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Deborah Duecker

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Merit Pay in Marshfield, Wisconsin?

by

Deborah Duecker

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of the requirements for the degree of
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1983, when *A Nation At Risk* was published, the idea of merit pay for teachers reappeared. The hope associated with merit pay is that if public school teachers in the U.S. were given incentive for improvement, public education might also improve. Awards of merit pay would be based on longevity, credentials, additional duties and quality of teaching performance.

If Marshfield, WI is typical of the school districts polled nationwide, there is some willingness to explore merit pay possibilities among both educators and the community.

Three merit pay options predominate: Performance-by-objective, Professional Competence, and Career Ladder. Of them, an adaptation of the Career Ladder Approach as described by the State Superintendent's Task Force on Teaching and Teacher Education is the most likely to be successful in Marshfield, should the present system of rewarding teachers for their accumulation of college credits rather than their teaching competency be dropped. This pay system has four stages with entry standards and rewards specific to each level. It is workable, it motivates teachers to excel, it is cost effective over the long term, and it has the potential to improve student learning.
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SECTION 1
INTRODUCTION

When *A Nation At Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) was published, the idea of merit pay for teachers reappeared with the hope that public school education in the United States might improve as teachers were given incentive for improvement (Bobbit, 1989). Some advocates called merit pay the "foremost proposal for achieving excellence in education," or "the challenge of the decade" (Boyles & Vrchota, 1986, p.10). Opponents called merit pay a simplistic solution to complex educational problems.

The merit pay concept is not new. Newton, MA instituted the first formal merit pay plan in 1908 (Boyles & Vrchota, 1986). Merit pay was the preferred form of teacher compensation during the 1920's (Adkins, 1983). In the 1930's the current practice of basing salaries for teachers on experience and level of training became widespread. This was an effort to end inequitable pay for elementary and secondary and male and female teachers (Tecker, 1985). Sputnik sparked a renewed interest in merit pay. During the 1960's merit pay plans were used in 10% of U.S. school districts (Murnane & Cohen, 1985). More than 11,000 school systems still used merit pay during the 1970's (Tecker, 1985). Publicity about recent problems in American education has heightened the public demand for corrective action to be taken.
Because of current interest in merit pay for teachers, an exploration of such a program's assets and liabilities seems warranted not only by state legislators but also by local school leaders. They have the responsibility of ensuring that programs are suitable for their communities and articulate realistic goals.

Could such plans improve student learning and improve cost effectiveness? The public's demand for school excellence has waivered in intensity at times, but it has never diminished. Taxpayers will support education as long as they see proof of results (Tecker, 1985).

This paper examined the potential impact of a merit pay plan on the Marshfield Public Schools. Specifically, it examined the potential effects of the Career Ladder Merit Pay Plan should the present salary schedule be dropped.
SECTION 2

DESCRIPTION OF MARSHFIELD, WISCONSIN AND ITS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Marshfield Demographics

Marshfield, Wisconsin is a small city of nearly 20,000 people located in Wood County. The Rating Guide to Life in America's Small Cities (Thomas, 1990) graded Marshfield along with 218 other "micropolitan" areas according to climate/environment, diversions, economics, education, sophistication, health care, housing, public safety, transportation, and urban proximity. Marshfield was ranked 1st in Wisconsin, 3rd in the Midwest, and 14th in America ("Marshfield Community Profile", 1990).

Marshfield's economy has been active recently. The median household income in Marshfield is $25,591. The unemployment rate has declined and there has been a 3.7% gain in nonfarm employment in 1990. Marshfield retailers believe store traffic and sales are noticeably better than in 1989 (Central Wisconsin Economic Research Bureau, 1990). Marshfield is home to the Marshfield Clinic, the largest rural medical center and one of the 10 largest private, multispecialty clinics in the U.S. ("Marshfield Community Profile", 1990).

In addition to the Marshfield public schools, there are seven private schools, a technical school offering vocational diplomas and associate degrees, and a two-year University of Wisconsin Center offering freshman/sophomore level programs.
Public School Information

The Marshfield Public School System educates 3885 students in seven elementary schools, one junior high school and one senior high school. The public schools employ two hundred eighty-six teachers and their salary budget for 1989-90 was $8,752,430 (Dinah Holland, personal communication, July 3, 1990).

The School District of Marshfield is a unified school district. In addition to teachers, the district employs approximately 150 support personnel. The total per pupil cost is $4607 as compared to the state average of $5153. Instructional cost per pupil is $2985 compared to the $3052 state average. The present tax rate is $15.93 per thousand and it accounts for 51% of the district's income ("School District of Marshfield", 1989).

The population of Marshfield's 5-17 year olds from 1990-2000 is expected to increase by 1-10% and then decrease from 2000-2010 by 1-10 % (State Superintendent's Task Force on Teaching and Teacher Education (SSTFTTE), 1984). Total teacher demand is expected to increase in Wisconsin during these years, however, due to attrition (SSTFTTE, 1984).

The Marshfield Teacher's Association (M.T.A.) is affiliated with the Central Wisconsin UniServ Council, Wisconsin Education Association Council and the National Education Association. The M.T.A. is the bargaining unit which negotiates teacher contracts with the Marshfield Public School Board.
The present pay schedule for teachers is based on years of teaching experience and educational credits earned beyond the bachelor degree. Such a pay system is the norm in Wisconsin public schools.

Wisconsin students rank first in national S.A.T. and A.C.T. scores. Marshfield's students are consistently in the state's top 10% ("Match Up With Marshfield", 1990). Marshfield citizens are proud of the city's educational reputation and generally support the public schools as long as there is proof of good performance.

According to Mary Virginia Quarles, Uniserv Director for the Marshfield Teacher's Association, (personal communication, July 9, 1990) there has been no serious discussion of merit pay in Marshfield or its neighboring communities in the past 12 years. Teacher contract negotiations have not included merit pay considerations. Quarles indicated two possible reasons for the absence of such discussion: lack of monies and evaluation problems.

There are indications that some elements of merit pay programs are attractive to the Marshfield Public School District's superintendent and school board, however. Administrators' pay raises have been based on subjectively determined "merit" for many years. Furthermore, the junior and senior high school science teachers were asked to distribute student evaluations during the 1987-88 school year. There has also been some discussion of instituting a teacher portfolio procedure to include the personal yearly
goals and objectives of each district teacher as a basis for his/her evaluations throughout the year. The concept of teacher mentors has also surfaced.

