



Teacher Compensation Advisory Committee June 22 Meeting Summary

The following is a summary of what was discussed and considered at the 10th Teacher Compensation Advisory Committee meeting on Monday, June 22. The meeting minutes for the May 27 meeting were approved. The meeting was held at Kromrey Middle School so no video from the meeting will be available.

Review examples of different compensation models

Director of Employee Services Tabatha Gundrum went through a potential new salary step grid schedule. She then provided three examples:

- A new hire who would start at \$39,000. She estimated the staff member would get 240 professional development and experience points over their first five years, which would result in a gain of more than \$6,900 in salary.
- A staff member who earns their master's degree, which allowed for two levels of movement. The teacher had at least 10 years of experience so they received 25 points for experience (vs. the 20 proposed for new teachers) so don't need as much professional development. She predicted the staff member would gain \$9,659 over five years.
- A staff member with 20 or more years of experience. They would receive 30 points annually for experience. She predicted that person would gain \$6,923 over five years.

Gundrum stressed the challenge with this system is if two-thirds of staff do level movements it would cost nearly \$1 million annually. She said it is the same problem the District faces with the current salary schedule, which is why lanes are often sacrificed. With this model, the steps become more sustainable but lane changes would be expensive and unpredictable. She also said there is uncertainty until point values are assigned and we see how many are doing PD.

The annual increase if the District tried to fund all of it would be \$1.168 million and would be more expensive than the existing model, she said. What would happen if all of the levels had smaller increases? That would make it more sustainable, but make it almost impossible for teaching staff to top out at \$80,000, which was the target many wanted.

She reminded the committee the plan is to offer professional development points for things that aren't rewarded now. Gundrum thinks it would be difficult for staff members not to get some

points because there are so many options. Assistant Superintendent George Mavroulis said other districts that have gone to this model have found additional staff are doing professional development because there is an added incentive because it raises their pay. Gundrum also said she is worried by adding more lanes teachers will never get to the end.

A committee member asked what is sustainable. Gundrum mentioned that 1.62 percent is the Consumer Price Index (CPI) this year and that is just under \$300,000 for teachers only. This amount doesn't include any payments for benefits.

Superintendent Don Johnson said the question the Board of Education wants answered is what plan is sustainable. The Board understands that a 1 percent raise amounts to \$550,000 for all salaries plus 15 percent for benefits. The next biennial state budget is proposing no increase for districts for this year and an additional \$100 in categorical aid for next year. The governor's original plan was to withdraw the \$150 per pupil in categorical aid for 2015-16. Johnson said the dilemma for every school board is how can it commit to long-term salary plans when categorical aid can be adjusted every biennial budget.

Gundrum then went through the blended schedule model. It was adjusted from 60 to 80 points for full tier movement. She said the cost of this model if two-thirds of staff do full movement and one-third do partial movement would be about \$480,000. She then went through examples.

- A new hire who would start at \$39,000 would receive a \$4,800 increase over five years.
- A staff member who earns their master's degree would receive a \$9,900 increase over five years with \$6,000 coming from earning the master's degree. A committee member asked if this model would create a roadblock for those who don't get a master's degree. Gundrum said staff without master's could go as high as \$69,000 in this model.
- A staff member with 20 or more years of experience would gain \$3,900 over five years.

There was a discussion about new teachers getting the same salary as five-year veterans if the bottom of the salary schedule is adjusted. Bob Butler admitted that has been a huge issue with many districts and recommends some salary differentiation so that veterans are paid more. Gundrum estimated that could cost around \$100,000. She also wondered if there should also be adjustments for staff who have been passed by new hires.

Gundrum said there could be a discrepancy of up to \$300 for teachers with experience. No one will go backwards, but some will only go up a few dollars while some may go up \$300. A committee member said a number that small wouldn't bother her but it would if the difference was in the thousands.

Johnson acknowledged the only way around it would be to not raise the base salary. The committee asked what the average base salary is in Dane County. Johnson said he prefers to compare MCPASD with similar districts (Verona, Sun Prairie, Waunakee, Madison).

