

Teacher Quality Law of 2007

Taking control of our own profession!

The 2007 session of the Iowa Legislature will go down in the record books as the turning point for public education in Iowa. Not only did lawmakers approve a historic pay raise for K-12 teachers and area education agency professionals, it also gave educators a strong voice in determining their own

professional development needs and unprecedented control over professional issues.

But it didn't just happen. The landmark investment in Iowa's educators is the result of a multi-year ISEA effort to build a groundswell of public support for paying teachers a competitive wage and our

work to elect candidates who would honor those wishes.

In this informational piece you'll find basic information about the provisions in the law as well as answers to some common questions. For the latest updates, be sure to visit the ISEA Web site at www.isea.org.

In a nutshell

SF 277 made a number of significant changes to the Teacher Quality Law which was originally approved by the 2001 Iowa Legislature. Specifically, it:

- Increases the minimum salaries by \$1,000: beginning teacher salary to \$26,500; career teachers (third year) to \$27,500; and all other career teachers to \$28,500.
- Expands the pay raises approved by the 2006 Legislature resulting in an *average* cumulative increase of \$5,400 by the 2008-09 school year.
- Makes area education agency professionals and school nurses who hold a teaching license or statement of professional recognition from the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners eligible to receive the salary increases.
- Reinstates the requirement that school districts employ at least one teacher librarian, guidance counselor, and school nurse. School districts can request a two-year waiver but they will be required to fill these positions after this period. School districts also must work toward a goal of having one guidance counselor for every 350 students and one school nurse for every 750 students.
- Calls for the creation of local teacher quality committees, made up of an equal number of teachers and administrators, to provide input into the use and distribution of professional

development funds appropriated by the legislation, monitor the evaluation process, and recommend the use of the market factor incentives.

- Provides funding for quality professional development opportunities determined at the local level instead of mandating additional days.
- Improves the current accountability system by ensuring that teacher evaluations are conducted in a fair and consistent manner that is focused on improvement and eliminates unnecessary paperwork.
- Expands the use of "market factor pay" to include a wide variety of incentives to recruit teachers in shortage areas.
- Ensures that teachers who register for National Board Certification by December 31, 2007, will be eligible for the registration reimbursement and a \$2,500 stipend each year for ten years if they successfully earn this prestigious distinction.
- Calls for the development of an administrator improvement and accountability system similar to the one already put in place for teachers.
- Appropriates a limited amount of funding to allow experimentation with alternative compensation systems developed in collaboration with local associations.

How will the teacher salary money be distributed?

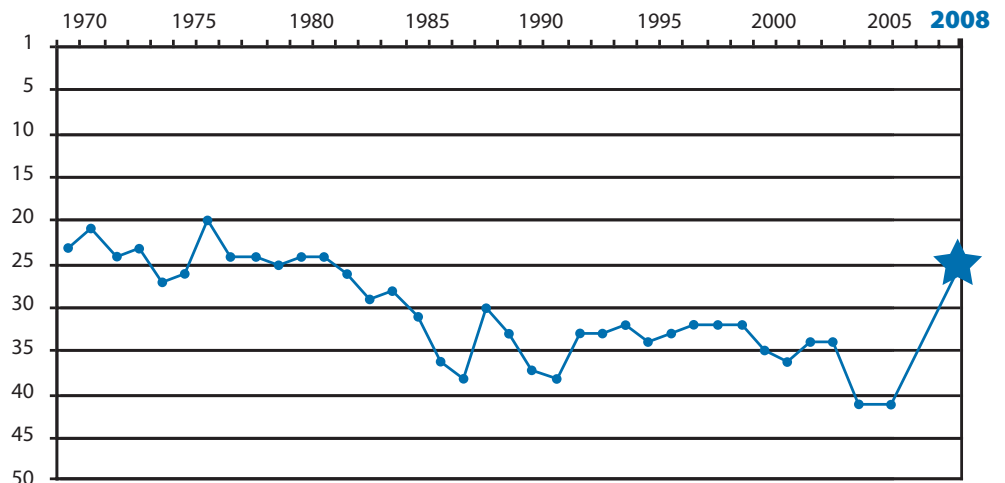
The Legislature appropriated \$141.3 million to bring the average Iowa teacher salary from 40th to 25th in the nation by the 2008-09 school year. That translates into a \$3,600 increase in 2007-08 (this figure includes \$1,800 in teacher compensation money approved by the 2006 Legislature) and another \$1,800 in 2008-09.

