

May 20, 1999  
Denver Classroom Teachers Association  
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## **A. Demographics**

*Number of Schools:* 110

*Elementary* 81

*Middle:* 18

*High School* 12

*Other* 9 Alternative Schools

(The above figure includes five charter schools. Charter schools are independent of the union. The figure also includes 12 magnet schools, 5 elementary, 7 secondary)

*Total number of employees by classification:*

*Certified:*

(Bargaining Unit) 4,118 Including classroom teachers, special education teachers, psychologists, counselors, social workers, librarians, nurses, etc. The classroom teacher portion of the bargaining unit breaks down, ethnically, as follows: Caucasian: 76.2%; Hispanic: 14.2%; African American: 8.1%; Asian: 1.2% and Native American: 0.3%

*Classified:* 1312

*Management/supervisory:* 285

*Other* 361 Professional-Technical which includes accounting, computer technicians, some secretarial, etc.

*Current enrollment by level:* 68,893

*Elementary* 35,010 (Includes early childhood)

*Middle:* 14,223

*High School:* 16,597

*Current enrollment by race/ethnicity*

*Caucasian: 24.4%*

*Hispanic: 49.8%*

*Black/African American: 21.0%*

*Asian: 3.4%*

*Other: 1.4%*

*Current enrollment - Language: 13,070 Spanish speakers, 1,590 who speak one of 80 other languages.*

*Average Class Size by level:* The staffing ratio is approximately 25-1. DCTA receives reports from teachers that class sizes in elementary average around 25, middle school around 30-31 and high school 31-32. At k-3, when the class exceeds 25, paraprofessional time is assigned, up to three hours. 4<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, classes may not exceed 35, or 170 per day at secondary.

*Primary: 25*

*Upper: 25*

*Middle/Junior High: 30-31*

*High School: 31-32*

*Private School enrollments in area/trends:* Private school enrollment is stable. Denver Public Schools enrollment is increasing. During the 1960's and through the 80's and first half of the 90's, Denver Public Schools were under a desegregation order which caused significant white flight. Recently, however, the order was lifted, in part explaining the recent enrollment increases. Estimated private school enrollment is 12,000

*School District Budget*

*Total expenditures: \$522,142,494.00*

*Expenditures per student: \$5,688.15*

**B. Significant Background Information:**

*. Union Structure/Roles*

*Officers (Names, longevity)*

Andra Giunta, President - 2 years, beginning second term in 99-2000

Becky Wissink, Vice President - 2 years, beginning second term in 99-2000

Marsha Burger, Secretary - 1 year

Doug Bushnell, Treasurer - 1 year

### *Executive Body*

Board of Directors includes four officers plus sixteen area directors each representing a portion of one of four geographic areas of the district. In addition, Denver has two seats on the state CEA Board of Directors. Both of these state directors also sit on the DCTA Board. The Board of Directors meets monthly.

### *Representative Body*

The DCTA policy making body is the Representative Council which includes one representative per building, plus additional representation based upon the size of the site. The representative council meets once per month.

*Committees - Union:* Committees 1-7 are standing committees that continue from year to year. The Effective Schools committee was established in response to a district move to redesign schools.

1. UniServe Unit Council- A coalition group of four representatives of the teacher unit and four representatives of the secretarial unit that governs the Uniserv Unit which provides staffing and support to both organizations.
2. Executive Committee - DCTA Officers and two board members that meet as needed to address DCTA issues between meetings of the Board of Directors.
3. Negotiations Team - A group of ten members appointed by the President and charged with bargaining the contract.
4. Central Grievance Board - Approves grievances for mediation or arbitration, represents unit members in some grievances at steps 1 and 2. Grievance Board also conducts advocacy training for site representatives.
5. Membership Team - The committee designed with implementing the membership recruitment program.
6. Political Action/Legislative Committee The DCTA makes efforts to balance the partisan representation on this committee, which interviews and recommends candidate and issue endorsements, and develops the DCTA legislative agenda in concert with the state Association.
7. Minority Concerns Task Force The Task Force develops and educates the membership on issues relating to the education of minority students.
8. Effective Schools Committee. This committee is the DCTA's counterpart to the joint effective schools committee defined below.

