Performance Pay for Teachers and Principals

For decades, Georgia, like most other states, has followed a locked-step single salary schedule for K-12 teachers, basing compensation on inputs, such as years of experience and highest degree earned with no consequential regard for impact on student learning. This salary schedule fails to reward Georgia’s excellent teachers and leaders.

Benefits of Performance Pay proposal:
- To identify, motivate and reward effective teachers and principals
- To improve student learning, and
- To provide career ladder opportunities for the state’s most effective teachers

What will this legislation do?

This legislation will preserve the current salary structure but will also enhance it by allowing current teachers to opt-in to a new, performance-based pay structure. The State Board of Education (SBOE) will be required to adopt a common, statewide evaluation tool that takes student achievement into account when assessing teachers and leaders. Using this tool, the state will calculate a Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM) and Leader Effectiveness Measure (LEM), 50 percent of which will be based on student growth.

SBOE will adopt a new salary schedule that provides performance bonuses for the state’s most effective teachers and principals. The TEM and LEM will be used to determine if teachers are eligible for bonuses related to performance and career ladder opportunities in their schools.

The bill will enable those who are already enrolled in advanced degree programs to complete their studies and remain in the present salary structure if they so choose. But, new teachers and those who choose to opt-in to the performance-based salary structure will no longer be paid for the degree but instead will be paid for the degree to which students grow.

Who is eligible to be considered?

Current teachers and principals who wish to opt into the performance pay system and all new teachers and principals. Current teachers and principals who do not wish to opt into the performance pay system will be evaluated on the new statewide tool, but will remain on the current salary schedule.

What is the timeline for implementing Performance Pay?

Several years of data collection are needed before the state can implement performance pay. Therefore the SBOE shall adopt the new evaluation tool by July 1, 2013. The SBOE shall adopt a new salary schedule no earlier than January 1, 2013 and no later than January 1, 2014. All new teacher hires after January 1, 2014 will go into the new salary schedule.

As Performance Pay is part of Georgia’s Race to the Top proposal, districts that enter into memorandums of understanding with the state may implement Race to the Top on an earlier timeline.