

### **Issue Assignment**

#### **What is your issue?**

Should teachers be compensated using a merit pay system?

#### **Who does your issue involve?**

Teacher merit pay involves nearly everyone. The students, the parents (tax payers), regular tax payers, the teachers themselves and the school administration are all “players” in the issue.

#### **How is your issue impacting education today?**

It’s impacting the education world because first of all only a few districts are experimenting with the idea of merit pay systems for their teachers. This creates a discrepancy between districts. Secondly, the system itself is not universal. The districts that have some sort of merit pay system have their own version of it. Each district has their own (different) pay scale but when you have teacher/student performance involved, it creates a new plate of issues. The students performance is now are directly connected to how much a teacher is paid each year.

#### **Why is the issue controversial?**

The issue is controversial because there are many pros and cons to the issue. Some arguments for merit pay include: It’s good to reward people (teachers) for their hard work and dedication to their students. It also encourages more talented and bright minds to enter the field of education. It creates incentives and thus will push teachers to work harder. It also gives the administrators a better way to evaluate their teachers and make better decisions on who to keep and who to let go. Some cons to the issue are: It could possibly create tension between colleagues and would discourage collaboration between them. It’s tough to define what a successful teacher is because of wide ranging demographics. Expectations for teachers vary from district to district. Where is the money to cover the incentives going to come from? If it is budgeted money from the district where does that money go if the incentives are not earned? These points, counter-points and questions illustrate the controversy that surrounds teacher merit pay.

#### **List the three articles you read about your issue.**

Rosales, John. "Pay Based on Test Scores?" *Rss*. N.p., n.d. Web. 26 Oct. 2013.

"The Good & Bad of Teacher Merit Pay." *Scholastic, Helping Children Around the World to Read and Learn*. N.p., n.d. Web. 26 Oct. 2013.

"Professional Learning Based Salary System." *Professional Learning Based Salary System*. Portland Public Schools Terms Department, n.d. Web. 30 Oct. 2013.

#### **Identify an organization and tell their view.**

The Portland (Maine) Education Association (PEA) does have a merit pay system in place that they have used since 2007. Their view is that ‘a high quality teacher is the most important factor in student learning.’ Their plan is the Professional Learning Based Salary System (PLBSS) in which the teachers accumulate salary contact hours (SCH) by participating in professional learning activities and those hours cause them to change lanes in their pay scale. Their thinking is to reward teachers that perform ‘above and beyond their job description.’