

Pay competitive salaries to attract and retain education professionals

PSEA members support the development of compensation systems, within the collective bargaining process, that allow for appropriate local decision making and that encourage and enable improved educational outcomes. PSEA's recommendations for compensation are based on decades of research investigating the educational strategies that improve educational outcomes and how compensation systems align with successful educational strategies.

PSEA Recommendations

- Reform compensation to reward professional educators for the professional development and mastery of teaching associated with National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification.
- Reform compensation to reward professional educators for obtaining professional development appropriate either for their current subject areas or subject areas in which they seek to teach.
- Identify programs that reform compensation to reward professional educators for undertaking additional duties and responsibilities associated with school-wide or district-wide educational improvement goals.
- Reform compensation to reward professional educators, under particular conditions, for electing to teach in hard-to-staff schools.

Reward experience and hard work

Reform compensation to reward professional educators for the professional development and mastery of teaching associated with National Board Certification. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has developed a certification process designed to be attained by only a small percentage of all professional educators. It is the explicit goal of the National Board to only certify professional educators who exhibit remarkably high levels of knowledge, skill, and practice.¹ The advantages of providing additional compensation for National Board Certification are self-evident. Research has shown that educators' level of knowledge and experience are good predictors of the quality of their teaching, so it is appropriate

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to provide financial incentives for the higher levels of mastery that teachers obtain as they gain experience. In many school districts in Pennsylvania, teachers are being rewarded for successfully completing this arduous national certification process.



Unfortunately, in most cases the additional compensation does not reflect the appropriate value of teachers holding a National Board Certificate. The application process for National Board Certification takes approximately 400 hours to complete, the equivalent of 10 full-time, labor-intensive work weeks while the applicants continue to hold their full-time teaching positions. The fact that teachers are motivated to complete this process for minimal additional compensation shows their work ethic. PSEA supports using federal funds to provide \$5,000 annual incentives to teachers who achieve National Board Certification.

Reform compensation to reward professional educators for obtaining professional development appropriate either for their current subject areas or subject areas in which they seek to teach. Research shows that high-quality professional development can have a significant impact on student achievement. Teacher compensation reform should encourage professional educators to achieve additional, appropriate knowledge and skills and compensate them for bringing the additional knowledge and skill into the classroom. The single salary schedule, used properly, already provides the framework for this reform. If anything, a significant problem in Pennsylvania is that the current levels of additional compensation for additional knowledge and skills are too low.

Identify programs that reform compensation to reward professional educators for undertaking additional duties and responsibilities associated with school-wide or district-wide educational improvement goals. Compensation strategies for professional educators need to align compensation with the extra duties associated with school-wide and district-wide educational improvement goals. Additional duties and responsibilities require additional effort and time. Mentoring is one example. Mentoring is especially important now in Pennsylvania as we are experiencing a major demographic shift in the teacher labor force as teachers hired in the 1970's retire and are replaced by less experienced teachers.

Reform compensation to reward professional educators, under particular conditions, for electing to teach in hard-to-staff schools. PSEA recognizes that certain schools are harder to staff for a variety of reasons. However, the evidence is far from clear about what level of compensation and what types of contractual commitments from both schools and teachers would be necessary to attract and retain a sufficient number of high-quality candidates who are not otherwise predisposed to desire the challenges of teaching in hard-to-staff schools. One potential solution for high-poverty/hard-to-staff schools is to require a five-year commitment from those provided additional pay to work in hard-to-staff schools and a five-year commitment from the school district to continue to provide additional pay. PSEA believes the decision to provide additional pay for hard-to-staff schools should be made through the collective bargaining process. These teacher pay reform strategies are best made within the context of a single salary schedule.

How to use the federal incentive program funds such as the Race to the Top (RTTT) initiative. From a policy perspective, it would be beneficial to use some RTTT funds to design scientifically valid pilot programs in districts with the intent of measuring the effect of teacher pay reform in comparison to other reforms that have been proven to work, such as smaller class sizes and parental involvement. The information gleaned from this approach would have a significant long-term impact by providing sufficient data for significant research on the changes that have the greatest effects on student learning.

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¹ For a comprehensive review of the research on the effectiveness of teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards see Hakel, M., Koenig, J, and Elliot, S. (2009) Assessing Accomplished Teaching: Advanced Level Certification Programs. Washington D.C.: The National Research Council of the National Academies.