

# THE MYTH OF THE SILVER BULLET: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO TEACHER INCENTIVE PAY

Aspiring to a performance-based *system* over performance-based pay.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Utah lawmakers enact reforms to public education – specifically, teacher compensation – they should be wary of simple solutions. As one long-time researcher put it, “There are no silver bullets for improving teacher quality...a comprehensive approach that touches on each stage of a teacher’s career is the best strategy for improving teacher quality.”<sup>1</sup>

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Sutherland Institute recommends following this admonition to look beyond the “silver bullet” and aspire to a performance-based *system* rather than simply performance-based pay.

Such a comprehensive approach would include a new state teacher certification that recognizes subject mastery and practical pedagogical training, not an “appropriate” college major, as measures of competency.<sup>2</sup> This approach would also include a single salary schedule for all state-certified teachers that: 1) ends collective bargaining, 2) offers a competitive starting salary and benefits, 3) boosts earning potential, and 4) increases pay solely through performance measurement.

Performance measurement would reclaim the optimal, local decision-making partnership – parents, teachers, and principals. Annual performance evaluations can produce this renaissance, which in turn will lead to high-performing public schools.<sup>3</sup> These performance reviews would make teachers accountable to principals, and both teachers and principals accountable to involved parents. Such evaluations give each a significant voice in a child’s education, and focus the efforts of all on academic success.

In this context, the principal’s role should be to lead, not simply to manage, their school. As such, principals’ compensation should be based upon performance and should reflect their responsibilities and effectiveness in facilitating high-quality

teaching and improved school performance. Further, they should have greater influence over their school's direction: greater ability and authority to hire, fire, and recruit teachers.

Other policies, including additional pay for those in "hard-to-staff" schools and high-cost areas, additional compensation for teacher-group performance, and

new standards for termination hearings and tenure can complement these broader policies. Taken together, these proposals create the framework for a performance-based system. They also will help reduce teacher shortages and professional reputation. Most importantly, they will improve the quality of teaching being offered to children and families in the public education system.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Replace the current licensing system with a new state-teacher certification based upon: 1) passage of a rigorous subject knowledge test (or portfolio), 2) a brief pedagogy course with extensive practical training, and 3) re-testing every three to five years
- End collective bargaining
- Implement a single, state-teacher salary schedule for all regular K-12 teachers (not including special education, or charter school teachers) starting at \$40,000 and capped at \$92,500
- Allow for 15 pay raises of \$3,500 for teachers: 1) \$2,500 based upon individual performance, and 2) \$1,000 based upon group/grade-level performance
- Place principals on one of three statewide pay scales: 1) elementary school (\$75,000-\$145,000); 2) middle school/junior high (\$80,000-\$150,000); and 3) high school principals (\$85,000-\$155,000)
- Give principals 20 potential pay raises of \$3,500, based upon performance
- Utilize performance evaluations to reward high-performing teachers and principals. Teachers would be evaluated chiefly by their principal, and also by involved parents. Principals would be evaluated primarily by involved parents' teacher evaluations, and further by parents on the community council
- Create an appeals process for teachers if they fail principal's expectations but exceed parents' expectations, and for principals if they exceed community council expectations but their teachers fail parents' expectations
- Fund incentive-pay by requiring that minimum basic property tax funds go toward teacher salaries, with state-MSP funds covering any shortfall. Make districts responsible for benefits expenses
- Add \$5,000 to the base salary of teachers and principals that work in "hard-to-staff" schools
- Give principals full authority over the screening and hiring of teachers at their schools, and the ability to recruit and reward "all-star teachers" through recruitment accounts
- Implement standards of evidence that teachers must meet before a district hearing can be held to review a termination decision
- Raise tenure standards for teachers by tying "career employee" status to the eighth individual performance raise

## INTRODUCTION

Research shows that Utah's current education system – including teacher licensing and compensation – does not reward high-performing, quality teachers.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, even the most innovative incentive-pay solutions in other states continue to reward poor performance indicators.<sup>5</sup>

By learning from these mistakes, Utah policymakers can create policy that improves performance throughout the teaching career. If done right, these reforms can benefit public school teachers, parents, administrators, and children alike. In other words, while silver bullets in education reform may be a myth, the silver lining of education reform is substantial.

Lacking a simple solution, needed reform should impact the teaching career from beginning to end. This calls for a new framework for teacher licensing, recruitment, and compensation – a framework based upon performance.

## CERTIFICATION

While incentive pay can reward good teachers for performance, certification also should encourage effectiveness and guarantee competence, a prerequisite for quality teaching. Studies have found, however, that teachers with certification are no more effective than un-certified teachers.<sup>6</sup>

Research has also shown that today's primary requirement for licensure, an appropriate college degree, is a poor indicator of teacher performance.<sup>7</sup> These same studies have also found that subject knowledge and real-world training do improve teacher quality and effectiveness.

**Sutherland recommends** that a new state certification be created, based on this evidence, to encourage

performance. The new certification would emphasize two factors: subject mastery and practical pedagogy.

Subject mastery would be demonstrated by satisfying a minimum performance standard on a rigorous content-knowledge exam. While today's licensing process includes a testing standard, the new state certification would raise the bar. For example, the current licensing test could be replaced with the exam being used to meet federal teacher quality standards.<sup>8</sup> Alternatively, the State Board of Education could create or select a more difficult exam.

Additionally, teachers would have to re-pass the exam every three to five years. This condition would encourage sustained subject expertise, and would further emphasize performance-based competency. In fields difficult to test, like art, portfolio submissions could replace exams to assess subject mastery.

