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December 2019

A Teacher Weighted Formula: A Compensation Concept for NM

In the 1974 Public School Finance Act the NM State Legislature made a decision to be responsible for funding the operation of our school districts and create a funding formula to guarantee equal funding to all districts within the state according to their unique student population.

Since that time the state has had the primary responsibility for funding the operation of our schools. The State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) is how the Legislature distributes state funding equitably to all 89 districts. The SEG is a progressive way to equitably distribute funding for schools. The weights in the formula are based on the attributes of each student enrolled in those schools

In addition, the New Mexico public school funding formula adjusted the value of the pupil unit on the basis of the training and experience (commonly referred to as the T&E Index) of each school district's professional staff, excluding principals. This adjustment was intended to promote and provide incentives for districts to hire and retain more highly educated and experienced teachers.

A program cost for each school district is determined by multiplying the student full-time equivalency in a particular grade or a program full-time equivalency by the respective cost differential to generate units. (The full-time equivalency to be used in the calculation of program units is the prior year average of district membership on the 80th and 120th days.) All of the program units are then added together and multiplied by the district's training and experience index to produce the adjusted program units.

In 2003, when the state adopted the three-tiered licensure system, they created a link connecting teachers' licensure levels, education and experience to minimum salaries. It soon became clear that the T&E and the 3-Tiered system were a mismatch.

2018's House Bill 188, sponsored by then Rep. George Dodge, began the important process of transitioning New Mexico funding processes away from the now outdated/inadequate Teaching & Experience model (T&E) to the Teacher Cost Index (TCI) model. The phase in of TCI is an effort to better flow adequate funding to public school districts – dollars that are required to compensate all teachers according to state mandated 3-Tiered licensure minimums.

TCI is certainly an improvement over the outdated T&E Index; however, it has become clear that, as we increase the 3-Tiered minimums, the resulting salary compression hampers our state's ability to retain our most experienced educators.

Retention is Important

Attracting and retaining excellent educators is one of the most important drivers of a well-functioning education system—a system that must prepare diverse students with complex needs to participate in today's knowledge-driven economy. However, a recent surge in the demand for teachers, alongside a diminishing supply and a steady rate of teachers leaving the profession, threatens students' academic and economic welfare. Teachers who leave the profession prematurely hurt student learning and cost taxpayers. For example, one study found that replacing teachers who leave—which can cost in today's dollars as much as $20,000 per teacher in a large urban district—produces a national price tag of $8.5 billion a year.

Recruiting and retaining excellent educators is especially urgent in schools serving concentrations of low-income students and students of color, because teacher attrition disproportionately impacts their school. In 2012–13, almost one in 10 teachers in high-poverty public schools left the profession. In contrast, fewer than one in 15 teachers in low-poverty schools did so. The persistently higher rates of turnover in high-poverty, high-minority schools contribute to a concentration of inexperienced and underprepared teachers in these schools.

The federal government, states, and districts must invest in comprehensive human capital systems to prepare and retain competent and committed teachers for long-term careers in the classroom. The policies pursued will influence the quality of the nation's more than 3.1 million public school teachers and have long-term impacts on student learning, especially for students in the most underserved communities.

Based on a review of an extensive body of research on teacher recruitment and retention, we identify five major factors, and related policies, that influence teachers' decisions to enter, stay in, or leave the teaching profession. Those factors are:

1. *Salaries and other compensation.*
2. *Preparation and costs to entry.*
3. *Hiring and personnel management.*
4. *Induction and support for new teachers.*
5. *Working conditions, including school leadership, professional collaboration and shared decision-making, accountability systems, and resources for teaching and learning.*

Solving the Teacher Shortage: How to Attract and Retain Excellent Educators

A Learning Policy Institute Research Brief, September 2016
Anne Podolsky, Tara Kini, Joseph Bishop, and
Linda Darling-Hammond

> **A Teacher Weighted Formula**
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> The concept of a Teacher Weighted Formula supports building on House Bill 188 (2018) that enacted the Teacher Cost Index (TCI) to create a teacher compensation system that will:
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> - Be an innovative alternative compensation system
> - Enhance retention efforts
> - Address compression issues

If we take the next step to build on the TCI, we can enhance the 3-Tiered Licensure/Compensation system. This leads us to an opportunity to create a world-class, innovative teacher compensation system.