Superintendent of Marshfield Public Schools, Dr. Alain Holt, feels that there is some interest among school board members and members of the community in merit pay for teachers. His own feelings are mixed. As with principals, who presently enjoy merit pay, there are teachers who warrant above the norm pay when they have worked above and beyond what is expected of them in their job descriptions. As with principals, a Performance-by-objectives approach may be workable with teachers. Should student performance be used as a part of the criteria for merit pay, however, Dr. Holt feels a baseline must be established since some teachers work more with EEN students, others with average ability students, and still others with students who are gifted and or talented. Dr. Holt feels a bonus type of pay for superlative teachers would be most workable (Dr. Alain Holt, personal communication, September 27, 1990).

President of the Marshfield School Board, Dr. S. Schulte, is an advocate of merit pay for teachers. He feels schools should strive for excellence and that talents should be recognized. Schulte anticipates problems with evaluation, but feels expert input would be helpful, and that multiple variables should be considered in determining merit pay rewards. He feels schools could look to the private sector and base their pay scales similarly.
Schulte, too, feels a base plus bonus pool system would be most workable. Negotiations with the M.T.A. would be difficult, he feels (Dr. S. Schulte, personal communication, October 3, 1990).
SECTION 3
THE PROBLEM
Motivation

In some ways it could be argued that teaching is a dead end career. In most school districts (with traditional years of teaching and college credits pay scales,) there are no motivational techniques utilized to encourage teacher excellence. Tangible rewards are nonexistent. Promotions are unheard of. According to Hellreigel and Slocum (1986), one is not likely to have any feeling of how he or she has performed on the job if one does not get feedback. An employee's work motivation is low if his or her work is not perceived as meaningful, if responsibility for outcomes of the work is not experienced, or if one has no knowledge of the results of the work.

Many analysts believe returning to merit criteria is our best hope for increasing worker productivity. Employees behave in ways that organizations reward, and may perform at a higher than normal level in anticipation of promotion. Rewards can, furthermore, keep an organization attractive to prospective employees. Wages and salaries are the most visible rewards (Szilayi & Wallace, 1987).

Mindful that no reward system is available which will motivate all employees equally, pay can be used as a method to motivate individual performance in numerous ways. It can be a hygiene factor, serving as a potential dissatisfier when absent. It can be an instrument for gaining desired
outcomes. It can be used as a point of comparison between workers, acting as a motivator should an inequity exist, and money can be a conditioned reinforcer when awarded to workers according to their level of performance (Szilagyi & Wallace, 1987). Were pay incentives offered to educators for superior teaching, it is quite possible public schools would employ more motivated teachers and ultimately produce better educated students.

Improving Teaching

In 1985 business and non-educator residents of Maumee, Ohio (approximately 10 miles SW of Toledo) were surveyed to assess public opinion on five issues pertaining to education. They included: (a) teacher recruitment, (b) career ladders and master teacher roles, (c) staff development, (d) merit salary increases, and (e) the image of teachers. Overall response supported merit pay for teachers based on teaching excellence, student achievement and expertise in subject matter (Gress, 1985).

Metropolitan Life Insurance Company sponsored a survey in 1984 on the attitudes of elementary and secondary teachers toward U.S. public education. Data was obtained nation-wide. Of all teachers surveyed, 87% felt establishing career ladders that provided teachers with greater opportunities to take on more responsibilities (and greater pay) would have a positive effect on the quality of teaching. Of the midwest teachers, 89% felt this would have a positive effect (Harris, 1984).
In the same survey 71% of public school teachers felt that if "merit" could be judged objectively, merit pay could work. Only about half of the public school teachers felt merit pay would make their salaries more comparable with salaries in other professions, and they generally (59%) disagreed that merit pay could attract and retain teachers in the profession. Merit pay was favored most by less experienced teachers and by male teachers (Harris, 1984).

The Metropolitan Life survey showed that a majority of teachers would be willing to be evaluated by their administrators, a committee of teachers, standardized tests charting student improvement, standardized tests charting school-wide student improvement and standardized tests that measure teachers' skills. Again, less experienced teachers and male teachers were the most open to various evaluation measures (Harris, 1984).

It seems evident from these surveys, that teachers and local communities have an interest in improving schools, a willingness to consider some type of differentiated teacher recognition, and an openness to improved evaluation methods.

The Holmes Group, a consortium of education deans from the nation's leading universities, warns that education must resist the temptation to enrich itself by offering inferior performance behind a facade of higher credentials. Teachers are commonly paid according to the number of course credits they have accumulated, rather than by their improvement in teaching (Lochhead, 1990). In a major investigation
underway at the Center for Educational Renewal, headed by John Goodlad of the University of Washington, research has found that only 5 of 88 professors surveyed, viewed a teacher as "an educated person who is excited about learning" (Lochhead, 1990).

Most merit pay plans adopted previously have failed over the past 75 years. A 1978 survey reported that most of the school districts which had merit pay, dropped their plans within five years (Murnane & Cohen, 1985). So while interest in the concept continues, the programs generally have not.

Perhaps the most significant problem with merit pay has been worker monitoring and evaluation. One branch of microeconomics studies the costs and benefits of multiple employment contracts to compensate workers. This "contracts literature" branch assumes that because workers and organizations differ in their goals, workers will not work as hard as their organizations would like, unless there are adverse consequences. Monitoring workers is costly. And imperfect monitoring causes adverse results (Murnane & Cohen, 1985). Therefore, there appears to be a problem with merit pay regarding worker monitoring. The National Education Association (NEA) claims serious administrative problems, reduction in morale, dissension and jealousy caused half of the districts using merit pay programs to discontinue their use (Adkins, 1983). Where merit pay programs failed, there was weak or unfair evaluation and/or
a lack of funds (Adkins, 1983). The reverse must be noted here, also. Half of the districts using merit pay programs did not fail because of monitoring problems.

The NEA does not advocate merit pay. The theory, they argue, is based on the premise that what constitutes superior teaching is known, professionally sanctioned, and measurable. Yet it is much more arbitrary in practice. Differentiated pay, they argue, is salary based on a division of labor. Incentive is a financial plan used to solve district staffing and assignment problems, as shown when there are stipends given to educators to draw them into problem schools. Performance pay/merit pay is arbitrary by nature and capricious in application (NEA, 1984). These arguments do not apply to all merit pay plans, however. To make blanket statements against all merit programs is both unjust and ignorant.

