



Council For Lifelong Learning Merit Pay for Teachers

Fact Sheet

September 2001

<p>1. What is merit pay for teachers?</p>	<p>"Merit pay is an approach to rewarding exemplary teachers by paying them higher salaries based on their performance or the performance of their students . . . Some school districts have combined merit pay with other factors--such as additional planning time, training, flexible assignments, and changes in working conditions or environments--and they report that the distinctions have helped them retain high-quality teachers."</p> <p>-- <i>The Language of Learning: A Guide To Education Terms.</i> by J. McBrien and R. Brandt. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.</p>
<p>2. Does Florida have a merit pay system?</p>	<p>Florida does have a merit pay system. The 1997 Legislature passed legislation that requires school boards to "base a portion of each employee's compensation on performance." (Ch. 97-212, L.O.F.) In addition, "The superintendent must recommend a salary schedule for instructional personnel which bases a portion of each employee's compensation on performance under Section 231.29, Florida Statutes" (Section 231.29, Florida Statutes, addresses student assessment procedures and criteria).</p> <p>These salary schedules are locally determined. The state does not mandate an exact percentage of a teacher's pay that must be based on performance.</p> <p>In the 1999 Legislative Session, the Legislature passed the A+ Education Plan (Ch. 99-398, L.O.F.) which contained provisions for improving teacher quality. This legislation established that teachers <i>and</i> administrators who demonstrate outstanding performance (based upon student achievement criteria measured under Section 231.29, Florida Statutes) could annually earn a bonus of up to 5 percent of their base pay.</p> <p>In the 2000 Legislative Session, the Legislature created the Mentor Teacher School Pilot Program (Ch. 2000-301, L.O.F.). Section 231.700, Florida Statutes, authorizes the Commissioner of Education to select a combination of elementary, middle, and high schools representing small, medium, and large districts to participate in the program.</p>

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	<p>Schools chosen to participate must offer a five tier teacher development system that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Paraprofessional Learning Guides • Associate Teachers • Teachers • Lead Teachers • Mentor Teachers <p>Each of the five levels has specific performance requirements for educational experience, student performance, and peer support or training. Teachers at the pilot schools would be allowed to move up this pay-differentiated career ladder based on performance instead of receiving lock step salary increases based upon years of service. Mentor teachers are eligible to receive up to twice the district average classroom teacher salary.</p> <p>The Legislature appropriated \$1.1 million for the Mentor Teacher School Pilot Program in the 2001-2002 General Appropriations Act (S.A. 7C).</p>
<p>3. Do parents and teachers have input in the salary schedule?</p>	<p>Section 230.23(5)(c), F.S., instructs the district school board to adopt teacher salary schedules. The law requires that "the school board shall seek input from parents, teachers, and representatives of the business community."</p>
<p>4. What are the applicable statutes and rules?</p>	<p>Section 230.23(5)(c), F.S. -- Compensation and salary schedules.</p> <p>Section 230.33(7)(b), F.S. -- Compensation and salary schedules.</p> <p>Section 231.29, F.S. -- Assessment procedures and criteria.</p> <p>Section 236.02, F.S. -- Salary schedule.</p>
<p>5. Where can I get additional information?</p>	<p>Florida Department of Education Division of Public Schools (850) 487-3663 www.firn.edu/doe/bin000611/mentor_pilot.htm</p> <p>The Florida House of Representatives Committee on Education Innovation (850) 488-7451</p>