

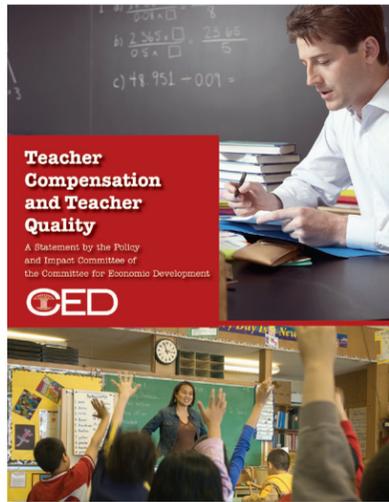
teachers. Better evaluation is also needed to design more useful professional development and to help teachers grow in effectiveness throughout their careers. Current evaluation methods are not up to the task, in part because there is little agreement on how to identify and measure effective teaching. Teacher evaluations generally do not include specific measures of student learning, and if they do the measures are often narrowly based on one year of student test scores rather than presenting a fuller picture of what teachers do or the context in which they teach. In many districts, technical difficulties in connecting separate data systems on teachers and students complicate the task of determining how much an individual teacher is able to influence learning.

In response to the need for a better knowledge base to guide new evaluation approaches, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2009 funded the Measuring Effective Teaching (MET) project. This partnership of more than a dozen organizations is testing new methods of identifying effective teaching. Researchers are working with nearly 3,000 volunteer teachers in six school districts (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Dallas Independent School District, Denver Public Schools, Hillsborough County

Public Schools, Memphis City Schools, and the New York City Department of Education) to collect and analyze measures from multiple data sources over two years. These measures include student achievement gains on state assessments and supplemental assessments designed to test higher-order conceptual understanding; classroom observations and teacher reflections on their practice; assessments of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge; student perceptions of the classroom instructional environment; and teachers' perceptions of working conditions and instructional support at their schools.

MET is guided by a Teacher Advisory Panel, a group of 21 classroom teachers representing all geographic regions, grade levels, and subject areas.

MET will issue final findings and results in the fall of 2011. Before then, the project is issuing a series of reports on interim findings and results; study design, methods, and empirical analyses; and teacher observational protocols, training, and scoring requirements. The project will also produce guides to implementation and to data requirements, showing how to use the measures and gather and store evaluation data.



**CED's 2009 report *Teacher Compensation and Teacher Quality* can be found at:**  
<http://www.ced.org/images/library/reports/education/tctqreport09.pdf>

# Teacher Compensation and Teacher Quality

## Policy Brief

Committee for Economic Development



### More Districts Adopt Innovative Teacher Pay Plans

In 2009 the Committee for Economic Development called on district and state education officials to revamp the way that teachers are paid. New compensation systems are needed to attract highly qualified individuals into teaching under labor market conditions that have changed substantially since the typical framework for teacher salaries was adopted.

In *Teacher Compensation and Teacher Quality*, CED argued that the so-called "single-salary schedule," under which teachers are paid primarily or exclusively based on their years of service and academic degrees and credits earned, has outlived its usefulness. Today's workers, especially younger ones, are less interested in staying in one place or in one type of job for their entire careers than were the teachers who entered the profession several decades ago. Younger workers also do not shy away from jobs where performance is evaluated and rewarded. The single-salary schedule fails to recognize job performance as a factor in compensation. By paying teachers the same no matter what they teach or where, it contributes to shortages in hard-to-staff subject areas and high-need schools. It rewards factors (longevity and additional degrees) that research has shown to have little effect on raising student achievement.

There are encouraging signs that reforms called for in CED's report are starting to take root around the country.

Furthermore, as CED urged, these reforms are addressing both the structure of teacher pay and the "enabling conditions" that are essential for new approaches to pay to succeed. By enabling conditions, CED referred to the tools, policy, and practices without which new compensation plans would be less effective than they should be at encouraging genuine instructional improvement and increased student learning.

The 2009 report described several pioneering initiatives, such as Denver's Pro Comp program and the Teacher Advancement Program. At that time, the Denver Public School system was one of only a few districts (and the only large urban one) that had truly replaced the traditional single-salary schedule with a new design for setting pay. Most compensation reforms around the country continued to use the single-salary schedule as the basic framework for compensation, adding to it new incentives such as pay for performance or incentives for teachers to work in

designated high-need schools or hard-to-staff subjects.

Other districts are now working to replace, not just supplement, the single-salary schedule. They are also working to develop improved teacher evaluation and professional development programs and to expand data systems that link student and teacher information and inform evaluation systems as well as give teachers feedback on the learning needs of their students.