The NEA warns that state-wide plans typically call for changes in teacher certification programs necessitating a revision in pay categories for teachers. Often there are limits put on the number of people in different categories. Where there are no limits, salary supplements are decreased because of limited funds. Multiple salary schedules typically offer teachers in high-demand, hard-to-fill positions higher salaries than teachers in other subjects. This may be so in some states and with some payment programs. Careful planning and review of data from the more successful programs could alleviate some potential problems,
however. Furthermore, historical data provides a school board with information about numbers of teachers who generally move up the traditional salary schedule after acquiring a set number of college credits. Once a merit plan has been established, historical data can be kept to help budget appropriately for merit pay as well.

The NEA claims that merit pay does not work well in industry, either. 5-10% of American companies use merit programs to pay employees whose efforts increase the total resources available to the organization. Corporate merit pay and teacher merit pay share common evaluation and administrative problems. The NEA further claims a consensus on what constitutes a superior teacher has not been reached, making measures of teacher effectiveness very hard to develop. Many research studies have failed to establish a link between written test scores and student learning. Rating scales are often unreliable and overly subjective. Measures of student achievement are weak indicators of teacher performance because they fail to consider factors affecting student progress that are beyond the control of a teacher (NEA, 1984). Nevertheless, students are compared nationally, according to standardized achievement test scores. Test scores recently have been declining and the question, "Why?" must be asked.

A system of individualized pay for performance is antithetical to a system designed to establish salaries for a bargaining unit's members through collective action
according to the NEA. Some aspects of a merit pay program may be collectively bargained, but because of its nature, administrators would have a great deal of control over the implementation of such a system. Greater numbers of grievances and other labor relations problems would be expected (NEA, 1984). These problems may be alleviated, however, if teachers and administrators could work together outside of negotiations to develop a well-planned merit pay program, and if there were a commitment to improving education by everyone involved.

The Virginia Board of Education declared merit ratings educationally unsound because the effectiveness of teaching cannot (in the opinion of the Board) be fairly evaluated. Merit ratings reward conformity. Competition rather than cooperation is fostered. Security of teachers is undermined, the teaching environment is disregarded and educational quality cannot be improved (Adkins, 1983). Whether the Virginia Board examined all types of merit plans is unclear. By recognizing and avoiding the weak features of failed merit pay programs and retaining the positive attributes found in successful plans many past problems could be solved.

Marshfield

If Marshfield is typical of those districts polled in national surveys, there is some interest in school improvement among teachers, community members and administrators; as well as a willingness to explore
differentiated teacher recognition. Indeed, the Marshfield School Board President, Steven Schulte, is a strong proponent of merit pay for teachers (Schulte, personal communication, Oct. 3, 1990). The Marshfield Superintendent of Public Schools is also somewhat interested (Holt, personal communication, September 27, 1990).

At the same time, there is a small but extremely influential group of teachers within the M.T.A. which strongly adheres to advice given by the regional, state and national teacher's unions. Local union officers regularly attend Central Wisconsin Uniserv Council, Wisconsin Education Association and NEA conferences to relay new policies and opinions to the general M.T.A. membership at their scheduled meetings. Typically these unions have criticized merit pay because of evaluation concerns and the realization that monies for such pay are scarce. The media is replete with their arguments.

Marshfield is presently building a new elementary school to the consternation of the Taxpayers' Alliance. Increased local property taxes that conceivably could come with the adoption of a merit pay program would not be popular, particularly at this time. However, if other monies could be found for incentive pay, the idea could be well-supported by the community.

The purpose of this report is to determine which of two teacher payment plans would best improve student learning in Marshfield: maintaining the presently used system based on
years of service and education credits, or implementing a merit pay plan. There are three types of merit pay plans and a discussion of each is necessary since arguments against the concept of merit pay are often, in reality, arguments pertaining to a particular type of merit pay rather than a criticism of the concept, itself. In the opinion of this writer, the Career Ladder approach to merit pay as defined by the Wisconsin Department of Public Education would be the most viable alternative to Marshfield's current pay system. It has the greatest potential to improve student learning through teacher motivation since all of a district's teachers could participate. The Career Ladder, more than any other plan, seeks to reward classroom teaching excellence. Specifically, the purpose of this report is to determine whether the Career Ladder or the present salary system would best improve student learning in Marshfield's public schools.
SECTION 4
POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Two Alternatives

Currently in Marshfield, a teacher's salary is determined by educational background and experience as approved by the Superintendent. A teacher may advance vertically on the salary scale when he/she has a B.A. or B.S. degree and earns three semester credits once in four years. The credits must be in the teacher's field or related to his/her working assignment, psychology, education, or guidance and counseling. A teacher with a M.A. or M.S. degree must earn three credits once in six years. Those teachers who fail to comply with the Master Contract as regards the acquisition of three credits in each of four to six years, depending on their degree, are frozen at their current salary schedule step. In the year following a teacher's 60th birthday, he/she is exempt from the three credits requirement. Credit toward vertical advancement may also be approved for workshops or courses related to the teacher's extracurricular assignments with fifteen hours of workshop attendance time being the equivalent to one semester of college credit. Only three credits may be earned this way ("Master Contract", 1989).

To qualify for horizontal credit, the Bachelor degree teacher must be enrolled in a graduate school. Both Bachelor and Master degree teachers must submit evidence to show their course work is at the graduate level and in their
fields of teaching endeavor, psychology, education or guidance and counseling ("Master Contract", 1989).

In order to be approved for vertical and horizontal advancement, credits must have been earned with a minimum grade of "B" ("Master Contract", 1989).

These course work requirements are an attempt to ensure that Marshfield school teachers keep abreast of current trends and issues in education. Perhaps the philosophy behind the requirements, maintains an informed teacher is a good teacher, and good teachers maximize student learning. Yet, while most school districts in the nation adhere to this type of salary schedule, we remain "a nation at risk."

An alternative to the standard pay schedule is a merit pay plan. Merit pay suggests a different philosophy. That is, a motivated teacher is a good teacher, and good teachers maximize student learning.

Merit pay is a motivator, according to the experts, where the basic pay scale is viewed as fair, and where merit rewards are sufficient enough to make the effort exerted to attain them worthwhile (Boyles & Vrchota, 1986).

Employers may link merit pay to the regular salary schedule by (a) increasing a teacher's pay in forthcoming years by movement to a higher incremental step, (b) offering a percentage increase, or (c) varying the ranges on the schedule.

Payment methods do not have to be linked to the regular salary schedule:
1. Supplemental contracts may be given for extra duties. For example, mentors may be given additional pay.

