

Jeffco Schools reaches agreement with teachers union

Jeffco Public Schools has reached tentative agreement on contract negotiations with the Jefferson County Education Association (JCEA). The contract must be approved by the Jefferson County Board of Education and ratified by JCEA members.

The district and its teachers have agreed to a 2.7 percent cost of living increase, effective Sept. 1, 2008 along with annual step (years of service) and level (educational credits) increases and medical benefits.

Both sides worked hard at the bargaining table to find creative solutions to address teacher workload concerns. To that end, the new tentative agreement includes:

- \$1.4 million to be set aside to help teachers with workload issues. Each Jeffco school will receive \$10 thousand to use for paraprofessional support or other strategies that will help teachers manage an increased level of responsibility. Working collaboratively, school administrators and teachers in every school will decide how to most effectively spend the money on workload relief.

Other financial highlights of the tentative agreement include:

- The district is seriously considering a mill levy election for November 2008. If the mill levy passes, teachers will earn an additional .5 percent salary increase.
- The district will also be incurring an additional .9 percent employer contribution to PERA (Public Employees' Retirement Association).

"I am pleased that we were able to reach this agreement with JCEA and look forward to working with them for the benefit of our students and teachers," said Jeffco Public Schools' Superintendent Cindy Stevenson. "This is a fair settlement that reflects the success of our teachers in managing the dramatically increasing expectations for our schools."

JCEA President Nancy Henderson said, "Jeffco teachers are pleased that with the 2.7% salary increase, Jeffco Public Schools will remain competitive in recruiting high quality teachers. We are also encouraged that the school district recognizes the need for additional resources to help teachers manage all the mandated programs and the extra demands on their professional time. This money will be used to support teacher efforts to improve the quality of their instruction and the time they spend working directly with students."