

NEWS RELEASE

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Gwinnett County Board of Education approves new teacher compensation system framework

At its February 16, 2017, meeting the Gwinnett County Board of Education approved a new teacher compensation system framework that focuses on rewarding employees for performance. The new framework will be phased in over the next two years, beginning in August 2017.

CEO/Superintendent **J. Alvin Wilbanks** reviewed the Performance-Based Teacher Compensation System framework with School Board members during the afternoon work session. He shared details on the work done to this point to develop the framework and previewed the work that will continue next year.

“We have great teachers in every one of our schools,” says Mr. Wilbanks, “and we worked hard to create a framework that recognizes that fact. It’s a framework that rewards our best teachers, not just at the district level but at the school level as well.”

Phase 1 of the framework moves the school district to a **Performance-Based Teacher Salary Schedule** beginning next year. All teachers and certified staff who are compensated on the district’s teacher salary schedule today will transition to the new salary schedule starting with the August 2017 paycheck. In 2018-19, the district will implement **Phase 2**, which provides **Performance-Based Awards** to teachers as determined by **four metrics—professional growth, a teacher’s rating on the state’s Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS) evaluation, student growth, and the local Weighted School Assessment.** The methodology for calculating the points earned for each metric will be finalized in late fall of 2017.

The Performance-Based Awards will go to the 10% of eligible teachers who earn the highest scores systemwide (Category 1); Category 2 will recognize eligible teachers who score in the highest 10% at each school (excluding those in Category 1); and Category 3 will recognize eligible teachers with the second highest 10% of scores at each school.

“Our move to a performance-based compensation system has been years in the making,” says Superintendent Wilbanks. “We’re excited about the progress we’ve made and the favorable reactions from our teachers and leaders. One of the most exciting aspects of this new system is that it will allow us to reward those who have proven to be our most effective teachers. That will give us a distinct advantage in both recruiting great teachers and retaining the very best in Gwinnett County Public Schools.”



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Additional Background on Gwinnett’s New Performance-Based Teacher Compensation System:

Leaders in Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) began investigating different teacher compensation systems in 2007. Its initial work was suspended when Georgia was awarded a federal Race to the Top Grant, which stressed increasing teacher effectiveness. In December 2015, Governor Nathan Deal’s Education Reform Commission released recommendations that included the call for school districts to develop new compensation models for teachers. This recommendation was based on the belief that a better way of compensating teachers can help Georgia attract and retain the best and brightest teachers. Although the Commission’s recommendations are still under review, GCPS is moving forward with the development of its own compensation model. The school district worked with external advisors to study compensation models used by other school districts and to continue its work to gather input from key stakeholders— primarily GCPS teachers and leaders.

As a result of this thorough review and research, GCPS has developed a new compensation system for Gwinnett educators that is based on performance, allowing GCPS to reward its most effective teachers and increasing the district’s ability to recruit the best ones. The new system’s two components—a **Performance-Based Teacher Salary Schedule** and **Performance-Based Awards**— will be phased-in separately.

Phase 1: Performance-Based Teacher Salary Schedule

- **Goes into effect with the August 2017 paycheck for all teachers and certified staff** who are compensated on the current teacher salary schedule.
- **The new salary schedule keeps many familiar features of the current one, and incorporates a number of improvements.**
- **The new schedule has 29 steps, as does the current schedule.** However, annual performance, not time on the job, will determine movement to the next step.
- **No staff member will lose base salary compensation when GCPS transitions to the new schedule.**
- **The new schedule acknowledges a teacher’s current education level, as well as advanced degrees as they are earned.**
- **It provides consistency in pay increases between the steps in each level, which the current schedule does not do.**
- **Under the new schedule, a teacher advances one “performance step” for the next contract year upon achieving a rating of “Proficient” or higher on the annual Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS) or equivalent annual evaluation tool.** Employees earning TAPS ratings of “Needs Development” or “Ineffective” will not move a performance step, but remain on their current step for the next contract year. **As with the current salary schedule, teachers can move only one step per year on the new schedule.**

Phase 2: Performance-Based Awards

- As GCPS transitions to the Performance-Based Teacher Salary Schedule, it will **continue to refine the Performance-Based Awards that will be implemented in Phase 2, beginning in 2018–19.**
- This component of the new Performance-Based Teacher Compensation System will **allow top-performing teachers at the district and school levels to earn additional money**, above and beyond what they earn on the teacher salary schedule.
- The compensation award framework recognizes that **there are great teachers in every school.**
- Rewarding outstanding teachers will **help GCPS with teacher recruitment, retention, and morale**, all of which **impact student achievement.**
- Incentivizing top performance in every school will **help to improve the education GCPS schools provide across the district.**