

**Discussion Questions for ProComp Director – Ms. Shirley Scott
Denver Public Schools**

E&A Questions:

1. Has there been any evaluation showing the effects of the program on:

Not formally, ProComp conducted a partial program implementation evaluation but the results have not been released. There is a long-term plan in place to evaluate the program internally and externally to determine its impact on student achievement, staff morale, cost-effectiveness, instructional quality. DPS and the Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA) annually conducts surveys, focus groups and face-to-face interviews to determine the teachers' perception of the school climate and of the ProComp.

a. student achievement,

ProComp has partnered with Ed Wiley of University of Denver @ Boulder to conduct an evaluation of the ProComp program in the Fall of 2008.

b. staff morale,

Though no formal evaluation has been done, Ms. Scott pointed out that some of the veteran or seasoned teachers do not believe that teachers should be rewarded for student achievement. To this end, they have not joined the ProComp program.

c. cost-effectiveness,

Prior to program implementation, DPS consulted with Douglas Ross an economist who reviewed ProComp needs and projected what the program will cost using TM1 software. In determining the projected amount, the economist factored in the rate of inflation. ProComp has a stable funding source adjusted for inflation till 2011.

d. improved quality of instructional staff,

Under the ProComp, teachers get bonus for completing Professional Development Units (PDU). PDU entails completing approved courses, research or development activities which are related to the teacher assignments. Teachers have to clock 45 hours to complete the unit, demonstrate knowledge, skills, and reflection on how the unit will improve the instructional delivery and student achievement. Additionally, they have to reflect on how the unit has helped them grow professionally.

e. teacher/principal attrition rate?

DPS has about 4300 teachers. About 300 to 500 teachers leave the district annually. DPS strives daily to attract and retain the bright and best teachers. ProComp will help with the district's mission of attracting and retaining bright and best teachers.

2. Which dept(s) or groups are largely impacted by the ProComp program? What are additional services (dispute resolutions, communication, objective-setting training, technology ...) that we need to consider providing & the costs associated to them?

All departments are impacted by the ProComp in one way or another. The departments that work closely with ProComp include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Communications/Public relations-** The ProComp program has been successful because of communication and public relations. Getting the message out to all stakeholders in a timely fashion and in a manner the stakeholders are most comfortable with is critical to the program's success. From inception, DPS consulted and contracted a Public Relations Agency which disseminated information to the stakeholders via TV, Radio, Newspaper, newsletters, magazines, meetings, community forums, Web and Email. Funding for the PR campaign was a grant from Ross Foundation, Broad Foundation and a number of local foundations in Denver. DPS spent \$ 100,000 per year for 4 years in getting the message to the stakeholders.
- **Information Technology** – to design the ProComp website and interactive online calculators and tools
- *Human Resources* – recruitment and compensation
- **Planning Office** – helps in projections of the student demographics which ProComp uses to identify the hard-to-serve campuses. Likewise, they help with developing the school improvement plans.
- *Teaching and learning* – curriculum guides, student expectations and assists in helping the teachers develop their student goal objectives (SGOs).
- **Assessment and Evaluation-** student assessment data analyses
- **Student Services**
- **Business Services**
- **Professional Development**
- **Superintendent's office**
- **Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA)**

3. [What is ProComp support structure? Does the Joint Task Force handle ranges of issues as they arise \(compensation, testing, methodology, evaluation ...\)? Which dept takes the lead?](#)

DPS has several teams in place to implement and monitor the ProComp program:

Teacher Compensation Trust Board – oversees the disbursement of the Trust Fund and the investment of unused funds to get maximum returns. The trust board is also charged with the responsibility of ensuring that ProComp is financially stable over time. Additionally, the trust is responsible for ensuring that funds are spent only for ProComp related expenses and that the expenditures are consistent with the ProComp agreement.

Transition Team - The 12-member Transition Team oversees the phase-in of ProComp system. Team members are appointed by Denver Public Schools and the Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA). The team implements and evaluates transition plans and advises the district, the association and the board of directors of the Teacher Compensation Trust.

The Operations Team - coordinates the work groups and directs the development of the technology and systems needed to support ProComp. It meets regularly on Tuesdays at 1:30pm.

Work Groups – Fourteen work groups with representation from all stakeholders were originally assigned to craft the details of ProComp. Most began operations in the fall of 2004 and some continued their work in the 2005-2006 school year.

ProComp 3.5 committee- works out the nuts and bolts of rewarding certified personnel who work in the schools but not in the classrooms e.g. counselors, social workers, nurses, speech language pathologists, etc.

Professional Review Panel – handles any disputes and/or grievances that might surface.

