



Washington State
School Directors' Association

Legislative Update

July 2, 2012

By [Marie Sullivan](#), WSSDA Director of Governmental Relations

Work group recommends higher starting teacher salary

The Compensation Technical Work Group (CTWG) wrapped up nearly a year's worth of meetings on June 21st and sent a 177-page report to the Legislature with nine main recommendations that include increasing the starting salary for teachers and educational staff associates to \$48,687.

The work group was created under RCW 28A.400.201 and was tasked to develop an enhanced, collaboratively designed salary allocation model. Among the key directives for the group's report were:

- Attract and retain the highest quality educators
- Reduce the number of tiers within the existing salary allocation model
- Account for regions of the state where it may be difficult to recruit and retain teachers
- Conduct a comparative labor market analysis of school employee salaries and other compensation
- Provide a concurrent implementation schedule

[The full report](#), along with the CTWG members and guiding documents, is available on the OSPI web site for the [Compensation Technical Work Group](#).

Attention now turns to the Legislature, which has been waiting for this final piece of information as part of the ESHB 2261 implementation. The price tag to fully implement the work group's recommendations is about \$2 billion more a year than is allocated now for salaries and benefits.

Nine key recommendations

The executive summary of the report describes the nine recommendations, how the CTWG responded to the legislative directives, and a compensation model that shows the collapsed tier structure. Recommendations are:

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- Provide Fair Market-Based salary allocations for all K-12 staff
- Maintain comparable wage levels through an annual cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) and periodic wage analyses
- Align the Salary Allocation Model to the Career Continuum for Educators
- Invest in 10 days of Professional Development time
- Allocate mentors and instructional coaches in the Basic Education Funding Formula
- Provide appropriate staffing levels and increased program support for Basic Education
- Amply fund state Basic Education salary allocations and limit locally funded salary enhancement to 10 percent of the state allocation
- Ensure school districts receive the same or higher state salary allocations per state-funded employee

Detailed descriptions of these recommendations can be found in the report.

10% compensation cap suggested

One of the hotly debated elements was consideration of regional pay difference compensation for King, Snohomish and Pierce counties, which ultimately was not included in the recommendations.

A compromise emerged at the June 7 meeting, when the 15-member group began discussing a “salary cap.” While more work needs to be done on the proposal, the CTWG recommended that local districts be allowed to tap other funds (e.g., local levy, federal, private, and foundation) for up to 10 percent of the state allocation to be used for total compensation.

As an example, the way members discussed how the proposal would work is:

- The state allocation for compensation to a school district is \$10 million
- 10 percent of \$10 million is \$1 million
- A school district would be authorized to use up to \$1 million in additional funding for compensation of all school district employees

The proposal would allow a school district to make up regional pay differences, pay certain teachers more in hard-to- attract jobs or locations, offer bonuses to employees who meet certain targets, etc. The recommendation is to eliminate TRI (Time, Responsibility, Incentive) when the new salary allocation model is fully funded.

Rather than a strict compliance model, the CTWG opted for an allocation model, with no teacher receiving less than the minimum starting salary.

Tiers collapsed to 10

The proposed state salary allocation model has 10 cells compared to the 119 cells in the current model, providing what the CTWG said would be a more attractive career progression to recruit and retain educators in the profession. Elements include:

- Starting certificated salary at \$48,687 for a bachelor's degree and \$52,582 for an advanced degree
- After four years of experience, the salary could jump to \$58,424 and \$63,098, respectively
- With a National Board certification, and a minimum of four years of experience, the salaries would be \$63,098 and \$68,146, respectively
- After nine years of experience, with professional/continuing certification, salaries would increase to \$70,109 and \$75,718, respectively
- With a National Board certification, after nine years of experience the salaries would rise to \$75,718 and \$81,775

Members debated when to put that first salary bump, with some arguing that starting educators should be focused on being high quality teachers first and worry about achieving certification levels or National Board status later, while others argued that placing the bump later would discourage educators from continuing their certification and professional development.

As described above, the proposed model incorporates recognition of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certificate.

It does not include what is currently known as the \$5,000 bonus for working in challenging schools. However, nothing in the recommendations precludes the Legislature from keeping the challenging schools bonus as a separate appropriation or local districts from offering it under the 10 percent total compensation cap.

Next steps

The [Quality Education Council](#) will meet July 20 at the Cherberg Building in Olympia. It is expected that the QEC will discuss the recommendation in depth and make recommendations to the Legislature based on their deliberations.

Another group that will be keeping tabs on the Compensation Technical Working Group recommendations is the Joint Education Funding Task Force created by [HB 2824](#). The group is directed to produce a report by the end of the year that describes how to fund elements of [ESHB 2261](#). Compensation is a major component of the education reforms adopted in 2009 and 2010.

OSPI confident Washington will get ESEA waiver

Earlier today, OSPI released a message to school district superintendents and chief financial officers on Washington state's back and forth negotiations with the U.S. Department of Education on a waiver to the federal No Child Left Behind law.

K-12 Deputy Superintendent Alan Burke is bullish that final approval will be granted for a one-year waiver, and that Washington will be included in the next round of announcements.

be aware of the favorable status of the state's application prior to the July 10 deadline for district's to publish a draft 2012-13 operating budget.

Not knowing which way the waiver would go, many districts had prepared two budgets: one with the 20% Title I set asides separated on the assumption that the old rules would be in effect, and one with the 20% Title I set asides back in the budget assuming the request would be granted.

Once the agreement is finalized and USED officially announces approval, OSPI will be offering webinar-based guidance regarding the new accountability system, and its effects on schools in each district. Superintendents with schools identified through the flexibility request will have a portion of the webinar devoted to reviewing regulations regarding schools designated as priority, focused, and emerging.

OSPI indicated that approval of the Washington flexibility request will come exclusively from USED and will not take place for a week or more, depending on their schedule.

SBE announces July meeting in Bellingham

The [State Board of Education](#) has released its agenda for the July 11 and 12 meeting in Bellingham. A major portion of the meeting will be spent on developing a new State Accountability System. The SBE meeting packet is available [here](#) and on the web site.

Last May the SBE heard about the student growth model that Colorado has been using and other states are considering using to measure student achievement and learning. Board members are leaning towards a student growth model, which would measure individual student growth, and away from the current comparison of class cohorts.

The SBE has created the Achievement and Accountability Work Group, comprised of school district and education stakeholders, to inform the Board on the new Accountability System. Tukwila school director Dave Larsen will serve as WSSDA's representative to the AAWG.

In addition, the SBE will take up the topic of waivers and recent results from a survey conducted last month. The SBE has filed a [notice of intent](#) to use the rule-making process to adopt criteria by which to evaluate waiver requests, starting in the 2012-13 school year. The Board received nearly 200 responses to the survey, including about 80 from school directors.

On July 12, the SBE is scheduled to take action on Option 1 waiver requests, requests for waivers based on the new Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) inventory, and draft criteria language that would be included in the next step of the rule-making process. A public hearing on the draft rules may occur at the September SBE retreat in Walla Walla.

Correction

Please note that Rep. Cathy Dahlquist, R-Enumclaw, and Susan Fagan, R-Pullman, have

Education Accountability. The committee was authorized by [E2SSB 6696](#) (Sec. 114); initial appointments were made after May 1, 2012. The new appointments are effective immediately.

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