### *Committees: Joint:*

1. Effective Schools Committee - Committee size is approximately 14 members, 6 of whom are appointed by the DCTA President. The role of the committee is to establish guidelines and procedures to determine whether a school was functioning successfully i.e.; to deal with the issue of low performing schools. The District had announced that two schools would be redesigned. DCTA demanded involvement in the decision and insisted that the focus should be on school effectiveness rather than redesign of schools. The committee developed a document to identify necessary components for effective schools. These were used to identify two schools that were jointly redesigned. While the committee was initially successful, recent district moves have caused some members appointed by DCTA have dropped off. The lack of success is attributed to lack of commitment by the district first evaluate the two earlier redesigned schools before a decision to redesign others. As a result, DCTA Representative Council adopting a motion to cease participation in school redesign the district agrees to evaluate the success or failure of two schools which were redesigned in 1997.

2. Agreement Review Committee - Four representatives of the district and four of the union (the President and three UniServ Staff) meet monthly to review issues related to the contract.
3. Health Benefits Board - The Board is composed of four representatives from the District, four from the DCTA and four from the other district unions.. DCTA representatives are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Representative Council. The role of the committee is to review and shape the benefits package for all district employees. The negotiations team bargains the district contribution to benefits, and the HBB deals with the specifics of the package.
4. Retirement Board - A fifteen member group including seven who are elected by members of the DCTA bargaining unit. The Retirement Board is responsible for the day to day operation of the Denver Public Schools pension program.

*Permanent Union Staff (Names, positions, tenure)*

1. Bruce Dickinson, Executive Director, 11 years. Teacher in Colorado Springs for 10 years, union staff in Colorado for 14 years prior to assignment in Denver.
2. Rich Nass, Uniserv Director, 18 years. Teacher in Colorado for 9 years prior to assignment in Denver.
3. Emily Watson, Uniserv Director, 3 years. Taught school for 17 years in Virginia and Tennessee. Participated in the NEA Women & Minority intern program prior to assignment in Denver.

*Term limits*

All Board of Director members and Officers may serve a maximum of two two year terms.

*Union Partnerships*

The Reading Plus Project: A project of the Denver Mayor's Office, 4 area Universities, The Public Education Business Coalition (The PEBC is a coalition of business and educational agencies with a pro-public education agenda and an interest in improving public schools), Aurora and Greeley Education Associations and the DCTA to create a half of a master's degree program for teachers in the area of literacy.

Ford Foundation Planning Grant: A project funded by the Piton and Ford Foundations and including the District, DCTA, the two foundations the Public Education Business Coalition (PEBC) and La Raza. The project includes a grant to assist in planning staff development for standards based instruction.

Denver Cross City Schools: A coalition composed of DCTA, parents, administrators from the District (not appointed by the district), the Piton Foundation. Initially formed to institute site based decisionmaking and decentralization. Some work has been done to train teachers and parents around site based budgeting. The group continues to meet to determine the next area of focus.

NEA Urban Grant to provide Public Radio News about Schools - A coalition between the High Plains News Service (a regional news service) and DCTA to provide and promote positive news about schools and what the Union is doing to improve schools in Denver.

*Principal means of communication with members:*

1. Monthly newspaper - "Slate" produced by DCTA and distributed to the membership.
2. Newsletter - "Action" provides membership with timely information on current DCTA activities.
3. "Negotiations News" published on an as needed basis to inform members about the status of negotiations.
4. Broadcast telephone system that permits telephone messages to be delivered on a timely basis to all leadership (Board of Directors, Officers, Site Representatives)
5. Website in the developmental stage.

*Membership Engagement*

1. Planned outreach to membership including a survey, site visits, public relations and organizing assistance on education reform issues.

*Significant recent budget developments (cutbacks, infusions) if any:*

The District, with the support of DCTA, passed a \$17 million operating fund increase and a \$305 million bond for instructional improvements in November, 1998.

*In order to understand this district, what is it necessary to know/understand?*

Labor-management relationship: The relationship between DCTA and the District is still highly adversarial, though slightly improved since the 5 day teacher strike in 1994. Improvement is due to the fact that one supportive School Board member has taken an interest in negotiations. The middle level managers who implement the contract, when permitted, attempt to implement the contract equitably. Top managers, however, are not keyed into the contract, and tend to make decisions without considering its impact. Collaboration, to the top administration, is when DCTA agrees with the decision.