Practical pedagogy would include a brief course in basic pedagogy followed by extensive practical training and observation. These recommendations reflect research that finds lengthy education and pedagogy classes do not improve teaching quality, but the first few years of experience do.<sup>9</sup> In other words, hands-on experience, not academic training in pedagogical theory, shows teachers what works in the classroom. Observation and feedback from master teachers would enhance this practical training.

This certification would only apply to traditional K-12 public school teachers. While aspects of the policy could be used for special-education, charter-school, and substitute teachers, the unique characteristics of these groups warrant individual consideration.

By focusing licensure on factors proven to improve teacher performance and quality, the new certification discards unnecessary licensure requirements. It should also address teacher shortages in the state by putting all competent teacher candidates on a level playing field, regardless of their college major or prior experience. Most importantly, the new certification will communicate expectations regarding teacher performance from the beginning of the teaching career.

## INCENTIVE PAY

### Salary Schedule

Collective bargaining has continually failed to reward indicators of performance. Instead, these agreements reward seniority and advanced degrees. Even performance-pay programs that include collective bargaining have not escaped this reality.<sup>10</sup> **Sutherland recommends** ending collective bargaining in favor of a state-teacher pay scale based entirely on teacher performance.

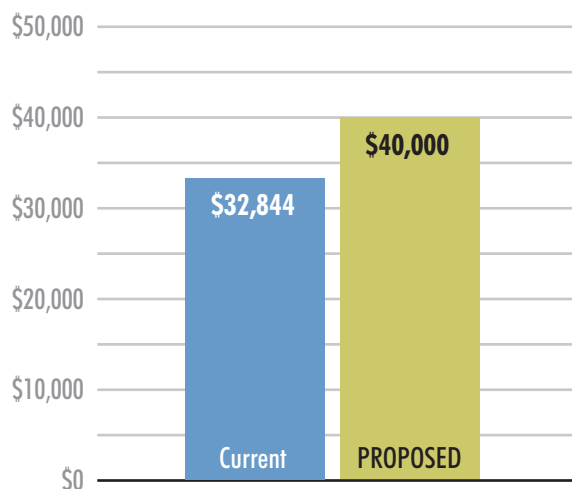
In place of the myriad agreements across districts, the state would implement a single salary schedule for all state-certified teachers. This new system would enable better performance through increased mobility. High-performing teachers could obtain the positions they desire without fear of a pay cut, and low-performing teachers could gravitate to settings better-suited to their performance development.

To ensure that financial incentives encourage quality teaching, the pay scale should include a competitive starting salary, provide a high earning potential, and contain performance-based raises.

### Beginning Salary

If base salary is not high enough, new teachers will not

UTAH NEW TEACHER SALARY 2008-09



\* Unadjusted Data Source: "Teacher Salary Schedules & Comparisons 2007-08," Utah Education Association (Except "Proposed")

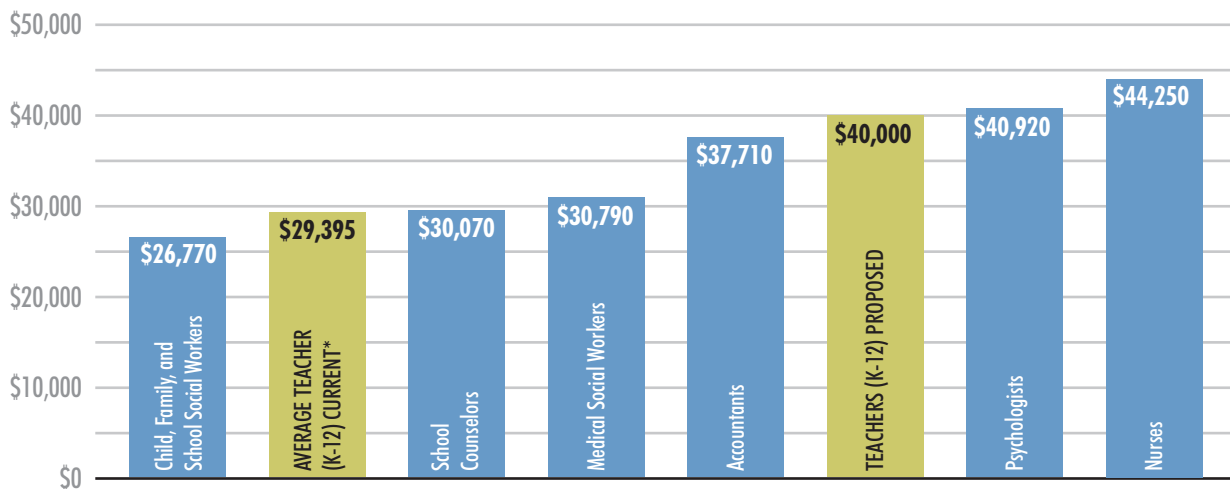
choose to teach in the state – rendering incentive pay impotent. **Sutherland recommends** a base salary of \$40,000, while maintaining present benefit levels, to provide a competitive package for new teachers.

This would represent a 22 percent increase in the average starting teacher salary in Utah, and would be only \$5,500 less than the median salary of all teachers state-wide.<sup>11</sup> If implemented today, an estimated 31 percent of current teachers would receive an average raise of \$5,367.<sup>12</sup> This would require an initial investment of \$35 million, not including benefit costs.<sup>13</sup>

The new base salary would also be competitive relative to similar professions. In 2007, for instance, a \$40,000 salary would have placed the pay of inexperienced teachers comfortably above social workers, school counselors, and accountants.<sup>14</sup> It would also have been close to new psychologists' and nurses' salaries.

It would further make Utah more competitive relative to other states. With a \$40,000 starting salary in 2006, Utah

### UTAH STARTING SALARIES 2007



Data Source: "Utah Occupational Wages," Utah Department of Workforce Services (Except "Proposed")

would have placed 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation, instead of 43<sup>rd</sup>, for starting teacher pay.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, new teacher salary in the state would have been \$4,716 higher than the national average that year.

