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Teacher Salaries and Fringe Benefits.

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To attract and retain an adequate supply of competent teachers, professional salaries and fringe benefits must be increased to a level competitive with other professions and occupations requiring comparable preparation and experience. The NEA has recommended that salary schedules negotiated between school districts and teachers should be based upon preparation, teaching experience, and professional growth. Salary incentives for entering and staying in the teaching profession should be supplemented by increased fringe benefits. The achievement of an equitable and reasonable basis for staff compensation will require maximum cooperation among boards of education, administrators, and teachers, and a significant financial investment. (JH)

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### TEACHER SALARIES AND FRINGE BENEFITS

The National Education Association commends those state and local legislative bodies and boards of education that have recognized the importance of higher teacher salaries as a means of promoting improved competence and performance in teaching. Greater efforts must be made continuously to increase teachers' salaries to levels which will retain competent teachers in the schools and attract persons of outstanding ability to the profession. School board members are well aware of the difficulties faced in securing and retaining an adequate supply of teachers in the schools. School boards determine the policies and we believe that there are some guidelines which provide assistance in establishing salaries and other welfare measures often referred to as fringe benefits.

The National Education Association, after careful study and research through the years, in July 1968 recommended that a professional salary schedule should:

- (1) Be based upon preparation, teaching experience, and professional growth.
- (2) Provide a beginning salary adequate to attract capable young people into the profession.
- (3) Provide annual increments which in no case are less than 5 percent of the bachelor's degree minimum and which are sufficiently cumulative to double the bachelor's degree minimum within ten years for professionally qualified teachers with the master's degree, with further salary increases for additional preparation and experience, including the doctor's degree.

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- (4) Be developed cooperatively by members of boards of education, administrators, and teachers through the process of professional negotiation.
- (5) Permit no discrimination as to grade or subject taught, residence, creed, race, sex, marital status, or number of dependents.
- (6) Relate salary scales for supervisory and administrative positions to the teacher-salary schedule by ratios which recognize differences in responsibility, length of contract year, and other appropriate factors.
- (7) Be revised by methods which prevent deterioration in the ratios of maximum salaries, experience increments, and preparational differentials to beginning salaries.
- (8) Be applied in actual practice in an equitable manner so that teachers are not penalized for changing assignments.
- (9) Allow full credit for teaching experiences outside the district.
- (10) Provide that these principles also be applied to salaries for professional service including, but not limited to, summer school, after-school activities, federally supported programs, research and writing assignments.

We believe that starting salaries for qualified degree teachers should be at least \$10,500 and salaries for experienced teachers with a master's degree should range at least to \$21,000, followed by continuing scheduled increases for career teachers of advanced qualifications.

It is generally understood that for many school systems these goals are unattainable at the present time. However, since beginning salaries of \$8,000 or above have been adopted for the school year 1969-70, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that these will be realistic goals in the near future.

We believe that teachers' salaries should compare favorably with earnings of other professions and occupations requiring comparable preparation and experience. This goal has not been achieved, as evidenced by the fact that for 1968-69 the average starting salary for beginning teachers with a bachelor's degree is \$5,941, compared with \$9,312 for engineering graduates with bachelor's degrees, \$8,520 for chemistry graduates, \$8,916 for physics majors, and \$8,424 for accounting graduates.

The average starting salary in 1968-69 for teachers with a master's degree is \$6,546. This compares unfavorably with average starting salaries of graduates with master's degrees who enter private industry. For example, men graduates with master's degrees in engineering are receiving \$10,932 on the average, and those with a master's degree in accounting \$10,428.

The National Education Association maintains that in order to attract and retain high caliber staff, fringe benefit programs should equal or surpass in value and scope those in other professions and occupations requiring comparable preparation. Although the organized teaching profession pioneered in achieving many staff benefits, most public and private employers now provide far more attractive fringe benefit programs than do many school districts.

Fringe benefits are defined as nonsalary compensation provided by the employer to the employee in return for his services, usually in the form of insurance programs, leaves of absence, and services provided at the employer's expense. They are provided to meet needs which are shared by the employees as a group, and which may be met with greater economic advantage to both employee and employer under group programs than by individual expenditures from the employee's salary.

These benefits have become increasingly recognized in recent years not only as an integral aspect of employee compensation and an important cost element in both public and private employment, but as a significant means of recruiting and retaining capable personnel. A study of 1,120 firms by the U. S. Chamber of Commerce indicated that average payments of fringe benefits expressed as a percentage of salary totaled 25.6 percent in 1963.

Although teaching has been lagging behind other fields of employment in the provision of employee benefits, school districts have begun emphasizing these benefits in their recruitment programs. Moreover, growing numbers of teacher salary and welfare committees are directing their efforts toward the inclusion of various fringe benefits in the total compensation package being negotiated with boards of education.