*Key crises:*

The school redesign issue is an example to the significant relationship problem between DCTA and the District. The district, with cooperation of DCTA, redesigned two schools, effective the 1997-98 school year, through the dialog developed in the Effective Schools Committee. Subsequently, when DCTA raised questions regarding evaluation of the success of these redesigned schools, the district simply ignored the process which had been agreed to, and unilaterally have announced the redesign of two additional schools.

Currently, DCTA is involved in negotiation of a new contract to be effective on September 1, 1999. The stakes in these negotiations are high. The redesign of schools is an important issue, and the recent district decision to unilaterally redesign two schools has added significantly to the tension. Site based decisionmaking is also a crucial bargaining issue. Eight years ago, when the Governor came in and virtually dictated a contract settlement to the parties, a number of working conditions issues were assigned to the Collaborative Decisionmaking Committees at the site. Recently, a major review (copy attached) of the CDM process has recommended that the CDM process deal with student achievement and not with working conditions. As a result, the DCTA believes that the working conditions belong back in the contract, while the district resists.

*Measured outcomes - test scores, college acceptance rates (1997-98 & 1998-99)*

Several measures included: Iowa Test of Basic Skills Scores, districtwide and districtwide by level; attendance data disaggregated by ethnicity from 1993-94 through 1997-98 and Gifted and Talented Program again, disaggregated by ethnicity from 1988-89 through 1996-97.

*Current Superintendency:*

*Name:* Irving Moskowitz

*Background:*

Taught somewhere in Pennsylvania briefly. Came to Denver as an administrator, approximately 20 years ago. Left Denver for a superintendency in Cleveland Heights, Ohio and Pomona California before returning to Denver in September, 1994.

*Tenure:* 5 years

*Management team:*

The management team is composed of the Superintendent, Chief Operating Officer (financial), Chief Personnel Officer, an Elementary Superintendent a Secondary Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services, Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services

All of the top level managers operate with a top-down management style and believe that the key to accountability is to find someone to blame. The current Superintendent is leaving effective June 30, 1999, and the district is currently involved in a nationwide search.

*Other employee unions (Name, approximate unit membership, relationship to teachers)*

Secretarial/clerical: Denver Association of Education Office Personnel represents the secretarial clerical staff. The DAEOP is affiliated with the Colorado Education Association and the National Education Association. The union shares offices and staff with the DCTA and they are the participants in the UniServ Unit Council referenced above. The DAEOP has approximately 200 members with a potential of approximately 480. The DAEOP has its own collective bargaining agreement.

Buildings & Grounds: The Association of Buildings and Grounds, an unaffiliated group represents these employees who are primarily the skilled trades employees. The organization does not bargain collectively, however, they do have a set of guidelines that are discussed with the district. The unit has 155 members. Membership in the organization is unknown. The DCTA has no relationship with this organization

Custodians: These employees are represented by the Communication Workers of America, Local 7777, AFL-CIO. They have their own collective bargaining agreement. There are approximately 266 members in this unit - union membership is unknown. The DCTA has recently begun to work with this local in discussions regarding the upcoming school board election.

Facility Managers This is an unaffiliated group of 110 employees who are the head custodians at the school site.

Bus drivers: The Amalgamated Transit Union (Local 1563 - AFL/CIO) represents the bus drivers and mechanics. The Bus Drivers have their own bargaining unit and collective bargaining agreement. The unit size is about 140 FTE's and union membership is unknown. The DCTA has no relationship with this organization.

Food services: These employees are represented by an unaffiliated group called the Association of Food Service Employees. This group does not bargain collectively, but does discuss employment issues with the District. The unit is composed of 90 FTE's. Association membership is unknown. DCTA has no relationship with this group.

Principals: Denver principals belong to three separate groups based upon level: Elementary, Middle, High School. These groups do not bargain. DCTA has no relationship with these groups.

Paraprofessionals: The Denver Federation for Paraprofessionals is represented by the AFT. There are approximately 1680 paraprofessionals, most of whom work a part time assignment with not benefits. Union membership is unknown. DCTA has recently begun to attempt a relationship with this group.

In addition to the above, there are several other organizations in existence that have minority memberships in some of the above categories. These groups are not recognized by the district.

*Status of contract:*

*Expiration of current agreement:* August 31, 1999

*Agency fee:* No

*Binding arbitration:*

No. The contract does contain advisory arbitration. DCTA has proceeded to Advisory Arbitration approximately 40 times in the past five years. Breakdown of decisions splits about 50/50. When the decision rendered favors DCTA, the district generally receives, but ignores the decision.