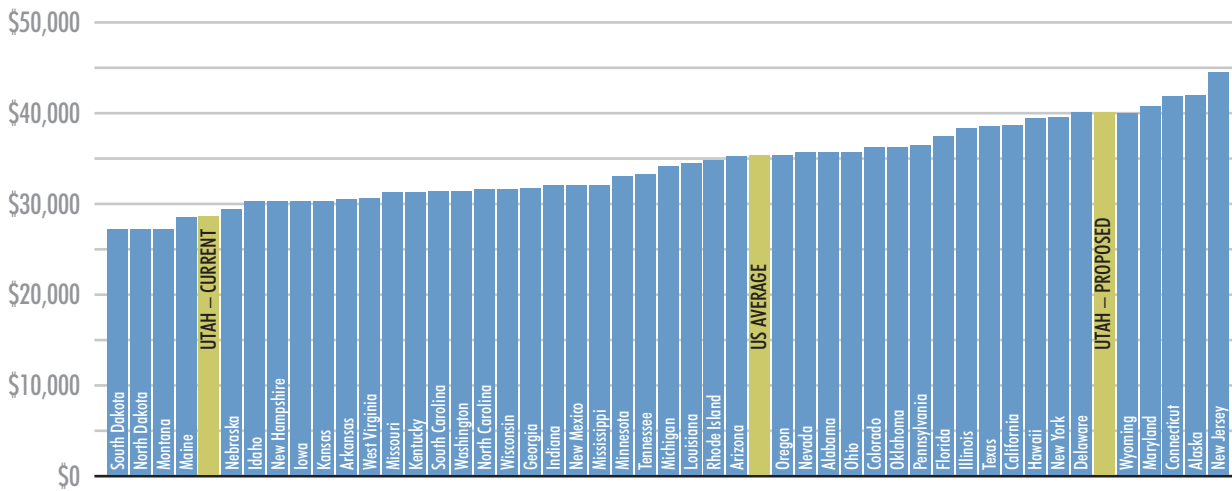
With this competitive base salary in place Utah would attract the state's, and the nation's, best and brightest – the most likely to perform well. Beyond starting salary

however, lifetime earnings and the size and structure of available raises will also support teachers' motivation to achieve in the classroom.

### Lifetime Earnings and Performance Raises

Lifetime earnings will be a very important factor in attracting the most effective teachers and encouraging performance.<sup>16</sup> Earnings potential must be significantly high to

### STATES' STARTING TEACHER SALARY 2006-07



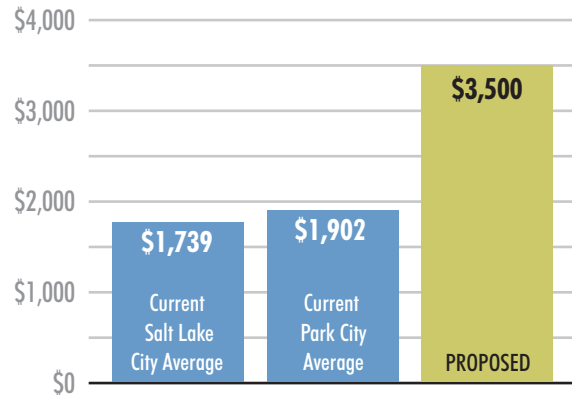
Data Source: "Survey and Analysis of Teacher Salary Trends 2007," American Federation of Teachers (Except "Proposed")

attract good teachers and incentivize performance, but must also recognize limits on resources. Lifetime income will be determined by the cap on teacher salaries, and the number and size of available performance raises.

**Sutherland recommends** a cap of \$92,500 for the state pay scale. This means that teachers could more than double their starting salary over their career. It also means the cost of employing a teacher in the state has an effective limit. This cap would give all teachers the ability to earn 38 percent more than the highest salary on the current Salt Lake City School District schedule, and 30 percent above that on Park City's schedule – Utah's two highest-paying school districts.<sup>17</sup>

**Sutherland further recommends** 15 potential raises of \$3,500, awarded solely on the basis of teacher performance, to reach the cap. Each award would in part be determined by personal performance, and in part by group/grade-level performance. In other words, teachers would have to excel individually as well as work collaboratively with colleagues to get the biggest raise.