2. Pay may be a one-time reward, as a bonus.

3. Merit pay may be based on differentiated staffing. This would be typical of the Career Ladder plan as teachers move from probationary status to "master teacher" and skills, knowledge or responsibilities increase.

4. Occasionally there are state initiatives for alternative salary and incentive plans (Boyles & Vrchota, 1986).

An issue of any merit pay plan is that of who may participate. Should the program be mandated or optional? Should individuals be compensated, or should whole schools be compensated? Should part-time or substitute teachers be allowed to participate? Should the names of meritorious teachers be published? Must participants meet certain prerequisites to qualify for admission into the plan?

Three Approaches to Merit Pay

Three approaches to incentive pay for teachers predominate: Performance-by-objective; Professional Competence; and the Career Ladder. Plans are generally based either on evaluation of input (teacher performance) or evaluation of output (student achievement.) The accurate assessment of teachers' performances by either input or output is a major concern of all approaches.

Performance-by-objective plans use teachers' own written performance objectives (which are written early in
Evaluators measure attainment of the objectives by outcome-oriented factors (Boyles & Vrchota, 1986). This is the system currently used with the administrators of the Marshfield Public School System. Those principals who warrant salaries above the norm are evaluated by Marshfield school board members according to job descriptions, the principals' written, personal employment objectives, and a determination of how the objectives have been met.

The Professional Competence Approach, which has the goal of giving greater esteem and salaries to the best teachers, includes master and mentor programs. As in business, a new teacher, may be assigned to a mentor who knows the system, has been successful in it, and has been trained to work with first year teachers. A mentor will discuss the accomplishments of the new teacher with the administration, make suggestions and supply judgements about the system that are not in writing (Hellreigel & Slocum, 1986). Through observation, interaction, and experience a new teacher will acquire career direction (Szilayi & Wallace, 1987). Mentors would be awarded "merit pay" for their extra responsibilities. The new teacher may also receive a bonus for successful completion of administrative requisites. Since improving student learning is the primary goal of merit pay plans, this program only has a potential success if many new teachers are hired on a regular basis and if mentors are selected according to their teaching skill.
The Career Ladder approach allows teachers to be promoted (or have salary increases) as they grow to new levels of competence and skills. Teachers are placed on one of four rungs. Associate Teachers, because of their lack of experience, would be lowest on the pay scale. Professional Teachers would be in the middle and Teacher Specialists (experts in some area who teach half-time) or Career Teachers (superlative full-time teachers) would be the highest paid. More details on the Career Ladder will be given in the Wisconsin subsection. Of the three approaches described, the Career Ladder is least subjective in terms of evaluation and most reflective of the goal to improve student learning. This is because standards and criteria designating meritorious teaching must be measurable in a Career Ladder approach. Prior to implementing a Career Ladder, performance assessment tools must be agreed upon by teachers, administrators and community members. Evaluation being the stumbling block to the success of many merit pay plans, this aspect of the Career Ladder is particularly noteworthy.

The Career Ladder offers an opportunity for all teachers in a school district to strive for excellence. The Professional Competence plan does not include everyone. The Career Ladder rewards meritorious teaching. The Professional Competence plan and the Performance-by-objective plan may or may not do this. In Professional Competence plans, teachers are awarded additional pay for
additional duties. In Performance-by-objective plans, additional pay is earned by meeting or exceeding personal goals. So it is the Career Ladder approach to merit pay which will be most closely examined in this paper as the most viable merit pay alternative to the present system.

Wisconsin

In reaction to A Nation At Risk Wisconsin State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Herbert Grover, appointed a task force in 1983 to determine how the teaching field could be made more attractive, how teacher preparation could be improved, and how excellent teachers could be retained.

Among their final recommendations to improve the preparation and performance of teachers, the task force suggested first year teachers participate in a year-long induction program involving both school district and university or college personnel under the direction of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). This induction program's standards should be established by the State Superintendent. In addition, the task force recommended that a performance assessment be conducted for every first year teacher by a team made up of a teacher specialist, a school administrator, and a teacher educator trained in performance assessment. They should use a performance assessment established by the State Superintendent, and satisfactory progress should be a prerequisite for advancement to the rank of Professional Teacher (SSTFTTE, 1984).
The task force had many recommendations aimed at retaining competent teachers. They felt the D.P.I. should exercise leadership in strengthening the requirements for the continuing professional development of teachers. This would include a five year continuing development plan required of each teacher and each district. The task force suggested state aid be earmarked in support of such plans (SSTFTTE, 1984).

The task force recommended that a career ladder be established for Wisconsin teachers consisting of four stages: Associate Teacher, Professional Teacher, Teacher Specialist, and Career Teacher. Appropriate standards should be established for entry to each level (SSTFTTE, 1984).

Because advancement opportunities in teaching are limited, teachers desiring status or higher salary often leave, and good teachers need to be attracted and retained, the task force felt a career ladder approach would lead to more specialization, rewards, status and enhance the quality of education in general (SSTFTTE, 1984).

An Associate Teacher would be a first or second year teacher with a one year license. This teacher would be advanced upon successful performance as certified by an assessment team approved by the Department of Public Instruction and satisfactory progress in a planned program of professional development.

A Professional Teacher would have completed at least
one year of teaching, and receive a five-year license
renewable upon evidence proving satisfactory performance and
continuing professional development. A teacher would be
able to continue at this level throughout his or her career,
or move up the career ladder. The task force suggested
teachers presently employed in Wisconsin school districts,
be phased into the career ladder as Professional Teachers.

A Teacher Specialist would have high knowledge or skill
in a particular area such as curriculum development,
cooperating teacher or staff development, or inservice
coordination. This teacher would have an extended term of
employment, and would be required to meet high standards,
including an assessment of his/her teaching performance. He
or she would teach at least half time, and hold a five-year
license renewable with satisfactory performance of teaching,
specialist duties, and continuing professional development.

Career Teacher status would be reserved for superlative
teachers who choose to remain full-time in the classroom.
They, too, would have an extended term of employment. Their
five-year license would be renewable by submitting evidence
of excellent performance in rigorous assessment, and
continuing professional development (SSTFTTE, 1984).

The State assessment tools, Career Ladder licenses, and
continuing professional development plan requirements have
not yet been developed. This is a drawback to the plan.
However, until such time as the State implements the Career
Ladder in Wisconsin, a local district would be free to
devise its own evaluative tools, procedures and criteria for awarding merit pay to teachers in each of the rungs.

