



Search site for:

NEWS

- Local
- State
- Nation
- World
- Election
- Legislature
- Education
- Census 2000
- Opinion
- Columnists
- Lottery
- Commuting
- Obituaries
- AP wire

Databases

Learn more about your school with our searchable databases.

- School report cards

CSAP results

PRINT THIS STORY | E-MAIL THIS STORY

### Dispute with teachers may threaten pay plan

But union's leader says support for DPS measure isn't at risk

By Julie Poppen, Rocky Mountain News  
April 7, 2005

Some unionized Denver Public Schools teachers are threatening not to back a historic teacher pay plan called ProComp at the polls this fall.

And there are those who are suggesting a revote on the plan, which links teacher pay to student performance and rewards teachers for taking the toughest assignments.

Advertisement

MOVE IN AND MAKE NO MORTGAGE PAYMENTS FOR SIX MONTHS!\*

Introducing DELAYED PAYMENT MORTGAGE

The newest, smartest way to buy a new home - exclusively offered by Neumann Homes!

Increasing hostility between the school district and the Denver Classroom Teachers Union threatens to undermine the nationally watched ProComp, some teachers say.

The Professional Compensation Plan for Teachers, or ProComp, is slated to take effect in January if a \$25 million property tax increase to pay for it passes at the polls in November.

"I think Denver taxpayers - because they're good people - will say, 'Our poor teachers. We've got to help them,'" veteran Abraham Lincoln High School English teacher Marsha Burger said. "Unfortunately, I think it will be our demise if they do that."

Burger said a movement is afoot to fight ProComp.

Talks to hammer out a three-year deal pertaining to teacher pay, benefits, class size and teacher planning time screeched to a halt last month with no resolution. A mediator is scheduled to help iron out issues this month. Teachers have talked about a strike.

"We can't even do simple negotiations," Burger said. "(ProComp) is a bureaucratic nightmare waiting to happen."

But Becky Wissink, head of the teachers union, disagreed that ProComp is at risk.

"There are no plans to pull or revote on ProComp," she said.

A revote would require a change in the union's bylaws, said Dave Szumiloski, a teacher and member of the union. "The only way teachers perceive as a way to kill it is to defeat the mill levy," Szumiloski said.

Teachers and the district signed off on ProComp a year ago. The plan moves away from the traditional model of basing teacher salaries mostly on experience. Putting the plan together took six years.

School board members intend to put the measure on the ballot.

"I don't think the issues are big enough to delay the project," DPS board member Michelle Moss said. "Why would teachers do anything to put in jeopardy \$25 million a year to pay them? It's like shooting yourself in the foot."

Brad Jupp, a teacher and union member who is directing the district's ProComp efforts, said he's heard the threats from his colleagues. But Jupp said he doesn't think anything will come of them.

"I know these are hard times, and teachers have every reason to question where the association is putting its resources," Jupp said. "But it would be unwise for us to cut off our future just because of arguments with the district in the present."

Jupp said Denver should not forfeit the opportunity to revolutionize the way teachers are paid.

"Denver is miles - not inches, not feet - but miles out in front of other school districts," Jupp said.

A year ago, 59 percent of teachers voted to approve ProComp. But a December survey of 1,160 teachers by the teachers union found that about 70 percent of respondents did not have confidence in the district's ability to run the program.

Teachers hired after January will automatically be enrolled in ProComp. Current teachers have seven years to opt into the plan, or they can stay with the existing salary system until they retire.

"I would hate to have this promise of ProComp jeopardized or placed on the table as collateral," DPS board member Lucia Guzman said. "We're making history here."

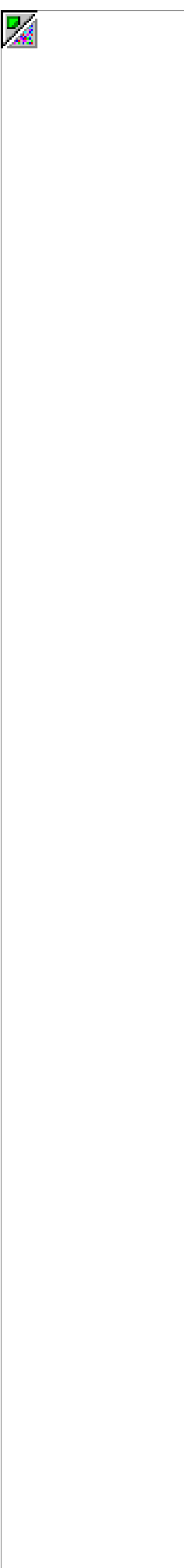
Related Advertising Links

BUY A LINK IN MARKETPLACE



Register to win a 6-pack of lift tickets

Valid for the 2004-2005 season

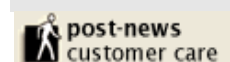


Search the Web



Rocky Mountain News  
ELECTRONIC EDITION  
Every page, every day.

LOG ON SUBSCRIBE



Sponsored Links

- Siebel CRM Software
- News 401 Online
- Internet Dial Up Access
- Cash Advance
- Auto Insurance
- Health & Diet Supplements
- Pool Tables Billiard Cues
- Flower Delivery Nationwide
- Car Insurance Quotes
- Strollers
- Multi-Level MLM Training
- Work from Home
- Home Mortgage Companies
- Latest Financial News
- PHP Programming News
- Personal Loan
- Fundraisers & Fundraising Ideas