To assist teacher groups in negotiating for fringe benefits, the NEA in cooperation with state and local education associations has recently developed a booklet entitled Guidelines to Fringe Benefits for Members of the Teaching Profession. This booklet advises teacher organizations on procedures for studying and evaluating their fringe benefit package and for negotiating improvements. It also outlines 32 fringe benefits which are recommended for teachers and describes a desirable level of coverage to provide for each benefit.

The fringe benefit package recommended is a comprehensive one, designed to cover all major needs shared by teachers as a group. The Guidelines distinguish five areas of teacher needs to be met by fringe benefits:

- (1) Financial security--benefits which protect the teacher against loss of income when absent from work, provide retirement income, and protect the security of his dependents in the event of his death.

- (2) Health and recreation--benefits which provide for medical treatment and services, and which provide free time for recreation.
- (3) Service-connected liabilities--benefits which protect the teacher against expenses or loss incurred through the performance of his duties.
- (4) Service-connected personal needs--benefits which offer conveniences to the teacher in meeting needs which arise in connection with the performance of his duties.
- (5) Professional growth--benefits which provide opportunities for professional growth and participation in activities of professional significance.

Some of the most important benefits include:

- o a minimum of 10 days paid sick leave per year; preferably 20 days.
- o paid personal leave which the teacher may use entirely at his own discretion
- o extended leaves of absence granted for such reasons as personal health, family illness, maternity, military service, or election to public office.
- o adequate retirement benefits provided through the state-wide retirement plan for teachers.
- o employer-financed group life insurance in an amount equal to at least one year's salary.
- o employer-financed group health insurance, including major medical insurance for employees and their dependents.

- o employer-financed professional liability insurance to protect the teacher against damage claims arising from the performance of his duties.
- o in-service training programs.
- o paid professional leave.
- o paid sabbatical leave.

The Guidelines also stress the importance of equitable and efficient administration of fringe benefit programs, including the provision of payroll deductions for employee contributions to cost-shared benefits, association dues, credit union payments, and other mutually agreed upon items.

Nothing that I have said about fringe benefits is intended to minimize the importance of increasing professional salaries. Fringe benefits are not a substitute for salary. The vast majority of an employee's personal needs are matters which he can and should handle at his own discretion and finance from his own salary. To meet these needs, improved teacher salaries are essential. Many voices in government, business, and industry are joining with the profession in loudly proclaiming the need for higher salaries a reality. In the broad area of teaching welfare, this should be the primary concern.

There is also need for a balanced perspective. Given certain amounts of funds for increases in staff compensation, local factors will determine where they might best be placed. Any order of priority must be subjective. The immediate improvement of staff salaries as shown by valid research is the primary need in a majority of school systems. In others, it may be desirable to emphasize other areas of staff welfare. Needs of personnel vary from district to district, and from state to state. What may be most important in one school system may be less important in another; what may be easily available

and perhaps unique in one, may be out of the question in another. It may be relatively simple for one system to arrange for a particular benefit with negligible cost or inconvenience, while the benefit could be of major importance to the staff.

These are some reasonable goals to be achieved in teachers' salaries and fringe benefits, and they can best be achieved through the cooperative efforts of boards of education, administrators, and teachers. Despite the many controversies and conflicts erupting on the local, state, and national fronts, we must keep in mind the primary goal which all of us share and for which we all have some responsibility: the provision of excellent and appropriate education for all young people.

Let me quote from the invitation I received to participate as a panel member on this program: "The following description of the clinic may suggest ideas which could be treated in your presentation: 'Almost as important as the basic salary schedule to teachers and boards is the issue of fringe benefits. What are some reasonable goals to be set concerning these benefits? How may boards determine policies on the issues involved?'"

In reference to the first question, I have set forth some reasonable goals. In regard to the second question, "How may boards determine policies to be set on the issues involved?", I wish to quote the following resolution of the American Association of School Administrators: "We urge all school systems to establish written negotiation agreements which are developed cooperatively by the school board, the administration, and the teaching staff. Such agreements should state clearly the functions and prerogatives of the board, the administration, and the teachers. A grievance procedure listing definite steps for lodging appeals should be included in an agreement."

We believe in the right of professional associations, through democratically selected representatives using professional channels, to participate with boards of education in the formulation of policies of common concern including salary and other conditions of professional service. We believe that procedures should be established which provide for an orderly method of reaching mutually satisfactory agreements and that these procedures should include provisions for appeal through designated educational channels when agreement cannot be reached.

No easy task is that of boards of education today. No easy task is that of the teaching profession today. Never was the need greater for total cooperation in the maximum utilization of the knowledge, the skill, and the competencies which are available.