Many states and districts have made a concerted effort to go beyond the traditional salary schedule made up of steps and lanes by creating career ladders. Typically, career ladders are career advancement systems for teachers.

In Montgomery County, Maryland's largest public school district (MCPS), the district and union worked collaboratively to go beyond the ladder concept and developed a Career Lattice.

> The Career Lattice in Montgomery County, Maryland, is part of the district's teacher quality initiative, the Professional Growth System. The result of a collective bargaining agreement between the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and the Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA), the career lattice is designed to provide "stages" in a teaching career.
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> A principle purpose of the career lattice is to attract and retain high-performing teachers, in part by providing teachers with options to vary their professional routines and encourage them to remain in the classroom.
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> *Alternative Teacher Compensation: A Primer*
> Julia E. Koppich and Jessica Rigby, 2009

New Mexico is poised to build on our 3-Tiered system by enhancing the Teacher Cost Index with teacher attribute factors that would carry a weight in the SEG, much in the same way our funding formula attaches a weight, or multiplier, to students' attributes.

Weighting factors would include the responsibilities, credentials, and leadership positions that exist in our public schools and that are, at least in part, required by the State of New Mexico. Including a factor for greater years of service, additional credentials, and for movement through the 3-Tier system of licensure enhances our teacher retention efforts and will address the compression issues that have resulted from adding money primarily to the base of each tier. We call this system a Teacher Weighted Formula.

The goal of the Teacher Weighted Formula is to create an innovative and cutting edge statewide alternative compensation system that better connects the 3-Tiered salary minimums, a district's need to fill school-based responsibilities, and our state's goal to attract and retain teachers with diverse qualifications.

Through the Teacher Weighted Formula, we can create a framework to better flow funding to districts and value a highly-qualified and diverse teacher workforce. The Teacher Weighted Formula has the potential to be the most innovative alternative compensation system in the United States.

A Teacher Weighted Formula will build on, and exceed, the current research and practice on alternative teacher compensation, while acknowledging the importance of:

- Teacher Leadership
- School Responsibilities
- Diverse Credentials/Qualifications
- Advanced degrees or micro-credentials
- Retention of experienced teachers

By building onto the existing TCI framework, calculating actual teacher costs through a Teacher Weighted Formula, and determining individual attributes which contribute to school function, success, stability, and ability to meet student needs, we have an opportunity to:

- Promote Longevity of Teaching Professionals
- Diversify Qualifications
- Attract/Recruit into the Profession
- Alleviate Compression of Teacher Salaries

How could this work?

We envision an innovative career ladder through the weighting of additional roles and responsibilities that teachers assume (e.g.: Extra Curricular Leadership, Co-Curricular Leadership positions such as Departmental Chair, Student Assistance Team Chair, Mentoring), as well as leadership positions in school-based reforms such as Restorative Justice Initiatives and Project-Based Learning. By acknowledging the diverse credentials, talents, and work of our New Mexico teaching force, we can better retain highly qualified teachers in the profession.

As we implement and refine the current TCI framework, the Teacher Weighted Formula would acknowledge and reward leadership roles, qualifications, and responsibilities, and help to ensure that distributed State funding matches the attributes of teachers in any given district.

Example:

Licensure Level (TCI) + .1 Differential x EACH Attribute (Teacher Weighted Formula) = Salary

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Moving to a Teacher Weighted Formula in conjunction with the current TCI is not a deep departure from current practice. Rather, it is the next logical step in our efforts to attract and retain a diverse, well-qualified teacher workforce in New Mexico.

