

PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

Colorado teachers and education support professionals are deeply committed to every student's success. We want all students to achieve their full potential as individuals and become productive citizens who make positive contributions to society.

We believe that educators provide the stable, nurturing, inspiring environment that makes it possible to teach each student and provide individual attention to each student's learning needs. To this end, we work to ensure that every student has a qualified, caring educator.

We believe that we must change the way educators are recruited, trained, evaluated, supported, and held accountable. We believe we must raise the bar for what it means to be a quality educator by focusing on:

- Preparing new educators for the classroom,
- Attracting and retaining educators,
- Ensuring high standards for all educators,
- Providing continuous, high quality professional development for all educators,
- Revamping evaluation systems to ensure effective educators,
- Promoting effective teachers and quality educators, and
- Improving educators' salaries and working conditions.

We believe that working on these key elements of professional excellence will ensure that all students in Colorado public schools have the benefit of qualified, caring, committed educators throughout their school years.



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Quality teaching is the most important factor in helping students learn. We expect every teacher in Colorado's public education system to demonstrate the essential characteristics of a quality teacher: mastery of and pedagogical expertise in the content they teach, the ability to establish a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment for a diverse population of students, planning and delivery of effective instruction in an environment that facilitates students' learning, the ability to analyze and reflect on one's teaching practice, and the demonstration of leadership in his or her schools and in the teaching profession.

We expect every school district to foster an environment that promotes teaching excellence by valuing and trusting educators and by attracting, supporting, and retaining effective educators. We are confident that such an environment will lead to the high quality instruction that advances every student's learning.

Preparing Effective Educators: We believe it is essential to recruit talented, committed individuals to the teaching profession in order to develop a professional workforce which complements our students' diversity.

As educating today's students requires new responsibilities and competencies, teacher preparation programs must train teachers to fully understand academic content and the theory and practice of teaching and to demonstrate competent teaching skills before they are hired into teaching positions. We must ensure that teacher preparation helps teachers understand how cultural differences affect student learning, lead classrooms with diverse student populations, employ strategies to assist second-language learners in acquiring proficiency in English to succeed in school, and differentiate instruction to accommodate their students' special needs. New teachers should have the skills to enter the classroom knowing how to craft and administer reliable assessments, how to engage in data analysis and application, and how to use technology for their instruction and student learning.

We believe in expanding opportunities for prospective teachers to become high quality teachers by combining college coursework with intensive internships supervised by school-based educators.

"I had the good fortune to have a number of great teachers as I was growing up. They encouraged and challenged me; they connected to each of us and connected all of us to the subjects we studied. With strong role models like these teachers, how could I not want to be a teacher and try to do for my students what my teachers did for me?"

*– Amber Hutton, Future Teacher
Metropolitan State University of Denver*

Attracting and Retaining Effective Educators: The rewards of a public education career should mirror society's high regard for the professionals who inspire our students to achieve. This is accomplished when educators' compensation levels are competitive with other professions which have similar requirements for education, preparation, knowledge, and skills.

Entry-level educators' salaries must reflect their education levels and expertise. Veteran educators' salaries demand sufficient marketplace value so that every district retains a highly-skilled workforce.

Supporting Effective Educators: Effective teachers continuously improve their practice because they want to gain a deeper understanding of subjects they teach, learn innovative instructional methods, and apply appropriate assessment strategies to improve student outcomes. Teachers who consistently work together in grade/content teams and who participate in collaboratively-designed, well-crafted professional development not only advance student achievement, but also improve their skills and achieve job satisfaction.

Formal, comprehensive induction systems are important in the first three years of teaching, under the guidance of experienced teacher-mentors and with the support of time during the school day to participate in induction activities. Educators benefit from the expertise of their peers who offer rigorous, differentiated mentoring that helps fellow teachers improve student achievement.

Customized training and support benefits new teachers and those who need intensive assistance and mentoring. Such opportunities help educators build subject-matter knowledge and incorporate feedback that rapidly improves their instruction.

Other ways districts can support effective educators are helping establish peer assistance and review programs, providing equitable access to resources, training, and technology, negotiating improvements in teaching and learning conditions, and working collaboratively with educators to determine how to use flexible schedules and changes in the school day and school year.

“Talking about teacher effectiveness does not mean we do not have effective teachers and we need to somehow create them. Teacher effectiveness is about identifying the teachers who are doing great and amazing things and helping them share their successes with others in the profession.”

*– Zachary Rupp, Elementary Music
Denver Classroom Teachers Association*

Evaluating Effective Educators: Achieving the goal of an effective teacher in every classroom starts with fair, comprehensive evaluation systems that enhance teachers' practice and advance student learning. CEA supports statewide evaluation requirements that ensure that all teachers have:

- Meaningful, continuous, comprehensive, and valid feedback from their supervisors and peers about their instructional practices,
- Performance evaluations that consider the data from multiple, research-based measures of student learning, and
- Informal, collaborative feedback on their instructional practices before the evaluator conducts a formal performance evaluation.

We believe that if the evidence demonstrates that a teacher is not suited to remain in the teaching profession, separation will be initiated in a fair, transparent, efficient, and cost-effective dismissal process.



“For too long, teachers have been in the back of the boat while other people who are not even in education make decisions for students. Teachers need to take ownership of their profession, just like doctors and lawyers do. When teachers own their profession, they will have more say in and more responsibility for the curriculum and student outcomes.”

*– Andrew Burns, Middle School Social Studies
Cherry Creek Education Association*