



## 2011 PROPOSED AMENDMENT: **NEW MODEL FOR TEACHER COMPENSATION**

A New Model for Teacher Compensation is our No. 6 priority. It reads:

*The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that lead to a new research-based state teacher compensation model that emphasizes rewarding teacher effectiveness in improving student learning.*

Delegates voted it onto our two-year platform last fall. The position falls under the larger umbrella of education and funding reform and reflects ongoing work by the state to streamline its K-12 salary allocation model and create a new four-tier evaluation system that defines and promotes both student and professional growth. This position was purposely written in a broad manner as a conversation starter. Washington State PTA did not have a specific salary model in mind, but did want to emphasize the need for a research-based model as well as the importance of considering student outcomes.

In the 2011 legislative session, compensation made its way into various proposals, though none resulted in legislation. Currently teachers receive “step increases” for years of experience and additional credits of study. Some teachers also receive bonuses for National Board Certification. While our position does not preclude experience and additional study, neither does it affirm them.

A proposed amendment to our compensation issue would affirm those considerations. However, it would also fundamentally change the position so that Washington State PTA would no longer advocate for a research-based system that emphasizes rewarding teacher effectiveness in improving student learning.

If the amendment passes, the issue would read:

*The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that reward teachers for academic credits and degrees as well as years of service to students.*

**Issue submitters:** Bill Mokin, Alica Ogren, Susan Kelly, Joanna McCann, Jared Fernandez, and Paula Nocente-Casey, all of Challenger PTA 2.6.6; Kim Brousseau and Sandra Genereaux, both of Newcastle PTA 2.6.18; and Phyllis Runyon, of Maywood MS PTSA 2.6.40

**Recommended WSPTA board action:** Do not pass

### **Rationale behind do not pass recommendation:**

The WSPTA Legislative Committee felt a discussion of teacher education level was appropriate to have and that enough had changed on the legislative front to warrant consideration of an amendment.

However, the committee also felt this particular amendment would undermine past advocacy that asked for more importance to be placed on whether students are learning, and that also sought to better reward great teachers who did not have advanced degrees, or who might live in areas with higher costs of living. And while theoretically both positions could be on our platform (consider student success, as well as experience and study), the committee felt an additional position would be counterproductive.

The WSPTA board concurred with the legislative committee and agreed to put it before delegates, but with a do not pass recommendation.

#### **What changed since last year:**

- Mainly, ideas have been floated to rethink the practice of linking pay increases to academic credits;<sup>1</sup> and bonuses for national board certification were on the chopping block. (Bonuses were saved, but as enhancement funding they remain vulnerable to supplemental cuts.)
- Also, work with evaluations and compensation has evolved. The evaluation pilots are addressing the question of how to define and measure great teaching,<sup>2</sup> while some of the Merit schools are experimenting with rewarding for student success.<sup>3</sup> The Merit schools have received federal rapid improvement grants, and as part of their grant requirements sites using the transformational model must use student growth as a significant factor in evaluations and must identify and reward school leaders and teachers who have increased student achievement and graduation rates. These Merit schools are also charged with implementing strategies such as financial incentives and career ladders for recruiting, placing and retaining effective teachers.
- There is a difference of opinion about whether to link evaluations to compensation.

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### **Rationale behind proposed amendment**

The proposal is mainly driven by a concern that the state could move to a merit-pay system based on standardized test scores.

Research also indicates teachers are intrinsically motivated<sup>4</sup> and that merit bonuses can actually detract from job performance when the skill set is mainly cognitive.<sup>5</sup> This last research indicates that what motivates cognitive employees is a secure salary and assurances of independence and creativity.

**(Staff note:** Per law, the new evaluations under development may factor in student success, but if they do so they **MUST** include multiple measures, not just a single test score. There is no language around what compensation can be based on, and the idea of school-wide bonuses for increased test scores has been considered, but not advanced.)

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### **Why is this issue important?**

About 80 percent of school budgets go to salaries, and the current model is not research-based. In fact, research does not show a correlation between extra study in general and successful student outcomes, though some areas of study do indicate a positive impact. Teachers with only a bachelor's degree – even

if they are board certified – do not get as much of a “step increase” as their cohorts who have a master’s degree. State Senate staff estimated about \$900 million was tied up in rewarding for extra study.

Moreover, the money the state sends to cover staffing doesn’t align with actual need.

- It doesn’t factor in regional cost of living differences
- It doesn’t accommodate mentoring needs of new staff
- It doesn’t accommodate ongoing professional development needs, or collaboration time
- It arbitrarily pays some teachers more – simply because they were grandfathered in at higher salaries and the difference was never phased out.

This combination of factors has become an area of concern as more districts trim class time to accommodate staff training or collaboration, and as funding needs for professional development compete with needs to fund counselors, librarians and other student supports. Districts also increasingly rely on local levies to meet basic payroll obligations. If those levies fail, or if the state cuts levy assistance to property-poor districts, districts could struggle to meet their contractual obligations.

Basically: Schools are under increasing pressure to make every penny count, while the education field in general is under pressure to ensure students are actually learning.

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### **Why PTA/PTSA**

Washington State PTA has prioritized teacher effectiveness and compensation reform for a number of years.