Interesting examples can be found in Baltimore, Maryland, Hillsborough County, Florida, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In addition, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is funding a major initiative called Measuring Effective Teaching to develop a strong research foundation for creating new measures to identify effective instruction.

#### Baltimore Public Schools, Maryland

In November 2010 Baltimore teachers ratified a new three-year contract that, when fully implemented, will do away with automatic pay increases for teachers who earn degrees and credits beyond the bachelor's degree. Instead, the district has adopted the concept of the "Achievement Unit" (AU) by which to determine which teachers are eligible for raises. Teachers can earn AUs based on various factors, with ratings on performance evaluations counting much more highly than, for example, college credits. For example, a teacher who receives the highest evaluation rating can earn 12 AUs, whereas a teacher who earns one college credit will earn only one AU.

The new contract also creates four new levels: standard teacher, professional teacher, master teacher, and lead teacher. This structure creates a career ladder similar to that used by a number of schools and districts under the auspices of the Teacher Advancement Program. In Baltimore, the purpose of the new career ladder is to improve professional practices, increase student learning, and increase career acceleration and opportunities. Teachers can move through intervals within each level based on earning 12 AUs. To move from the standard to the professional level, an individual must have previously reached the highest interval on the standard scale or have the approval by a Professional Peer Review Committee. To move from the professional to the model level, an individual has to be approved by the



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Professional Peer Review Committee or meet several specified benchmarks including evaluation ratings, ten years of service in the district, and good attendance. To retain the model rating, a teacher will have to be peer-reviewed every five years.

The lead teacher level is specifically established as a promotional opportunity. Individuals will be selected as lead teachers by principals, whose decisions must be approved by the Professional Peer Review Committee.

Unlike many other districts that have adopted compensation reforms, Baltimore is making its new salary structure mandatory for all teachers in the district, not just for new hires or returning teachers who voluntarily agree to participate.

### **Hillsborough County Public Schools, Florida**

In 2009, the Hillsborough County Public School district was one of five entities to receive multi-year funding from a Gates Foundation initiative called “Intensive Partnerships to Empower Effective Teachers.” With its \$100 million award, the district is implementing a multi-faceted plan to create a comprehensive system of policies and practices designed to attract, support, reward, and retain its most effective teachers. A new compensation framework directly tied to a revamped evaluation system and a career ladder are central components of the Hillsborough approach.

As CED noted in its report, the state of Florida has made several attempts since the 1990s to encourage or require districts to link teacher pay to performance. CED said that the state offered a “cautionary tale about the perils of creating performance-pay plans that appear hastily designed and that garner little support from teachers and administrators.” Several Florida initiatives were aborted before they really got underway. The Merit Award Program (MAP) enacted in 2007 remains in effect as a voluntary activity for districts. Even districts that adopted it, though, like Hillsborough, pointed to flaws such as measures of student learning that were perceived as insufficiently reliable and valid. Florida teachers were also strongly opposed to the arbitrary caps on the number of teachers who could be recognized for outstanding performance that characterize MAP and several of the earlier state initiatives.

While continuing to make MAP available, Hillsborough is moving toward a new compensation system based on a career ladder that will be mandatory for new hires and voluntary for existing teachers. Believing that valid and reliable measures of teacher performance require several years of student test results and classroom observations rather than the one-year snapshots used in MAP, the first component of the Hillsborough plan is

a new evaluation system that has been put in place for school year 2010-11. It employs a more comprehensive evaluation instrument that principals, assistant principals, and peer evaluators will use to rate teachers on their planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. An individual’s overall evaluation will reflect the principal’s rating (30 percent), mentor (for first year teachers) or peer rating (30 percent), and student learning gains (40 percent). The district is working with local and national experts to develop value-added learning measures (that is, indicators of gains in learning rather than absolute attainment) based on state assessments and semester exams.

The new evaluation plan applies to all teachers. In 2013-14, at which time current teachers will have had three years of evaluations under this plan, they will have the opportunity to opt into a new salary framework that will rely on a career ladder rather than the single-salary schedule to determine pay. Teachers whose evaluations reflect increasing performance over several years will be placed on the advanced or master step of the ladder and will qualify for teacher-leader roles that will enable them to increase their responsibilities and salaries without leaving the classroom. Advanced teachers can be promoted to master teachers if their performance continues to improve. Teachers who have earned advanced or master status but whose performance then declines over several consecutive years will be moved back down the ladder. New teachers will not have a choice of participating in the new compensation system. They will begin as career teachers and have the opportunity to move up once they have accumulated three years of evaluations on which a promotion decision can be based.

