

DIFFERENTIATED PAY PLAN RESPONSE

Pursuant to N.C. Session Law 2014-100, § 8.41(b), we, the Transylvania County Board of Education (“Board”) hereby presents to the N.C. Senate Appropriations/Base Budget Committee, the N.C. House Committee on Appropriations and the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee the following Differentiated Pay Plan Response.

I. Differentiated Bonuses for Classroom Teachers

The Board believes that all classroom teachers are valuable employees and should be entitled to additional financial compensation. With that said, the following classroom teachers, in order of most emphasis, should be entitled to some form of differentiated bonus:

1. Teachers who take on additional leadership roles within the school district (e.g., School Improvement Team Chair, Department Chair, Curriculum Chair, etc.)
2. Teachers who provide professional development within the school district
3. Hard to Staff Subject Area Teachers (as defined by our school system’s needs, programming, and challenges)

The Board believes that any bonus system should be financially meaningful, recurring, properly executed, and fully funded in the bi-annual budget. A recurring bonus system would help to create stability and a better applicant pool as we seek to fill teacher vacancies and to create opportunities for teacher leadership within our school system.

II. Performance-Based Salary Increases

Based on the reasons set-out in full below, the Board does not feel that it can, at this time, properly develop or suggest a meaningful plan for performance-based salary increases. The Board strongly believes that all school employees, not simply classroom teachers, deserve salary increases in an equitable and fair manner.

The Board respectfully declines to respond to the section for the following reasons:

1. A summary of multiple research studies, incorporated herein and attached hereto, indicate differentiated pay is ineffective in terms of student achievement.
2. In order to develop an equitable and fair plan, the Board would need more time, perhaps a full academic year, to develop a plan that best meet the needs of the school system.

3. The legislative criteria requires a plan for those classroom teachers rated highly effective on the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation instrument (largely Standard 6). In looking at all classroom teachers across the system, it is difficult to distinguish between the types of assessments used for Standard 6. This creates an analysis that is based on unequal and, in some cases, unfair comparisons.
4. Without more objective criteria, it is difficult to evaluate teachers across the different schools in the district and across their peer cohorts in the state. Even with more objective criteria and valid and equitable data, school systems across the state are vastly different with very different needs. A uniform, state plan might be beneficial to Cherokee County Schools but may not serve the best interest for Dare County Schools.
5. The concept of performance-based salaries is an industry-based, corporate response to a human situation. Classroom teachers do the best they can with the resources they have and the students they teach. When dealing with the human element of teaching and interacting with students (who come to school each day at varying ability levels with their own emotional situations), a more subjective analysis must be considered.
6. For reasons mentioned herein, any sort of differentiated, performance based plan (with problems of inequitable measuring, unreliable data and subjective considerations not even being addressed) will create problems within the employment ranks. Issues like this and the recent legislation regarding the twenty five percent (25%) serve to detract from the positive, collaborative and collegial environment that our employees have worked hard to create and maintain.
7. As the law is written, who can receive differentiated pay is too restrictive. Many non-administrative school employees who are not considered classroom teachers are not even considered in this model. The role of the classroom teacher is hugely important, but so are other support individuals (i.e., school social workers, school counselors, etc.)