- In our 2-year platform adopted in 2008, we prioritized Rational Approaches to Teacher Compensation. This included eliminating inequities in the pay structure; promoting compensation agreements that have sufficient resources and flexibility to recruit and retain highly qualified professionals; and basing realistic pay on labor market factors, plus characteristics that have been demonstrated to contribute to improved student outcomes.
- In 2009, we amended that position to reflect new legislation, and we prioritized successful adoption of standards for effective teaching and continuous student improvement, as well as a definition of “master teacher” and creation of a classroom-based means to evaluate teachers that includes multiple measures of performance. We also supported creation of a work group that would recommend details of an enhanced salary allocation model that aligns educator development and certification with compensation.
- In 2009, Washington State PTA endorsed the basic education funding reform plan issued by the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance; this included a “salary ladder,” or a simplified, 4-tier model that increased pay as teachers advanced through the tiers. The top tier, master, was linked to effective teaching practice.
- In 2010 we added New Model for Teacher Compensation to our legislative priorities. We also joined the oversight committee of the Teacher Principal Evaluation Pilot.
- [This issue aligns](#) with our Public Education Policies and Funding Legislative Principle, which calls for restructuring education funding in Washington state, as well as equitable school staff

salaries, The issue also aligns with Resolution 18.4 Excellence in Education, and Resolution 18.5, Funding for Basic Education

### **Background on this issue in Washington:**

Work on revising school employee compensation is part of the larger work with basic education funding reform. The goal of the larger work is to better align state funding to what students and schools actually require. That work started in 2007 when the legislature set up a task force to look at K-12 funding. The task force in turn drafted a plan in January 2009, and later that year HB 2261 – the basic education funding reform bill – was passed.

- While compensation reform was part of the original plan, the final bill called for another work group to study the issue. That work group started in July 2011 and must submit a report in December 2012. The work group will review the current compensation system with the intention to streamline it, account for regions where it is difficult to attract or retain teachers; and determine the role and types of bonuses available, among other tasks.
- Concurrently the state is implementing a new four-tiered evaluation system (i.e. not satisfactory, basic, proficient and master) that emphasizes goal setting and professional capacity and that can include multiple measures of student growth. We are also transitioning to Common Core State Standards, which define what knowledge and skills students should have when they graduate, and defines stepping stones to get them there. Standardized assessments will be tied to these new outcome-based standards.

### **Last compensation recommendation to legislature**

In its 2009 final report to the legislature, the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance recommended:

School employee compensation should be sufficient to attract and retain highly competent teachers and other school staff;

- Reward increasing levels of teacher effectiveness in the classroom;
- Provide school-wide bonuses for improvement in student achievement;
- Be competitive with similar non-education jobs in regional labor markets;
- Provide time for professional development;
- Include special incentives to attract teachers in shortage areas such as math, science, bilingual education, and special education, and incentives for experienced teachers to teach in schools with a significant percentage of low-income students.

Washington State PTA endorsed the plan

### **Resources**

- **Compensation Technical Working Group:** <http://www.k12.wa.us/Compensation/default.aspx>
- **Teacher/Principal Evaluation Pilot** – blog, models, instructional frameworks, interviews: <http://tpep-wa.org/>
- **TPEP report to the legislature and general information:** <http://www.k12.wa.us/EdLeg/TPEP/default.aspx>

- **School Improvement Grants/Merit school cohort**, including report on incorporating student growth: <http://www.k12.wa.us/Improvement/SIG/default.aspx>
- **How Are We Doing? 2011 Legislative Session**, [http://www.wastatepta.org/advocacy/session\\_2011/2011\\_Focus\\_On\\_Schools.pdf](http://www.wastatepta.org/advocacy/session_2011/2011_Focus_On_Schools.pdf)
- **Final Report of the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance**: <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/rptfiles/09-01-2201.pdf>
- **Research on pay for performance:**  
Teacher Pay for Performance: [http://www.performanceincentives.org/data/files/pages/POINT%20REPORT\\_9.21.10.pdf](http://www.performanceincentives.org/data/files/pages/POINT%20REPORT_9.21.10.pdf);  
An Evaluation of the Teacher Advancement Program; [http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/pdfs/education/tap\\_yr2\\_rpt.pdf](http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/pdfs/education/tap_yr2_rpt.pdf);  
Merit Pay: Will It Work? Is It Politically Viable? [http://www.hks.harvard.edu/pepg/MeritPayPapers/goodman\\_turner\\_10-07.pdf](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/pepg/MeritPayPapers/goodman_turner_10-07.pdf)
- **The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us**: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6XAPnuFjJc>

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<sup>1</sup> [SB 5959](#), [SB 5455](#), [2ESHB 1443](#) - proposed bills in the 2011 Legislative Session touching on compensation

<sup>2</sup> Washington's Teacher/Principal Evaluation Pilot, TPEP Vision and Pilot Models, <http://tpep-wa.org/vision-models/>

<sup>3</sup> Incorporating Student Academic Growth in Teacher and Principal Evaluations at Schools Implementing the Transformation Model. MERIT Network/School Improvement Grant Progress Report. August 2011

<sup>4</sup> Teacher Pay for Performance: [http://www.performanceincentives.org/data/files/pages/POINT%20REPORT\\_9.21.10.pdf](http://www.performanceincentives.org/data/files/pages/POINT%20REPORT_9.21.10.pdf);  
An Evaluation of the Teacher Advancement Program; [http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/pdfs/education/tap\\_yr2\\_rpt.pdf](http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/pdfs/education/tap_yr2_rpt.pdf); Merit Pay: Will It Work? Is It Politically Viable? [http://www.hks.harvard.edu/pepg/MeritPayPapers/goodman\\_turner\\_10-07.pdf](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/pepg/MeritPayPapers/goodman_turner_10-07.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> The surprising truth about what motivates us, (video). Dan Pink, RSA Animate video lecture. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6XAPnuFjJc>