The District is Backtracking on Compensation!
The ProComp Agreement expires in 30 days, on March 14!

Continuing its efforts to negotiate a Compensation Agreement that provides predictability, stability and growth potential, the DCTA Bargaining Team again hammered away at the District’s insistence on focusing so strongly on test scores as a means to increase teacher compensation.

DCTA’s position advocates assigning more dollars to teacher base pay, limiting incentives and maximizing their impact by re-focusing incentives on a wider array of criteria. For example, DCTA argues that the Distinguished School status mandate of the ProComp ballot language should be assigned to fewer schools (10 has been proposed) by evaluating Whole Child programming efforts, bullying prevention initiatives, teacher retention, student evaluations and, yes, test scores – as well as other critical attributes of success. The District continues to advocate for maintaining more or less a status quo approach of focusing solely on standardized testing.

While the District likes to tout their “whole child” approach to parents and the community, the reality is that when it’s time to compensate teachers, the District puts its money where its values really are: in test scores. When asked what a “distinguished school” looks like, spokesperson for the District, Michelle Berge, could not answer. At one point, she even tried to differentiate her feelings as a DPS parent and DPS employee! Why would those not be the same? Why would DPS not have the same vision for a distinguished school as the community that it serves?

Further, the District has not been able to provide any data that the current compensation system has had any effect on test scores, yet, they continue to stick to the same, tired stance that schools will be better if we reward teachers solely for how their students test. We believe that we should strive to create schools where students and teachers feel safe and included. Let’s reward making that happen.

“If we continue down the same pathway, we will continue to reward teachers in affluent schools over and over again,” said DCTA team member Lynne Valencia-Hernandez. “We need to compensate (continued on page 6).”
Members Lobbied Colorado Legislators Last Wednesday

Last Wednesday, 16 DCTA members, along with close to 100 members from other local associations, stormed the State Capitol to lobby their elected officials on Classrooms Not Corporations and PERA. These members had face-to-face conversations with decision makers about how much money they each spent out of pocket on their classrooms last year—on average $656 per Colorado educator—that was never reimbursed. While the state of Colorado has consistently underfunded public education, the State Legislature gave out more than $1 billion over the past ten years in corporate tax breaks. Read several members’ experiences below:

“Participating in Lobby Day with CEA was a fascinating experience that I am deeply thankful for. It is imperative that citizens are active and engaged in legislation, as teachers it is especially important that we take this active citizenship into consideration with our profession as it has a direct impact on our students and the work that we do. If we are not active and engaged in our democracy then it doesn't live up to the full potential that is there, and our elected officials aren’t held accountable for the major decisions that they are making every day. Being at the Capitol with a group of passionate educators was one of the most powerful experiences that I been a part of during my 5 years as an educator within Denver Public Schools. Seeing legislation being debated on the floor of the House and the Senate was incredibly informative and allowed me to see our democracy in action.”

~ Phillip Haberman, Special Education, Gilliam Youth Services

“I enjoyed going with such large numbers of other educators, and I felt like the representatives I spoke with were receptive to the message of needing more funding for education. I talked with Representative Jeff Bridges a bit (I live in his district), and he brought me out onto the floor to observe proceedings. While I was out there, it was really interesting to observe a debate occurring between several representatives over whether to approve an education funding-related bill. I also liked the teach-in and felt it was powerful.”

~ Alex Wentz, Math Teacher, South High School

(continued on page 5)
**Black Lives Matter at School**

Are you passionate about educating and organizing around racial justice in education? Check out this new website—[Black Lives Matter at School](#)—developed by [NEAEJustice](#), which has helpful resources you can use in the classroom, including grade-level appropriate lessons, art and multi-media materials, and stories highlighting member activism.

**TAKE ACTION:** [Sign the pledge](#) to grow the movement for racial justice in education!

[Click here](#) to download a Black Lives Matter at School printable flyer.

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**Save the Date—Salute to Excellence in Education Scholarship and Awards Gala**

The Education Center presents the 9th annual Salute to Excellence in Education Scholarship and Awards Gala—a program to honor educators of color. The Gala is on Friday, March 2 at 7:00 pm at the DoubleTree Hilton Hotel Denver ([3203 Quebec St](#)). DCTA will purchase tickets for five teachers/SSPs to attend the event. Would you like to join us there? [Email Henry Roman](#) to let him know by February 23...

For more information about the Gala, call 720-326-5176 or visit [www.theeductr.com](http://www.theeductr.com).

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**Seventeenth Annual César E. Chávez Day**

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](#).

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**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!**
Susana Cordova Speaking at DCTA Board Meeting Today

Susana Cordova, DPS Deputy Superintendent, will be today’s DCTA Board Meeting to speak about School Performance Framework (SPF). DCTA board meetings are open to members, and we encourage you to attend today and hear what she has to say. The Board Meeting at 4:45 pm on the 4th floor of the DCTA/CEA Building (1500 Grant St).

Have your voice heard! Take the TLCC Survey Today! (formerly TELL Colorado)

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 survey closes on February 23 and so far, only 5% of DPS employees have completed it. TLCC is an anonymous and confidential survey for Colorado’s school-based staff to share perceptions of teaching and learning conditions. This is the one opportunity teachers have to join together and provide reliable data to our schools, districts, and state policymakers on our teaching and learning conditions. Unlike Collaborate, this survey was not created by DPS, asks the types of questions teachers need to answer and allows comparison across districts (and states, as well). We want every teacher’s voice to be heard to let policymakers know what you need to do your job well. 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 and Feb. 21. A fifth drawing will be held Feb. 28 if the survey window is extended. 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.

