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**No Green or Blue SPF for Schools with Academic Gaps**

Bryant Webster, Brown International, and Bromwell Elementary are three traditional DPS schools with Union members working tirelessly inside the classrooms. While each school is unique and successful for the children who attend, only Bryant Webster is green on the 2017 SPF even though both Brown and Bromwell have higher numbers of students at or above grade level and higher numbers on various closing the gap measures. Head scratching ensues when looking into the reasons why.

Although 92.68% of Bromwell’s students are performing at grade level, the closing the gap for children of color is only 50%. The SPF reports states that 37.78% of Bryant Webster students are at grade level and the closing the gap for children of color is even less at 25%. Brown International boasts 67.73% of its students are at grade level and the closing the gap for children of color is 56%, again higher than Bryant Webster. Still only Bryant Webster’s SPF rating is green.

DPS claims this color coding helps parents make informed choices about the schools they choose for their children. But how does labeling a school with a simple color code help parents, students, and the community know what is going on within a school when a review of the data shows such a disparity in outcomes depending on the demographics within the school?

During the February 13 DCTA Board meeting, Susana Cordova, Deputy Superintendent, and Maegan Daigler, Director of Research and Accountability, presented the rationales for why DPS chooses its measures to assign these ratings to schools.

DCTA board member and Brown International teacher Kate Tynan-Ridgeway said, “This rating hurts Brown.” As families make choices, they may or **(continued on page 7)**

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**The ProComp Agreement expires in 23 days, on March 14!**

Only two Compensation Agreement Bargaining Sessions remain, so be certain to attend the next session and make your voice heard! The last two sessions are scheduled for Monday, February 26 and Wednesday, March 14 from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm at the Acoma Campus (1617 S. Acoma St).

***Contact your UD Kate Martin, Alizay Furtado, or Brock Grosso to schedule a meeting to discuss a new teacher compensation system in DPS. Changes are being bargained now, and it is imperative that you know where we are headed on YOUR compensation system.***
Take Action Against Gun Violence

After having a fun afternoon celebrating Valentine’s Day with my 1st grade ESL group, I left school and was horrified to learn that there had been yet another school shooting; 17 killed, 15 injured in Parkland, Florida. I know many of you are feeling immense sadness and frustration. I joined Moms Demand Action and Educators Demand Action (you don’t have to be a mom or a woman to join!) two years ago because I could no longer sit around being angry and heartbroken without doing something to make a change. I invite you to join me in taking action for common sense gun legislation.

Too many of our legislators offer only thoughts and prayers after these tragedies. It’s time to take action. Everytown, which is the umbrella organization of Moms and Educators, has 5 steps you can take to make a difference. You can take action at everytown.org/ThrowThemOut. You will be able to look up local events close by. We have chapters all over the metro area.

Another event you can take part in is March for Our Lives. Student survivors of the Parkland shooting have taken the lead and are planning a nationwide march on March 24th. There will be a march in DC and we will have a local event here in Denver that is being led by our very own Tay Anderson. Meet on the 24th at the Capitol from 2-5 pm. Please support students all over the country in fighting for gun reform!

~ Rachel Barnes, DCTA member at Bradley International
Denver Schools named after Prominent African Americans

Barney Ford was an escaped slave who became a wealthy Colorado businessman and civil-rights pioneer.

Bruce Randolph ("Daddy" Bruce Randolph), the barbecue restaurant owner and philanthropist whose mission was to feed the poor and who founded the annual Daddy Bruce Thanksgiving meal giveaway, a tradition that continues today.

Florida Pitt Waller was a woman of many firsts! She was Denver Public School’s first Black librarian, instructional coordinator, and educational TV script writer.

Jessie W Maxwell was the first African-American Administrator in Denver Public Schools and the state of Colorado. Mrs. Maxwell was named Principal of Whittier Elementary School in 1955, where she served until 1966. She then became Principal of Columbine Elementary School until her retirement in 1972.

Marie Greenwood is a living legend. Still thriving at 105 years old, she was Denver’s first African-American teacher. She was hired by the Denver school system to teach first grade at Whittier Elementary School in 1938. She was hired under a three-year probationary agreement, with the understanding that the school system would not hire another black teacher until she passed her probation. Her success opened the school district to many African-American teachers.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a Baptist minister and social activist who led the civil rights movement in the United States from the mid-1950s until his death by assassination in 1968. He played a pivotal role in ending the legal segregation of African-American citizens in the United States, as well as the creation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Rachel B. Noel helped integrate the Denver Public School system and provide equal opportunities to all Denver students. Noel Community Arts is named for her. Read the Noel Resolution here.

Sandra Todd-Williams is a DPS graduate who retired earlier this month after serving more than 30 years in FNE Denver schools. The majority of her career was spent in early childhood education and her last teaching position for DPS was with the Escalante Biggs Academy.
If you can’t get excited about learning in Jessica Donovan-Massey’s class, it’s not for her lack of trying. Walking down the hallway toward Donovan-Massey’s East High School classroom, you can feel the energy building. The class spills out into the hallway, where the spunky bundle of energy moves from student to student, asking for updates or providing assistance as needed. Inside the classroom, students huddle in groups or work independently. It’s clear the focus is on learning.