4. [How is the project information being presented for input and suggestions from others?](#)

Prior to implementing the program, DPS spent an enormous amount of time researching on whether it made sense to pay teachers a bonus based on student performance. Likewise, they spent a lot of time talking to the stakeholders to get feedback.

Annually DPS and DCTA survey the teachers on their perceptions on the program and school climate. ProComp conducts face to face interviews and focus groups to gather information about the program. The ProComp Transition, Operations, Trust Board and Work Groups have representation from teachers, community and administrators. There is a ProComp general email account where questions are sent to and the teams attempt to address the questions at their meetings.

Before the veteran teachers opt in, they are interviewed by the ProComp staff. The interview provides an opportunity for the staff to get feedback from the teachers on their views of the program.

5. [Can we get a copy of Professional Evaluation Handbook on MyDPS?](#)

The handbook can be accessed on DPS website

<http://hrforms.dpsk12.org/doc/Appraisals/2006Docs/HandbookCompProfEval.pdf>

All the stakeholders had a stake in designing the evaluation handbook.

6. [If you could start over, what will you do differently?](#)

Work closely with the IT folks to have all the systems in place for easy access to information.

Design and implement a system that compensates both the teachers and the administrators.

7. [Do you anticipate using a value-added model in determining student growth? Who is the primary contact on this topic?](#)

ProComp is investigating the possibility of using a value-added system in determining student growth. Currently they are utilizing external and internal resources to determine which avenue to pursue. Externally, they are consulting with Ed Wiley of University of Denver at Boulder. In the past, they have consulted with Dr. Sanders on the value-added systems. Internally, their Planning, Assessment and Research department is exploring the value-added systems that exist in other school districts in the state and nationwide. Ms. Scott expressed interest in our value-added systems and would like to know more about our system.

8. [Opponents of pay for student performance assert that it encourages teachers to teach to the test. What safeguards does DPS have in place to ensure that teaching and learning is rigorous? Does DPS give incentives for Advanced Placement \(AP\)? If yes, is compensation tied to AP scores or enrollment?](#)

Currently, DPS does not give incentives for Advanced Placement classes.

9. How does DPS measure growth when the test/assessment constructs are not the same?

DPS does not use state assessments to measure student growth. Teachers develop common assessments used in determining whether they met the student goal objectives (SGOs).

10. What systems do you have in place to ensure data integrity? (tracking teacher assignments, student room assignments, professional development etc)

DPS uses Oasis to track student assessment data. Oasis is a one stop location for the teachers to access and analyze longitudinal student assessment data (similar to MyData Portal). Likewise, they use EduSoft software to analyze benchmark assessment data for instructional purposes.

Compensation:

1. We would like to have a copy of all Denver's salary schedules.

The DPS salary schedules are on their website. The schedules can be accessed via the link below:

<http://hrforms.dpsk12.org/salary/>

DPS is committed to maintaining two salary schedules/systems till the last veteran teacher(s) leave or join the ProComp system. Veteran teachers have 7 windows of opportunity till 2011 to opt into the ProComp system. The opt in window is November thru June 30 of every year till 2011. Once a veteran teacher decides to opt in, s/he cannot opt out.

2. What additional stipends or extra payments do DPS give to teachers besides their annual base salary? Does DPS have the equivalent to our Stipend Handbook?

DPS compensates its teachers for taking on extra responsibilities. Embedded in the HR compensation guidelines are rules for compensating teachers for taking on additional responsibilities.

3. Can you explain with a specific example what kind of potential total compensation a teacher that did not join their incentive plan can have?

In addition to the base salary, a teacher can earn bonus/stipend for:

1. Knowledge and skills (Professional Development Units, Advanced degree, National certification, and tuition reimbursement)
2. Professional Evaluation (evaluation has to be satisfactorily or higher). Anyone rated unsatisfactory does not qualify for the bonus/stipend
3. Market Incentives (hard to staff position or hard to serve campus), and
4. Student growth

There is no limit as to how many stipends a teacher can qualify for. It all depends on where they are serving and their personal goals.

4. Does DPS have a specific software program to plan and administer the Compensation program and the specific incentive plan?