### TEACHER PAY RAISES 2008-09

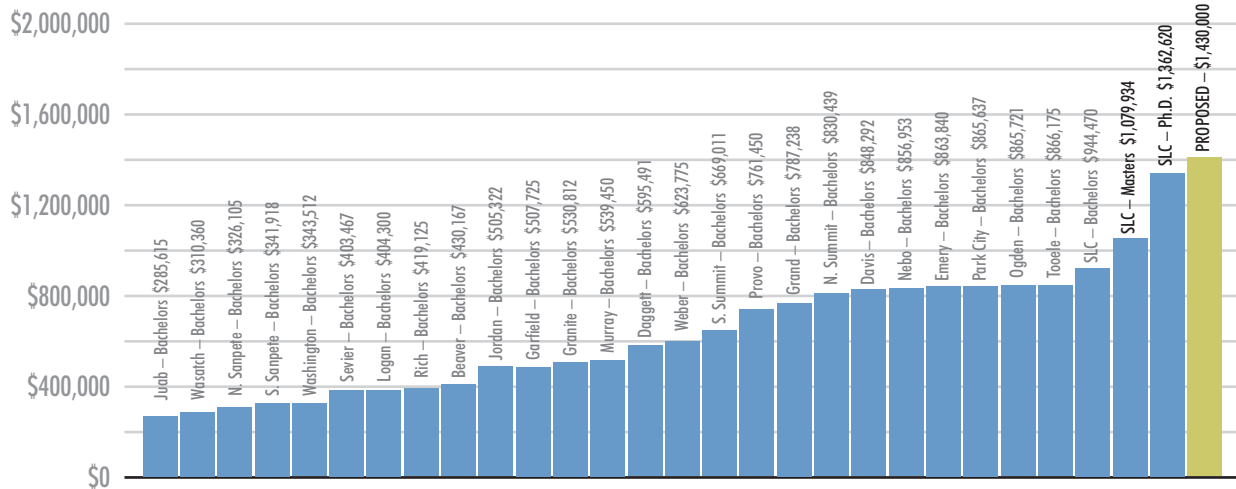


Data Source: Salt Lake City and Park City School Districts' 2008-09 Certified Teacher Salary Schedules (Except "Proposed")

For a new teacher, the \$3,500 would be an 8.8 percent raise from the proposed base salary. Such a raise would also be 84 percent larger than the average raise currently available in Park City and more than double the average in Salt Lake City.<sup>18</sup>

This salary schedule would give all state-certified teachers an earnings potential of \$1,430,000 over 20 years. This would increase potential earnings between 51 per-

### SCHOOL DISTRICT EARNINGS POTENTIAL 20 YEARS



Unadjusted Data Source: "Teacher Salary Schedules & Comparisons 2007-08," Utah Education Association (Except "Proposed")

cent and 401 percent for bachelor's degree holders in the state, depending on the school district.<sup>19</sup> It would also be 32 percent greater than the best potential income for a current master's degree-holder in the state, and even a five percent boost for the highest-earning teachers: Ph.D. holders in Salt Lake City.<sup>20</sup>

With lifetime earnings, raises, and starting salary at these levels, the state will have the tools to encourage and reward performance from good teachers. What remains is to decide how to measure performance and how to use these measurements to reward good teachers.

### Performance Measurement

Evidence suggests that a primary purpose of performance measurement should be to encourage parents, teachers, and administrators to collaborate in their efforts to help children succeed. Such collaboration has been found to be a hallmark of excellent schools and is correlated with high student achievement.<sup>21</sup>

**Sutherland recommends** a series of annual performance evaluations, which would determine raises, to achieve and promote this collaboration. Such evaluations have been broadly successful at improving employee performance in many different organizations – public and private – for-profit and not-for-profit.

Teachers would be evaluated first, and chiefly, by their principal. They would also be evaluated by involved parents of their students. An “involved” parent is one who has met at least twice with their child’s teacher: at the start of the school year to set expectations, and then again at the end to discuss if/how those expectations were met.

Principals would be evaluated primarily by the combined parent evaluations of their teachers. They would

also be evaluated directly by the parents on the school’s community council.

This series of evaluations creates a cycle – teachers’ pay driven chiefly by principals, whose pay is determined primarily by parents’ evaluations of teachers, who in turn focus on meeting parents’ needs. In this process all are motivated to clearly communicate with each other. Such a policy will encourage both collaboration and parental involvement, two of the best indicators of a child’s academic success.<sup>22</sup>

Another benefit associated with this approach to annual evaluations is the flexibility and scope it allows in measuring teacher performance. Student test scores, for example, provide useful information, but do not reflect every aspect of a teacher’s performance or a student’s education. This is particularly true in today’s economy, where analytical thinking and problem-solving skills are so crucial.

Test score-based policies also carry unintended consequences that can undermine a child’s education.<sup>23</sup> Performance evaluations, while admittedly more subjective, can sidestep these pitfalls and are more adaptable to present-day educational needs.

To help address concerns of subjectivity, the State Board of Education could create a rubric or framework for principal evaluations of teachers. Several school districts in other states have begun using such models for performance evaluation, with promising results.<sup>24</sup> The framework could include many factors for principals to assess.

Obvious factors for consideration are test scores, attendance, and classroom observation, whether by the principal or other teachers. Other worthwhile factors, however, are class size, socio-economic status, and

even student input about the teacher given to principals via school counselors. The possibility for inclusion of nontraditional factors in performance evaluations illustrates their potential for effective performance measurement.

The rubric would provide objective, universal guidelines and standards for factors that principals should consider in their teacher evaluations. Yet it would still give the principal flexibility in addressing performance, based on the needs of the teacher, their students, and the school.

## Principals

The principal – the school’s Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) – is crucial to the success of an incentive-pay policy involving performance evaluations. This proposal envisions the principal becoming the leader, rather than simply the manager, of their school.

As such, the principal would focus his/her time on facilitating quality teaching and guiding their school toward success. This means that daily administrative tasks would be delegated to assistant principals or business managers as much as possible. It also means that his/her pay would be based on performance, and would be commensurate with these weightier responsibilities.

**Sutherland recommends** three pay scales for principals: one for elementary schools, one for middle school/junior high schools, and one for high schools. As principals’ duties expand from one level of school to the next, so should their compensation increase.

An elementary school principal’s pay scale would begin at \$75,000, with a cap of \$145,000. A middle school/junior high school principal would start at \$80,000 and

cap out at \$150,000. A high school principal would begin at \$85,000, with a cap of \$155,000.

These salary schedules correspond to beginning and average pay for other chief executives in the state.<sup>25</sup> While the average principal’s salary would still lag behind, it would be more in line with private-sector pay, attracting talented administrative leaders into public schools. Implementing these schedules today would give a raise to 23 percent of school administrators, at a cost of \$1.5 million.<sup>26</sup>

Principals would annually be eligible for a raise of \$3,500, up to their salary cap (a maximum potential of 20 raises). Like teachers, receipt of any raise would depend on their performance evaluation.