Addressing salaries, the task force stated that the State of Wisconsin should adopt a minimum salary of $20,000 for Professional Teachers to be received at two-year intervals and adjusted as necessary to reflect economic trends and conditions. A minimum salary should be adopted by the state for Associate Teachers, Career Teachers, and Teacher Specialists when these positions are defined. Compensation above the basic amount should be based on the career ladder and merit pay concept as well as changes in the delivery system and the adoption of innovative methods (SSTFTTE, 1984).

The task force recommended that a statewide system of merit pay be established. Specific details included in this recommendation included: (a) a reminder to establish instruments and procedures prior to the implementation of objective performance evaluation; (b) the establishment of an adequate minimum statewide salary before consideration of merit pay; (c) that all teachers be eligible and that entrance into consideration for merit pay be voluntary; (d) that the amount of money for merit pay be significant in addition to base pay; (e) that merit pay be granted solely on teaching performance, but not solely on student achievement scores; (f) that a teacher may appeal, if denied merit pay; (g) that failure to receive merit pay not be interpreted as evidence of unsatisfactory performance; and
(h) that all school districts participate in the merit pay plan, which would be substantially funded by the State of Wisconsin (SSTFTTE, 1984).

Jacqueline Rodman (personal communication, July 9, 1990) of the Wisconsin State D.P.I., explained that to date, there have been efforts to attract competent individuals to careers in teaching, but that limited funds have slowed progress in most merit pay endeavors.

Methods of Teacher Evaluation

One of the main reasons given for the failure of merit pay plans is that evaluation has been inadequate in any or all of its aspects. Problems often relate to the lack of objectivity and consistency among evaluators, the inability to guarantee accuracy in ratings and the difficulty in deciding who is worthy of recognition (Tecker, 1985).

There are three basic approaches to evaluation: evaluation of teacher performance, evaluation of professional growth or development, and evaluation according to student learning. Evaluation of teacher performance is made using surveys, questionnaires, or observations of an educator's teaching by any or all of the following: administrators, peers, students and parents. Teachers are measured according to criteria deemed significant by the local school district. In addition, teachers themselves may be given standardized tests that measure their teaching skills.

There are potential problems in evaluation teams of
teacher peers from the same district. Familiarity could promote bias. Parent evaluation is another alternative, however few parents are adequately trained to effectively evaluate teacher performance and again, familiarity may lead to a biased measurement. Students generally have a good idea of how well a teacher is doing his/her job, but the maturity of some students might lead to unreliable evaluations since some youngsters might "try to please." Others might see popularity and personality as the equivalent of good teaching, rather than an ability to encourage increased and better learning and attaining one's potential.

Evaluation of professional development may include appraising teacher participation in continuing education, conferences or workshops, membership in professional organizations, and or community service. A formal career development plan may be required, detailing the manner and timelines proposed by the teacher to meet specific responsibilities.

Teacher evaluation according to student learning is measurement of a teacher's performance according to student performance. This usually involves comparing standardized test scores of students in a given class to other classes in the district or to national scores.

School districts with merit pay may use any of these methods or even a combination of them. The number of evaluations that are made during a school year varies with
the system. Whether the observation is impromptu or scheduled varies. Evaluation may be very detailed or general in nature. Expected standards vary (Boyles & Vrchota, 1986).

Successful merit plans have a control or monitoring system built into their design. If changes need to be made there must be an avenue to follow in which the plan can be improved (Boyles & Vrchota, 1986). Districts vary according to whether or not a poor evaluation may be appealed. Substandard evaluations may lead to termination, salary freezes, salary reductions, demotions, or skill refinement action depending on the school system (Boyles & Vrchota, 1986).
SECTION 5
ANALYSIS

General Focus of Plans

The traditional salary plan for Marshfield teachers is based on a 190 day teaching contract agreed upon by the School District of Marshfield, and the Marshfield Teachers' Association. The focus of the plan is not on student learning or exemplary teaching.

As mentioned earlier, there are three basic approaches to merit pay for teachers, including Performance-by-objective, Professional Competence and Career Ladder.

In Performance-by-objective programs, teachers write their own objectives early on in the year and are evaluated according to the outcome of those objectives. For example, a teacher may complete a number of graduate hours beyond the baccalaureate degree. The teacher may attend conferences or workshops on non-contract time, become involved in professional memberships, work on better communications, take on additional duties, etc. During evaluative meetings a teacher and evaluator will determine what the expected level of all criteria may be and whether or not the teacher has exceeded the expected level, thereby warranting merit pay.

The Professional Competence Approach is a mentor program approach to merit pay. Many school districts use identification or imitative behavior in initial teacher training as well as with their first and second year
teachers. In managerial training this process is known as "mentoring". New teachers are assigned to more senior teachers to learn skills through observation, experience and interaction. Mentoring attempts to polish up skills and provide an environment in which skills can be improved. The new teacher has an opportunity to gain information and practice from an experienced teacher and to learn how to better deal with problems faced in a school setting. It is also an opportunity to acquire career direction and develop a philosophy of teaching as well as self-confidence in one's teaching ability. For the mentor, working with a new teacher provides satisfaction and pride in developing a teacher capable of superior educating.

There must be some attraction between mentor and protege', however, for mentorship to be successful. The behavior being imitated must also be important to the educational process (Szilagy & Wallace, 1987).

The mentor may be rewarded for his or her extra responsibilities by a school district with increased pay. Selection of mentors may be based on administratively determined criteria. It may be assumed the "better" teachers would be mentors. However, not all superlative teachers may wish to be mentors. Spending their time teaching students may be a higher priority than mentoring. Those experienced, "better" teachers desiring to be mentors in school districts which hire few new teachers may not have the opportunity to do so. Mentorship may be a viable type
of merit pay however it does not necessarily promote growth on the part of the mentor because the experienced teacher is being paid for accepting an additional duty rather than for excellent teaching. Nor does it recognize superior mentors because the program is devised to polish skills of the newly hired teacher. Improvement in student learning is not monitored in the mentor program.

The Career Ladder was designed in response to national educational concerns. The purpose of this plan is to enhance educational quality by improving student learning and encouraging exceptional teaching. The Career Ladder offers all teachers who have traditionally been working in dead end positions, the opportunity to advance both in position and salary. No other merit pay plan offers as much.

The Career Ladder is most workable because it can be adapted locally, with the cooperation and input of teachers, administrators and community members. Research tells us ownership makes programs work. The Performance-by-objective plan does not have input from so many, nor does the Professional Competence plan.

