



# Position Statement Professional Compensation in Missouri



*“The goal of public education is for all students to have access to a quality public school where they can develop the knowledge and skill to participate fully in our democracy and to succeed in this dynamic 21st century world.”*

--Missouri NEA Education Transformation Task Force (2009)

Education systems and structures are transforming to meet the demands of modern students, classrooms and communities. Compensation systems for education employees\* are an important component of that transformation. A professional compensation system may be based solely on a single salary schedule or it may be an alternative compensation system that supplements or replaces a single salary schedule. Recruiting, retaining and rewarding high quality educators\* are key goals of any legitimate education compensation system. School districts/education institutions and school employees need to collaborate in designing professional compensation structures that meet the needs of the students, the staff and the district/education institution through a collective bargaining process.

A strong, single salary schedule avoids many of the pitfalls that are found in a differentiated staffing plan. It does not impose a divisive hierarchy of jobs on a group of educators previously defined as equals. A strong, single salary schedule contains no quotas, and it supports the idea that education is a true profession.

The principles outlined below have been established to provide a framework for the transformation of professional compensation plans. Where developed and implemented well, these plans aid in the recruitment and retention of educators in Missouri’s public schools.

To advance these goals, the following principles shall apply:

1. Provide professional beginning salaries with a path for growth through a strong salary schedule.
2. Recognize and reward educators who attain and can demonstrate knowledge and skills that improve their professional proficiency.
3. Recognize and compensate improved teacher practice that is a factor in student learning and other student outcomes.
4. Provide an outline for career growth for educators who want to seek additional responsibility without leaving the classroom or work site.
5. Compensate all education employees on par with the salary, professional growth opportunities and career earnings of comparably prepared professionals.
6. An alternative compensation plan should be considered only after a district/education institution has, over time, implemented a strong salary schedule.

In order for a local education association (LEA) to consider approval of an alternative compensation plan, the plan must include the following features:

## **I. Commitment to Student Learning**

- a. Attract and retain quality staff.
  - i. The salary is competitive to neighboring districts/education institutions and other professional salaries in the area.
  - ii. Encourage teachers to stay in the classroom and ESP members to stay in the district/education institution.



- iii. Attract teachers to hard-to-serve and/or hard-to-staff assignments.
  - iv. Recognize diversity of student needs in teaching assignment.
  - v. Include teaching and learning conditions that support student learning.
  - vi. Incentives should be significant enough to celebrate success but not punitive to those not receiving the incentive.
- b. Encourage staff collaboration and not competition.
  - c. Include a broad curriculum for every student.
    - i. The program must encourage building students' skills in academic and non-academic areas.
    - ii. Non-tested subjects should not be devalued.
  - d. Use multiple measures to assess student learning including teacher-made assessments.
  - e. Support instructional improvements that increase student engagement.
    - i. The question, "Is the student truly being considered?" must be asked in the development and implementation of the program.
    - ii. The program must motivate students, not rely solely on their test scores.
    - iii. The program must respect the confidentiality of students.

## II. Career Growth and Development

- a. Include a professional growth salary schedule accompanied by a bargained, quality evaluation system linked to the state licensure system and state teaching standards.
- b. Support instructional improvements with:
  - i. Time for collaboration and professional development for teachers and support staff.
  - ii. Quality professional development that follows standards such as those of the National Staff Development Council (NSDC).

- iii. Professional development aligned with the learning needs of students and instructional needs of staff
  - iv. Professional development that includes reimbursement for tuition.
- c. Hold participants accountable for meeting high standards of performance as measured by negotiated evaluation processes that are objective, fair, understandable and predictable.
  - d. Be flexible to include graduate degrees, advanced licensure, leadership responsibilities, length of day or year, tiered system or extracurricular activities.
  - e. Be fair and justifiable, clearly written and provide confidential data for educators and students.
  - f. Fully inform participants of the pay involved in program participation.

## III. Collaborative and Transparent Development and Implementation

- a. Consider alternative compensation only after a strong base salary with adequate increases has been implemented with maximum salary achieved in 10 years.
- b. Include a locally bargained, collaborative process with the district/education institution and union involved in the decision-making--resulting in improved relationships with labor and management.
  - i. Include parents and stakeholders who:
    - 1. Are aware of the program and its ultimate impact on students
    - 2. Feel informed of the process and valued in the process of development and implementation of the program
    - 3. Are involved in discussions regarding the goals of the program
  - ii. Include an appeals process for the system.
  - iii. Include building-wide incentives, individual criteria or a combination of these (as locally bargained).



- c. Require an annual process of monitoring and evaluation that includes the LEA at all levels to make sure that the program is producing its intended goals/targets. This process should include:
  - 1. Monitoring systems developed and maintained to track valid, reliable and meaningful data.
  - 2. Monitoring systems developed and maintained to examine the effectiveness of old and new programs to prevent work overload
  - 3. A manageable administrative management system that does not hinder the district's/education institution's ability to benefit students or pay staff, or sacrifice students' instructional time.
- d. Provide adequate and sustainable local funding sources, both initially and ongoing. Grants should be viewed only as temporary resources that will not sustain a career salary program.
- e. Allow for voluntary participation of staff.
- f. Guarantee current salary shall not be reduced for any educator.
- g. Provide access for all staff without quotas or caps that arbitrarily limit the number of participants.
- h. Include a process of training participants, evaluators and administrators.
- i. Include a reasonable timeframe for developing, implementing and monitoring of the program.
- j. Consider the possibility of a pilot or phase-in during the planning phase.

### **Conclusion**

Education transformation for the 21st century will include varying plans to compensate education personnel. The position of Missouri NEA is that any alternative pay plan should be considered only after a district/education institution has, over time, implemented a strong salary schedule. Any pay plan must be collectively bargained by the local education association. Although some local education associations will choose to continue use of the traditional salary schedule, this position paper sets forth guidelines for those local associations who choose to embark upon the challenge of bargaining an alternative, professional compensation plan.

*\*Throughout this document, the terms "educators" and "education employees" refer to teachers and education support professionals.*