“I am at my best when I’m sharing the pleasure of literature and the fun of words with students,” Donovan-Massey said of her love for teaching. “I hope to give them the courage they’ll need to face their world with confidence.”

The teacher has been helping to provide that courage to students for more than 26 years. An Honors English and AP Literature teacher at East High School, Donovan-Massey relishes the time she gets to spend with students. That enthusiasm becomes ever-more-apparent when you listen to her describe the immersive approach she takes to her subject matter.

“Rolling around in the literature is what happens in Massey’s room,” she said. “It is contagious to roll around in the literature. We are not in a hurry with our books. We look deeply into the nuances of the texts. I love to watch the eyes and smiles on my students’ faces as they master rigorous content and learn to work confidently toward learning.”

To that end Donovan-Massey encourages students to incorporate what they’ve read and learned through books into their everyday lives. That can happen by putting vocabulary lessons to life in conversation, or students identifying when they recognize vocabulary words in popular culture like TV and movies. The outcome is to generate classroom conversations and create connections from school lessons to real life.

“Seeing students uncover the treasures hidden in literature is the absolute best,” Donovan-Massey said. “I am hoping to create an environment that is close to the conversations I enjoyed with my father at the dinner table.”

To help bring literature to life, Donovan-Massey advocates for projects with every text the class is assigned. For example, when students read “Catcher in the Rye,” she asked students to “take on” the role of literary critic or therapist. Using the novel, students gathered “evidence” found throughout the book to explain their logic behind a “diagnosis” of a main character’s psyche or to demonstrate proof of the author’s use of a particular literary device. The rationales were then used to develop a presentation supporting the student’s assertions.

That spirit of innovation is what drove Donovan-Massey to help develop East’s Academic Success program—a support class to help “reluctant” students achieve success in Honors-level classes. As part of her work, she teaches the 9th grade Academic Success class.

(continued on page 5)
Have your voice heard—Take the TLCC Survey Today!

Your AR and/or building administration has your building “ticket code” needed to fill out this survey. Once you have the code, you can take the survey online. If your AR or building admin does not have your building code, email the survey helpdesk or call toll-free 1-866-329-1530 (Mon-Fri, 8 am-4 pm).

The Teaching & Learning Conditions Colorado (TLCC) survey has been extended to close on Monday, March 5 and so far, only 7% of DPS employees have completed it. Learn more about TLCC online.

Schools with 50% participation can win money!—CEA will hold two weekly drawings of $150 for all schools with members that have reached 50% participation in the TLCC survey. The drawings will be held Jan. 31, Feb. 7, Feb. 14, Feb. 21, and Feb. 28. Additionally, a $500 final grand prize drawing will be held after the survey closes for one school that has reached 95% participation in the TLCC survey.

Schools in the Drawing with over 50% participation!
Johnson Elementary (69.4%)
Kepner Beacon (54.5%)

Schools close to 50% participation:
Bradley International (42.9%)
Colfax Elementary (43.3%)
Denison Montessori (25%)
Denver Discovery (25.7%)
Denver Online High School (33.3%)
Denver School of the Arts (47%)
Eagleton Elementary (42.4%)
East (31.5%)
Ellis Elementary (33.3%)
Force Elementary (32.6%)
Garden Place (26.3%)
Holm Elementary (26.2%)
MSLA (26.1%)
Polaris Elementary (37.5%)
Stedman Elementary (31.8%)
Thomas Jefferson (39.2%)
University Park (33.3%)
Vista Academy (37.9%)

(“Jessica Donovan-Massey” continued from page 4) “Students enter my honors English class as students who anticipate struggle and failure,” Donovan-Massey said of the need for such a class. “With the support of the Academic Success class, these same students unfurl and blossom into confident students who often self-select honors-level classes going forward.”

Donovan-Massey explained the class is built on acceptance, individualized support and “re-teaching,” in addition to simply providing students more time to learn topics. Both students and parents have reported great value in the class, she said.

Like most teachers, Donovan-Massey struggles with the same issues so prevalent among schools today: the politics of teaching, lack of time, difficult class sizes and lack of adequate student supports, among others. But the seasoned education veteran (whose husband Vince is also an educator), understands the challenges.

“Making each student feel accepted, recognized, and valued so they know that they are welcomed and safe to excel is critical,” she said. “As is finding enough time to differentiate and accommodate individual student needs, gifts, and styles.”

Watching her in action on a recent Thursday morning, she makes these challenges seem effortless.

If you know of a DCTA teacher that should be featured here, please email their name and contact information to Amber Wilson - DCTA Secretary.
February Rep Council

Rep Council is on Tuesday, February 27 at DCIS Baker from 4:30 pm—6 pm. Training will be on the new contract requirements around student discipline. We will also have Teacher Survival Bags to take back to your buildings.

All members are welcome to attend!