These figures are, of course, only statewide averages. The amount individual teachers actually receive will vary greatly.

Half of the \$141.3 million will be distributed to school districts on a per-pupil basis; the other half will be distributed on a per full-time equivalent teacher basis. AEAs will receive funding on a per-teacher basis that is equivalent to the average per-teacher amount allocated to school districts.

As in the past, the teacher compensation allocation must first

Iowa average salary national rankings



be used to fund the career level minimum salaries. But unlike the past, the allocation is significant enough so that all teachers should receive an increase.

A new era for professional development

Thanks to SF 277, school administrators and local school boards no longer have sole authority to determine the use of professional development funding. Instead, those decisions will now be made by local teacher quality committees made up of an equal number of teachers and administrators. The teacher representatives are appointed by the ISEA local association.

The legislation eliminates the mandated extra days for professional development and instead appropriates up to \$20 million to fund locally designed district and AEA professional development programs. The law does, however, call for a goal of one additional day, or its equivalent, to be used for professional development purposes.

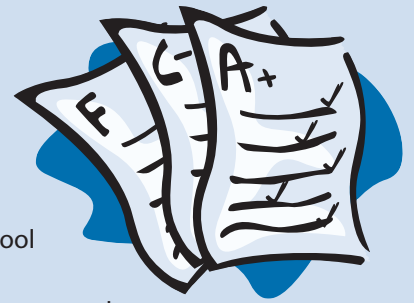
SF 277 also allows the professional development funds to be used to pay salaries for time spent beyond the normal negotiated agreement as well as to pay for such things as substitute teachers, materials, speakers, and costs associated with implementing the individual professional development plans. These funds must be used to supplement, not supplant, the professional development opportunities the school district would otherwise make available.

In addition to the previously required district professional development plan and the individual plan for each teacher, SF 277 adds the requirement that each attendance center develop an attendance center

professional development plan. The plan must be based upon the needs of teachers, the Iowa teaching standards, the district professional development plan, and the student achievement goals of the attendance center and the district.



Duties of teacher quality committees



SF 277 requires each district and AEA to create a teacher quality committee with an equal representation of administrators and teachers. The size of the committee is determined at the local level. The law does allow the ISEA local association and the school board to mutually agree to assign these responsibilities to an existing district committee (such as a professional development, curriculum, and/or school improvement committee) or they may agree to allow an existing committee to advise the teacher quality committee.

The law specifies the following duties of the teacher quality committee:

- Monitor the local implementation of the Student Achievement and Teacher Quality program.
- Monitor the district teacher evaluation requirements

to ensure they are conducted in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school district or agency.

- Determine the use and distribution of professional development funds based on the school district/agency, attendance center, and individual teacher development plans. The committee must follow the Iowa Professional Development Model.
- Monitor the professional development in each attendance center.
- Make recommendations regarding the expenditure of market factor incentives.

Teacher quality committee Q & A

Q: May a district opt out of receiving the professional development funds?

A: No, all districts and AEAs must participate in all aspects of the Student Achievement and Teacher Quality program, including professional development.

Q: Who is ultimately responsible for creating the teacher quality committee?

A: Per Iowa Code Chapter 284.4, the school board must carry out all aspects of Teacher Quality. Therefore, the board is ultimately responsible to see that a teacher quality committee is established.

Q: What if the teacher quality committee cannot reach an agreement on use of the professional development funds?

A: The funds may only be used for professional development purposes and would be carried into the following school year. If agreement is not reached, the funds may not simply be equally distributed to teachers as salary. Note that the district must annually report to the Department of Education how professional development funds are used.

Q: What if a district wishes to use funds appropriated in SF 277 for professional development? Must they have the approval of the teacher quality committee?

A: Yes, the teacher quality committee has responsibility for professional development funds appropriated in SF 277 for 2007-08. The duties of the teacher quality committee begin July 1 and should focus on the use and distribution of professional development funds to implement and support the overall district, attendance center, and individual plans.

Q: May a district move forward with professional development plans already made for the 07-08 year?

