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To those of you who have been working since July, we hope your new school year is off to a good start. Those of you just starting, welcome back! We would like to give you an update on what you can expect for the 2007-2008 school year. Your Douglas County Federation representatives have been your voice on many committees during this past year and are proud to share the following news with you.

Class Coverage Pay

The 2007-2008 newly negotiated rate of pay for class coverage has been increased to \$30.00.

Online Pay Stubs

The District process is underway with “online pay stubs and W-2 forms.” This project will not only reduce use of paper, but it is a more secure method. Your online pay statement will be available on your scheduled pay date and will include the same information that was on your paper pay statement. In addition, you will have online access to a history of your pay statements from January 2007 to the most recent. The District’s goal is to have online check stubs for all employee groups by January 1, 2008.

Infinite Campus

Elementary schools will be opening their portals for parents during September and October. Parents will be able to access their student’s attendance, immunization, fees, and Elementary Progress Report (EPR) data from IC. However, the grade book function will not be turned on for elementary parents during the 07/08 school year. Decisions around grade book will not be made until Essential Learnings are complete and reviewed for application to the EPR and the elementary grade book. Secondary schools will continue to use the IC electronic grade book. The parent portal remains open for all secondary schools and on-line registration will be an option for all middle and high schools this year. Continued trainings will occur for users of IC and will be posted on the IC site. In addition, all new updates to the program will be rolled out to users through IT and the application support staff.

Credits Earned Prior to 9th Grade

A student may earn up to 4 credits towards a Douglas County School District high school diploma prior to the official start of the 9th grade school year. Credit will be awarded for successful completion of any Douglas County School District high school summer session content course as defined in the District summer school guide or approved equivalent, any mathematics course which exceeds the expectations of an Algebra 1 course, any World Language course which exceeds the expectations of level 1, any content area course meeting Board of Education criteria and which exceeds the expectations of a typical Douglas County 9th grade course as approved by the high school building administration. You can find more information about approved credit on the Douglas County School District’s website.

World Language in Elementary

Thanks to the voter approved mill levy over-ride in the last bond and budget election, World Languages will be offered in thirteen selected elementary schools. Eight schools and four Discovery programs will be piloting these new programs. World language teachers have been hired to implement the language of each school’s choice. Eight schools will offer Spanish and the others will offer Mandarin Chinese. Video iPods will aid in the process of language instruction and acquisition.

DRA 2

Fourth through sixth grade teachers will be trained in the DRA 2. The minimum assessment requirement in grades four through six is for all ILP students to be assessed.

Changes made for K-3 are as follows:

- A paraprofessional can enter data
- If an end of the year assessment has been given, a teacher then needs to assess at the end of the first semester and at the end of the school year
- Minimum requirement is to test students to grade level benchmarks

eDCSD – Online Education

DCSD and the Department of Learning Services have developed a vision and beliefs regarding an online high school and virtual learning programs. Virtual education represents a twenty-first century approach to teaching and learning appropriate for today's students. Technology advances, particularly in the development and dissemination of resources through the internet, can provide alternatives that can be customized to serve the diverse needs for **all** of today's student populations within or outside the school building. Furthermore, technology and online education, including both full-time and supplemental programs, are important tools that can be used to enhance educational opportunities and improve educational outcomes. It is a fundamental value of DCSD that students and families have choices in their schools and models of education, including virtual courses and programs. The name *eDCSD* has been chosen to signify virtual educational opportunities in Douglas County. This fall the online offerings will focus initially on secondary courses. All courses offered virtually will meet the accreditation guidelines set forth by Learning Services. Online courses will be aligned to courses that occur in the physical classroom. Content will be rigorous and aligned to district and state standards, enabling teachers to adjust the scope and sequence of instruction to meet students' academic and learning needs. In addition, essential learnings and quality criterion-based assessments will be embedded in each course. Students may engage in *eDCSD* online courses for purposes of credit recovery, as an extension of their learning, or as an alternative to the traditional learning environment. Most importantly, all virtual courses will be taught by DCSD highly qualified content experts. *eDCSD* is committed to using our teachers and aligning our curriculum to meet the diverse needs of all of our learners.

Curriculum

Learning Services, along with teacher cadres, will continue to work on the following:

- Essential Learnings in elective course offerings, science, and social studies
- Integration of Information Science and Technology across the curriculum
- Instrumental music staffing realignment
- Critical Thinking exemplars and sample assessments for core areas

Learning Center

The Learning Center has a home. It is located near Human Resources – North, in Highlands Ranch. The first waiver candidates have been hired and are going through intensive training offered by our own district trainers. The Learning Center focus for the next year will be to continue work related to the training of waiver candidates in hard to fill areas: high school math, science, world languages, and Special Education (both elementary and secondary). It will continue to implement research-based professional development and provide opportunities for both certified and classified personnel to expand their expertise in job related knowledge and skills.

Performance Pay

The PPIC (Performance Pay Improvement Committee) continues to study and draft revisions regarding Teacher Performance Pay. No changes have been made and the program will continue in its current state for the 2007-2008 school year.

Evaluations

After many years of work and two years of piloting, the new evaluation system will be rolled out to all certified employees this year. It aligns with the administration evaluation. Certified staff will receive training within the first six weeks of school. All regular status teachers will be on a Performance Evaluation Model allowing for more teacher ownership and reflection on growth than ever before. The Classified Employee evaluation system is in the process of being developed.

As you can see, we have been working on initiatives that positively impact both students and staff. If you would like to become more involved and participate on a district committee or if you have any questions, please contact our office.

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