The NM Legislature has already recognized that additional credentialing; National Board Certification for example, is valuable in our schools and provides a differential for those educators holding that certification. Advocates for the groundbreaking *Martinez/Yazzie v. State of NM* lawsuit believe that additional credentials such as TESOL, Bilingual, Reading Intervention, etc. are also worthy of such differentials. Other areas of school-based responsibilities and teacher leadership should be treated equally.

To create a true teaching profession in New Mexico, our school systems must provide the supports and structures that allow teachers to assume meaningful leadership roles in the school site, the district, and the profession as a whole.

These roles should provide diverse opportunities and choices for teachers to continuously develop their skills in and out of the classroom. One important way to help create these opportunities is innovative compensation systems that provide a clear mechanism by which we can capture the leadership and instructional capacity that already exists within our system.

Career ladders or "lattices" enable all staff to achieve their full potential, which in turn increases levels of personal satisfaction and improves job performance. But most importantly, a career ladder/lattice program builds the internal capacity of the school district to positively affect student achievement by using its most underutilized resource: its people.

An Example of a Teacher Weighted Formula Career Lattice: **Blue** areas indicate funding flowing through the TCI in the funding formula. **Green** areas indicate a teacher-weighted multiplier (as the state currently does with National Board Certification).

Level 1 Example Base pay $45,000				
Years within Level	BA+30	MA	MA+30	Credential Differential (National Board Certification, ESL, Bilingual, etc.)
1-3	.05 / $47,250	.15 / $51,750	.20 / $54,000	.10 in addition to current base $4,500
4-5	.10 / $49,500	.20 / $54,000	.25 / $56,250	.10 in addition to current base $4,500

Level 2 Example Base pay $55,000							
Years within Level	Education			Credential Differentials	Micro Credentials	Added Responsibilities	Leadership
	BA	BA+30	BA+45 or MA				
1-5	$55,000	.15 $63,250	.20 $66,000	.10 $5,500	.05 $2,750	.10 $5,500	.10 $5,500
6-10	.10 $60,500	.20 $66,000	.25 $68,750	.10 $5,500	.05 $2,750	.10 $5,500	.10 $5,500
11+	.15 $63,250	.25 $68,750	.30 $71,500	.10 $5,500	.05 $2,750	.10 $5,500	.10 $5,500

Level 3 Example Base pay $65,000							
Years within Level	Education			Credential Differentials	Micro Credentials	Added Responsibilities	Leadership
	MA or NBC	MA+30	Doctorate				
1-5	$65,000	.15 $74,750	.20 $78,000	.10 $6,500	.05 $3,250	.10 $6,500	.10 6,500
6-10	.10 $71,500	.20 $78,000	.25 $81,250	.10 $6,500	.05 $3,250	.10 $6,500	.10 $6,500
11+	.15 $74,750	.25 $81,250	.30 $84,500	.10 $6,500	.05 $3,250	.10 $6,500	.10 $6,500

Note - The differential amounts in this chart for credentials, responsibilities, evaluations, and school goals/leadership are listed on base pay only.

Some Examples of Building a Teaching Career in New Mexico

Teacher 1
- Is in her 3rd year of teaching. She is a Level 1 teacher with a BA. She does not yet qualify for leadership positions because the system is designed to ensure that the only requirement of beginning teachers is to learn how to teach well and to be mentored. (Level 1 Matrix; Column: "Years Within Level"; Row: "1-3").
- Her base salary is $45,000 (Level 1 Matrix; Column: "Years Within Level"; Row: "1-3").
- As part of her Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), she attained her Bilingual Certification (Column: "Credential Differential") and teaches in a bilingual classroom. She receives a .10 multiplier for the credential adding $4,500 to her base salary.
- Her salary for this year is $49,500.

