

DMEA TEMPO

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Des Moines Education Association

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TEACHER COMPENSATION

Most of this edition of the TEMPO will be devoted to the Teacher Compensation issue that will be debated in the 2001 Iowa Legislature. **It is a critical issue** for Iowa's future. **And, it is a confusing issue.**

► **Why critical?** Iowa has a shortage of teachers caused by low salaries compared to other states and a wave of retirements scheduled in the next several years. Average salary in Iowa is \$5,600 below the national average. Something must be done.

► **Why confusing?** Two reports have been advanced. One by a business group led by Des Moines businessman Marvin Pomerantz. The second was prepared by a group chaired by Wellmark CEO John Forsyth at the request of Governor Vilsack.

► **Both plans are similar in many respects:**

- Both call for increases in beginning teacher salaries. (Not much help to Des Moines).
- Both eliminate the salary schedule as we know it.
- Both advance a career ladder approach using steps like Provisional (probationary), Professional Career 1, Professional Career 2, Professional Advanced, and National Board Certification.
- Salaries in each category could be tied to a factor of the national average.
- Both contain a variable pay incentive for a building staff for achieving student performance goals.

► **Are you still confused?** Sorry! But the clarity will come later as specific legislation is developed and debated. To paraphrase ISEA President Jolene Franken, we must get involved to make sure the Legislators do something "for us" and not "to us". The ISEA has developed a set of Core Criteria and Guiding Principles to be used in an ongoing lobbying effort and to measure the details. That is reprinted here:

► The Iowa State Education Association supports and encourages our members to explore and develop enhanced compensation systems which are designed to help recruit and retain quality teachers and which will result in improved teaching and student learning. These changes will require a considerable infusion of new money into education to make salaries competitive.

Core Criteria for Compensation Plans

The ISEA further believes that such enhanced compensation systems should:

- Provide all educators with equal access to appropriate high-quality professional development opportunities, including mentoring programs and relevant conferences and workshops.
- Provide incentives for teachers to improve their skills and assume leadership positions.
- Result in salaries that are competitive with teaching salaries nationwide as well as with other professions requiring commensurate skills and education.
- Foster improved labor-management relations.

Guiding Principles

The ISEA also believes that the following principles are critical to the success of any teacher compensation model:

- The source of funding for compensation systems must be sufficient and sustainable.
- The plan must be mutually developed and agreed upon by the teachers, administrators, and school boards as part of a collective bargaining agreement.
- The plan must promote cooperation and collaboration among all staff.
- Financial incentives for individual teacher salaries must not be based solely on high-stakes student test scores.
- Financial incentives for groups of teachers must be based on building-level goals, they must emphasize growth in student learning, and they must use multiple measures of student achievement.
- Financial incentives must be significant enough to encourage participation, and there must not be quotas.
- No individual teacher's salary should be reduced under the plan.
- Compensation plans should not be implemented until all parties have received appropriate information and training.
- The evaluation procedures for employment and individual teacher licensure must remain separate.
- Any criteria used for establishing levels of professional expertise must be clear, objective, and predictable.
- Any compensation system must retain current teacher termination procedures.
- Mentoring and peer assistance programs must be available to all teachers.

► **Discussions with teachers and others interested have already produced these questions.**

1. Will this effort be used mostly to attract new teachers to Iowa and not be as useful in retaining veterans?
2. Will rural schools with low beginning salaries be helped more than larger Iowa districts?
3. Will Phase III be eliminated? Will it be replaced by something different and better?
4. Will teachers be asked to do more to receive higher pay? How is that possible?
5. Do we really want to replace the traditional salary schedules?

Editorial by Chris Miller

Would you like it if Staff Development had to be done on your time without pay? Would you like it if there was a required Staff Development course for your job and you had to pay tuition to take it? Would you like to have a 5-section career program determining your salary instead of our salary schedule? Would you like more hoops to jump through to raise your salary? Would you like a state wide salary schedule? Would you like to work extra days for your "raise"?

If you answered No or Hell No to any of these questions, it is time to get involved in legislative action. I know you're tired. I know you have lives. I know you're busy. But if we ignore this legislative session we do so at our peril.

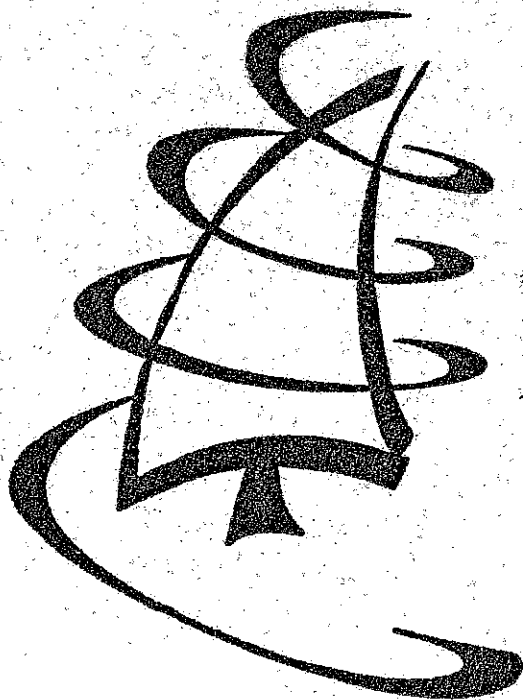
During every session of the legislature the ISEA and DMEA have had lobby days. We tell the FRs and the FRs tell their faculties and we wind up with perhaps 30 people advocating for education out of the 4000 Des Moines employees. This is not enough to make a difference this time around.

If you have any hope of your position being heard and acted upon YOU must take action. When we ask for calls or e-mails (from home computers) or lobbying, legislators must be inundated. They must say, "Whoa, there's a lot more intense feeling on this than I thought." If not, there is the potential for a whole bunch of mischief.

When I talk, as your representative, to both legislators and school board members, one of the things I most often hear is "We never hear from teachers." This must be turned around for this legislative session or three or four years from now, an awful lot of people are going to be wishing they had done more and trying to get it fixed when education may not be THE hot issue.

Briefly:

- > You can start getting involved in the teacher salary issue by attending a reception for Polk County legislators on Wednesday, Jan. 10th from 5:00-6:30 PM at the DMEA /ISEA headquarters. (777 3rd Street)
- > Bargaining for salaries and benefits for 2001-2002 will begin in January. All DMEA members will receive a survey in early January to determine priorities.



As we approach the holidays in my first year as president of your DMEA, I am acutely aware of what a wonderful group of teachers we represent. Your unstinting efforts and your willingness to go above and beyond for the children in our District give them a gift for a lifetime. We are in a profession where the results of our efforts only become manifest many years later. At this joyous time of the year, John, Sharon and I would like to thank you for all that you do. We wish you a wonderful, relaxing break and continued success and happiness in the New Year.

Sharon

Chris

John

Happy Holidays