



National Council on Teacher Quality

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Contact: Laura Johnson, 202.393.0020 x117

ljohnson@nctq.org

PRESS RELEASE

New NCTQ Report: Teacher Salary Growth Slowed as Result of Recession

Over the Last Four Years, Teachers Continued to Get Raises, But at Only One-Third to One-Half of What Raises Were at Start of Recession

Washington, DC – A new report from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) finds that although teachers continued to get raises following the recession, there was a noticeable slowdown in teacher salary growth on par with that of comparable professions. Post-recession raises have been one-third to one-half of what they were at the beginning of the recession, with almost all 41 districts studied by NCTQ freezing or cutting at least one component of scheduled teacher raises at some point between the 2008-09 and 2011-12 school years. In 80 percent of the districts sampled (33 out of 41), teachers had a total pay freeze or pay cut in at least one of the last four school years.

“There is no question that teacher salary growth took a hit post-recession,” said Kate Walsh, President of the National Council on Teacher Quality. “The good news is that the economy is strengthening and districts are slowly getting back to investing more in teacher pay. The question is, will education leaders choose to go back to the status quo of step increases and regular annual adjustments, or will they evaluate teacher performance and reward the most effective teachers

with raises? Expectations for students are increasing, which means the bar is being raised for teachers as well— and a support that should accompany this shift is the ability to reward the best-performing teachers.”

The recession's impact on teacher raises varied district by district. Cutting annual adjustments, which are raises for cost-of-living and other market forces, was the most common method used to reduce raise amounts. However, no district had a pay cut or freeze every year and eight districts had positive salary growth over the entire four-year period (Fort Worth, Memphis, Milwaukee, New York City, Jefferson County, KY, Fresno, Chicago, and Baltimore City). Of the 41 districts in the sample, Chicago Public Schools had the highest average raise over the four years at 6.5 percent. The report includes detailed information on teacher raises in each of 41 districts from 2008-09 to 2011-12, including the methods each district used to reduce raises. To view the full report, visit www.nctq.org/tr3/docs/nctq_recession_salary.pdf.

Methodology

The report draws on data from the 50 largest U.S. public school districts in 2010-11 (the most recent year for which such data are available). Forty-one of the 50 districts responded to the data request with enough information to be included in the report. NCTQ calculated the average annual salary growth in the 41 school districts from 2008-09 to 2011-12 by analyzing districts' salary schedules and determining teachers' movement on the schedules (using information reported by the districts). Salary growth calculations take into account raises for earning additional years of experience (also known as "step increases") and annual adjustments for cost-of-living increases and other market factors. They do not take into account raises for completing additional coursework.

About NCTQ

The National Council on Teacher Quality advocates for reforms in a broad range of teacher policies at the federal, state, and local levels in order to increase the number of effective teachers. In particular we recognize the absence of much of the evidence necessary to make a compelling

case for change and seek to fill that void with a research agenda that has direct and practical implications for policy. We are committed to lending transparency and increasing public awareness about the four sets of institutions that have the greatest impact on teacher quality: states, teacher preparation programs, school districts and teachers unions. For more information, visit: www.nctq.org.

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