Minneapolis

Star Tribune (**Minneapolis,** MN)

September 18, 1999, Saturday, Metro Edition

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HEADLINE: Minneapolis teachers;
Contract moving in right direction

BODY:
For the second time, **Minneapolis teachers** voted this week for a contract that reads more like a strategic plan for improving teaching and learning than a traditional wage- and benefit-driven agreement. That shift in collective-bargaining philosophy is welcome and sorely needed.

In the past, educators were loath even to consider concepts like **merit pay** or pay-for-performance; in fact, labor and management went to arbitration over the issue a few years ago. But the two most recent contracts have opened discussion about the idea. **Teachers** know they are under intense public pressure to improve achievement _ especially in challenging urban districts like **Minneapolis,** where just under half the children are failing to perform at grade level. So **teachers** and administrators have agreed contractually to concentrate on improving the skills of **teachers,** hoping in turn to boost student achievement.

As in most public **teacher** contracts, salaries in **Minneapolis** have been determined by two factors _ seniority and education level. This contract doesn't stray from that formula, and is fairly generous. Roughly 5,000 **Minneapolis** educators will receive a 6.5 percent salary increase over two years; that means pay will range from nearly $28,000 per year for beginning **teachers** to more than $60,000 for 25-year veterans.

However, the new agreement allows other criteria to be added to the salary mix, such as leadership and mentoring, success rates with students and additional training. More on-the-job training, more rigorous probation requirements and **teacher** evaluations are also written into the pact. And for the first time, students and parents will be asked for feedback about **teacher** performance.

Across the nation, several dozen districts reward **teachers** financially for meeting academic goals. Denver educators recently approved a pilot program that would link pay raises specifically to student performance.

The **Minneapolis** 1999-2001 contract doesn't go that far. But it wisely builds upon the accountability measures that were introduced during contract talks two years ago. The previous pact spelled out criteria for effective schools, set goals for **teachers** and administrators and developed a plan for improving schools. And for the first time, it defined what must be done when a school is in crisis. Under the "fresh start" provision, **teachers** and the administration agreed that a school could be closed permanently, moved to a different site and/or reopened with new leadership and staff.

In the public mind, the foremost questions are why Johnny can't read and why Sarah can't pass the basic skills test. And while a student's performance may be limited by factors entirely outside a school's control, educators are beginning to understand that they must do more to educate every student to his or her full potential. The new **Minneapolis** contract, with its emphasis on achievement and accountability, is a strong step toward meeting that goal.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

Alternative Methods of Staff Development and Teacher Compensation

Colorado Springs (Co) Education Association (CSEA)

Conditions were ripe for a change in the salary schedule in Colorado Springs. Everyone wanted a change - but for very different reasons. Some community members and a couple of school board members took the view that teachers were being rewarded every year for "doing nothing," or taking courses that had no relevance to what they were teaching.

Meanwhile, the business community was pushing for a merit pay system. The school district already had a task force in place that was studying the issue. CSEA was eager to find an alternative to merit pay, and wanted change in the salary scale for other reasons. Many Association members felt they were locked into a schedule that was going nowhere. A number of teachers had reached the top of the salary scale, and most felt that allowing just five years' credit for prior experience was not going to attract high quality teachers to the city.

To help deal with the problem, the school district and CSEA last year created a Career Development Task Force that conducted research and produced a report on teacher training, career development, and compensation. The report recommended:

- That the school district and the Association negotiate changes to the educational increment ("lanes") portion of the salary schedule, permitting the creation of a "skill module" component to enhance career development and execution of the district's mission.
- That the Association and school district create a stipended position in each building for a teacher coordinator of staff development.
- That the school district and the Association agree upon incentives for those who are currently "maxed out" on the salary schedule so that all teachers may receive support for undertaking group or individual training initiatives.

CSEA and the Board of Education reached an agreement based on the recommendations that was in effect until June 30, 1998. This agreement enabled the development of the Skills Module and building development coordinators sections of the new Master Agreement that is in effect until June 30, 2001.

The Skills Module
A significant change is the introduction of the Skills Module - courses of study for improvement in professional growth and development. This is a menu of training that addresses the district's strategic plan, state and district standards, and individual school improvement plans. These skill blocks do not completely replace the need for or freedom in taking college courses, but they establish a sharper focus for career development. And the modules allow staff more time to implement their learning with action-oriented, in-school functions.

A building staff development coordinator, principal, the cluster executive director of school management, and a representative from the staff development office created the courses of study. Teachers can earn four credit hours through the skills module that can be applied to educational increments. They are expected to earn four hours of credit in the application and intregration of technology. The district requires 16 hours of college credit for step advancement on the salary schedule.

Teachers who have either an MA or Ph.D. and have reached the top step can receive a one-time amount of $500 for the successful completion of an approved module. Beginning in the 1999-2000 school year, a module will be a required component of an educational increment.

Anyone involved can raise questions about the modules - whether the number or content will allow teachers regular movement on the academic lanes component of the salary schedule, whether the content of the modules is adequately responsive to the strategic goals, for example. If the questions aren't resolved within 30 days, the required modules as a component of an educational increment will be suspended until agreement is reached.

The Building Staff Development Coordinator
This position is designed to assist with the development and implementation of skill modules for improvement in professional growth and development at the building, cluster, and district levels. Persons in this position will receive stipends based on the following formula:

- At buildings with an enrollment of less than 500 - 3.5 percent of the BA base
- At buildings with enrollments between 501 and 1200 - 4 percent of the BA base
- At buildings with enrollments in excess of 1201 - 5 percent of the BA base

In the first year of implementation of the contract, 1997-98, the district and the Association chose 20 staff development coordinators: four coordinators from each cluster, one each from the elementary, middle and high school levels; and one from a specialty area - music, special education, or non-classroom teacher, for example. Their job was to develop the cluster skill modules to be implemented in 1998-99.

Club and Activity Stipends
Each junior high school will get a sum that is equal to 14.2 percent of the base salary to compensate sponsors of academic or enrichment clubs, activities, and intramural sports. The funds are available each semester. Schools cannot use the funds to subsidize building programs. The building principal and staff will collaborate each year to develop a list of clubs and activities, their stipends, and duties.

Each semester, elementary schools will get a sum equal to 12 percent of the base salary.