The Career Ladder plan recommends a performance assessment team be set up for first year teachers, established by the State. The same team could evaluate more experienced teachers, as well. Such a team would lend itself to more consistent, objective evaluations than a solitary administrator, since personal bias and extremes in opinions would be balanced out.
The State devised assessment instrument, required five-year continuing development plans, and level-specific licensing also suggest the Career Ladder is a plan which rewards superlative teachers. The other plans do not necessarily recognize and award meritorious teaching.

Presently employed teachers so desiring could be eased into the plan without much difficulty. While this would also be true of a Performance-by-objective plan, it would not with the Professional Competence, since mentors would only be needed when new teachers were hired.

The Career Ladder offers an appeal process and an avenue for needed changes.

Evaluation

Under the traditional experience/credits earned salary schedule, teacher evaluation is unrelated to pay. Evaluation serves as infrequent feedback on how an administrator views the teaching performance of a given educator. It may serve as documentation of cause for the rare dismissal. But it serves little purpose in a motivational sense. The teacher earning a mediocre evaluation knows that he/she will still move vertically on the pay scale if he/she has taken the prescribed college course work. He/she will move horizontally on the pay scale if the credits were in the "correct" categories. In the opinion of this writer, student learning may be unaffected by teacher evaluation under the traditional plan.

Merit pay is essentially a reward for excellent
teaching performance. Evaluation is integral to merit pay. Such evaluation must be effective, objective, and consistent. Instruments of evaluation must be established prior to implementation. Should a teacher receive a substandard evaluation, an appeal must be possible. Evaluation of individual teachers must be based on teacher performance -- not on student achievement scores. Plans using only student achievement scores to measure quality create the incentive to "teach to the tests" (Lipsky & Conley, 1986).

The Career Ladder is the only merit plan which meets these criteria. Performance-by-objective plans do not measure the quality of an educator's teaching, but rather, whether or not the educator's yearly goals were met. Because each educator in a Performance-by-objective plan sets his/her own goals, it would be possible for all teachers embracing such a program to be awarded merit pay, and superior performance would not be recognized. The Professional Competence plan offers mentors increased pay for additional duties. However, mentors may or may not be superior teachers. Mentor pay could only be earned when a school district employed new teachers.

The Career Ladder would utilize a performance assessment established by the State Superintendent (ensuring consistency.) A five-year continuing development plan would be required of each teacher and each district. Licensing for each rung of the Career Ladder would be based upon
successful performance as certified by an assessment team approved by the Department of Public Instruction (ensuring objectivity.) The Career Ladder also includes an appeal process. Effectiveness of the plan may be measured by district-wide student achievement scores. This could be part of the district's required five-year continuing development plan. Only the Career Ladder offers true merit pay.

Pay

In Section 4 of this paper, various payment strategies were described. The traditional salary schedule is, of course, based on years of experience and education.

One option mentioned for merit pay plans was to vary the regular salary schedule. One variation is to allow the meritorious teacher to move to a higher incremental step in the regular salary schedule. This procedure would be less than satisfactory. As a publicly funded entity, schools (especially in Marshfield where there are a higher than average number of elderly) are not deep pocketed benefactors. The taxpayer may be willing to pay increased property taxes to acquire and retain quality teachers, but he/she will protest what he/she considers to be frivolous spending. Merit pay, since it is rewarded for behavior as observed in a one-year time frame, may be given for the year in which it was earned. But putting someone into a step higher on the pay scale would be a reward for years to come, or "frivolous" payment for what may be very ordinary
teaching. The same problem may exist when teachers deemed exemplary one year are given a percentage increase or when the salary ranges are varied.

Supplemental contracts for extra duties are already given in the Marshfield Public Schools. While this is a benefit to teachers for extra effort put forth in assuming extra duties, it is not "merit pay" for a job well done.

The third payment option is differentiated staffing. Differentiated staffing payment scales are viable where there are clearly defined positions.

A bonus payment option is intended to promote teacher incentive to excel in job performance. But the bonus must be worth the effort. For example, a $200 bonus would be approximately a dollar a day for exemplary teaching over a 190 day contract. After taxes, 70¢ per day would be the reward for a job well done.

A merit pay program necessarily rewards superlative teachers. If the program is worthwhile, any teacher who evidences exceptional performance in teaching rightfully deserves merit pay. A quota system is not, therefore, recommended.

The Career Ladder could work well with the differentiated staffing pay scale. A salary schedule could be devised for years of service and Career Ladder status, much like the present system of years of service and college credits. If merit pay was to be awarded, the bonus could be paid at the end of the year in which it was earned. The
bonus amount could vary for each rung of the Career Ladder, or it could be a set sum across the rungs. Most Career Ladder programs are set up with differentiated pay scales.

Teacher Organization Views

When Wisconsin State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Herbert Grover challenged the Task Force on Teaching and Teacher Education to formulate and publish their report, a WEAC Commissioner member was also on the Task Force. When that report was released, the WEAC Commission cited those areas of the Report with which they concurred and offered recommendations in those areas they felt were weak.

WEAC emphasized money must not be a stumbling block to excellence in education. Funding is essential. Present taxing methods are outdated and inadequate. Property taxes can no longer serve as the primary funding source for education (WEAC, 1984).

In principle the Commission agreed with most of the recommendations, rationales, and guidelines presented within Section II of the Report, including that which recommended the State Superintendent establish criteria and procedures for the regular supervision and assessment of performance of all licensed professional personnel (WEAC, 1984).

The Superintendent's Task Force recommended a four-stage career ladder for teachers, but the WEAC Commission recommended a two-stage career ladder consisting of Associate (or probationary) and Professional Teachers and
appropriate standards established for entry at both levels (WEAC, 1984). A Professional teacher, under the WEAC plan would be eligible for increased salary if he/she chose to work under an extended contract. This is clearly not pay for superlative teaching, however, and as such should not be considered "merit pay."

There will always be people who are reluctant to change. Nevertheless, if the benefits of the Career Ladder can be recognized and this type of salary system can be viewed not as a threat but as an opportunity, members of the M.T.A. may be receptive to its adoption.

Financial Impact Information

A decision to implement the Career Ladder in the Marshfield Public Schools should be made only after an examination of its potential cost to the district. Any projection would be rough at best, however. The reader should be cognizant of the many assumptions necessary to making such projections.

Using the Marshfield School Board's final salary offer for 1989-90 (the 1989-90 contract presently going through arbitration,) it can be seen that with each year of experience, teachers are paid approximately $892.00. For every six credits acquired up to a master's degree, teachers earn approximately $698.00. For every nine credits earned beyond the master's degree, a teacher earns about $1,048.00. (See Table 5.1.)

