

Teacher Compensation: Goals & Strategies

Development of Compensation

Beyond the initial stage of research and brainstorming, schools serious about addressing compensation issues will develop a compensation philosophy and a series of strategies, to be presented to the board and faculty. The following goals and strategies should be considered as part of the process.

I. Set Goals (5):

- **Attract** All-star Teachers
- **Retain** the best of the best;
- **Reward** exceptional performance and group performance;
- **Improve** collegiality and the environment advantage;
- **Move** the institution forward.

II. Develop and Prioritize Strategies (8):

- **First**, determine the top priority: e.g., to attract all-stars with nationally competitive salaries (>\$30+K to start and >\$40+K median).
- **Second**, decide "how to pay for it": i.e., via a balance of tuition increases, class size growth, and/or endowment & giving.
- **Third**, establish a retention strategy for teachers 3-5 years into the system (e.g., major jump in salary and responsibility).
- **Fourth**, explore compensation re-engineering design: consider broad-banding and faculty rank systems.
- **Fifth**, develop a "meaningful evaluation" system that combines administrative responsibility for 360-degree assessment (to address individual performance issues, both positive and negative) with faculty ownership (focused on professional growth and development). Resolve the "merit pay" conundrums of divisiveness, performance "grade inflation" and lack of relationship to student achievement. Consider as an alternative to merit pay, a performance pay system that marries "more pay for more work" for all-stars.
- **Sixth**, implement strategies to develop a more collegial environment (NB. Roland Barth's *Improving Schools from Within*, 1990, Josey-Wales): The most important factor in determining the quality of a school is the relationship of the adults.)
- **Seventh**, examine work culture and work climate with intent to making it harder to leave. Flexible leave policies & work schedules, increased security, financial planning, scholarship or reduced tuition plan for teacher children, Continuing Education tuition reimbursement "golden handcuff" plans, etc.
- **Eighth**, collaborate on determining school-wide programmatic and strategic goals to be incentivized: If there's more money on the table, let's attach some of it to group performance.

Schools that manage to put all of the above pieces together in a comprehensive compensation plan will be miles ahead of those with whom they will compete for the next generation of teachers.