Teachers who supervise students overnight will be compensated at 23 percent of the base salary per night.

Special Stipends
Teachers who serve in the following roles will receive stipends:

- Coordinator of Information and Technology
- Athletic Director
- Business Manager
- Planetarium Curator
- Planetarium Assistant Curator
- Program Coordinator
- Coordinator Nueva Ventura Program
- Student Organization Advisor
- Elementary Special Education Coordinator

The work of the Task Force took several months. They met for five-and-a-half full days and spent many hours beyond the meetings conducting research, reviewing staff surveys, and preparing proposals. Its members included teachers, administrators, and central administration staff.

At times, as they represented their constituencies, members of the Task Force disagreed. But they created a product that was well worth the effort. And although there are still some issues of concern to CSEA that the agreement does not address, CSEA sees this agreement as a first step toward positive change.

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District 11 -2 school

Extra pay based on achievement

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Staff coming together -

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NEAToday Online TOPIC

Newsmakers: At the Bargaining Table
The Bonus of Working Together

In Columbus, Ohio, NEA members use a contract provision to boost student achievement.

A library media specialist, Karen Schwab works at a high school in Columbus where all faculty members mentor five freshman.

A "gainsharing" agreement negotiated recently by the 5,000-member Columbus (Ohio) Education Association creates the opportunity for breaking down isolation among faculty, boosting student achievement, and adding to educators' bank accounts.

Here's how it works:

- Teachers, principals, and parents or members of the community at each of the district's 146 buildings form gainsharing committees.
- The committees set measurable goals for student achievement and create action plans for reaching them.
- Once an action plan is ratified by two-thirds of the school staff, initialed by the Association's senior faculty rep, and approved by the joint CEA/School Board Gainsharing Committee, educators get to work.
- If a school's goals are met by the end of the year, each staffer gets a $500 bonus.

This isn't some form of merit pay or stipend that pits employee against employee, say Columbus educators.

"Our staff isn't motivated by the extra money, although we're glad to accept it," says Karen Schwab, faculty rep at the Ft. Hayes Metropolitan Education Center, a combination alternative high school for arts and academics and career center.

Instead, the Ft. Hayes staffers are using gainsharing as the impetus to help them set achievement goals and meet urban challenges.

Among the goals they've set for this year are increased attendance, higher graduation rates, and a boost in ninth-graders' scores on Ohio's student proficiency test.

The school already has a lot going for it. Staffers picks 1,200 students by lottery and expose them to a unique environment--including a 100-year-old campus, an art gallery with ever-changing exhibits, and lots of cross-curricular classwork.

Since the gainsharing agreement, Schwab says, "everybody's making a concerted effort to prepare students for the proficiency test--without losing sight of the curriculum or being driven by the test."

New instructional strategies are already in place.

Once a week, Ft. Hayes's in-house bulletin publishes a sample state test math problem, for discussion in first-period classes.

"That gets even English and art students thinking about math," notes Schwab.

And staffers have initiated a new program that assigns each faculty member to five freshmen for regular meetings and mentoring.

"I invited my five kids to a pizza party to talk about their grade cards," reports Schwab, a library media specialist. "They signed a pact spelling out how they would raise their grades. It makes a difference when every ninth grader has an adult to lean on."

At the end of the year, promises CEA President John Grossman, the Association will use its newspaper as a clearinghouse for these and other staff-generated strategies.

"Our actions," Grossman says, "are based on the premise that teaching staffs can accomplish great things with students when they unite in a common effort."

The gainsharing agreement adds to CEA's reputation as a leader in the New Unionism movement that ties collective teacher action to student achievement.

In the 1980s, CEA negotiated a peer assistance and review program that became a model for districts working to boost teacher quality (see *NEA Today*, November 1997).

Still, advances always come with cautionary notes.

"There's a definite concern that gainsharing not turn into a merit pay concept," says Schwab. "We don't want to be pitted against the suburbs that surround Columbus," she stresses, "and I don't want my pay raise tied to performance in the future."

That's not likely to happen in Columbus, Ohio.

The $500 gainsharing bonus is "not in lieu of raises on our salary schedule," says John Grossman.

"In fact," he adds, "this provision is just part of a three-year contract--with annual raises of 2.5 percent, 3 percent, and 3 percent--that has kept Columbus on the list of Ohio's five--out of a total of 710--best paid districts."

For More Information

Visit the Columbus Education Association Web site at www.ceaohio.org and a Ft. Hayes conference site at www.network98.com.

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The Tampa Tribune

View Related Topics

October 11, 1999, Monday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: NATION/WORLD, Pg. 16

LENGTH: 1492 words

HEADLINE: More equitable pay;

BODY:

As I read my Tampa Tribune, I became disturbed by the articles pertaining to the garbage man who was accuseed of dumping toxic chemicals into our city dumps.

While this news is disturbing enough, the real crime is that my wife, a devoted kindergarten teacher in Hillsborough County is, at 10:30 p.m., still hard at work on lesson plans for tomorrow's class, for which she earns (and I do mean earns) approximately $ 27,000 a year. Meanwhile, garbage men earn in excess of $ 40,000 a year.

For all doubters of teachers' efforts toward educational excellence in our county, spend a night with a teacher and you will understand the devotion the profession demands. I hope all of our valued garbage men are resting comfortably. My wife still has two hours of work before bedtime. ED GILKISON Tampa

It's interesting that lawmakers want to tie teachers' pay to student performance. The theory is excellent, just misplaced. It should apply to lawmakers.

As an example, a first-year senator could earn $ 75,000. Not bad for a starting salary. If he or she served satisfactorily and subsequently was re-elected, the salary would jump to $ 100,000. The third term would bring $ 125,000; the fourth term, the maximum allowed.

It's mind-boggling to think elected officials - whether city, county, state or federal - could be responsible to constituents if they wanted more money and could not just vote themselves a pay raise. No business would stay profitable if it hired new personnel at the same rate of pay as the outgoing employee after years on the job. Why should our government?

As for applying the **pay-for-performance** theory to **teachers,** this also is mind-boggling. You can lead a child to an education, but you can't make him think. A child's thirst for knowledge starts well before exposure to that first teacher. It starts at home. NANCY ZUK Dover Ugly and beautiful America

The letter from Nancy Crawford (Oct. 6) touts billboards as guides to our favorite service stations and restaurants. She feels that the federal green-and-white signs don't let you know what businesses are available. However, the writer overlooks the new additions to our Florida landscape: the blue logo sign boards that have popped up everywhere along our interstate system.