The current base salary is \$36,800. Butler thought that was pretty low, but said \$39,000 is comparable to what others are offering, although offering \$45,000 to those with master's degrees is higher than most districts pay. He also said most districts have already faced this dilemma. For

example, Sun Prairie might have had \$500,000 for salaries and decided x would be devoted to the base with whatever is left spread out across the entire schedule.

Butler also said two districts in Dane County -- Mount Horeb and Waterloo -- have scrapped their plans, while many have tweaked their plans. Waterloo had issues with a portfolio model that said staff should be making more than they could afford. Sun Prairie's tweaks had to do with points for professional development.

A committee member asked if additional staff would be needed to track professional development. Gundrum said this can be tracked in Skyward and would result in little additional work. Employees would log the information online. Mavroulis pointed out that 70 staffers will be participating in the Equity Institute today. Gundrum said her department could import the information if there is concern about all 70 doing it on their own.

A committee member wondered if staff would think the message that was being sent was you can only get a raise by working beyond 40 hours a week. However, another staff member pointed out that wasn't true and that teachers would get a minimum \$300 a year in this model regardless.

Butler also pointed out more districts are going to need to go to referendum to ask taxpayers to fund staff increases if the state doesn't provide more funding. Gundrum doesn't believe the step grid model is sustainable but she believes the blended one is the most sustainable one the committee has looked at so far.

A committee member then asked if the only real option was to recommend a sustainable model. Gundrum noted if the committee picks a model that isn't sustainable that would hurt teacher morale. Johnson thinks the step grid model might be sustainable but would need to spread it out over 30 years rather than the proposed 20.

Johnson asked Butler what other systems are out there that are more sustainable. Butler likes the model MCPASD has put together because annual costs are built in and they aren't overly high. He also thinks the differentiating points for experience is a good inclusion and that the model isn't tied to test results. His biggest concern with the blended model is the difference between starting salary for a new teacher with a bachelor's degree (\$39,000) and those with master's degree (\$45,000). He suggested keeping the current difference (\$4,500) so someone with a master's would make \$43,500.

There was a lengthy discussion about whether to add additional steps at the end of both the bachelor's and master's lanes. The result is the top of the master's schedule would be slightly over \$80,000 and top of bachelor's schedule would be about \$75,000. Johnson likes the idea of starting the master's lane at \$43,500. He also pointed out a master's is transferable out of the District, while there is no guarantee that an outside district would accept PD points.

A negative for current staff is you are slotted based on your salary and not on how many years you have been in the District. A committee member noted new staff can see that it would take 31 years to reach the top, but that isn't true for current staff, who will likely need longer.

Johnson also hopes this schedule will also adjust over time as inflation changes, so numbers should go up to reflect for inflation. He noted \$80,000 won't look as attractive in 20-30 years.

Gundrum said she added another level to the blended model and gave \$300 a year rather than \$400. She explained that \$400 increases were closer to 1.9 percent rather than the 1.6 the Board directed. Johnson wondered if teachers would oppose the changes in points. The original plan had 20 points for experience and 40 points for professional development to get to 60, while this plan required 80 points to move a level.

The committee voted to move forward with the blended model but also wants to spend more time determining how the points will be used.

A committee member wanted level movements to be based on three years and not four. Johnson said a benefit of this model is it doesn't cap teachers, which the current one does if a teacher doesn't do professional development. He also pointed out this model doesn't require staff to pay for credits.

Johnson also said the Board will have to decide how much to give and will it go on the schedule or go toward steps. Butler said the goal is to find that sweet spot that you can afford to do it but also leave money to adjust the schedule. If the model is too difficult, that will leave more money for the schedule but staff may be frustrated. If the model is too easy, staff will fly through it and no money will be left.

Butler asked every member to offer their opinion on 3 vs. 4 years between levels. A committee member asked a philosophical question about experience vs. professional development. Butler pointed out Sun Prairie and Madison both have set walls that teachers can't move levels without some professional development. He also reminded the committee that earlier they spent a lot of time discussing this and decided not to put these roadblocks in. A committee member also noted it should be happening anyway because either taking credits or doing PDP to keep their license.