewed on an annual basis. However, once identified as hard to serve a school will maintain that designation for a period of three years.

In the Spring of 05, positions in the twenty eight schools were posted with the market incentive attached for teachers who choose to opt-in to ProComp for the 05-06 school year in the first window immediately following a successful mill levy vote on November 1. The incentive will be retroactive to the start of the school year.

Element - Hard to Staff Positions

The following criteria were used to identify hard to staff positions:

- National data on the supply of teachers
- CDE data on supply of teachers
- DPS data on the ratio of NCLB qualified teachers to the total in that discipline
- DPS data on the ratio of teachers with one year of experience to the total in that discipline
- DPS data on student services professionals still vacant on November 1, 2004

As a result the following positions were identified:

- Middle school math
- ELA-S
- Special education center teachers
- Speech Pathologists
- Psychologists

These designations will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Component: Student Growth

Element: Instructional Objective Setting

The bulk of the student growth dollars are in Instructional Objectives, available to teachers in all subjects and all specialist categories.

The value of writing student growth objectives was the subject of a four year (1999 to 2003) research study known to most people as the Pay for Performance Pilot (PfP). The researcher was the Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC) of Boston. 1037 teachers participated in the study by writing objectives and then responding to surveys and focus groups from CTAC about their experiences. The conclusion of CTAC in the published report is as follows:

“Students whose teachers developed the highest quality objectives, based on a rubric developed by CTAC, average greater gains in achievement on the ITBS – whether the objectives were met or not met- than students whose teacher objectives were scored lower on the rubric.” The same was true for CSAP scores.

The study also taught us that the better way to measure the impact of a teacher on the lives of their students was through student growth measures and, better yet, multiple growth measures. Therefore, CSAP is not permitted to be used in writing student growth objectives.

The Pay for Performance Pilot also demonstrated that counselors, librarians, special education teachers, nurses etc. can write objectives based on their own unique work and be compensated for student growth.

The 1% salary increase for student growth objectives was based on five years of DCTA surveys, where teachers said they would be willing to have at least 1% of their salary increase be based on student growth.

Characteristics

- The objectives are set collaboratively between the teacher and the building principal.
- Objective setting will not be related to teacher pay until the 2006-2007 school year, and then only for teachers who are participating in ProComp.
- **Instructional objective setting is not related to teacher evaluation.**

Element - CSAP Incentive

The CSAP increase is designed to reward those teachers whose students significantly exceed the expected range of improvement (one year’s growth).

The CSAP dollars are not a large part of ProComp; it is anticipated that at most 30% of the teaching staff who are part of ProComp would be impacted.

Teachers who received the CSAP increase would lose the increase only if student growth falls significantly below the expected range. They would also lose only one year’s increase, not all increases they had earned in the past.

Element - Distinguished Schools

This is a bonus of 2% of Index for serving in a distinguished school based on multiple measures of school quality.