They advertise gas, food, lodging and camping. They can number as many as 16 sign boards per exit (eight in each direction - four along the interstate, four more at the exit ramp with directional arrows and mileage indicators), with as many as six logos apiece. Just outside our state Capitol, logo signs on the right of way advertise a Publix Deli 4.2 miles away.

Guess what? These blue logo signs are part of an exclusive franchise agreement between the Florida Department of Transportation and a subsidiary (Florida Logos, Inc.) of one of the world's largest billboard companies (Lamar Advertising Co.). People are shocked to learn that this billboard conglomerate controls the blue logo signs on our rights of way.

Florida's old logo-sign law mentioned terms such as natural beauty and aesthetics. Not true anymore. Those references are now gone. Businesses that advertise on the blue logo signs are free to have billboards as well. Citizens concerned about beauty must distinguish between the necessary and the redundant.

Scenic beauty need not bow to the total commercialization of public space, at least not in those communities where citizens are willing to fight for beauty.

In a speech shortly before his death, Charles Kuralt spoke about the two environments that collided at the Mobil station in Whalebone Junction in his home state of North Carolina. "North of the gas station, nothing but scenic discord, which depresses people. South of it, all natural harmony, which elevates people. I think of that Mobil station as the fulcrum upon which is balanced the worst nightmare and the best hope of all of us.

"Two Americas meet there: the ugly one and the beautiful one. And of course, Americans of their own free will created them both." We have the free will to make a difference. Let's do it right. MELANIE CROSS Jacksonville The writer is executive director of Citizens for a Scenic Florida. Adjudicate Warrick quickly

Peter Warrick was accused of stealing designer clothes with another football player, a multiple-offender. The only question now is: How fast will Coach Bobby Bowden and the university administration sweep this latest incident under the rug? Heaven forbid the football schedule was impacted by this crime. Both of these miscreants should be off the team and their football scholarships rescinded.

Bowden should immediately speak out against this type of behavior. This matter should be adjudicated immediately - not after the football season is over - so the university won't have a way out of doing what's right. PATRICK J. FREMDER Lutz Producers vs. produce-nots

Regarding "The inane Humanist Manifesto 2000" (Editorial, Sept. 25):

The editorial considers a number of ideas, but among the inanities are two that can help to analyze the basic problem. They do not include transfer of wealth by taxation or do-good gifting, but the need for good food, clothing, health care and housing and the disparities between the rich and poor, the industrialized countries and the rest of the world are real.

The key lies in understanding "industrialized." Industrialization means greater production of good food, clothing, health care and housing per unit of labor. The wealth of an industrialized nation is the value of goods and services produced by its workers, not its money. Only when the workers in the less developed countries increase their productivity will disparity shrink. Transfer of wealth by universal taxation does not increase productivity; it is merely a Band-Aid. This, coincidentally, is true in the national as well as in the international arena.

The wealth in a nation is the ability of labor to produce or purchase goods. With a mean annual wage in the United States of $ 30,000 to $ 35,000, an automobile costs six months' labor, a dozen eggs costs about five minutes and a pair of shoes, about three hours.

Until productivity is equalized between haves and have-nots, the struggle for equality will go nowhere. Social and economic disparities will continue until industrialization is promoted. It also implies capital investment with reasonable returns to the investor.

We need not even debate socialism vs. capitalism to see that investment in productivity is the sought-after solution. The problem is not the haves vs. the have-nots, but the producers vs. the produce-nots. JOHN J. DESMOND Spring Hill Glazers' latest escapades

Regarding "Bucs snuggling up to judges?" (Florida/Metro, Oct. 6):

Didn't Don Corleone have a few judges in his pocket? Didn't Idi "Big Daddy" Amin take umbrage at a few of his critics? Didn't Marie Antoinette snoot the masses that financed her to entertain a select few? Don't snake oil salesmen make you think you're buying one thing while they're delivering a bill of goods? Aren't people who double-charge in times of high demand price gougers? And didn't Fidel Castro tell his backers he was fighting for their cause, only to come out of the closet as a commie after they made him victorious?

Sorry, Glazers, but neither Robin Hood nor the Good Samaritan came to mind after reading about your latest escapades. Putting the bait and switch on your most loyal fans in favor of your latest fancy is fickle. Suing your fans is treason. But inviting six or so local judges to your luxury suite less than a week after filing this defamation of character lawsuit is grounds for mutiny! How stupid do you think we are?

The deck has been stacked in favor of the Glazers ever since the citizens were conned into buying season tickets, building them a new stadium and covering their taxes. But that deck just wasn't sweet enough for the Glazers, so they tried in vain to lure some of our most trusted officials to deal 'em dirty.

I applaud Judge Holder, not because he's a Bucs fan, but because he rejected their tempting yet plainly motivated offer. Rather than send the invitation back to the Glazers, it would be appropriate for the judge to send it to one of the Bucs' disgruntled fans - he's got a lot to pick from. DOUG DOWNING Lutz An idea for troubled kids

Philip Uzanas' article (BayLife, Oct. 5) on his experience with the Civilian Conservation Corps was both interesting and accurate.

We saved the forest and opened entry into remote areas, which greatly contributed to the victory of World War II. A similar program today could save countless "problem" schoolchildren.

Northern boys were "Roosevelt's Tree Army." We were the "Tree Monkeys." HARRY DUNLAP New Port Richey

TYPE: LETTERS

LOAD-DATE: October 12, 1999

The National Journal

View Related Topics

October 9, 1999

SECTION: EDUCATION; Vol. 31, No. 41

LENGTH: 1874 words

HEADLINE: School Reforms: Now the Hard Part

BYLINE: Siobhan Gorman

BODY:

PALISADES, N.Y.--On the first night of the National Education Summit last week, Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and National Education Association President Robert F. Chase hit it off over filets of salmon and beef. So much so that after dinner, Chase declared: "My new best friend is Governor Bush." But talk about odd couples. Just the thought of the head of the 2.5 million-member teachers' union linking arms with the Republican Governor presiding over the nation's only statewide voucher program caused skeptics in the room to nearly choke on their warm apple tarts.

