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Study finds DPS pension flaws

The plan isn't designed to attract top teachers, the research concludes.

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By Jeremy P. Meyer

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The pension offered by Denver Public Schools is antiquated and not designed to attract top-quality teachers, a study released Monday says.

Less than 15 percent of Denver teachers stay with the district long enough to receive full benefits of their pension system, according to a study by the Piton and Donnell-Kay foundations.

"What we found is that if you are an employee who doesn't last for 25 years, the pension doesn't do you that much good," said Tony Lewis, director of the Donnell-Kay Foundation.

A system that makes employees wait that long to get lucrative benefits may not be attractive to workers when the workforce tends to be highly mobile, the study found.

The study, prepared for the A+ Denver citizen's group, comes as the district looks at refinancing its pension system and getting legislative help to possibly merge the district's pension program with the state-run system.

"The paper raises some important points for us to think about," said Tom Boasberg, DPS's chief operating officer.

Boasberg has said Denver's pension program pays \$50 million a year more or \$800 more per student than the state's Public Employees Retirement Association system.

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