

Introduction

In July of 1994, the Douglas County School District and Douglas County Federation of Teachers implemented a performance based compensation system for all certified staff. This web page is an attempt to bring the latest information regarding the many different aspects of performance pay into one comprehensive location. Although the district and the Douglas County Federation of Teachers are making ever effort to include the most recent updates, committee work continues on all aspects of the plan. The plan will continue to be adjusted, expanded and improved based on the feedback we receive from teachers, administrators and parents. Therefore, this document should not be viewed as a contract, but rather as a guide for general information.

Plan Overview

Not only is Douglas County's Performance Pay system the most comprehensive and long running in the nation, but it continues to attract the attention of a wide range of local, national and even international audiences. The plan has been heralded as "trail blazing" and "unprecedented" by various Colorado newspapers. The plan has been described as "precedent-setting reform," in a *Denver Business Journal* article.

Before the plan could become a reality, it was essential to put together a group that would ensure the efforts would be tailor made to the needs of Douglas County School District. In July, 1993, a task force of 30 individuals—20 teachers and 10 Board of Education appointees, including several community members and business people — put in more than 6,000 hours designing this compensation system. Two neutral facilitators helped manage this intensive, far-reaching effort to arrive at consensus on the details of this new teacher pay plan.

First adopted in the summer of 1994 by the Board of Education and the Douglas County Federation of Teachers (DCFT), the plan has continued to evolve. Each year since its inception, committees have continued to refine, evaluate, modify and expand each of the plan's components. Teachers have demonstrated their support for the plan by voting overwhelmingly to continue its implementation each year.

The major philosophical shift of performance pay is clear: *no longer will all teachers be awarded salary increases without regard to performance.* The integration of successful private sector approaches has helped this plan gain wide credibility among various school district constituencies.

Why are we doing this?

The number one reason for pursuing a new compensation system is to improve overall district performance. This plan has come about as an effort to reward outstanding individual and group performance as it relates to measurable goals.

Reinventing an old way of compensating teachers has not been easy, but that's precisely what has happened. An extensive review of private sector approaches to paying employees has enabled the transfer of many relevant concepts to the school district's new compensation plan. But the plan does not undermine the important element of collegiality and teamwork that people will see in Douglas County today.

Incentives for quality

The new compensation system focuses on rewarding teachers for their individual and group performance. Unlike the old system of step increases, this approach is not primarily dependent on length of service for improved compensation. Any professionally licensed teacher will have the ability to apply for additional compensation by providing proof of their effectiveness in the classroom through a number of options and components.

The total compensation system is made up of: **Individual Teacher Evaluation Credit, Knowledge Level Increases, Outstanding Bonus Options, Master Teacher Bonus, Group Incentive Pay, Skill Blocks and Responsibility Pay.** Details of each component follow.