## Awarding Raises to Teachers

As mentioned previously, teachers would be evaluated primarily by principals, and also by involved parents. Principals would be evaluated chiefly by combined parent evaluations of the teachers at their school, and also directly by the parents on the community council. The following example illustrates one model of how these evaluations could work.

Evaluation of individual teacher performance need not be complicated. For both parents and principals, simple numerical evaluations with three values could be used. The options for principals could be -2 (“below expectations”), +1 (“met expectations”), or +2 (“above expectations”). A parent’s choices could be -1 (below expectations), 0 (met expectations), or +1 (above expectations). After evaluations are completed, the scores would be combined and a score of 0 or above would earn the teacher a \$2,500 pay raise.

The weighting of the principal's evaluation is to ensure that the CAO is the primary driver of a teacher's individual-performance-pay raise. For example, if parent evaluations were below expectations, but the principal's evaluation met expectations, a teacher would receive a pay raise.

The parent-evaluation score for a teacher would be calculated after all involved parent evaluations were submitted. The evaluations could be done via a letter or postcard sent to all involved parents, with a submission deadline clearly posted.

After the deadline for submission, all evaluations for a particular teacher would be averaged. That average would determine whether a teacher received a score of -1, 0, or +1, as specified by the State Legislature or the State Board of Education.

To ensure fairness, if a teacher's parent-evaluation score is "above expectations" and their principal's evaluation is "below expectations," a teacher could appeal to the community council. Parents on the community council

would vote on whether or not to award a raise to the teacher after gathering input from the teacher, the principal, and other community council members.

Evaluation of group/grade-level teacher performance would also be straightforward: if a certain proportion, specified by rule or statute, of teachers in the same grade (for elementary school) or the same subject (for middle school/junior high and high school) received "above expectations" evaluation scores from the parents of their students, the entire group would receive a \$1,000 pay raise. There would be no appeals for group-level raises.

### Awarding Raises to Principals

Evaluation of principals could follow a similar pattern. First, all submitted parent evaluations of teachers at the school could be averaged. Then, based on the average, a value of -2 (below expectations), +1 (met expectations), or +2 (above expectations) would be assigned, as specified in statute or board rule.

Further, parents on the school community council would, by majority vote, give the principal -1 (below expectations), 0 (met expectations), or +1 (above expectations). Again, these ratings reflect the lower weighting associated with the community council evaluation. When the council meets to rate a principal, teachers on the council could give input, but would have no vote. Similarly, a district representative, such as the superintendent, would attend and give input, but would only vote in the case of a tie. After the evaluations are completed, the scores would be combined and a score of 0 or above would earn the principal a \$3,500 raise.

For principals, parents' evaluations of teacher performance drive compensation. For instance, if school-

### AWARDING INDIVIDUAL-TEACHER RAISES

		Principal Evaluations		
		BELOW Expectations (-2)	MET Expectations (1)	ABOVE Expectations (2)
Parents' Evaluations	BELOW Expectations (-1)	<b>NET SCORE -3</b> No Raise No Appeal	<b>NET SCORE 0</b> Raise	<b>NET SCORE 1</b> Raise
	MET Expectations (0)	<b>NET SCORE -2</b> No Raise No Appeal	<b>NET SCORE 1</b> Raise	<b>NET SCORE 2</b> Raise
	ABOVE Expectations (1)	<b>NET SCORE -1</b> No Raise May Appeal	<b>NET SCORE 2</b> Raise	<b>NET SCORE 3</b> Raise

### AWARDING PRINCIPAL RAISES

		Parents' Evaluation of Teachers		
		BELOW Expectations (-2)	MET Expectations (1)	ABOVE Expectations (2)
Community Council Parents' Evaluations of Principal	BELOW Expectations (-1)	<b>NET SCORE -3</b> No Raise No Appeal	<b>NET SCORE 0</b> Raise	<b>NET SCORE 1</b> Raise
	MET Expectations (0)	<b>NET SCORE -2</b> No Raise No Appeal	<b>NET SCORE 1</b> Raise	<b>NET SCORE 2</b> Raise
	ABOVE Expectations (1)	<b>NET SCORE -1</b> No Raise May Appeal	<b>NET SCORE 2</b> Raise	<b>NET SCORE 3</b> Raise

wide teacher evaluations indicate the teacher met expectations, but the community council's evaluation was "below expectations," the principal would still receive a raise.

However, if combined teacher evaluations were "below expectations," but the community council evaluation was "above expectations," there would be an appeals process for principals. The appeal would consist of an evaluation of the principal directly by involved parents at the school, again through a letter or postcard sent to qualifying parents with a clearly-specified submission deadline.

### Funding Mechanism

The larger available raises, higher base salaries, and increased lifetime earnings will create additional costs to the state. There will certainly be an initial investment required to bring current teachers and principals onto the new salary schedules. There will also be a cost over time as teachers and principals, on average, begin to earn higher salaries than were once available to them.

Covering these costs will require a mechanism for funding. **Sutherland recommends** that the district minimum basic tax levy be combined with Minimum School Program (MSP) funds to fund the new policy.

Under the MSP, every school district must maintain a "minimum basic [property] tax" to qualify for state MSP funds.<sup>27</sup> The state could require that the funds raised under the basic tax rate be allocated toward paying teacher and principal salaries. Once those funds have been exhausted, the state would make up the difference. Each individual district would pay for their employees' benefits.

This funding mechanism provides multiple ways to fund any future increases in costs. The state could either raise the revenue requirement of the minimum basic tax rate, or raise income taxes. Conversely, when teacher-pay costs decrease (due to declining enrollments, for example) the state could reduce taxes.