In separate interviews the next morning, Bush and Chase both said that while they had found common ground at the dinner table, they hadn't talked specifics. Bush characterized the discussion as a polite conversation about education. And Chase allowed that they "really didn't get into" the issues that have divided them. Dinner conversation "didn't really lend itself to that," he said.

So it went at this year's summit--the third such gathering in the last decade--which drew 24 Governors, compared with 41 in 1996, as well as business leaders and educators. Building consensus was the goal of this year's affair, and indeed there was polite agreement on the need to stay the course on holding schools and educators accountable for student performance, boosting teacher pay, and improving teacher training. But, as with Bush and Chase's dinner conversation, the menu didn't include potentially divisive issues, such as how to pay for a significant raise in teachers' salaries and what to do about vouchers--using tax dollars to let parents send their children to private schools. "For the most part, people are keeping their mouths shut and just playing along," confided a staff member of one education group. "The bottom line is: Come Monday, are we going to be fighting about vouchers and 100,000 teachers in the classroom? This is the third time around, and not a lot has come from it."

Nevertheless, the discussions among Governors, educators, and business leaders during their day-and-a-half gathering at IBM's corporate getaway here raised serious issues. Consider, for example, the dilemmas surrounding states' and schools' adoption of accountability measures, which summit leaders called the next step in education reform. In his address to summit attendees, President Clinton emphasized the need to stick with the standards movement, which has prompted 49 states to set student achievement benchmarks, create tests that gauge whether students are reaching them, and begin enforcing tough accountability measures. Teachers chimed in that they should be held accountable only if they are properly trained and paid. Private-sector representatives pointed out that if more resources are needed for education, someone ought to convince the American taxpayer that it's a worthwhile investment. Of course, the best way to persuade Americans to part with more tax dollars for schools is to show them that schools are being held accountable for improving student scores. An educational catch-22.

Noting a mounting backlash against the standards movement in states that have seen high failure rates in the first year or two of statewide tests, Clinton seemed to depart from his script. As his gestures grew more pronounced, he urged policy-makers and teachers to "ask people not to be afraid when there are consequences." (Sixteen states now have plans to intervene in schools with chronically low test scores, compared with 11 in 1996.) He encouraged them to stick with the standards movement he and other Governors launched a decade ago along with then-President George Bush at the first education summit in Charlottesville, Va.

Clinton argued that the message to students who don't pass exams should be: "We'll be hurting you worse if we're telling you you're learning something you're not." Clinton left the conference with a call for "genuine accountability," emphasizing that "this is the hard part."

But when it came to implementing accountability measures, the summit's official action statement released at the end of the conference struck critics as vague. "To strengthen accountability for results, Governors, business and education leaders will work together in our states to create incentives for success and consequences for failure," the statement declared. "To further this agenda, Governors will benchmark their standards, assessments, accountability systems and performance against other states and nations and will publicly report the results."

One education group aide grumbled that it's easy for an outgoing President and outgoing Governors, like summit co-chair Tommy G. Thompson of Wisconsin, to say the hard work is ahead. The aide questioned whether any Governor will be inclined to address the difficult issue of holding educators accountable for low test scores "unless the state has a secret stash of educators that are really good."

The only way to get educators to embrace accountability, said the NEA's Chase, is to raise salaries and make resources available for professional development. "If we are not willing to address these (resource) issues as a partnership, then the standards movement will fail." On the first night of the summit, nearly the entire post-dinner discussion focused on the needs of teachers--a trend that Chase called encouraging. And at the farewell press conference, Gov. James B. Hunt Jr. of North Carolina, co-vice-chair of the summit, called for higher teacher salaries.

But no one's spending that raise yet. "What happens is reality sets back in as they all go back to their home states and their jobs," said one education group staff member. "There's a very finite amount of resources out there." Educators are hoping that a strong economy and public pressure to improve education will prompt a few more Governors to support additional resources.

Even some of the Governors most concerned about education acknowledged that it will be difficult to plow more money into teachers' pay. For example, California Gov. Gray Davis told National Journal that he could not promise to raise California teachers' salaries to compete with companies in Silicon Valley because it would be "a practical impossibility absent a huge tax increase, not because I'm not totally committed to improving public education." And when asked about the salary issue, several Governors, including New Jersey's Christine T. Whitman, expressed more interest in **pay-for-performance** options than in paying their **teachers** on a par with lawyers and business executives.

In his post-dinner comments on the first night of the summit, Joel Lawrence Fleishman, president of the Atlantic Philanthropic Service Co., noted the "direct relationship between the willingness of the people and the politicians to pay for these resources, and what they see happening in the schools," as heads nodded in the room. "How do you market that to the public?" he asked. "The public still doesn't have a sense that progress is being made."

In fact, the teaser on the local news the next morning highlighted that very public relations problem: "Teachers in Yonkers are resisting a longer school day."

Getting out a national message about the need for accountability and finding adequate funding are among the "exciting To Do's" for the future, said IBM President Louis V. Gerstner Jr., a summit co-chair.

Shaping a unified public message may be a major challenge. "I don't ask every single person to focus on the resource question," Gov. Davis said. "I do ask every person to see if they can't find 10 or 15 minutes a day to read to their child. That's far more important--that a parent send a signal to their child that education really matters." In his first three months in office, Davis visited a dozen schools to read The Little Engine That Could, to emphasize the importance of reading. Gov. Whitman sends a similar message when she takes a day or two each month to teach a fourth-grade New Jersey history class.

And the pace of reform remains a concern for advocates like Hugh Price, president of the National Urban League. The only speaker to raise the controversial issue of vouchers, Price predicted that minority families will use vouchers to abandon the public school system unless there are tangible improvements in the next three to five years. Will change come quickly enough? "The answer to that question is very much up in the air," he told National Journal. "It's a process of reckoning with reality that is going on right now. It's not going at the pace we want, but it's very healthy."

While the summit offered few answers to such questions as how to enforce accountability, provide more resources for educators, and rally public support for public education, Price and the NEA's Chase said the direction of the summit was heartening. Price cited its focus on the need to give children the means to meet standards, with better teachers and after-school programs. Governors said it was useful for exposing them to new policy ideas. Gerstner contrasted the tone of this year's summit with that of the 1996 summit, when participants were "adrift" when it came to unifying behind states' setting standards for students.