DPS uses the following programs for various tasks:

Microsoft Project – for planning
TM1- for fiscal projections and accountability
ProClarity for queuing and generating reports
K2 for process tracking and management

Public Relations:

1. What was the scope of the communications plan and materials?

So much of what DPS did depended on communication. Communication was vital because the concept of paying teachers for performance was relatively new and DPS had to find a funding source. To ensure program success, DPS had to reach out to all stakeholders in a very diverse community. To this end, a committee of 4 ProComp advocates developed a formal communication strategy to share and explain the ProComp program to all stakeholders at the same time build relationships, trust, and buy-in. DPS hired Public Relations (PR) consulting firm to reach out to all stakeholders. The firm used internet, radio, TV, flyers, brochures, videos, CDs, DVDs, newspapers, community forums and mail to get the message to the public. In addition to using various avenues of communication, DPS met with various stakeholders face to face and spent a lot of time explaining the stakeholders what ProComp was all about and the benefits of such a program. Ms. Scott repeatedly pointed out that face-to-face interviews, meetings and interactions made the greatest impact. Likewise, building relationships and trust and communicating with all stakeholders at every step of the way had the greatest impact on program planning, and implementation. DPS established and maintained partnership with the local bargaining unit (DCTA) and area universities. The committee of 4 met with the DCTA on a monthly basis to share program information and get feedback. ProComp still maintains the partnerships.

2. What was your key message?

Teachers are not paid enough for the amount of time and effort they put into their day to day responsibilities.

Every dollar allocated for ProComp will be spent appropriately, will be accounted for and every teacher will have equal access to the funds as long as they meet the stipend criteria.

3. What worked best for the various audiences? Teachers? Principals? Parents? Taxpayers?

DPS hired Public Relations (PR) consulting firm to reach out to all stakeholders. The PR firm used internet, radio, TV, flyers, brochures, videos, CDs, DVDs, newspapers, community forums and mail to get the message to the public. In addition to using various avenues of communication, DPS met with various stakeholders face to face and spent a lot of time explaining the stakeholders what ProComp was all about and the benefits of such a program. Face-to-face interviews, meetings and interactions had the greatest impact. The PR agency DPS contracted knew the local politics, had a good reputation and social network, and responded in a timely fashion whenever they was a press issue.

4. Did you have a means of measuring results?

Annually DPS and DCTA conduct a survey of teachers' perceptions of the school climate. They also conduct face to face interviews to get an idea of the impact of the program. DPS has a long-term plan to evaluate the program internally and externally to determine its impact on all stakeholders. The evaluation is slated to start in the Fall of 2008.

5. What follow-up messages and information did you provide?

DPS publishes a monthly newsletter – **Inside DPS**. **Inside dps** highlights the major activities in the district and ProComp events. The ProComp events and activities are highlighted under the Inside ProComp section of the newsletter. Likewise, there a Q & A section that addresses all ProComp questions received via email, mail, fax and/or telephone.

6. Were best practices published or shared in some way?

All events, meetings, news and best practices about the ProComp program are posted on the DPS site. ProComp uses the monthly newsletter to get message out to those who do have access to the internet.

ProComp staff introduces the program to the new teachers at the annual new teacher orientation meeting. New teachers hired after January 1, 2006 are automatically enrolled in the ProComp.

7. How did you handle issues related to teachers being in an uproar over bonuses as they were in Houston? Did you do anything preemptive as far as communication? Did they address the issue later?

There has not been any uproar since inception of the ProComp. Communication, building relationships and trust with all the stakeholders made a huge difference. Likewise, DPS is in contact with all stakeholders on a regular basis. Monthly the work groups and the Trust Board meet to discuss any issues and/or concerns that might surface. Moreover, ProComp established and maintain a good partnership with the local bargaining unit and the school board. Any disputes and grievances are handled by the Professional Review Panel. The PRP conducts hearings on any disputes about pay decisions on any of the ProComp compensation components.

8. Roughly, what percentage of their overall total of \$\$ dollars spent goes to communication efforts. And, is it enough?

DPS applied for and received a four-year grant from Ross Foundation which they used to promote the ProComp program. To supplement the Ross Foundation grant, they sought grants from other local and national Foundations. DPS spent over \$ 100,000 per year for 4 years to get the message to all stakeholders. DPS did not use the general funds to promote the ProComp program.

Information Technology Questions:

1. How do you accumulate the information needed to do the assessment analysis (do you use a data warehouse or pull live data).

DPS has a data warehouse where all their data is stored – known as “Operation Data Store”. They use several programs to extract and analyze the data. Some of the programs they use include, but are not limited to the following:

- Microsoft Project – for planning
- TM1- for fiscal projections and accountability
- ProClarity for queuing and generating reports
- Infinity Campus for managing and tracking student information
- EduSoft – for analyzing benchmark assessment data for instructional purposes

- K2 for process tracking and management
- Online Assessment Scores Information System (OASIS) for real time access to student assessment scores from different assessment programs.
- Encore- tracking Special Education IEPs and services
- MyDPS is a one-stop location for the teachers and staff to access templates for creating Student Goal Objectives (SGOs), enrolling for professional development courses and uploading PDU information.

