

Basic Education Finance Joint Task Force

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M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: January 8, 2008
TO: Members, K-12 Task Force
FROM: Dan Grimm, Chairman
SUBJECT: Task Force Work Plan

Following is a proposed revision to the work plan I discussed at our December 13 Task Force meeting.

Instead of scheduling presentations by agencies, associations, and individuals immediately following the legislative session, time constraints suggest we need to start making preliminary decisions on major issues. Presentations will be scheduled later, probably in June or July.

To give our discussions some structure, I suggest we group related issues into categories and pose specific questions for each member to respond to in turn. We might as well begin with compensation, which makes up the biggest share of the public school budget and is always an issue of great interest. A set of compensation questions is attached. The list is not intended to be exhaustive and I am solely responsible for all content. Feel free to suggest additions and revisions as well as a preferred order of consideration.

To illustrate the process I'm suggesting, each member will have an opportunity to respond to questions such as, "Should the state impose a teacher compensation system that includes merit pay?" If a majority of members support merit pay or indicate they are open to the idea, the issue can be discussed in greater detail and Institute staff and others will have time to conduct research and develop options. If a majority of members do not support merit pay, the issue will become a low priority.

Further consideration of any specific issue is not precluded, of course. Members can submit proposals on anything and everything when we get to the final phase of developing a report and specific recommendations.

To make sure all Task Force members have an opportunity to respond to each question, our initial discussions should be limited to points of clarification and brief statements. Members have been selected for their expertise and there will be plenty of time for everyone to review a wealth of available information prior to our meetings.

I will forward a revised set of compensation questions if necessary. Other sets of questions will be submitted for your consideration over the next several weeks. Topics will include but not be limited to: the Basic Education Act and related statutes; the budget and funding formulas; local levies; and all matters identified in SB 5627.

K-12 TASK FORCE

QUESTIONS

TEACHER COMPENSATION and CERTIFICATION

SALARY ALLOCATION

Should the state allocation system for teacher salaries be revised?

If yes, should the system include:

- Regional differences in cost-of-living?
- Regional differences in cultural amenities?
- Regional, district, and building differences in student family income, academic performance, English fluency, or other factors?
- Continuing education credits granted by colleges and universities, including degrees?
- Differential pay for teachers with high-demand skills (e.g., math and science)?
- Differential pay for teachers who pass designated state and national examinations?

Should the state prohibit, limit, or clarify the use of local levy revenues to provide teachers with additional pay for additional time and incentives?

MERIT PAY

Should the state impose a teacher compensation system that includes merit pay?

If yes, should merit pay be based on:

- Evaluations conducted by principals or other supervisors?
- Evaluations conducted by other teachers?
- Student performance?

Should the state impose a compensation system for principals, superintendents and other supervisors of teachers that includes merit pay?

SALARY SURVEY

Should the state conduct regular salary surveys of the job market for individuals with qualifications comparable to public school teachers?

If yes, should the surveys include:

- Regional market differences?
- Different market opportunities for teachers with different skills (e.g., math and science)?
- Teacher salaries in other states?

Should the salary surveys include:

- Superintendents and other administrators?
- Classified employees?

Should salary survey comparisons include:

- Total compensation (i.e., salary, benefits, deferred compensation) from all sources (i.e., state, local levies)?
- Employment terms and conditions?

Should school districts be required to report compensation provided for each TRI component (i.e., Time, Responsibility, Incentive)?

SALARY EQUALIZATION

Should school employee salaries and allocations be equalized in accordance with the Heavey decision?

If yes, should salaries be equalized:

- Instead of revising the salary allocation system?
- In addition to revising the allocation system?

HEALTH INSURANCE

Should the state impose a single, state-wide medical insurance program for all public school employees?

CERTIFICATION

Should teacher certification standards be revised?

If yes, should they be based on standardized tests?

Should teacher tenure provisions be revised?

If yes:

- Should the probationary period be extended?
- Should it be subject to regular review and renewal?