And many were quick to argue that the complexity of the accountability issues reinforces the need for perseverance. "Sending a man to the moon and getting him back is a piece of cake compared to reforming the school system," said Houston Independent School District Superintendent Rod Paige. "At least the laws of gravity don't change."

But policy-makers, business leaders, and Governors will still have to sort through the catch-22 of trying to win public support for more education funding without first significantly improving the schools. The concrete results of the conference are due in six months, when states have to offer "a detailed response" to the summit's action plan, with "specific targets and timelines" to show how they plan to get at teacher quality, student opportunity, and school accountability. "I don't know how realistic six months is, and it's still not clear to me what role we're going to play in the development of that," said the education group staffer.

And even the somewhat reformed skeptics like Price and Chase remained cautious. "It's impossible to predict," Price said. "You'll probably see a spotty pattern." As for the prospects of more resources flowing toward educators, Chase was more circumspect the morning after his chat with Bush. "I'm going to be interested to see if there is any change in that direction," Chase said. "We need to hold each other accountable for our part of the bargain."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: October 11, 1999

The Florida Times-Union (Jacksonville, FL)

October 7, 1999 Thursday, Georgia Edition

SECTION: NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL; Pg. A-1

LENGTH: 584 words

HEADLINE: Teacher signing bonuses?

BYLINE: James Salzer, Times-Union staff writer

BODY:

ATLANTA -- With more than 100 Georgia school systems claiming they have teacher shortages, a key committee of Gov. Roy Barnes' education reform commission may wind up recommending the state pay signing bonuses and consider higher salaries for recruits in hard-to-fill subjects like science, math and foreign language.

Questions remain whether such proposals, which are part of a tentative plan of action the funding committee of Barnes' commission will discuss today, are enough to get top students to consider teaching.

'There is going to be an overall teacher shortage in the next few years, and it may attract people to go into the profession,' said state School Superintendent Linda Schrenko.

But she added that a $ 5,000 signing bonus paid over three years --- as has been recommended by some members of the committee --- may not be enough money to move educators into critical-needs areas or schools that are having a hard time finding help.

'Why would I pack my bags and move someplace for $ 5,000 when I know that I can stay where I am and in three years [with typical raises], I'll be making the same amount?' she said. 'You can get that in salary supplements in Gwinnett County in 1 1/2 years.'

Amy Denty, a Jesup middle school teacher who is the state's Teacher of the Year and serves on the governor's commission, doubts signing bonuses will resolve the problem schools face getting top students into the profession.

'That's a one-shot deal, and it's not going to be enticing to the best and the brightest,' Denty said.

A survey released this summer by the reform commission found 113 of 141 local superintendents who responded said they are currently experiencing difficulty filling teacher positions in one or more fields.

The problem may only get worse. The U.S. Department of Education projected in August that Georgia's schools would have the fastest enrollment growth rate during the next decade of any state east of the Mississippi.

John Brown, a policy coordinator with the state Office of Planning and Budget, told the reform panel that Georgia public schools need about 9,000 new teachers each year to keep up with growth, retirements and turnover.

Tentative recommendations to help the problems include:

Expanding the HOPE teacher scholarship programs, which currently attract few top college students to the profession, in part because the requirements are so high.

Increasing the sharing of teachers who work part of the day at a technical institute or community college and the other part at a high school.

Paying signing bonuses of at least 10 percent of a teacher's starting salary.

If shortages persist, paying an annual stipend to teachers in critical fields.

Expanding the use of distance learning.

Providing additional housing opportunities for teachers in rural areas.

Schrenko also would like to see an expansion of the state's current **merit pay** plan, giving more money to **teachers** who perform well to show educators good work is rewarded.

The superintendent backs the idea of different pay for different teaching jobs, a proposal Barnes broached earlier this year.

'If you are willing to go into areas that are more difficult to get a college degree in, like math or science . . . you're going to get paid more. That's the way the real world works,' she said.

Information Box:

HITTING HOME

Georgia teacher pay climbed from 27th to 22nd in the country last year, according to the National Education Association.

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HEADLINE: Message from education summit: improve, or be buried in blizzard of vouchers

BYLINE: RICHARD WHITMIRE; Gannett News Service

DATELINE: PALISADES, N.Y.

BODY:

PALISADES, N.Y. - Public schools have four or five years to materially improve or face an avalanche of changes they might not like at all, including vouchers.

The head of the Urban League, Hugh Price, said that is inevitable as disgruntled parents and disgusted business leaders find alternatives that will better educate children and provide a pool of qualified workers for crucial, challenging jobs of a new century.

At the point parents and employers become convinced public schools are mired in mediocrity, look for alternatives like vouchers allowing students to attend private, parochial or non-neighborhood public schools, Price said. He pointed to the burgeoning popularity of pilot programs offering vouchers to poor youngsters in some inner cities.

Price's prediction that public schools at most have five years to reform themselves got no argument from New York City School Chancellor Rudy Crew, who spoke informally during a break at the National Education Summit last Thursday and Friday.

"That sounds about right," Crew said.

He said he is confident educators know the path to rescuing low-achieving children - smaller classes, better teachers, longer school hours, summer school and mentors.

The unknowns, said Crew, are the political will - and the resources - to complete the rescue.

However, the dismal track record of Crew's lowest-performing schools - his personal "chancellor's district" - suggests there still is much to learn about rescuing failing schools.

"I see individual (poor) schools performing well, but not an entire district," said Price.

The governors, business leaders and education leaders attending the third summit in a decade debated a three-point action plan they believe will lead to better schools.

Included were:

-- Improving teacher quality.

The solutions, they said, include strengthening requirements for teachers to enter the field, focusing training solely on teaching to state standards, and offering higher salaries to better teachers.

The group said it wants to encourage states to experiment with **pay-for-performance: teachers** earning more when their students accumulate higher test scores. That last proposal is controversial among both teachers and test experts.

Teachers say what they do is a collegial, collaborative faculty effort, and pitting one teacher against another in the same school for higher salaries would compromise that cooperation. Test experts, even those who philosophically favor merit pay, say the small sample size of a single classroom presents a statistical problem because the margin of error is too great.

-- Help all students achieve high standards.