Further, giving responsibility for benefits to individual districts will maintain their ability to differentiate themselves. In other words, while the state will attract a pool of good teachers with competitive salaries, districts still compete for those teachers through their benefit packages.

Another benefit of this funding policy is its transparency. Citizens could easily determine what proportion of their property taxes and income taxes were going to pay teachers, versus other education expenses. This information would equip and empower citizens to ensure that government and district policy represents their interests and reflect their intent.

It is also worth noting that with competitive salaries and benefits, the state could reduce costly practices as a means of defraying increasing salary costs. The practice of “double-dipping,” where a public school employee will retire, begin receiving their pension, and then take a job in a different school or district, provides an example.

## COMPLEMENTARY POLICIES

Besides certification, there are other aspects of the teaching career that influence performance. These include hiring/recruiting, the choice of where to work, the process of firing a teacher, and tenure or “career employee” status. Properly reforming these policies will aid incentive pay; maintaining the status quo will hinder it.

### Hiring/Recruitment

As the CAO of the school, the principal is in the best position to make staffing decisions. **Sutherland recommends** that the principal, as the leader of the school, be given full authority to screen and hire teachers. Currently, that process is split between principals and school districts. Fully vesting principals with this authority will allow them to put together the highest-performing staff they can find.

Further, **Sutherland recommends** that principals be given access to teacher-performance information and a “recruitment account,” which they could use to recruit and reward the best teachers. This account would allow principals to reward the highest-performing teachers beyond the normal salary schedule.

For instance, say the best math teacher at a school retired. Understandably, the principal might want to replace this teacher with an “all-star,” rather than gambling on an unproven instructor. With access to past performance evaluations, certification scores, etc., a principal

could find that master teacher and offer him or her pay beyond the salary schedule (e.g., an extra \$5,000 for five years) to bring the teacher to the principal’s school.

This recruitment tool would further strengthen incentives for teachers to perform well. To ensure that classroom time is not disrupted mid-year by recruitment, the State Board could create rules to guide when and how offers could be tendered.

### Choosing a School

A teacher’s decision about where to work is also important. It has been shown that good teachers have a significant impact on their students’ performance in the classroom.<sup>28</sup> Subsequently, a teacher’s decision to accept a job at Timpview High School versus Hunter High School has implications for both schools. Public resources should focus on connecting the best willing principals and teachers with the students that need them most.

To this end, **Sutherland recommends** adding \$5,000 to the pay scales of both teachers and principals working in “hard-to-staff” schools. This extra pay would add \$100,000 to their earnings over 20 years, providing incentive for people to work at difficult schools.

“Hard-to-staff” schools could include rural schools, and schools with a large proportion of students qualifying for reduced-price or free lunch, for example.

### Firing

Unfortunately, there will be times when it is best to fire a poorly-performing teacher. It may be a matter of a teacher who should not be in the teaching career. The more likely circumstance, however, is when a teacher is in a school or classroom situation to which they are not

well-suited. In such cases, the decision to fire the teacher is not only good for students, but may lead the teacher into a position that better fits his or her abilities.

Such a decision is best kept in the hands of the principal. Further, it should not be unreasonably difficult in such circumstances to fire a teacher. If a principal is excoriated by a teacher in front of their employer every time they choose to fire a teacher, constructive terminations will be infrequent. The larger the barriers to termination, the less likely it will be that teachers in bad situations will move on to better ones.

On the other hand, teachers should also have legal protections and reasonable due process. When a termination decision is blatantly malicious, a teacher should be able to contest it.

Subsequently, **Sutherland recommends** changing the standards for initiation of a teacher-termination hearing. Teachers should not be entitled to such hearings regardless of circumstance. Rather, teachers should be required to produce evidence substantiating a reasonable suspicion of malicious intent before a hearing is called. Such a prerequisite will discourage frivolous proceedings that hinder proper terminations. At the same time, teachers' rights to due process will be maintained.

## Tenure

The "career employee" designation also calls for reconsideration.<sup>29</sup> As tenure provides benefits and protections to teachers, it also ought to be tied to performance.

**Sutherland recommends** that a teacher be considered for the title of "career employee" only after the eighth annual individual performance raise has been achieved. In other words, tenure should only be grant-

ed after a teacher has shown an understanding of and aptitude for individual job performance. This policy would help further promote effective performance and turn tenure into a true professional accomplishment for teachers.

## IMPLEMENTATION

These proposed policies create several implementation issues. These issues deserve careful consideration because the proposed reforms represent a significant shift toward a performance paradigm in public education.

### Phased Implementation

The breadth and depth of reform being called for suggests that a phased implementation may be appropriate. If so, Sutherland would recommend the following three-year pathway to implementation.

Phase I (first year): During this phase, the hiring and firing policies would be implemented. Further, the State Board of Education would be charged to find/create the certification exam, create the basic pedagogy course, and create rules for the practical training in teaching methods. The Board would also create performance-evaluation guidelines and the teacher-evaluation rubric, with stakeholder input.

Phase II (second year): The new state certification and the funding mechanism for incentive pay would be put in place. Principals and teachers would be trained in the new evaluation procedures, and parents would be informed about the evaluation process and requirements. Principals would also be trained in their new abilities to recruit.

Phase III (third year): The new incentive-pay program, the recruitment policy, and tenure standards would be

implemented. Differential pay for “hard-to-staff” schools would also be enacted.

### Current Policies

These proposed policies are meant to create a new framework for public education: one based on performance. As such, these proposed reforms do not address every particular in the system. They also do not preclude many of the education policies currently in place.

For example, the state’s differential pay policy for science and math teachers could remain intact under the new state-teacher pay scale. It would simply become an addition to the pay scale, similar to the additional pay that those in hard-to-staff schools would receive.