*Strikes:*

The DCTA has struck the district twice. First, in 1968, there was a two week strike. Second, in 1994, there was a five day strike. In 1968, the strike was successful in that the Association obtained its' first master agreement. The 1994 strike resulted in winning a legal right to strike through the courts in addition to protecting and improving several terms and conditions of employment.

*Unfair labor practices:* (Non-bargaining state)

*Significant litigation:*

1994 - DCTA won a suit in Colorado Court of Appeals when the district unilaterally allowed unit members to stop dues deductions. Result: district was required to pay DCTA \$180,000

1994 - Strike - District attempted to have strike declared illegal with teachers ordered back to work. District court ruled that strike was legal, and teachers were not ordered back.

1993 Court upheld that district did not have pay an agreed upon wage increase of 3.5% based the district's argument that it had an inability to pay.

*Approximate number of grievances per year:*

Many settled at informal stages. Actual formal grievances filed: about 40 per year.

*Union role in community:*

*Political endorsements:* DCTA endorses candidates for school board, state legislature, school board races. There is little DCTA involvement in city politics, though the union is reconsidering whether or not to become more involved in city races.

*Community engagement:* (See partnership discussion above)

## **C. Education Reform**

*Union posture:*

*Pro/anti reform:*

The union leadership is crafting a reform agenda around the recommendations of the National Commission for Teaching and America's Future which includes a distinct membership engagement program and a set of proposals currently being negotiated at the bargaining table.

*Membership attitudes* Members have been surveyed around the issues contained in the National Commission's report. The membership response was more positive than expected, but still not as high as the support for traditional bread and butter issues. Copies and results of surveys are included with the attached material.

*Financial commitment:* The Union has budgeted \$500 per teacher to a maximum of 5 teachers toward national board certification. Approximately 10-15% of the time of the three full time staff members of DCTA are devoted toward education reform and instructional issues. The union has budgeted \$2,500 toward the DCTA Leadership Institute, which offer, in conjunction with a local university, graduate credit to teachers who participate in courses around collaborative decisionmaking, conflict resolution, understanding thinking/personality styles.

*Reform elements in contract:*

*Shared Decisionmaking* The contract contains a comprehensive shared decisionmaking program including teachers, parents, students and the principal. The program includes a broad decisionmaking scope which theoretically allows for democratic decisionmaking in Denver's schools.

*Organization/structure for reform:*

*Central coordinating structure:*

See "Effective Schools Committee" under "Joint Committees" above. The DCTA has proposed and is attempting to negotiate an "Educational Initiatives Panel" to guide reform efforts in the district. The district has shown some responsiveness and it anticipated that this will be successful in some form.

*District office structure:* None

*Union structure:* None

*Responsibility (within union - leaders? Staff?)*

Primarily, the Effective Schools Committee has handled reform issues for the Union. One of the UniServ Directors has been responsible as a liaison to the committee.

### *Organization around standards*

#### *Implementation:*

The State Legislature has adopted legislation directing the State Department of Education to develop standards. The standards have been adopted. At each district in the state, student content standards which implement the statewide standards are being developed. In Denver, student standards are 85-90% complete.

#### *Role of union:*

The union's role has been to encourage members at the sites to participate in shaping the standards. Once the state standards were adopted, the union has been involved in the development of the Ford grant regarding staff development around standards implementation.

#### *Development of standards:*

Administrative and teacher workgroups have been established in both grade level and subject areas to develop the content standards at the district level. Administrators and teachers were selected by the district from volunteers. The work is progressing and is 85/90% complete.

### *Professional Development*

#### *Program description & Operation:*

There is a statewide mandate that each new teacher participate in an induction process which includes: a) an assigned mentor; b) classes offered in instructional methodology and c) classes in content. Three types of credit are offered for these classes including credit for the mandated induction program; salary credit in the district; and credit within the district new teacher induction program. The district provides staff development monies to the sites for utilization by the sites through the Collaborative Decisionmaking Committees. Departments also provide staff development including the Bilingual department, Special Education, etc.

#### *Relationship to union:*

The District and Union have jointly developed, tabulated and reported two surveys regarding the effectiveness of the staff development program. Most important findings were that new teachers expect principals to provide leadership and/or direction for their schools, and that the most important determinate to success for new teachers was the peer support that the new teacher receives at the site. The two surveys and the survey results are included with these materials.

