

Differentiated Pay Plans

The American Federation of Teachers believes the decision to adopt a compensation system based on differentiated pay should be made by the local union leaders and district officials who know best what will work in their schools. Systems must be locally negotiated, voluntary, schoolwide, and must promote a collaborative work environment. Well-designed compensation systems based on differentiated pay for teachers must include the following elements:

- Labor-management collaboration
- Adequate base compensation for all teachers
- Credible, agreed-upon standards of practice
- Support for professional development
- Incentives that are available to all teachers
- Easily understood standards for rewards

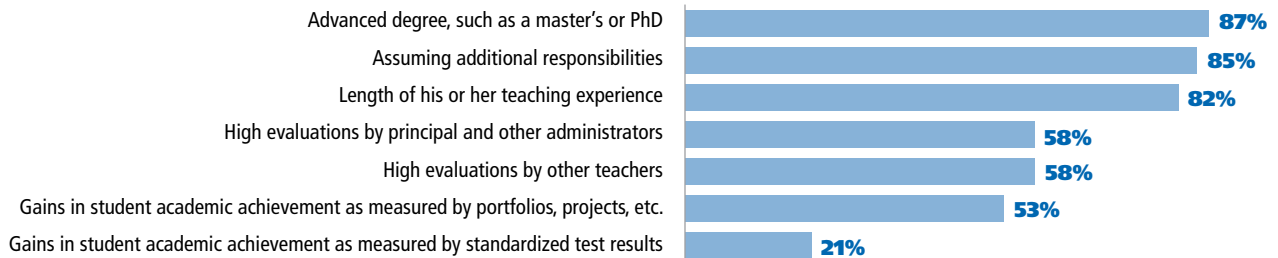
- Sufficient and stable funding
- Necessary support systems, such as data and accounting systems

In addition, AFT locals have developed schoolwide differentiated pay based on a combination of academic indicators, including standardized test scores, students' classroom work, dropout rates and disciplinary incidents. Teachers reject being evaluated on a single test score.

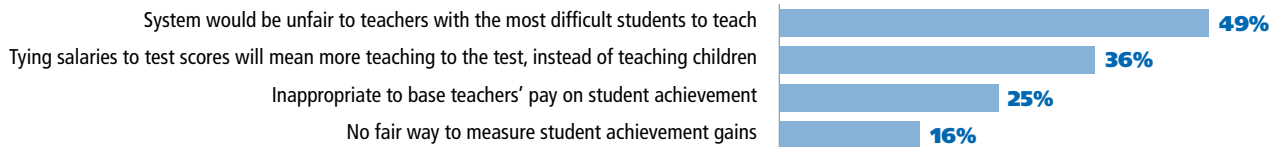
Additional compensation should also be given to teachers earning National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification; for those working in challenging schools that have teacher shortages; and for teachers who mentor, provide peer support and participate in other professional activities.

What AFT Members Think*

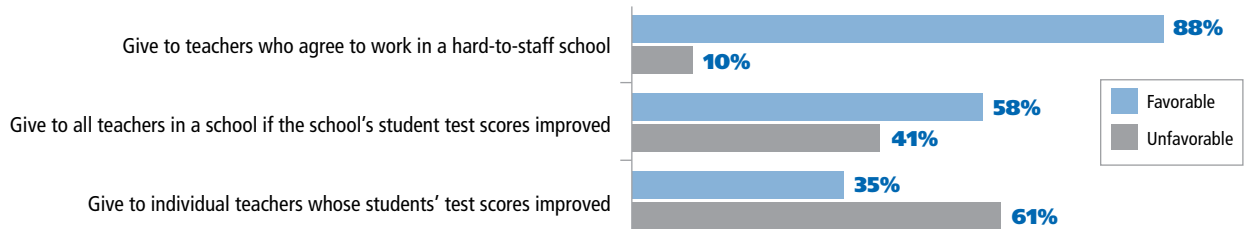
Reasons for awarding additional compensation



Biggest concerns about plans that take into account gains in student achievement (choose up to two)



Favorable or unfavorable view of ways to provide additional pay



* Source: Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., January 2008, 708 AFT Teachers surveyed, error: +/-3.7%

“Differentiated pay plans that are locally negotiated rather than imposed allow teachers to be paid additional compensation for taking on extra responsibilities. That works to the benefit of both teachers and students.”

—Randi Weingarten, AFT PRESIDENT

In Practice

Douglas County Federation of Teachers and Douglas County School District, Colorado

Douglas County teachers negotiated their first pay plan with the Douglas County public schools in 1994. The differentiated pay plan includes group incentives, extra pay for extra responsibilities, additional compensation for reaching milestones such as “outstanding teacher” and “master teacher” and for acquiring new skills that support the district plan. For more information, contact DCFT president: Brenda.Smith@dcsdk12.org

St. Francis Federation of Teachers and Independent School District 15, Minnesota

The St. Francis Federation of Teachers negotiated with the St. Francis public schools a Student Performance Improvement Plan. It provides a base salary for teachers as well as a series of promotions based on such factors as demonstrated student growth and annual performance reviews. For more information, contact St. Francis Federation of Teachers president: James.Hennesy@stfrancis.k12.mn.us

Toledo Federation of Teachers and Toledo Public Schools, Ohio

The Toledo Federation of Teachers and the Toledo public schools collaboratively developed, during 2001 contract negotiations, the Toledo Review and Alternative Compensation System (TRACS). In exchange for better pay and new career paths focused on instructional leadership, Toledo teachers assumed additional curriculum, instructional and school improvement responsibilities. For more information, contact TRACS coordinator Joan Kuchcinski at: jski@bex.net

United Federation of Teachers and the City of New York

In 2007, the United Federation of Teachers and the city of New York agreed to develop a locally negotiated, voluntary, school-wide initiative that rewards and promotes the collaborative work environment favored by New York City educators. The agreement emphasizes the UFT’s right to collectively bargain the components of a pay system that accurately and fairly reflects the work of teachers. For more information, contact UFT president at: uft.pres@uft.org

Resources

“Meeting the Challenge: Recruiting and Retaining Teachers in Hard-to-Staff Schools” (June 2007)

This paper describes several successful and promising strategies to help solve the school-staffing problem. www.aft.org/pubs-reports/downloads/teachers/h2s.pdf

“Where We Stand: Teacher Quality” (June 2003)

This booklet contains resolutions on teacher quality issues, including performance pay and professional compensation that were passed at the 1998, 2000 and 2002 AFT conventions. www.aft.org/pubs-reports/downloads/teachers/TQres.pdf

“Rethinking Teacher Compensation” (March 2004)

This column by former AFT president Sandra Feldman declares that equitable pay for teachers is part and parcel of improving student achievement. www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_teacher/mar04/AT_wws.html