The Teacher Scattergram 1990-91 shows the range of
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Marshfield School Board Final Offer
Teacher Salary Schedule 1989-90

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(M.T.A. Negotiations Team, personal communication, September 12, 1990)
teaching experience and education credits earned for teachers presently employed by the Marshfield Public Schools who are paid via local sources. (See Table 5.2.) Using the standardized normal curve, 68.27% of a given population is considered average or in the normal distribution range (Spiegel, 1988). This means that 15.865% of the same population is below average and 15.865% is above average. It may be assumed therefore, that about 16% of teachers are "above average."

Again, using the Teacher Scattergram, but simplifying it to show where Career Ladder licensing breakoffs would be, and narrowing the credits earned categories, one can see that those teachers who presently have up to six years of experience and 24 or more credits beyond their bachelor's degree, those teachers who have between seven and eleven years of experience and 9 or more credits beyond their master's degree and those teachers who have twelve or more years of experience and 27 or more credits beyond their Master's Degree, together, make up 36.833 teachers or 15% of the teaching staff. (See Table 5.3.)

As per the normal curve, 16% of a given population may be described as "above average." Because no historical data is available, and assuming those teachers to the right of the vertical lines on Table 5.3 are "above average" in credit-earning motivation, let us assume this group would also be motivated to earn merit pay.

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offer as a base, differentiated pay scales for Associate Teacher, Professional Teacher, Career Teacher and Teacher Specialist categories of the Career Ladder can be devised. (See Table 5.4.) Teachers would be paid the set salary for years of experience in their Career Ladder rung, but would be awarded merit pay only when recommended by a district evaluator, as a bonus at the end of their commendable year. (Bonus amounts normally would be determined during the negotiation process. The traditional salary schedule presently being reviewed by an arbitrator for the Marshfield School District calls for horizontal pay increments of approximately $698.00 per pay step beyond the bachelor's degree and $1,048.00 beyond the master's degree.)

Of the 26 teachers shown in the 2-6 years of experience range on Table 5.2, 10.3 worked to accumulate credits most rapidly to receive higher pay on the traditional salary scale. If those teachers were to be placed on the Professional Teacher scale and receive merit bonuses, the additional cost to the district for bonuses would be $10,300.00.

Of the 220 teachers shown in the 7-13 years of experience range on Table 5.2, 28.7 accumulated more credits more rapidly for higher pay on the traditional salary scale. If those teachers were to be placed on the Career Teacher/Teacher Specialist scale and receive merit bonuses, the cost to the district would be $38,745.00. (In all likelihood, these teachers would initially be placed on the
TABLE 5.4

Career Ladder Salaries

Associate Teacher Salary Scale

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Professional Teacher Salary Scale

MERIT BONUS = $1000

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TABLE 5.4 continued

Career Teacher/Teacher Specialist Salary Schedule

MERIT BONUS = $1350

<table>
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Professional Teacher scale until such time as they were promoted to the Career Teacher/Teacher Specialist status. However, by the second year of using the Career Ladder, applications for Career Teacher and Teacher Specialist will be made and accepted. Placing these teachers on the top pay scale gives a more realistic view of the financial impact of the Career Ladder.

Together, merit bonuses for Professional Teachers, Career Teachers and Teacher Specialists would be $49,045.00. One criticism of projected expenses for merit pay plans is that the cost of training and evaluating teachers is neglected. The Career Ladder plan calls for an evaluation team, particularly to assess Associate Teachers. This same team may be used to do all district teacher evaluations and conduct necessary inservices. If 246 teachers (those paid through local sources) received 5 hours of inservice and evaluation during a given school year, the district would need to hire evaluators for 1,229.3 hours of work. At $7.00 per hour (the approximate pay for substitute teachers) evaluation and inservice could cost the district an additional $8,605.10 per year. Altogether, the Career Ladder could cost approximately $57,650.00 in the first year or two.

The MTA would likely approve of a merit pay plan only if current salaries were not cut, and only if present teachers could be phased into the Career Ladder at the Professional Teacher rung. Newly hired teachers would be
placed on the Career Ladder at the new rates of pay. The difference between the costs of traditional salary increases for accumulated credits and Career Ladder salary bonuses reveals an apparent greater expense involved for merit pay. However, through normal attrition, the Career Ladder could save the district money as new teachers are hired and placed at the experience levels of their respective rungs. (The retirement of the two highest paid teachers on the traditional salary schedule alone, would be a savings of $10,483.00 if they were replaced with Career Specialists having 13 years of experience.)
SECTION 6
RESOLUTION AND CONCLUSION

The merit pay program that is adopted by the Marshfield Public Schools must meet certain criteria in order to be accepted by the community, administration and teachers' union:

1. Above all, it must meet the needs of the district to improve schools in terms of student learning. Student learning may be measured by changes in whole district test scores, success in post high school education or by employer feedback.

2. A merit pay plan for teachers must reward teachers for superior teaching. A teacher should not be given merit pay for taking on additional duties or for performing at a level which is expected.

3. The plan must be workable. It must be devised with the cooperation and input of all those who are involved. The program must have strong leadership, and a commitment on the part of the community and the school district staff. Present employees must have the opportunity to be voluntarily phased into the program. An avenue must be provided for needed changes. Evaluation of teachers must be effective, objective and consistent.

4. Monies for a merit pay program must be available to all who are deserving. It is perilous to negotiate a program which will reward a minority of teachers at the majority's expense (Lipsky & Conley, 1986). Salaries must
not be decreased because of limited funds, and a payment commitment by the community is essential. Bonuses must be given for the year in which the teacher's performance has been superior and the bonus must be significant enough to motivate teachers to excel. Essentially, adequate money must be provided to reward teacher excellence, yet the program must be cost effective.

To promote the hiring of greater numbers of quality teachers and to provide them with incentives to grow professionally, it is recommended that the Marshfield Public School System develop a Career Ladder plan for merit pay. Because state guidelines are most likely to become later mandates, it is further recommended that they be followed fairly closely.

Of the two teacher payment alternatives considered in this paper, implementation of the Career Ladder is the superior choice. The focus of Marshfield's traditional pay scale is not on the improvement of student learning. The improvement of student learning is the focus of the Career Ladder merit pay plan.