To help low-achieving schools, the governors and business leaders vowed to expand extended day and extended year programs; recruit tutors; give schools more flexibility to succeed; and hold all students to high standards - not just the brighter ones.

-- Strengthen accountability by creating incentives for success and consequences for failure.

Leaders such as Price, who speak on behalf of the struggling students, warned some 30 governors that raising standards is just the beginning.

"I think there are huge issues of resources," said Price, referring to the imbalance between rich and poor schools.

The biggest imbalance, most experts agree, is teacher quality, with the least capable instructors assigned to the worst schools.

There is limited time to carry out the reforms, said Price, who said most black parents now favor school vouchers.

But, he said, the rush to vouchers could be avoided if schools are cognizant of an Education Trust study of the characteristics shared by high-performing schools in poor neighborhoods.

-- Using standards to design the curriculum.

-- Increasing instruction time for reading and math.

-- Vastly increasing the time and quality of teacher training.

-- Developing a system to monitor - and rescue - struggling children.

-- Get parents more involved in the effort of helping their children reach the new standards.

-- Devise an accountability system that includes real consequences for the adults in the school.

But both educators and business leaders warned that the best academic plan would fail without talented school leaders.

New York Schools Commissioner Richard Mills says he visits schools in pairs - one failing, the other succeeding - to search for lessons.

The difference, he said, can be explained almost entirely by the quality of the staff and leadership. Mills vowed to let class size "bloom" if necessary, rather than bring in less-qualified teachers to plug holes.

That message also came Friday from House Education Committee Chairman William Goodling, R-Pa.

Goodling, involved in a political fight with President Clinton over using federal dollars to reduce class size, said number of students in a classroom is not the issue.

"If a quality teacher is not in the classroom, it doesn't really matter," he said.

Graphics: EDU-TEACHING 08-24-99 and EDU-TESTS 06-17-98, available on GGN2

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USA TODAY

October 4, 1999, Monday, FINAL EDITION

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HEADLINE: School plan due in 6 months Education leaders endorse tying pay to student achievement

BYLINE: Tamara Henry

DATELINE: PALISADES, N.Y.

BODY:

PALISADES, N.Y. -- The nation's governors, CEOs and educators this weekend agreed to boost teacher salaries and strengthen training programs to help kids learn.

To prove they mean business, they set a six-month deadline for themselves to outline how they are going to accomplish the tasks and when.

"The commitments we make today are among the most powerful levers available to us to raise student achievement," says an action statement approved by the 24 governors, 34 corporate executives and dozens of education officials -- 105 people in all -- at the 1999 National Education Summit.

They don't have to reinvent the wheel. Many successful programs are in place around the country. The summit leaders now seek a comprehensive national effort to draw all the best together.

But IBM CEO Louis Gerstner says, "There is no silver bullet here.

"I'm hopeful that these plans that the governors are going to come back with . . . will be very on target for pulling all of this together in an integrated approach."

The buzzwords for the two days of discussions were "standards" -- benchmarks for what students should know at various stages of their education -- and "accountability."

The action plan commits the group to:

* Improve the entry and exit requirements of teacher-preparation programs, requiring proof that graduates are prepared to teach to the state's academic standards and are technologically literate.

* Establish or expand alternative pathways to teacher certification to encourage the most talented, well-educated people from diverse fields to enter teaching.

* Have at least 10 states incorporate **pay-for-performance** incentives for **teachers.**

As for tying teacher salaries to student achievement, Sandra Feldman, president of the American Federation of Teachers, says, "I would have a problem if I didn't hear as much as I'm hearing about the need to raise salaries in general.

"I'm very gratified by the focus. We need to provide teachers professional support."

The gathering steered clear of the volatile issue of school choice, especially the idea of allowing low-income parents to use tax-supported vouchers to pay tuition at secular and religious private schools.

Wisconsin Gov. Tommy Thompson, co-chairman of the summit and "a passionate believer of choice," says he's not disappointed that the meeting avoided the issue because it "has a tendency to polarize."

Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, a fellow Republican, agrees. His state operates the nation's first statewide voucher program, but he says: "Each state ought to determine its own path. It shouldn't be determined by Washington."

GRAPHIC: PHOTO, B/W, Stuart Ramson, AP; Nonpartisan agenda: IBM's Louis Gerstner, left, and Wisconsin Gov. Tommy Thompson led the summit.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: October 04, 1999

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Survey & Analysis of Teacher Salary Trends 1998

Produced By:
The Research Department
American Federation of Teachers

Teacher Merit-Pay Programs

What is Merit Pay?

Merit Pay is a system that that adjusts salaries or provides compensation to reward higher levels of performance. It comes in many different forms including, "merit-based" salary schedules, bonuses, incentive pay, and differential staffing or "master teacher" plans. Merit pay can be linked to a district's regular single-salary schedule (teachers with high ratings advance up the scale more quickly), or it can be administered as a separate "merit pay schedule" (supplementing the regular salary). Participation by teachers can be either mandatory or voluntary. Several states also have broached the idea of paying more to teachers in subject areas with shortages, those willing to teach in hard-to-staff schools, and those who have particular knowledge and skills or who have shown superior performance.

How is merit assessed?

If the pay-for-performance program proves to be successful seniority will no longer determine a teacher's pay. Criteria for moving up the salary ladder would be the teacher's level of education and student achievement (the class must show a pre-determined level of improvement). (Council for Basic Education 1999).

Higher pay for teaching effectiveness can be awarded on the basis of input criteria (teacher performance) or output criteria (student performance). Input criteria may include classroom management skills; preparation of lessons; knowledge of subject matter; instructional techniques; management of student, staff, and public relations; professional ethics; or professional growth.

While past systems were largely based on input, current systems tend to be based on output, whereby the degree of progress in achieving specified goals determines the amount of benefits that the teacher receives. These goals may be measured by criterion-referenced tests to ascertain students' mastery of prescribed course content or their ability to perform certain skills. In some programs, teachers are responsible for proposing objectives for themselves or for their students, the fulfillment of which entitles the teacher to merit pay.

In addition to superior teaching performance, extra pay also may be awarded for such factors as professional development, additional responsibilities, teaching at a high-priority location, contributions to the total school program, teaching subjects for which there is a teacher shortage, and even for outstanding teacher attendance. "Incentive pay" denotes such programs which reward teachers for helping the school district achieve certain goals or solve specific problems.