Additionally, they have various interactive online tools which they use to pull data or reports together.

2. What data do you pull?

Student demographic information, test data, benchmark, professional evaluation data, teacher and student information, attendance, hire/retention data etc.

3. What tools do you use for the data analysis?

DPS uses variety of software to run their data analyses and generate reports for various audiences. Their software include, but are not limited to:

- TM1- for fiscal projections and accountability
- ProClarity for queuing and generating evaluation reports
- Infinity Campus for managing and tracking student information
- EduSoft – for analyzing benchmark assessment data for instructional purposes
- Creation Chambers – a web based application for recruiting staff and teachers.
- Geographical Information System (GIS) for projecting student enrollments and demographics, crime data.
- Online Assessment Scores Information System (OASIS) for real time access to student assessment scores from different assessment programs.
- Encore- tracking Special Education IEPs and services

4. What systems do you currently use for HR/Payroll and for managing student information?

DPS currently uses Lawson system for their HR/Payroll and Infinity Campus for managing student information.

Professional Development & Teacher Training

1. What professional development modules does DPS use? (principals, teachers, administrators)

DPS uses the Learning Leader 24/7 module developed by Dr. Douglas Reeves as part of their district mandated PD. The module honors the adult learner and is tailored to the way they learn.

In addition to the mandated PD, teachers are encouraged to develop their own Professional Development Units (PDUs) in collaboration with their supervisors. The PDUs are action-research based and entail completing approved courses, projects or assignments. The PDUs must reflect a DPS need, should be aligned with the district goals, and more importantly depict how completing the PDU will be utilized in the classroom and how it will impact student achievement or instruction delivery. PDUs have to be reviewed and approved by supervisor or leader before the teacher can start working

on the unit. Upon completion of the PDU, the participant must demonstrate the new skills and knowledge acquired via a presentation to peers or a portfolio, and the participants' reflection on the value of the knowledge and skills for use with their students. To earn the PDU credit, the teachers must spend 45 clock hours of effort, share their projects with their peers and reflect on the projects' potential for use in the classroom. Teachers earn a bonus/stipend upon successful completion of the PDU. ProComp reimburses for one PDU per year.

PDU can be an individual project or can be undertaken as a group project. Either way, the unit has to be reviewed and approved before the teacher(s) can embark on it. PDU can be job-embedded (a part of the regular instruction time). The beauty of PDUs is that teachers work on projects or assignments that they are interested in and is self-paced.

PDU is a win-win situation for the ProComp teachers and the veteran teachers as well. The PDU can be utilized towards getting a stipend, meeting state PD requirement or earning 3 graduate credit hours through area universities that DPS has partnerships with.

Schools Support Services

1. [How does DPS compensate teachers who are the teachers of record but happen to go on sick leave, leave of absence or maternity leave?](#)

Teachers who are on leave are compensated using the guidelines in Article 31. Teachers under remediation can get a bonus (depending on what the remediation is). If they successfully complete any their SGOs or PDUs, they will get rewarded.

2. [What incentives does DPS have for the permanent subs?](#)

Only contracted teachers are eligible to participate in the ProComp program.

3. [How does DPS compensate teachers who are hired late in the year? What about teachers who get reassigned midyear?](#)

From the hire day, new hires work with their principal to set measurable student goals objectives. If they complete their SGOs successfully and submit proper documentation, they will get the bonus.

4. [Does DPS have a system in place to evaluate the objectives developed by the teachers? Who ensures that the objectives are realistic and aligned to the district's goals and mission?](#)

Normally the teacher works with their principal or supervisor to set the SGOs. The SGOs are aligned to the district goals, campus and district improvement plans.

Grants Acquisition and Management

1. [How did DPS go about standardizing the ProComp program across the district to ensure that it is fair and equitable?](#)

- Reviewed student data and the teacher hiring and retention data
- Got input from the teachers as to what system will work best for them
- Solicited input from administrators, parents and community (all stakeholders)
- Conducted needs assessment to determine the campuses' and district's needs
- Aligned the program to the campus and district improvement plans and identified needs
- Determined what the district valued and wanted to reward for

- Created a program that is fair, equitable, sustainable, and manageable, and can ultimately impact student achievement.

Assessment

1. Does your state run an analysis of test data for schools/campuses? If so, how do you handle a **school** that has been identified by your **state** agency as having test anomalies? Are they allowed to receive an incentive award?

The state agency analyzes the student test data. DPS has not had to deal the test anomalies. However, if a school is identified by the state agency as having test anomalies, it will not qualify for the distinguished school incentive.