Addressing evaluation, positive or negative assessment of teacher performance is not currently reflected in teacher salaries. The Career Ladder rewards superior teachers. All teachers have an opportunity to strive for excellence, as determined by a number of assessment techniques and a team of evaluators. Currently, teacher evaluation is done by a building administrator after a classroom visitation.
Taxpayers often voice concern over the increases in local property taxes caused, in part, by increases in teacher salaries of the present pay system. The Career Ladder may be better supported in Marshfield as taxpayers discover differentiated pay scales using a bonus system for meritorious teaching would be cost effective in the long term.

The traditional salary plan works. However, the Career Ladder is also workable in terms of plan development, teacher evaluation, ease of implementation and avenues for change. Negotiations between the Marshfield School Board and the Marshfield Teachers' Association may permit implementation of the Career Ladder since the WEAC Commission concurred with most of the recommendations, rationales and guidelines presented in the Wisconsin Career Ladder.

In conventional positional bargaining each side tries to improve the chance that a settlement reached is favorable to it by starting with an extreme position. If school district negotiators present merit pay as part of their initial demands, the union may consider the proposal a bluff which will be abandoned later. A district with genuine commitment to merit pay must make it clear from the start and at every discussion of compensation thereafter, that merit pay is necessary for the board and there will be no agreement without it (Whalen, 1984). The cost to school districts of pressuring teacher unions to accept merit pay
may include breaking off negotiations, accepting work actions or accepting even a strike (Lipsky & Conley, 1986).

If, during negotiations, a district concludes that incentive pay should be abandoned, they will lose credibility with teacher negotiators who will infer the district had been bluffing. If a district seriously intends to negotiate merit pay it may have to engage in tradeoffs to obtain their plan. Thus, the price may be contracts which are more costly and liberal (Lipsky & Conley, 1986).

Any incentive plan acquired in negotiations is likely to be the result of compromises. While a proposal may emerge that is acceptable to both sides, it may also be a very watered down version of the original plan. And negotiating new evaluation procedures is difficult to handle in negotiations even when they are not linked to pay. The adversarial nature of collective bargaining, pressures of deadlines and impasses all combine to make negotiations a difficult forum for developing merit pay plans (Lipsky & Conley, 1986).

To assure a quality merit pay program in the Marshfield Public Schools, the development of the Career Ladder should be done outside of negotiations, and specifics explained in writing. Leadership and commitment are essential to the program's success. Once the program has been carefully developed with the input of teachers, administrators, "experts" and community members, ratification by both the collective bargaining unit and the school board is of course, necessary.
The Marshfield Career Ladder should spell out eligibility, application procedures, evaluation instruments, numbers of required evaluations, evaluators, an appeal process, rewards and consequences for unsatisfactory evaluations. Since the State of Wisconsin has not yet adopted the Career Ladder recommended by the Superintendent's Task Force, Marshfield would be free to develop its own particulars. One drawback might be that when, and if, the Career Ladder became a state mandate changes would likely be necessary.

While it is not recommended that student achievement scores be used as the basis for merit pay, they could be used on a district-wide basis to measure the effectiveness of the entire program on student learning in the Marshfield School District. In addition, data must be collected from employers hiring Marshfield graduates to determine their readiness for employment. If a method could be found to track the success of Marshfield graduates in post highschool education, without invading privacy, such feedback would also help to measure the effects of the Career Ladder on student learning. A program intended to improve student learning must measure student learning periodically to determine its value.

An induction period for first year teachers is appropriate as described by the Task Force of the State Superintendent. Requiring a five-year professional development plan for each teacher under the direction and
within the guidelines set forth by the State Superintendent also seems appropriate. Both of these programs, aimed at developing and improving the quality of teachers and ultimately, education in Wisconsin, are necessary to insure against accepting mediocrity.

Because of state recommendation, it would be in the best interest of the Marshfield Public School District to adopt a Career Ladder approach to merit pay, phasing present teachers into the Professional Teacher rung. While the D.P.I. recommends a teacher apply for advancement one year prior to moving into another step so that administrators or unions may have input, it is suggested the application process be accelerated by requiring written recommendations from each as part of the procedure.

Statewide teacher pay scales are inappropriate for a number of reasons. The cost of living varies according to location within the state. Certainly teacher pay should be relative to the standard of living of the community in (or near) which the teacher lives (or teaches.) If local property taxes continue to support public education in Wisconsin, relinquishing control of local school budgets is, to some extent, taxation without representation. At the same time it also seems appropriate that if the State of Wisconsin is to mandate merit pay, it should provide monetary support for such a program. If the state were to pay additional increments beyond that for Professional Teacher status at a significant percentage of local base
pay, the differentiated pay scales advocated by the Task Force would be acceptable. No quotas should be imposed. All superlative teachers should be given their due reward.

If, however, state monies do not become available for a merit pay plan in Marshfield, it is recommended varying ranges on the present salary schedule, with the lower range being offered to teachers who have not met the standards for merit pay in a given year, and the higher range to teachers who have. Under no circumstances should a teacher automatically be placed at the higher pay range. The teacher must be encouraged to continue to grow professionally. For example, a teacher during the 1990-91 school year may show exemplary effort and be evaluated as merit-worthy. During the 1991-92 year then, he/she would be paid at the higher end of the salary step. If during the 1991-92 year his/her work was judged satisfactory but not merit-worthy, the following year he/she would move up a step, but be paid at the lower end. It is likely the collective bargaining unit would demand an appeal process be built into the program. As indicated in the Financial Impact subsection of this paper, such a schedule could actually save the district money in time, through attrition.

Although administrators are trained to evaluate their staffs, and they would be the best suited of the present district employees to evaluate teacher performance, an individual or team of individuals to act as district evaluators, may have the most consistent evaluation
measurements. Instruments used should be well-developed, objective, reliable and valid. The five-year Professional Development Plan recommended by the task force could be used, additionally, to ascertain merit.

The present system of rewarding teachers for their credentials rather than their classroom performances has produced the infamous, "nation at risk." It is time that teachers become more accountable for their teaching. Where merit programs have failed in the past, the reasons for their failure have been clearly determined. The Career Ladder is an improvement on past programs and, as such, should be seriously considered as an alternative pay scale in the Marshfield Public Schools. Student learning must be improved by highly motivated educators.
References


Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry. (1990, May). Marshfield Community Profile (Available from Executive Director, Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 111 South Maple Ave., Marshfield, WI 54449)

District, 1010 E. 4th Street, Marshfield, WI 54449)

Match Up With Marshfield. (Available from Executive Director, Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 111 South Maple Ave., Marshfield, WI 54449)


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