Further, teachers currently earning more than the teacher salary cap – .02 percent of all teachers – could be allowed to keep their current salary. If their performance is insufficient, it will quickly become evident and their employment could be terminated or they could find a position better suited to them.

### Teacher Associations

While collective bargaining would end under these proposed policies, the intent is not to eliminate professional teacher associations. Rather, these policies simply recognize the failure of collective bargaining to reward teacher performance.

Without collective bargaining, however, the question arises as to the role of the Utah Education Association (UEA) and other professional associations in education. While this will ultimately be decided by the associations themselves, there are several needs that would continue under the new policies.

For instance, the need for legal assistance in cases of alleged wrongful termination would not disappear under this proposal. Additionally, insurance and discount programs provided by groups like the UEA would still be beneficial to association members.<sup>30</sup>

There are many examples of beneficial professional associations, few of which have the power of collective bargaining. The Utah Bar Association is a prime example, along with the Utah Association of Certified Public Accountants. Associations in Utah without collective bargaining power also exist for nurses, psychologists, and other professions comparable to teaching.

It seems certain from the available evidence that ending collective bargaining in Utah will not destroy the ability of professional associations in education to be of benefit to their members. It will, however, significantly increase the state’s ability to reward good teachers.

## CONCLUSION

Utah has a unique opportunity to innovate and improve its system of public education. By learning from other states’ examples, Utah can implement a system that rewards good teachers and gives all teachers added incentive to improve. Sutherland’s proposal is an attempt at creating such a system.

These reforms lay the foundation of a performance-based education system. Additionally, they will also help address teacher shortages by increasing teacher pay and lowering unnecessary barriers – but not standards – to competent, non-traditional teachers. Most importantly, these changes will unite the efforts of parents, teachers, and principals to secure a child’s educational success, leading to better outcomes for students, families, and employees in the public school system.

## ENDNOTES

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2. Four independent literature reviews on teacher quality, synthesizing over two decades of research, found that subject knowledge and the first few years of practical experience are correlated with effective teaching. They also found that graduate degrees and pedagogy courses have no correlation with teacher quality. Escandon, Elizabeth, *Improving Teacher Quality in Utah*, 2008, Utah Foundation Research Brief, at [http://www.utahfoundation.org/briefs/2008\\_06\\_teacher\\_quality.html](http://www.utahfoundation.org/briefs/2008_06_teacher_quality.html).
3. Research has found that collaboration between these groups and collaborative environments are a hallmark of high-performing schools. Gruenert, Steve, "Correlations of Collaborative School Cultures with Student Achievement," 2005, *Urban Education*, Vol. 89, No. 645, Pages 43-55. Tschanen-Moran, Megan, "Collaboration and the Need for Trust," 2001, *Journal of Education Administration*, 39, 308-331.
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8. The Praxis II test is currently used to meet NCLB standards for "Highly-Qualified" teachers. The test used for basic licensure is the Praxis I. Office of Educator Quality and Licensing, "Utah State Board of Education Approved ETS Praxis II Subject Assessments for Federal 'Highly Qualified,'" Utah State Office of Education, at <http://www.schools.utah.gov/cert/nclb/ETSPraxisIISubject.pdf>.
9. Escandon, Elizabeth, *Improving Teacher Quality in Utah*, 2008, Utah Foundation Research Brief, at [http://www.utahfoundation.org/briefs/2008\\_06\\_teacher\\_quality.html](http://www.utahfoundation.org/briefs/2008_06_teacher_quality.html).
10. Denver Public Schools, *2008-2009 ProComp Payment Opportunities*, 2008, Denver Public Schools: Denver, CO.
11. In 2007-08, the average starting salary for a teacher with a bachelor's degree was \$31,144, as reported by the UEA. In FY 2007, the median average teacher salary in all school districts was \$41,242, as reported by the USOE. Estimates for the current school year were made by adding \$1,700 – the size of the most recent legislative salary increase – to the UEA figure, and \$4,200 – the size of legislative salary increases since FY 2007 – to the USOE figure. White, Courtney, and Carrie Hall, "Teacher Salary Schedules & Comparisons 2007-08, 2008," *Utah Education Association Research Bulletin*, Vol. MMVIII, No. 5, Pages 1-72. USOE School Finance & Statistics, "Superintendent's Annual Report:

- Section II: Data Files, 2006-07," 2007, Utah State Office of Education, at <http://www.schools.utah.gov/finance/other/AnnualReport/ar2007.htm>.
12. The methodology of these estimates was an attempt to ensure a cost estimate that would err on the high end, not the low end. The percentage estimate was based upon a sample of data collected from the Utah's Right to Know website on October 27-28, 2008. All traditional public school teachers in the database were retrieved, and \$1,700 (the size of the legislative salary increase) was added to create an estimate of their salary for the 2008-09 school year. To ensure the integrity of the data sample, repeated names were consolidated, and substitute and special education teachers were removed. Further, those whose adjusted salaries were below the lowest minimum bachelor's degree salary in the state in 2007-08 as reported by the UEA (\$28,859) were removed, as many of these were likely mid-year or part-time hires. The latter group included 2,271 individuals whose reported earnings (after \$1,700 adjustment) ranged from \$1,722 to \$28,854, and whose median salary was \$19,059. The remaining sample contained 19,249 teachers, of which 31 percent made less than \$40,000. Among this 31 percent, the average difference between their adjusted salary and \$40,000 was \$5,367. Utahsright.com, "Utah Public Salaries," 2008, *Media One*, at [http://www.utahsright.com/h\\_salaries.php](http://www.utahsright.com/h_salaries.php). White, Courtney, and Carrie Hall, "Teacher Salary Schedules & Comparisons 2007-08, 2008," *Utah Education Association Research Bulletin*, Vol. MMVIII, No. 5, Pages 1-72. USOE School Finance & Statistics, "Superintendent's Annual Report: Section II," 2007, Utah State Office of Education, at <http://www.schools.utah.gov/finance/other/AnnualReport/ar.htm>.
  13. The cost estimate was made by multiplying 31 percent by an estimate of the number of regular (no special ed or charter), full-time K-12 classroom teachers in the state for 2008-09. This product was then multiplied by the average raise this 31 percent would receive (\$5,367), creating a cost estimate of \$34,625,886. The estimated number of regular, full-time K-12 classroom teachers was based on data from the USOE between FY 2003 and FY 2007. The average percentage growth in the number of all FTE classroom teachers over these years was added to the number of total FTE classroom teachers in 2007-08 (23,001). Then the average proportion of FTE preschool teachers and FTE special education teachers was subtracted from the total FTE classroom teacher estimate, to give an estimate of the number of regular, full-time K-12 classroom teachers in the state for 2008-09. Utahsright.com, "Utah Public Salaries," 2008, *Media One*, at [http://www.utahsright.com/h\\_salaries.php](http://www.utahsright.com/h_salaries.php). Harrington, Patti, "Public Education – Fingertip Facts 2008," 2008, Utah State Office of Education, at <http://www.schools.utah.gov/default/FngrFacts.pdf>. USOE School Finance & Statistics, "Superintendent's Annual Report: Section II," 2007, Utah State Office of Education, at <http://www.schools.utah.gov/finance/other/AnnualReport/ar.htm>.
  14. The most recently reported data was for 2007. For reasoning behind using these professions to compare with public school teachers, see Anthony Milanowski's recent report, published through the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Department of Workforce Services, "Utah Occupational Wages," 2008, State of Utah, at <http://jobs.utah.gov/jsp/wi/utalmis/gotoOccwage.do>. Milanowski, Anthony, *Using Occupational Characteristics Information from O\*Net to Identify Occupations for Compensation Comparisons with K-12 Teaching*, 2008, Wisconsin Center for Education Research Working Paper No. 2008-4, at <http://www.wceruw.org/>

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15. The most recent data available was for the 2006-07 school year. Di Carlo, Matthew, Nate Johnson, and Pat Cochran, "Survey and Analysis of Teacher Salary Trends 2007," 2008, American Federation of Teachers, at <http://www.aft.org/salary/2007/download/AFT2007SalarySurvey.pdf>.
  16. White, Courtney, and Carrie Hall, "Teacher Salary Schedules & Comparisons 2007-08, 2008," *Utah Education Association Research Bulletin*, Vol. MMVIII, No. 5, Pages 1-72.
  17. Salt Lake City and Park City School Districts have consistently received top rankings in multiple measures of teacher pay compared to other school districts in Utah. White, Courtney, and Carrie Hall, "Teacher Salary Schedules & Comparisons 2007-08, 2008," *Utah Education Association Research Bulletin*, Vol. MMVIII, No. 5, Pages 1-72. Salt Lake City School District Human Resources, *Salt Lake City School District 2008-09 – Certified Teachers*, 2008, Salt Lake City School District, at <http://www.slk.k12.ut.us/depts/hr/pdf/teachersalary.pdf>. Park City School District Human Resources, *Park City School District – FY09 Licensed Salary Schedule*, 2008, Park City School District, at <http://www.pcschools.us/index.php?page=204&showfile=thefile&rowid=21&noattach=1>.
  18. The average pay raises were calculated by averaging the salary increase between each step, across all lanes, on each districts' 2008-09 pay scales. Step changes that did not result in a pay raise were not included in the average. Salt Lake City School District Human Resources, *Salt Lake City School District 2008-09 – Certified Teachers*, 2008, Salt Lake City School District, at <http://www.slk.k12.ut.us/depts/hr/pdf/teachersalary.pdf>. Park City School District Human Resources, *Park City School District – FY09 Licensed Salary Schedule*, 2008, Park City School District, at <http://www.pcschools.us/index.php?page=204&showfile=thefile&rowid=21&noattach=1>.
  19. Based on school district 20-year earnings data reported by the UEA for 2007-08. Estimates for 2008-09 were made by adding \$34,000 (the \$1,700 legislative salary increase for 2008-09 multiplied by 20) to each districts' 20-year potential earnings. White, Courtney, and Carrie Hall, "Teacher Salary Schedules & Comparisons 2007-08, 2008," *Utah Education Association Research Bulletin*, Vol. MMVIII, No. 5, Pages 1-72.
  20. *Ibid.*
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26. The 23 percent figure was based on data from Utah's Right to Know. Principals were split into their respective categories and their salaries adjusted for the \$2,500 legislative pay raise for school administrators in 2007-08. Then the number of principals whose adjusted salaries were less than their respective base salary was divided by the total number of principals in the sample (657). The cost estimate was made by first collecting the data on all principals in the sample whose adjusted salary was less than their new respective base salary. Then the difference between each principal's adjusted salary and their new base salary were added together. Finally, principals who did not appear in the Utah's Right database needed to be added to the cost. This part of the cost estimate was made by multiplying the average raise for each respective group of principals by the difference in the actual number of schools in each category (elementary, middle/junior high, and high schools) and the number of principals in those categories in the sample. The sum of this product and the earlier cost figure was \$1,470,142. Utahsright.com, "Utah Public Salaries," 2008, Media One, at [http://www.utahsright.com/h\\_salaries.php](http://www.utahsright.com/h_salaries.php). Harrington, Patti, *Fingertip Facts – 2008*, 2008, Utah State Office of Education, at <http://www.schools.utah.gov/default/FngrFacts.pdf>.
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