Teacher 2
- Is in his 10th year of teaching. He has been at Level 2 for 7 years (Level 2 Matrix; Column: "Years Within Level"; Row: "6-10"). His base salary is $60,500.
- He is working on his Master's degree and has accumulated 30 college credits toward that goal (Column: "BA+30"). The TCI multiplier is .20. He now makes $66,000 as his base salary.
- Now that he has some experience, he is ready to take on more responsibility and is serving as the Student Assistance Team (SAT) chair. The Teacher Weighted Formula multiplier for the leadership position is .10, adding $5,500 to his salary (Column: "Leadership").
- His salary this year is $71,500.

Teacher 3
- Is in her 15th year of teaching. She has been at Level 2 for 12 years (Level 2 Matrix; Column: "Years Within Level"; Row: "11+"). Her base salary is $63,250.
- She has not completed course work beyond her BA but works hard as a member of her school's Leadership team. The Teacher Weighted Formula multiplier for this is .10 or $5,500. She now makes $68,750.
- While pursuing her B.A., she earned enough credit to receive her TESOL Credential to teach English Language Learners for which she earns a .10 Teacher Weighted Formula multiplier or $5,500 (Column: "Credential Differentials"). Her salary is now $74,250.
- She holds a micro credential in Community Schooling and earns a .05 multiplier or $2,750 (Column: "Micro Credentials").
- She coaches basketball after school and earns a .10 multiplier or $5,500 (Column: Added Responsibilities").
- She also represents her grade-level on her school's Instructional Council and earns a .10 multiplier or $5,500 (Column: "Leadership").
- Her total salary this year is $88,000.

Teacher 4
- Is in his 25th year of teaching. He achieved National Board Certification to move to Level 3. He has been at Level 3 for 10 years (Level 3 Matrix; Column: "Years Within Level"; Row: "6-10"). His base salary is $71,500.
- He earns a .10 differential for his National Board Certification or $6,500 (Column: "Credential Differential"). This brings his salary up to $78,000.
- He has a TESOL endorsement and serves English Language Learners in his classroom. He earns a Teacher Weighted Formula multiplier of .10 for the additional credential or $6,500 (Column: "Credential Differential"). His salary is now $84,500.
- He has the additional responsibility of leading the school's debate team (Column: "Added Responsibilities"). The multiplier for that responsibility is .10, adding $6,500 to his salary.
- His salary this year is $91,000.

Teacher 5
- Is in her 7th year of teaching. She completed her MA in Special Education last year and has moved up to Level 3 after completing her Professional Dossier. Her base salary is $65,000 (Level 3 Matrix; Column: "Years Within Level"; Row: "1-5").
- She has completed a micro credential in Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and earns a .05 SEG multiplier or $3,250 (Column: "Micro Credential"). Her salary is now $68,250
- She has agreed to provide monthly Professional Development for her colleagues on SEL (Column: "Leadership"). She receives a .10 for this work or $6,500. Her salary is now $74,750.
- She has agreed to share her knowledge of teaching with a beginning teacher as an official Mentor. She earns a .10 differential of $6,500 (Column: "Added Responsibilities")
- Her new salary this year is $81,250.

The investment New Mexico has made and is poised to make in salaries is an important component of attracting and retaining teachers. We all know research has proven that, among all school-related factors, it is the teacher that matters most in students' learning.

Schooling Is More Than Teaching
Teaching, however, is not all of schooling. Schooling is made up of many enriching experiences designed for students. Additionally, teaching is not all that teachers do in school. They have many leadership roles and they take on a multitude of responsibilities that keep our schools running smoothly and our students engaged.

> **More of What Works:**
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> **Use extra-curricular activities to build relationships and engage students in school**
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> *Building the Capacity of Schools to Meet Student Needs*
> Pedro A. Noguera PH.D.
>
> Presentation to the LESC

> **Participation in extracurricular activities in high school appears to be one of the few interventions that benefit low-status, disadvantaged students – those less well served by traditional educational programs – as much as or more than their more advantaged peers.**
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> *Extracurricular Activities and Student Achievement: Everyone Gains*
> Education Partnerships, Inc. *Research into Practice* brief Howard Johnston, Ph. D., University of South Florida in Tampa.

8