Seventeenth Annual César E. Chávez Day March

Join us on Saturday, March 31, as we march to honor Chávez’s legacy as an educator, environmentalist, and a civil rights leader.

Mass starts at 9:00 am in the Saint John Francis Chapel at Regis University (3333 Regis Boulevard), followed by the march to the César E. Chávez Park (4121 Tennyson St) and festivities with music, food, and awards. Click here to RSVP.

DCTA Elections—Call for Nominations

We look forward to active participation in our election process to promote growth and build the strength of our union. If you are interested in running for a position or nominating a fellow member, fill out and submit the Nomination Form below. Nominations will be accepted February 27 through March 16.

2018 DCTA Election Nomination Form 2018 DCTA Election Calendar

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"Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed. You cannot un-educate the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore?" — Cesar Chavez (1927-1993)

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(“National School Walk-outs” continued from page 2) know the time for change is now,” they say.

April 20 has long been an unofficial pot-smoker’s holiday, a fact not lost on commenters: “Like we don’t know what these kids are really planning on doing on 4/20,” commented one of many who pointed out the date’s other significance. “We are aware of the significance of the date. This issue of school shootings is important enough that we hope that is what people focus on,” replied the official Twitter account five minutes later.

Wednesday, March 14, 2018

Using the hashtag #Enough on social media, this walkout is being organized by the people behind the Women’s March, and calls for 17-minute walk-out, a minute for each of the people who died on February 14 at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, at 10:00 am across each time zone to “protest Congress’ inaction to do more than tweet thoughts and prayers in response to the gun violence plaguing our schools and neighborhoods.” The group has put together a map of walkouts that appears to show participating schools. "Parents have the right to send their kids to school in the mornings and see them home alive at the end of the day,” call the petitioners.
Encourage Teachers to Attend Bargaining!

Join us as we call members and encourage attendance at the last two Compensation Bargaining sessions—Monday, February 26 and Wednesday, March 14! We need to make sure educators' voices are heard!

Please RSVP so we order enough food!

(“No Green or Blue SPF for Schools with Academic Gaps” continued from page 1) may not discern the nuances.

Bryant Webster was green due to an exemption based on its high poverty and high children of color population. DPS will do away with all exemptions this year. Claiming the label forces schools to work harder to close the gaps for all students, the 2018 SPF will apply the Academic Gaps rule to all school without exemption. No school will be labeled blue or green if it has an Academic Gap. According to Cordova, they could not find a way to apply any exemptions that appeared fair with the complex mixtures of factors.

Although DPS held 18 focus groups to establish the new changes to the SPF, DCTA Director Pam Shamburg asked why no one took notes at the DCTA focus group she attended. She also questioned why the District only held one meeting with teachers.

Greg Ahrnsbrak questioned the fairness to staff members who will automatically receive lower LEAP scores due to the lower rating of the school. “Staff members come into an automatic lower LEAP score if they choose to work at a red school.”

This year’s SPF changes include new weighting to early literacy, as the strong performance on Early Literacy tests was not mirrored in CMAS results for growth or status. This change means schools that showed strong performance with Early Literacy measures will most likely go down in their SPF as the Early Literacy tests do not lead to increased CMAS results. As the District transitions to Aimline testing, the District will gather more data for kindergarten and first grades.

The 2017 SPF included many indicators from old data. Since some measures were new or there weren’t enough students for a disaggregated group, this year’s SPF used only one year of data. Often that data was old and didn’t reflect the current year’s efforts in the classroom. DPS has now announced it will remove measures that don’t have current data. Looking at the examples we started with at the beginning of this article, different schools will have ratings based on different demographics.

Going with the stoplight motif, consider you are driving your car filled with your precious children. The light is green. But before proceeding, analyze your children and their unique needs to make sure that green light is for you. While the urge to create a simple color-coded graphic to explain the entire quality of a school is understandable, these explanations put forth to the DCTA Board show that the education of society’s children is multifaceted, and that teacher professionalism is at stake with questionable rating practices.
School Visits

**Last week:** We spent time at Amesse, Bear Valley, Colfax, College View, Columbine, Denver Discovery, DSISD, Ellis Elementary, Florence Crittenton, Florida Pitt Waller, Hamilton, High Tech Early College, Kaiser, Kunsmiller, Montclair, Pascual LeDoux, Sabin, Samuels, and Stephen Knight.

**This week:** We will be visiting Compassion Road, Doull, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Early College, Hamilton, Lowry, Summit, and West Leadership Academy.

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**Regional Open Houses**

Drop in to an open house near you to receive current information about your new contract, upcoming ProComp negotiations, etcetera from a Uniserv Director. Have your voice heard and join the conversation for what matters most for our students.

**Café Chihuahua Open House**
Wednesday, February 21, 4—6 pm
2250 S Federal Blvd
Hill Middle School
Wednesday, March 7, 4-6pm
451 Clermont St

**’Bout Time Pub & Grub Open House**
Wednesday, February 28, 4—6 pm
3392 W 38th Ave

**CANCELED—GVR Beer Garden Open House**
Wednesday, March 14, 4—6 pm
Attend Compensation Negotiations!