

Protect Teacher Incentive Pay

Community support for performance pay in Denver's high-needs public schools



DATE: February 7, 2019
TO: Denver Public Schools Board & Denver Community
RE: Preserving incentives for teachers, protecting the will of the voters



We are writing to express our support for maintaining the integrity of the ProComp teacher pay system, as the future of this program has become a key point of negotiation between the Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA) and Denver Public Schools (DPS).

As a coalition representing communities and interests across Denver, we recognize the complexity and the importance of the priorities outlined by unionized teachers and district administrators. We respect and support DCTA's right to have its voice heard, and we ultimately hope for a resolution that meets the needs of our teachers while also allowing our schools to provide a high-quality public education.



We strongly believe that the ProComp teacher pay system is not merely a bureaucratic system meant to complicate teacher pay, but reflects our community value to better support our students who face the challenges of growing up in poverty, and who experience the current and historical legacies of racism. As DCTA and DPS work to reach consensus, we stand firm that additional financial resources must be provided to the dedicated teachers who staff Denver's highest need public schools.



Though implementation has been imperfect, ProComp's goal of providing higher salaries to teachers who work in schools with high percentages of low-income students — with the goal of promoting the recruitment and retention of quality teachers—should remain the north star. Any changes to the pay system should protect and preserve this principle. Before ProComp, schools educating students in underserved communities typically received the largest share of teachers who had been dismissed from another school, thereby concentrating these teachers in the schools with the most need.



We are concerned that a redistribution of ProComp funding into base teacher salary will shift resources from schools in high-need communities to those in more affluent neighborhoods where there are already far greater resources. Such a policy change would heighten inequalities in a school district where there are already enormous and persistent achievement gaps. These gaps are likely to grow under a pay system that fails to recognize and reward the teachers who choose to work in high-needs schools, and who are effective at improving student outcomes.

We urge DPS to find a resolution that protects the resources and incentives meant for the schools that need them most, rather than submitting to a pay system that fundamentally undermines the district's equity goals.

Sincerely,

Papa Dia, African Leadership Group
Dr. Jeriod D. Patterson, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
Mike Cortés, PhD, Colorado Latino Leadership Advocacy & Research Coalition
Bishop Jerry Demmer, FaithBridge
Nicholas Martinez, Transform Education Now
Ariel Smith, Transform Education Now