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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jeffco Public Schools at impasse with teachers union

This week, contract talks between Jeffco Public Schools and its teacher's union, the Jefferson County Education Association (JCEA), went to impasse after the board of JCEA voted to reject the district's pay proposal. The Jefferson County Board of Education supports the proposed contract offer which gives most Jeffco employees a total of 4.5 percent increase for 2009-2010.

"I am saddened that JCEA doesn't support what we consider a fair and reasonable money offer in these difficult economic times," said Jeffco Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Cindy Stevenson.

Negotiating teams from the two sides have been meeting since January 2009 and jointly developed the offer, which was then taken to the respective boards for approval. The district is offering its teachers:

- Increases in steps (years of service) and levels (educational credits), as well as a one-time, one percent salary payment in fall 2009.
- If the district is allowed to keep \$11 million dollars funded by the state, but held in reserve by state mandate until January 29, 2010, the one percent given as a one-time payment would be included in the salary schedule as an ongoing increase.
- The average step increase is 2.50 percent; the range of steps and levels is from .9 percent to 7.53 percent.
- As mandated by legislation, the district is increasing its PERA (Public Employees Retirement Association) contribution by .9 percent.
- Here's the total package:
 - The one percent increase, plus the step increase, plus the .9 percent PERA contribution, adds up to a total compensation increase for most employees of 4.5 percent.

"Recognizing how hard our teachers work to educate children, we proposed a monetary package that would give our employees a raise at a time when many businesses are taking money and benefits away from employees", said Stevenson.

During an impasse, a third party mediator will be brought in to try and resolve the issues.