Rationale:

- "We're expecting teachers to know more and do more, and in order to be successful at that they need a whole lot of new knowledge and skills," said Allan Odden, a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, "and you could reinforce that in your pay structure."

- Everybody makes a concentrated effort to prepare students for the proficiency test, with out losing sight of the curriculum being driven by the test. (Hayes Metropolitan Education Center)

- Positive outcomes, such as reduced teacher absenteeism and turnover, improved teaching practices among borderline teachers, or an increased concern among teachers about the weaknesses of their teaching practices result from merit pay. (Issues and Case Studies in Teacher Incentive Plan 1994)

Arguments:

- Most Teachers oppose merit pay because it often has nothing to do with merit and everything to do with how well you get along with the principal. Merit pay encourages teachers to compete rather than collaborate. Teaching improves when teachers work together to share ideas and problems. With merit pay schemes, the incentive is to keep ideas to yourself. (AFT 1999)

- Test experts, even those in favor of merit pay, say the small sample size of a single classroom presents a statistical problem because the margin of error is too great. (National Education Summit 1999)

- In some New York school districts merit pay programs were eliminated because economic realities kept them from being able to reward all those who were deemed worthy. In schools with only enough to reward a chosen few, merit pay schemes bred a competitive atmosphere, created dissension, and lowered staff morale. (New York State United Teachers)

- A child's performance is influenced by factors far beyond the reach of the teacher, including the child's home life, prior teachers, direction provided by the school's administration, and cash available to the school district (Ormsby County Education Association)

- The Ohio Education Association generally encourages local teachers unions to resist merit-pay type concepts, which they feel are unproven and unfair.

- Pay performance plans have the inherent potential of teachers looking at students as to whether they're going to get them a pay raise. (Neil Quirk, Akron Education Association)

- At the National Education Summit a group of New York teachers say that what they do is a collegial, collaborative effort, and pitting one teacher against another in the same school for higher salaries would compromise that cooperation. (Gannett News Service 10/4/99)

Linking pay to performance is catching on in Cincinnati, Dallas, Houston, Columbus, Douglas County Colorado, Minneapolis and Rochester, NY are experimenting with performance based programs. (Christian Science Monitor 9/16/99)

- The program to be piloted in Denver will have approximately 450 teachers in 12 Denver elementary and three middle schools volunteering. Each teacher will immediately receive a

$500 stipend and later, up to $1,000 if a majority of students met achievement goals during the first year of the program. In the second Year, teachers from 2 district high schools will be invited to participate, and all participants will receive up to $1,500, if goals are met. Teachers' pay would not be cut if student performance did not improve. Participant teachers use the following to measure achievement: scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, scores on teacher-designed skills tests, or scores comparing students' knowledge before and after teachers had undergone additional training. (Facts on File World News Digest 1999)

- In Douglas County, Colorado, Performance Pay Plan was put into action in summer, 1994. The plan covers all employee groups including teachers, classified staff and administrative/technical employees. Douglas County teachers receive extra pay for participation in district wide professional activities.

- Last week, the St. Paul, Minn., school board approved a union contract that no longer grants automatic step increases to all teachers. Instead, teachers in need of improvement must show evidence that they are making progress to earn the incremental raises.

- In September, teachers in Coventry, R.I., ratified a contract that will allow individual teachers to earn $1,000 on top of their base pay if they can demonstrate excellent performance by completing portfolios of their work. "I believe that it's very important to recognize the best teaching," said John E. Deasy, the superintendent of the 5,600-student system, "and that recognition becomes substantial when you attach money and salary to it."

- In June, the Seattle Education Association approved an agreement with the district to devise an evaluation system that would be based, in part, on student achievement. Classroom evidence, not test scores, will be the primary source for showing student progress. Eventually, said Roger A. Erskine, the NEA affiliate's executive director, those evaluations will be used for compensation decisions.

- This fall, the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, is working on a proposal that would tie salary advancement to teachers' ability to show performance against standards of professional practice. The system is being tested in 10 schools. Teachers could also earn extra pay for acquiring specific sets of skills, such as expertise in technology.

- In Kentucky, for example, a state task force is likely to recommend extra compensation for teachers who meet some of those criteria.

- In Florida, Commissioner of Education Tom Gallagher has proposed paying some of the state's best teachers up to $80,000 a year if they agree to mentor others. In addition, all employees would be eligible for financial incentives tied to student performance.

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What Do We Know About Merit Pay for Teachers?

Merit pay is a compensation system that provides teachers with monetary awards for outstanding performance. Such systems aim to improve student performance by rewarding the best teachers and providing an incentive for all teachers to improve their practice.

Historically, most merit pay plans have provided compensation to individual teachers based on observations of their performance in the classroom. However, in recent years more states, districts and schools have been implementing merit pay systems that *reward whole schools* based on student performance, or that *reward individual teachers* for the attainment of certain *competencies*. As discussed below, the research suggests that compensation systems in the latter two categories may be more promising.

Merit pay for individual teachers based on observations of their classroom performance has not been a successful strategy for improving teaching and learning. A wide variety of merit pay programs for individual teachers have been tried in districts across the country. Although one study found districts that reported a few positive effects, most of the research on merit pay has concluded that the programs are fraught with problems and have not improved instructional practices:

Positive effects: In a 1994 study of 13 school districts with merit pay programs, Hatry and colleagues found that nine of the 13 districts reported that programs were associated with positive outcomes such as reduced teacher absenteeism and turnover; improved teaching practices among borderline teachers; or an increased concern among teachers about the weaknesses of their teaching practices. However, some districts also reported negative effects such as teacher dissatisfication with the programs due to the perceived subjectivity of the performance reviews. In addition, few districts attempted to evaluate the effects of the plans on student achievement, and none of the districts reported significant gains in student achievement.

Problems and negative effects: Several prominent researchers (Murnane and Cohen, 1984) have argued that teachers' work does not satisfy the conditions under which performance-based compensation for individual workers is an effective motivator for improved performance. **In addition, most research has not found a relationship between merit pay for individual teachers and improved teaching and learning.** The lack of positive effects may be due to the following features:

(1) Most merit pay plans have created competition among teachers by trying to identify a small percentage of the "best" or "excellent" teachers. This kind of program conflicts with the collegiality and cooperative culture found in the most effective schools. Therefore, merit pay plans can undermine rather than reinforce good school performance.

