



North Carolina Association of Educators

## Reforming “Teacher Pay” Through a “Professionally Based” Alternative Pay Plan

Two-fold approach must be implemented if true reform is to be made in paying teachers for excellence based on performance and student success. NCAE supports a shortened professionally based pay structure for “all” educators. Serious work must be done to improve the current 35-step salary schedule, averaging “only” a meager 1.8 percent pay differential between steps. It should not take 35 years for any college-educated employee to earn \$53,000 annually, but that is the plight of teachers employed in North Carolina’s PreK-12 public schools. Paying teachers on the current pay structure will not attract and keep the best and brightest in the classrooms!

Preliminary salary rankings data for 2012-13 reflect the results of no salary raise for the past three years , showing North Carolina’s average teacher salary ranking dropping drastically to 44th in the nation and ninth among the 12 Southeastern states, only ahead of Florida, West Virginia and Mississippi.

NCAE will once again seek to revamp the current salary structure by drafting legislation to develop a comprehensive “professionally paid base salary schedule that not only shortens the current schedule, but also increases the pay earned at each salary step.” The beginning teacher salary is too low for any college graduate to live on, causing 40 percent of “new” teachers to exit the profession after only teaching five years or less. Many veteran teachers moonlight, working one or more second jobs to make ends meet, while others leave the ranks of teaching for administrative work, to advance up the career ladder in education. The proposed NCAE “base” salary schedule will help alleviate these trends.

Secondly, NCAE supports additional or “alternative” pay above the base salary using multiple measures. These measures include student growth similar to ABC bonus pay (School-Based Accountability Program) and the new evaluation system for teachers being implemented by DPI. The new evaluation system measures student growth using multiple measures, including common core exams that measure student growth. These exams were created and developed by more than 800 teachers and will be used as one factor in determining teacher effectiveness. We will further ask lawmakers to allow time for the “new” teacher evaluation system to be fully implemented over the next three years, since student growth will be one of the components factored in the Race to the Top (RTTT) salary model.

The Association further supports pay for additional credentialing and training (master's, six-year degrees, doctorate's and NBCT). NCAE also supports additional pay for academic responsibilities (team leader, mentor teacher, department chairs, after-school tutors, etc.) as well as working in "hard to staff" schools.

The major concern the Association has when addressing alternative pay is differentiating pay for "hard-to-staff subjects." Schools are not businesses, but "learning communities" where teachers readily share resources, techniques, instructional strategies and other skills with their colleagues that impact student success. Pitting an elementary teacher against an AP Math teacher will halt this collaborative practice and drive a wedge between educators.

A comprehensive, substantive alternative pay plan will have a much greater impact on attracting teachers than a pay for performance "only" approach. NCAE will work closely with legislators and the state Department of Public Instruction to develop a "professionally based alternative pay plan" based on criteria being developed through the state's RTTT grant. NCAE is fully committed to this goal. It will not only raise the status of the teaching profession, making it truly professional, but finally pay teachers a "fair" and "living wage"!!