Hillsborough’s plan is designed to base pay on performance, not on factors such as longevity or degrees earned. It rewards outstanding teachers who may be in the early part of their careers as well or better than long-serving average teachers. For this reason, the district tells the most senior teachers that it may not be in their interest to opt into the new system. Before the plan goes into effect, teachers will be given individual information on how they will fare under both the old and new pay arrangements and be given the choice of whether to participate in the new plan. Veteran teachers may opt in at any time but cannot change their minds once they have chosen to participate.

### **Pittsburgh Public Schools, Pennsylvania**

Baltimore, Hillsborough, and a number of other districts are using a “career ladder” approach to rethinking teacher compensation, but the Pittsburgh school district (also a Gates Foundation “Intensive Partnership” grantee) appears to have gone further

than most in designing specific new career paths that teachers can follow. CED’s report highlighted the “flat career” problem inherent in the traditional approach to compensation: generally the only way that teachers have been able to receive formal recognition and pay for professional advancement is to leave the classroom for administrative positions. Developing career paths along which teachers can progress based in part on both qualitative and quantitative measures of their performance over time offers a promising way to address both the flat-career problem and the limitations of one-year evaluations of teacher performance as measures of how effective a teacher is in improving student learning.

As part of a new contract with the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers that runs from 2010 to 2015, the district is creating six new roles designed to encourage teachers to see working in challenging schools or with high-need students as a “badge of distinction.” The new roles, each with annual compensation ranging from \$9,300 to \$13,300, include:

- ♦ **Promise-Readiness Corps Teachers:** Teachers who are part of cohorts providing intensive, hands-on academic and personal support for 9th grade students. The teacher cohort follows its 9th graders to 10th grade.
- ♦ **High School Instructional Teacher Leaders:** Teachers who formatively evaluate content peers in their own schools and design and deliver customized professional development based on these evaluations, plus serving as summative evaluators for content peers in other schools.
- ♦ **K-8 Instructional Teacher Leaders:** Teachers who support interventions and formatively evaluate peers in their schools. These teachers also conduct summative evaluations of peers in other schools.
- ♦ **K-8 Turn-around Teachers:** Teachers who are deployed to be cultural change agents in low-performing classrooms for three-year assignments.
- ♦ **Clinical Resident Instructors:** Teachers who will teach a reduced course load and serve as mentors and instructional coaches to new and experienced teachers.
- ♦ **Behavioral Specialists:** Teachers with outstanding classroom management and interpersonal skills who coach peers on creating a positive teaching and learning environment.

Individuals must be selected for career roles on the basis of criteria that are likely to include evaluation ratings, classroom observations, in-person interviews, student work, a scenario-based activity, and evidence of impact on student achievement. Teachers must apply for the positions. Although they will be

encouraged to remain in these high-impact roles, they will have the option to revert to the status of a regular classroom teacher or pursue other career roles if they qualify for them. The initial commitment length is determined by the nature of each role, but teachers will be evaluated annually against a prescribed set of performance criteria, including student outcomes.

Roll-out of some of the roles began in school year 2010-11, with all the roles expected to be in place in 2011-12.

The distinctive teacher career roles represent perhaps the most unusual aspect of the new teacher contract, but there are a number of other provisions that modify the traditional single-salary schedule. The salary schedule for new teachers effective July 1, 2010 continues to tie pay to years of service but with fewer “steps” than in the traditional system. Instead of being rewarded for additional degrees and credits, however, teachers on this schedule, after they receive tenure, will undergo periodic reviews that will place them into one of four “professional growth” levels. Teachers could reach the highest growth level in as few as eight years, corresponding to a salary of \$100,000. In addition, teachers in growth levels 3 and 4 are eligible to apply for the career roles described above. There will also be bonus programs rewarding teachers for increases in student learning based on school-wide measures and on measures for an individual teacher’s students.

Many of Pittsburgh’s efforts to enhance teacher effectiveness are under-girded by a new evaluation system, the Research-Based Inclusive System of Evaluation or RISE. In 2008 the district and the teacher union agreed to collaborate on the development of a new approach to evaluation. RISE replaces a traditional teacher evaluation process that summed up teacher effectiveness with a “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” rating for each individual. Under the new system, which involves more interaction and feedback between teachers and principals, effective teaching is defined across 4 “domains” and 24 “components of practice.” Multiple measures over multiple instances are used to collect information about a teacher’s practice. RISE is described as a growth-oriented model that is differentiated to support the developmental levels of novice and experienced teachers across four performance levels and to foster teacher learning and the continuous growth of professional practice.

### **Measuring Effective Teaching**

One of the findings in CED’s 2009 report, reinforced by the experiences of the district innovations highlighted here, was that an essential “enabling condition” for new compensation plans is the creation of dramatically improved methods of evaluating