

Testimony for House Committee on Education and Labor
Hearing on "ESEA Reauthorization: Boosting Quality in the Teaching Profession"
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Across the nation our teacher workforce solutions tend to be on the margins. We negotiate additional stipends, per diem rates of pay, workshop rates of pay, curriculum rates of pay, and other methods of adding bits of time and compensation. We work on the margins simply because we have not created a compelling vision of a compensation system built on teachers as leaders. Even the No Child Left Behind approach to teacher quality takes a narrow view by focusing almost exclusively on credentials and other "paper" qualifications. Our systems will never change unless we create a focused effort to do so.

We must stop working on the edges of this issue and restructure the teacher work/compensation system. Today, I wish to share the new system we are creating in Fairfax County. As part of our redesign, we recognized that many adults now wish to have multiple careers inside and outside of education. We recognized that people enter the profession to work with children. Teachers typically do not aspire to become administrators, yet they want to have a voice in the decisions impacting their classrooms, their working conditions and the education of today's youth.

We expect teachers to teach, perform leadership functions, participate in school improvement decisions, participate in grade level and content area analysis of successful practices, coach and mentor new teachers, monitor progress, and involve parents in classroom and school activities. The list of expectations, pressures, and demands is lengthy, and all are issued in the name of "leaving no child behind."

Within the redesigned work/compensation system of the future we must recognize five realities:

1. Teaching is a full-time profession and can no longer be viewed under an "hourly" employment paradigm of so many hours per day and so many days per year.
2. Teachers no longer "just teach." They must perform a multitude of duties in and out of the classroom.
3. There can be multiple careers within the teaching profession, none of which need include the title of "administrator."
4. Educators must be competitively compensated as well as comparably trained professionals.
5. We must look within a school system's current resource pool to make changes. Additional resources may become available if we restructure the work of teachers and their work year.

Each recognizes the importance of teachers as key leaders and decision makers for their schools. Because the time demands are different, each will require a different work calendar, but all new roles are based on 12-month contracts instead of the current 10-month contract. The proposed teacher roles are in addition to their normal 180 days with students and include the following:

- **School Improvement Teacher Leader** – includes school leadership responsibilities, shared with the principal including analysis of school performance, program changes and staff development needs.
- **Feeder/Cluster Improvement Teacher Leader** – focuses on connections and collaboration with schools within a K-12 cluster that students would attend during their school years, particularly content alignment and performance expectations.

- **Instructional Improvement Teacher Leader** – includes instructional innovation, curriculum mapping, developing strong teams of teachers and refining instructional skills.
- **New Teacher Trainer/Mentor** – focuses on training new teachers prior to the start of school and mentoring new staff during the first several school years.
- **Extended Student Learning** – focuses on tutoring and nurturing students performing below grade level, or who need some pre-teaching of content. Such work would be done after school, during school breaks, as needed to leave no child behind.
- **Student Transition Leadership** – includes analysis and coordination of support services for children needing social/transition skills, it would also include system guidance as students craft learning plans.
- **Traditional Role** – 180 school days plus the typical additional 5 to 15 contracted days; this includes “normal” duties that are essentially the same as current teaching duties.

We currently devote a great deal of money to these functions, but on a “piecemeal” basis. Rarely do we group them in a manner that creates a comprehensive teacher work and compensation system. We must create such a system if we wish to become more intentional about “leaving no child behind” - if we expect and allow professionals to engage in all the necessary roles and responsibilities for sustaining high-performing schools, if we recognize that distributed, aligned leadership is a must in our ever-changing society, and if we hope to compensate professional teachers for the full-time set of duties that are now part of the profession. Flexible scheduling of the added time is necessary to meet the needs of the students requiring additional help. This means that not all teachers will be working the same hours, a paradigm shift for management, but these teachers will be working a full year.

Finally, the model assumes that 75 percent of the staff would be needed to fulfill all the roles. Initial survey data suggests that between 70 percent and 80 percent of a school staff would be interested in assuming one of the 12-month positions. This will vary from school to school and across school systems. The specific set of roles might also vary and the model allows for that variation. The model does re-professionalize teaching and substantively change the work/compensation system to become more aligned with current reality.