A: The district administration may elect to move forward with plans for the 2007-08 school year using funds such as general funds, unexpended state professional



development funds from the 2006-07 school year, Title I, Title IIA, etc. The district may not move forward with the expenditures of 2007-08 professional development funds without the teacher quality committee approval.

Q: What if the district already developed a school calendar with the equivalent of an extra contract day for professional development and planned to use professional development funds from SF 277 to pay for the extra contract day?

A: The teacher quality committee determines the use of the professional development funds appropriated in SF 277 for 2007-08. The committee could certainly decide to use SF 277 funds for the purpose of meeting the goal of adding the equivalent of one additional contract day of professional development. In cases where the planned professional development follows the Iowa Professional Development Model, teacher quality committees are strongly encouraged to support the equivalent

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Teacher quality committee Q & A – continued

of an extra professional development day. The district administration could also use other allowable revenue sources (e.g. general fund, Title I, Title IIA, unexpended state 2006-07 P.D. funds, etc.) to fund extra contract days for professional development.



Q: What if the certified employee organization and the board had already negotiated the addition of one more contract day for 2007-08? Does the teacher quality committee have to use funds allocated through SF 277 to pay for the extra day?

A: The language of any locally bargained agreement must be examined. Refer to your legal counsel for guidance.

Q: What is the ideal size and composition for a teacher quality committee?

A: The size and composition of the committee is locally determined. In a small district with only one or two administrators, the committee will naturally be quite small. It's possible in very small districts that the committee would be two or four individuals. But in order to function effectively and efficiently, larger districts should consider limiting the size of the committee. Regardless of the size of the committee, representation should include, to the extent possible, various grade levels/buildings (elementary, middle, high school). Ideally, members of the committee should have a working knowledge of effective professional development practices and the Iowa Professional Development Model.

Q: Since professional development funds are allocated to districts on a per teacher/per diem basis, must the funds be paid on a per diem basis?

A: SF 277 does not require professional development funds to be paid on a per

diem basis. The teacher quality committee determines the use and distribution of the funds.

Q: SF 277 allows compensation of the teachers on the committee for work beyond the normal workday. What's the source of those funds? Could the funds be used to pay for sub costs if the committee elects to meet during the "workday?"

A: The compensation comes directly from the district's allocation for professional development (the district's share of the \$20 million). The funds may also be used to pay for substitute costs if the committee elects to meet during the workday. Districts may already have agreed upon compensation for teacher committee work of this nature that will determine levels of compensation. If there is no agreed-upon compensation language, it is advised that in the first year of implementation an addendum be added to the bargaining agreement.



Q: One of the duties of the teacher quality committee is to monitor the district teacher evaluation requirements to ensure they are "...conducted in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school district or agency." Does this monitoring include teacher dismissal processes per Iowa Code Chapter 279?

A: The teacher quality committee responsibility to monitor the evaluation is limited to the evaluation processes in Iowa Code Chapter 284 (Teacher Quality and Student Achievement Law). Other employment issues are addressed in Iowa Code Chapter 279 and are not the responsibility of the committee.

Q: Does the monitoring of the teacher evaluation requirements include having the committee review an individual teacher's evaluation?

A: No, "monitor" means to review the process by which teachers are evaluated to ensure the overall process is fair and consistent. Any concerns about the evaluation process should be highlighted by the committee and reported to the certified employee organization and the board.

Q: What happens if our district doesn't use all the allocated market factor incentive funds in one year?

A: Districts are allowed to carry market factor incentive funds into the following school year. Given the timing of the hiring process, it is recognized that market factor incentives are needed in late winter/early spring during prime hiring time.

Q: Are any portions of market factor incentives subject to negotiation and bargaining?

A: One of the duties of the teacher quality committee is to make recommendations to the school board and certified bargaining representative regarding the expenditures of market factor incentives. The role of the committee is limited to recommendations. The school board determines the portion of market factor incentives to be used for allowable expenditures (e.g. portions for salaries, educational opportunities and support, moving expenses, and housing expenses, etc). Market factor incentive is now subject to negotiation and bargaining but only for that portion being used to pay for additional teacher salaries. Expenses such as "educational opportunities and support, moving expenses, and housing expenses..." are not subject to negotiation.

From the Iowa Department of Education memo to public school and area education agency administrators, May 18, 2007.