

## Principles for a Professional Growth Salary Schedule

The principles outlined below have been established to provide a framework for the development of professional growth salary schedules. Where implemented well, these schedules aid in the recruitment of talented college graduates to the teaching profession and our nation's public schools, and they help keep them there. To advance these goals, the principles:

- Provide an outline for a career path for teachers who want to seek additional responsibility without altogether leaving the classroom;
- Recognize and reward teachers who attain and can demonstrate knowledge and skills that improve professional teaching;
- Recognize and reward improved teacher practice that is a factor in student learning and other student outcomes, based on evidence of student progress drawn from teacher documentation, student work samples, and classroom assessments;
- Provide guidance for how to recognize and compensate teachers for the myriad duties that their daily work entails outside of direct classroom teaching; and
- Position teachers on par with the salary, professional growth opportunities, and career earnings of comparably prepared professionals.

### NEA's Principles

**Base Salary:** A professional growth salary schedule must start with a professional-level salary of at least \$40,000 for all beginning teachers entering the classroom. Teachers should be able to reach their "maximum" salary on the schedule within ten years.

**Association Involvement:** The schedule must be co-created or designed with teachers through collective bargaining or, where there is no collective bargaining, agreed to by the organization representing teachers, and it must allow for the strictly voluntary participation of current teachers.

**Salary Levels (Tiers):** A professional growth salary schedule must contain several levels through which teachers progress that are based on prescribed skills, knowledge, licenses, certifications, degrees, responsibilities, and/or accomplishments. Each level should build on previous ones and contain salary increases for specified time periods within each level.

**Advancement through the Levels:** Generally, early levels on the schedule should be linked to the probationary period of employment, and advancement through the levels should be required. Movement through later levels may be voluntary.

**Linked to Quality Professional Development:** A professional growth salary schedule must be linked to a professional development system that has been locally developed with teachers and tied to quality professional development standards such as those of the National Staff Development Council (NSDC). The schedule should clearly define what will be measured and how those measurements will be conducted.

**Knowledge and Skills:** The professional growth salary schedule should be tied to locally developed, research-based, professional learning opportunities (knowledge and skills) targeted to the needs of the students.

**Funding:** A professional growth salary schedule must have adequate and sustainable sources of funding, both initially and on an ongoing basis. Grants should be viewed only as temporary resources that are not capable of sustaining a career salary program.

**Accessibility:** Any professional growth salary schedule should be accessible to everyone who is eligible, without quotas.

**Flexibility:** There is no single model for professional growth salary schedules. Schedules should be locally bargained or, where there is no collective bargaining, agreed to with the organization representing the teachers. Proposed schedules must be flexible and structured for the contexts in which they will be implemented.

**Transparency:** The schedule must be understandable to teachers and the public.

**Program Assessment:** There must be an annual assessment of the schedule to determine its effectiveness in improving teacher salaries, teaching quality, and the recruitment/retention of quality staff. The schedule's administrative efficiency and cost-effectiveness also should be examined each year. The association must be involved in all stages of these assessments, including identifying criteria that will be assessed.

**Definition of Those in the System:** When implementing a professional growth salary schedule, all parties must agree on, and clarify, who is eligible to participate.

Other Considerations

**Teacher Assessment:** A professional growth salary schedule must be accompanied by a quality teacher assessment system (e.g., Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching) to ensure the quality of teaching for all those participating.

**Linkage to Licensure:** Those who develop the professional growth salary schedule will need to determine if it will be linked to the state licensure system or operate irrespective of state licensing structures, requirements, etc. Examples of both approaches exist.

**Longer School Year/Day:** One other item to consider is the length of the teachers' work year or work day. School districts and teacher representatives may decide to provide voluntary options to extend a teacher's year or day (for extra pay) under some pay levels in the professional growth salary schedule, or it could be determined that, in order to provide the necessary professional development to improve teaching and learning, an extended work year/day is necessary to effectively implement a professional growth salary schedule.

**Student Progress:** Improved teaching practice leading to improved student learning and evidence of changes in student outcomes can be factors in the professional growth salary schedule. This evidence can be drawn from classroom assessments and other forms of documentation, including pre- and post-test measures of student learning in specific areas and evidence of student accomplishments in relation to specific teaching activities.

**Student Tests:** While student test scores are not reliable measures for making high-stakes decisions (e.g., for teacher pay or job status), test scores do provide valuable information to teachers and schools that can be used to inform curriculum and instructional decisions.

Specifics of a Professional Growth Salary Schedule: The NEA has developed an example of a professional growth salary schedule. It may provide guidance to those seeking to develop a professional growth schedule but should not be considered an "ideal model."

**EMERGING TEACHER ENTRY CRITERIA:**

- Preliminary license/teaching certificate and one year at the Provisional level

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Full teaching schedule but no non-teaching duties. Maintain a professional journal.
- Continue in induction/mentoring program.

**SALARY:**

- Minimum of \$45,000 plus a 5% increase for completion of each successful year.

**DURATION:**

- Three years

**MOVEMENT TO NEXT LEVEL:**

- Complete requirements as assessed by a comprehensive teacher evaluation

**PROVISIONAL TEACHER MINIMUM ENTRY CRITERIA:**

- Bachelor's in subject area

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Reduced teaching schedule. Observe Professional and Accomplished Teachers.
- Dedicated professional development. Participate in an induction and mentoring program.

**SALARY:**

- Minimum of \$40,000.

**DURATION:**

- One year. Two years in special circumstances.

**MOVEMENT TO NEXT LEVEL:**

- Complete requirements as assessed by a comprehensive teacher evaluation system.

### **PROFESSIONAL TEACHER MINIMUM ENTRY CRITERIA:**

- Professional License and successful completion of Provisional and Emerging levels

### **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Full-time teaching or equivalency. After five years of successful teaching, may become peer coach, mentor, or teacher leader.

### **SALARY:**

- Minimum of \$55,000 with a 5% increase for completion of each successful year up to a maximum at Year 9.
- Additional pay for additional activities.

### **DURATION:**

- An option to remain for duration of teaching career.
- Must show evidence of effectiveness and continuous professional learning periodically.

### **MOVEMENT TO NEXT LEVEL:**

- Achieving NBPTS Certification

### **ACCOMPLISHED TEACHER MINIMUM ENTRY CRITERIA:**

- 5 years of teaching, including successful movement through previous levels
- At least one year as Professional Teacher.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Full-time teaching or service as a peer coach, mentor, NBPTS coach, or teacher leader

### **SALARY:**

- Minimum of \$80,000. Additional pay for additional activities.

### **DURATION:**

- An option to remain for duration of one's teaching career.
- Must show evidence of effectiveness and continuous professional learning periodically.
- Active National Board Certification required, with renewal as set forth by NBPTS