(2) There has been a lack of consensus about what qualifies as effective teaching, and many past merit pay programs have simply rewarded teachers for additional work performed outside of the classroom rather than for effective instructional practices. "Excellent" teaching or the "best" teaching is difficult to define and research shows that most schools have not implemented effective, objective performance evaluations of teachers. In many merit pay programs that have been studied, teachers have been rewarded for doing work outside of the classroom -- work that often has had nothing to do with teaching. Therefore, many of these programs have not been true "merit pay" programs; they have been "additional pay for additional task" programs.

(3) Districts and states have generally not provided stable funding for merit pay programs, and this lack of stability has undermined the incentives that such programs were intended to create. Individual merit pay programs have often been funded at low levels and have be defunded during times of fiscal stress.

(4) Many individual merit-pay programs have been associated with teacher morale problems stemming from the resulting competition among teachers, the perception of unfair evaluation practices, and the use of quotas in determining the number of teachers to receive awards. With a few exceptions, teachers and teacher organizations have generally opposed individual teacher merit-pay programs.

Collective merit pay for whole schools or groups of teachers (school-based performance awards) may be a more effective strategy for improving teacher performance and student outcomes. Many researchers and educators argue that group merit pay plans have the potential to motivate teachers to higher levels of performance while overcoming the problems associated with merit pay for individual teachers. These plans provide a monetary award to an entire faculty when school-wide student achievement reaches or exceeds expected levels of improvement. Kentucky, South Carolina and about 12 other states or districts have collective merit pay programs in place. Although more research is needed, there is emerging evidence that some of these programs are achieving the desired effects.

For example, in 1991-92 the Dallas school district implemented one of the most complete and sophisticated accountability systems of any big-city district in the country. The centerpiece of the Dallas program includes bonuses to the staff based on gains in students' test scores. All staff in the winning schools receive individual monetary rewards, and the school itself receives money for its activity fund. Clotfelter and Ladd (1996) found that when scores were evaluated against comparable school districts in Texas, the Dallas program had a positive impact on test results.

Preliminary findings from research conducted by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) indicate that some school improvement strategies that have included school-based performance awards have been associated with changes in teaching practice (Kelley, Milanowski, Heneman, 1998). However, the researchers view the school-based performance awards as one part of larger school improvement strategies that include other critical elements such as strong curriculum, aligned assessment systems, and other key supports. Nevertheless, the performance awards appear to be playing an important role. Preliminary observations indicate that the awards have helped teachers to focus their efforts in productive ways because they signal that the highest priority is to help students achieve in the core academic subjects (Odden, 1998).

Group merit pay plans can also have some downsides. For example, in Houston, Texas and Seiling, Oklahoma where group pay plans were used, some teachers who individually performed well did not receive an outstanding educational progress bonus because their schools did not meet the targeted test scores (Hatry, 1994). However, proponents of group incentives argue that over the long term, peer pressure within the group encourages poor performers to improve their practice.

A variation on the traditional form of merit pay -- additional pay for individual teachers who demonstrate certain professional competencies -- may be a more effective strategy for improving teacher performance and student outcomes. A variation of the traditional merit pay program is a program of competency-based pay that rewards teachers for developing and using knowledge and competencies described by external professional standards and valued by schools. In this system of pay, skill attainment is assessed relative to predetermined, clear-cut standards -- mastery of particular knowledge or sets of skills.

Programs that provide rewards to teachers based on the attainment of clearly specified skills avoid some problems found in many traditional merit pay programs -- the perception that the evaluations are unfair and subjective, and competition among teachers. Whereas traditional merit pay systems have used subjective measures of classroom observations to evaluate teachers against one another for a fixed pool of funds, competency-based pay systems signal the kinds of competencies a school wants its faculty to acquire in order to better educate students.

In addition, research shows that teachers are motivated by opportunities to engage in professional development and improve practice. Thus, a competency-based pay system can add an extrinsic reward to existing, intrinsic motivators. Finally, Allan Odden and Carolyn Kelley argue that competency-based pay "enables an organization to enhance overall capacity by investing in its people and thus expand its human capital." (Page 76, Odden and Kelley).

Odden and Kelley argue that under a competency-based compensation system teachers can be rewarded for developing expertise in three broad areas: (1) depth of knowledge in content, curriculum and instruction; (2) breadth of skills in nonteaching functions, such as curriculum development or counseling; and (3) management skills necessary to work in site-based managed schools. Indeed, additional compensation for teachers who achieve National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification represents competency-based pay in the first broad area and can be viewed as a form of merit pay. Currently, a number of states and local school districts provide salary supplements to teachers who achieve National Board Certification.

Odden and Kelley argue that a local, state, or national skills assessment system could identify and assess additional milestones in skill, knowledge, and competency development between initial professional licensure and certification by the NBPTS. Local school districts could determine salary increases based on teacher performance on the competency assessments.

Future Research and Information: More research is needed on the effects of school-based performance awards and competency-based pay for individual teachers. In August of 1998, the CPRE Teacher Compensation project will be releasing a research paper on school-based performance awards in Kentucky and North Carolina. In addition, the Teacher Compensation team is involved with several projects that support school-based performance systems and competency-based pay systems. First, the team is developing a "curriculum" to use in design seminars at which district and state union and management teams can create both school-based performance awards and knowledge and skill pay elements. Second, the team is proving direct technical assistance in several cities engaged in developing changes in their teacher compensation systems. Finally, the team is working with members of the Teacher Union Reform Network (TURN) to identify different and new models of teacher salary schedules and is beginning to organize an annual conference on innovations in teacher compensation.

Conclusions: Traditional merit pay systems that have used classroom observations to evaluate teachers against one another for a fixed pool of funds have generally not been successful in improving teacher practice and student outcomes. Emerging research suggests that merit pay systems that reward teams of teachers or whole schools for improved student performance, or that reward individual teachers for acquisition of clearly defined competencies may be more effective forms of merit pay for teachers. Finally, any system of additional compensation cannot single-handedly transform instructional practices. Rather, any form of merit pay should be viewed as one piece of a larger educational improvement strategy that includes clear goals for students and teachers, a strong curriculum, and other important elements.

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May 20, 1998

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