2. Does your district run an internal analysis of test data after each test? How is the analysis broken down, i.e. classroom, student level? How do you handle a **school** that has been identified at the **district** level as having test anomalies? Are they allowed to receive an incentive award?

The Assessment and Evaluation department analyzes the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) student test data internally to identify patterns and trends in the data. The analyses are broken down by grade, class and student. Each campus has a data team comprised of the administrators, teachers and the instructional coaches who are charged with the responsibility of reviewing student data to depict trends and identify areas that need further intervention. The student data is also reviewed at the grade level meetings. DPS has not uncovered any test anomalies. However, if a school is identified by the district as having test anomalies, it will not qualify for the distinguished school incentive.

3. If anomalies are found at the **teacher** level, would the rest of the campus be allowed to receive an incentive award?

DPS has not dealt with this issue. The bonus for students exceeding expectations on the state assessment (CSAP) is only available for Literacy and Math teachers in grades 4 – 10. The bonus is awarded to the individual teacher whose students exceed growth expectations on the state assessment program. The bonus will not be withheld because of problems with another teacher's test results.

4. How do you handle incentive pay for teachers that do not teach core classes? Do they receive any award? If so, is it weighted differently?

Teachers who do not teach core classes are eligible for the distinguished school bonus. Every staff member working at a distinguished school who is in ProComp is eligible for the bonus. The bonus is not weighted but prorated based on the full-time-equivalent (FTE) or the amount of time the employee is assigned to work in a school that is identified as distinguished.

5. If there is an anomaly in one subject area but not in another, how is that handled as far as incentives are concerned?

Student achievement bonus is based on significant growth or improvement in both subject areas covered by the state test (Literacy and Math).

6. If school or teacher anomalies are found during one testing year, how long do you wait before incentives are given to a school or teacher?

DPS has not dealt with testing anomalies issue.

7. Do you have an appeal process for campuses or teachers who are not receiving an award due to a testing anomaly?

The ProComp program has a Professional Review Panel (PRP) that handles any requests for dispute hearing about any compensation issue. The PRP is a vital safeguard in the ProComp program. The panel is comprised of equal number of teachers and administrators who hear and resolve disputes about pay decisions on all ProComp elements. Attached in appendix %%%% gives more details on the PRP and the dispute process.

8. Do you have hard-to-staff campuses? If so, is the award criteria the same for these schools as it is for others?

DPS gives bonuses to teachers who work in hard-to-serve schools. DPS uses poverty indicators, neighborhood crime rate, and student demographics (% of special education students and % of English language learners) to identify the hard-to-staff campuses. Additionally, DPS gives bonuses to those who fill the hard-to-staff positions (nurses, speech language, special education, psychologist, ELAS Teachers and ELAS Counselors).

Strengths of the ProComp Program

1. Teachers have opportunities to increase earnings at their own pace and have control over what is used to determine their bonuses.
2. Partnerships – ProComp established and maintain partnership with the local bargaining unit -Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA). Likewise, they established and maintain partnership with the area universities.
3. Consulted with economist – Douglas Ross who created the fiscal model for the program. Mr. Ross sought the maximum allowable adjusted for inflation.
4. Stable funding source (mill levy) – guaranteed \$ 25 million adjusted for inflation till 2011.
5. Personnel/leadership stability within the ProComp department- Ms. Scott and Mr. Ramon have been spearheading the ProComp program from inception and have promised to stick till it is successfully implemented in all schools.
6. Communication – DPS invested a lot of time and money in reaching out to the stakeholders.
7. Relationships and trust – DPS invested a lot of time in building relationships and trust among all stakeholders. Ms. Scott repeatedly pointed out that establishing and maintaining relationships and trust with all stakeholders is critical to the successful planning and implementation of the program
8. Assurance to the taxpayers that funds will not be misallocated and will be used solely for compensating teachers for their contributions to student achievement, their own professional development and their willingness to take on most challenging assignments or schools.
9. Equity and fairness- all teachers have equal access to the ProComp funds and that the compensation is administered fairly using the same criteria for all teachers.

Challenges of the ProComp

1. Sustaining new initiatives over a long time to make an impact on teachers and students.
2. Capacity building to ensure that all the stakeholders are on the same page
3. Staff and teacher turnovers
4. Teachers' attitudes to change. Ms. Scott pointed out that the way any program is presented makes a huge difference.
5. Budget cuts have impacted the IT group and ultimately ProComp. Ms. Scott pointed that it takes about 6 FTE dedicated solely to the ProComp department to complete the behind the scenes tasks that have to be done to make the program successful.
6. Veteran teacher buy in. Some of the veteran teachers have been resistant to joining the ProComp program.