Frequently Asked Questions
TLCC Fact Sheet

2018 Taxes

Union dues are tax-deductible: If you itemize, you can include all but $89.00 ($7.42 per month) from your dues in your deductions.

Do you qualify for free tax preparation? Find out if you’re eligible for free tax preparation assistance and keep more of your hard-earned money.

Are you missing out on these educator tax deductions? Read this before you file your tax return.

Use member-only discounts on tax prep software: Click here to learn more about discounts from H&R Block and TurboTax.
"This was my first Lobby day, and I was really nervous as I didn’t know what to expect. There were so many passionate people advocating for teachers by helping educate legislators about the amount of money teachers are spending on their own classrooms because of budget cuts.

While I handed out numerous cards to Denver county Senators, none came out to talk to me. I was really looking forward to letting them know how budget cuts have drastically affected me in my classroom. I look at my students as my children and want to make sure they are taken care of, whether that means classroom materials, food for the weekend or clothes for their bodies. Teaching is so much more than the classroom - we become invested in our students and their families! I came home and wrote letters to every Denver Senator, including a picture of me with my students, letting them know how I have been affected and how important it is to increase the funding for education. Can you imagine if every preschool aged student was able to attend school? This would be huge!!

I would encourage everyone to write to their Senators and Representatives encouraging them to increase educational funding, and how budget cuts have directly affected you.”

~ Torri Jackson, ECE Teacher, Amesse Elementary

"I was so happy to go to the Capitol to learn a bit more about the Legislature and participate in my civic responsibility. It was a valuable experience for me. Even though I was pretty nervous at first and figured early on that I could let the others actually meet the legislators, I ended up speaking to both my Representative, Paul Rosenthal and my Senator, Lois Court. Rep. Rosenthal was so happy to meet a constituent who lived in his district, and since I was the first (of the day I presume) I received a 'goody bag' with a personal note from him!

I also was able to speak to Senator Court, and now that I know how available she is to her constituents, I will continue to tell her (in emails and phone calls) about why she should stand for public schools and NOT charter schools. If everyone who feels that way were to tell her, she would have to change her position on "reform". Right now, all she hears is coming from the powers that be in the reform movement. If it's her constituents, she will have to change her position. I think that most people don't even know this about her!

It is so important for us, as citizens, to not only vote but to communicate with our representatives in the congress. We really do have a voice—and we have to use it!"

~ Sarah Pezoa, ESL-Resource Teacher, Carson Elementary

“ALONE WE CAN DO SO LITTLE; TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH”
~ Helen Keller
(District Backtracking on Compensation continued from page 1)

teachers across the District every day. We need to put more money in base salary so that teachers can plan for their future.”

Other topics addressed during the session focused on compensation for so-called “hard to serve” schools and “hard to staff” positions. The concern, according to DCTA’s team, is that many financial incentives are neither helping teachers reach their fullest income potential nor serving to improve conditions for teachers and students in schools.

On the issue of teaching in “hard-to-serve” schools, DCTA contends that the incentive providing increased compensation to teachers in these schools does not lead to higher teacher retention rates, even though the ballot language calls for “hard-to-staff schools.” In fact, schools that have received the hard-to-staff incentive have had significantly lower retention rates over the last three years compared to the District average. Much more critical to teacher retention, the Association says, is how teachers are treated within these schools (and all schools). The DCTA team argued that the DPS incentive tends to scapegoat students as the problem when working conditions and the relationship with school administration are what matters most to professional educators.

“How teachers are treated in their building has a much larger effect on retention rates than the students,” said Corey Kern, deputy executive director for DCTA.

Ultimately, DPS needs a compensation system that retains teachers districtwide, DCTA argued. With a current exodus of roughly 1,000 teachers a year and the district’s reputation as being difficult for teachers, an expected teacher shortage for DPS is coming sooner rather than later.

“If we determine there are non-monetary things happening that are causing the retention issues in that school,” said DCTA team member Rob Gould, “Should we create a retention compensation?”

On a more positive note, both bargaining teams did agree to a continuation of the “hard-to-staff” teacher compensation incentive in the new Compensation Agreement— the first agreement made to date in negotiations and a significant step forward.

In the final discussion of the night, both sides began outlining potential options for reforming the district’s incentives for professional development. Proposals ranged from disconnecting PDUs as a driver of teacher base salary to altering how PDUs are incentivized. DCTA also proposed expanding the tuition/loan reimbursement program to cover $10,000 over 10 years.

“We have to encourage our teachers to seek out advanced degrees,” said Lynn Valencia-Hernandez, “and we have to incentivize teachers to do that.”

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! We need to make sure educators' voices are heard!

Please RSVP so we order enough food!
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

School Visits

Last week: We spent time at Cory, Delta, Denison, Denver Montessori, Denver School of the Arts, Emily Griffith High School, Garden Place, Greenlee, Hallett, Henry World School, Isabella Bird, Legacy Options, Lincoln, Montclair, North, Slavens, Stephen Knight, and West Early College.

This week: We will be visiting Amesse, Colfax, College View, Columbine, Compassion Road, DSISD, Ellis Elementary, Florence Crittendon, Florida Pitt Waller, Hamilton, High Tech Early College, Kaiser, Lake, Montclair, Pascual LeDoux, Sabin, Samuels, and Stephen Knight.

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!
Happy Chinese New Year, Friday, February 16, from Isabella Bird