#### *Relationship to colleges/universities:* None

#### *Union structure/organization:*

The DCTA provides the DCTA Leadership Institute defined above. The DCTA is in the process of developing its own Instructional and Professional Development Committee which will help establish instructional policy and best practice. The Minority Concerns Task Force has provided articles regarding teaching and learning of minority students.

*Low performing Schools* (See discussion under Effective Schools Committee)

#### *Incentives for school improvement - measures to raise student achievement or teacher quality:*

Teachers can get tuition for one university class reimbursed every five years. Also, teachers can obtain credit on the salary schedule for participating in district approved workshops.

*Peer review:*

*Program description:*

The contract provides a peer assistance team of three peers for probationary and non-probationary teachers who are experiencing difficulty. The principal determines whether or not the teacher is experiencing difficulty, however the peer assistance team may be accepted or rejected by the individual. The members of the peer assistance team are unit members who have undergone training in the subject area and/or level, classroom management, lesson design, assessment, etc. Attempts are made to match the peer assistance with the needs of the teacher receiving the help.

Currently, it looks doubtful that the program will be expanded in the immediate future. The DCTA Bargaining Team is reluctant to increase the peer program due to lack of trust. The District is interested in merit pay and feels that increased peer involvement in evaluation may lead to less administrative authority as it relates to granting merit increases.

*School based management/decisionmaking related to school improvement*

*Program structure:*

The contract contains an extensive detailed article specifying significant aspects of shared or collaborative decisionmaking throughout the district. Each school is mandated to create a "Collaborative Decisionmaking Committee (CDM)" whose composition is specified to include a minimum of the principal, four elected teachers, one elected classified employee, four elected parents, one community/business representative selected by the other members of the CDM. Two student representatives selected by the student council are mandated in middle schools and high schools.

*Role of site teams:*

*The CDM's are given extensive authority by the contract language.* Roles defined for school based committees in Colorado state legislation are assigned to CDM's. In addition, the contract provides a list of responsibilities including: 1) Design of the instructional program; 2) establish school goals; 3) development of school policies and procedures including discipline and safety; 4) budgeting and allocation of site budgets; 5) staffing at the school including filling of vacancies, determining staff reductions; 6) oversee co-curricular activities. The CDM's also are given authority to play a significant role in selecting and evaluating site principals. In reality, however, many site based teams are controlled by strong, autocratic principals, and this visionary role is not fulfilled.

*Site budgets:*

Site budgets are within the purview of the CDM Committee, however implementation is mixed. Those sites that push for site budget involvement are generally able to exert significant influence. Those that are unable to "buck" the principal generally do not have the authority.

*Contract/rule waivers:*

The contract provides for waivers of the contract, however, in eight years, the DCTA has not received a request for a waiver.

*Other major reform efforts (Description, scope, relationship to union) None*

Attachments:

1. Directory of DCTA Officers, Board of Directors, others
2. List of Denver Public Schools, Address, Phone, Principal
3. Charter Schools within DPS.
4. DPS Human Resources Department Affirmative Action Report
5. 1996-99 DPS-DCTA Collective Bargaining Agreement
6. DCTA Monthly Newspaper - The Slate
7. DCTA Newsletter - DCTA Action
8. DCTA Bargaining Report - Negotiations News
9. DCTA Budget - 1998-99
10. DCTA/DAEOP UniServ Unit Budget - 1998-99
11. 1998-99 DCTA bargaining surveys and survey results.
12. DPS Ranking of Elementary Schools basedd on percentage of students on free & reduced lunch 1998-99.
13. DPS Report of Attendance - 1997-98.
14. DPS 1997-98 Iowa Test of Basic Skills test results
15. DPS Gifted & Talented participation summary, 1988-89 through 1996-97
16. DPS Special Education participation summary, 1993-94 through 1997-98
17. February, 1999 Study of Collaborative Decisionmaking in Denver
18. DPS Criteria & Process for redesign of selected elementary schools
19. 1997 MOU re: Opening/Closing Procedures for Redesigned Schools
20. 3-17-99 DCTA Bargaining Proposal for Effective Schools
21. New Teacher Survey Report, May, 1998
22. New Teacher Survey, Part II - February, 1998
23. New Teacher Survey Results - Part II