



# EDUCATOR COMPENSATION INSTITUTE

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P.O. Box 481, Plymouth, Wisconsin 53073-0481  
(920) 980-0344

## **PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES' POSITIONS ON TEACHER PAY August 13, 2007**

The Educator Compensation Institute has begun monitoring the 2008 Presidential candidates' positions on education employee pay. In addition to a perusal of news stories, speeches, and candidate websites, each campaign has been contacted to ascertain the candidates' thoughts and positions on teacher and administrator pay, including merit pay, pay-for-performance, and other related issues. Subsequent reports will be released as new information becomes available.

NOTE 1: Each announced Presidential candidate's campaign was contacted seeking a response to the following: "*What are the Candidate's views on teacher and administrator pay, including merit pay, pay-for performance, and related issues.*" If the candidate did not respond, a second inquiry was sent.

NOTE 2: No editing has been performed to any of the news stories, speeches, website postings, or Candidate responses to the ECI inquiry.

### **Joe Biden (D)**

*Candidate's Campaign Contacted: No Response*

### **Sam Brownback (R)**

*Candidate's Campaign Contacted: No Response*

### **Hillary Rodham Clinton (D)**

*Among the issues she has fought for and will make a priority as president are attracting and supporting more outstanding teachers and principals, and paying them like the professionals they are.*

Source: Candidate's Website

*Candidate's Campaign Contacted: No Response*

**Chris Dodd (D)**

*Senator Chris Dodd has criticized a proposal on teachers' pay offered by Sen. Barack Obama, one of his 2008 Democratic rivals, who advocates different salaries depending on the subjects taught and students' performance.*

*Dodd, who did not mention Obama's name, said, "I fear that instituting a merit-pay system may encourage teaching to the test and discourage teachers from working in schools with large numbers of disadvantaged students."*

Source: Concord Monitor

*Candidate's Campaign Contacted: No Response*

**John Edwards (D)**

*Studies bear out what parents already know: nothing is more important to children's success than their teachers. Our country needs to invest more in recruiting, training and paying teachers and in treating them like the professionals they are. Edwards will attract good teachers in rural, urban and other schools where we need them most with college scholarships and higher pay. Because the hardest time in a teacher's career is the first couple of years, he will pair new teachers with successful veteran teachers serving as master teachers.*

Source: Candidate's Website

*A great education starts with great teachers, but we don't pay them what they deserve. Teachers earn too little, and the schools that need good teachers most pay teachers the least. We need to do more to recruit teachers, train them, and pay them. I support higher pay for teachers -- especially in subjects like math and science and at hard-to-staff schools in inner cities and rural areas where we need them most -- and recruitment incentives like college scholarships.*

Source: Candidate Response to ECI Inquiry, August 2007

**Rudy Giuliani (R)**

*Candidate's Campaign Contacted: No Response*

**Mike Gravel (D)**

*Candidate's Campaign Contacted: Response Pending*

**Mike Huckabee (R)**

*We should provide bonuses and forgive student loans for high-performing teachers to work in low-performing schools. Just as there are executives in the corporate world who specialize in turning around failing companies, we need teachers who are "turn-around specialists" for failing schools.*

*Teachers' unions don't just protect poor teachers by making it virtually impossible for them to get dismissed, they discourage potentially good teachers from even entering the profession. No one with a spark of ambition wants a career path where they can't get ahead on merit, where they are in lock step for pay raises and other perks based entirely on seniority.*

Source: Candidate's Website

Candidate's Campaign Contacted: Response Pending

### **Duncan Hunter (R)**

Candidate's Campaign Contacted: Response Pending

### **Dennis Kucinich (D)**

Candidate's Campaign Contacted: Response Pending

### **John McCain (R)**

Candidate's Campaign Contacted: No Response

### **Barack Obama (D)**

*My view is this – if we truly believe that educators are the essential professionals that we know you are, then it's time we rewarded, and supported, and honored the professional excellence you show every day.*

*We also know that right now, we need the best teachers in the most challenging classrooms – those underserved, underachieving schools in parts of rural and urban America where we need to make "these kids" "our kids" again.*

*I believe in collective bargaining, and I believe that any time you're talking about wages, workers have to be at the table.*

*So let's make a promise right now that if you're a teacher or a principal doing the hard work of educating our children, we will reward that work with the salary increase that you deserve. If you're willing to teach in a high-need subject like math or science or special education, we'll pay you even more.*

*If you're willing to take on more responsibilities like mentoring, we'll pay you more.*

*And if you excel at helping your students achieve success, your success will be valued and rewarded as well. Here's the key: We can find new ways to increase pay that are developed with teachers, not imposed on them and not based on some arbitrary test score. That's how we're going to close the achievement gap that exists in this country and that's how we're going to start treating teachers like the professionals you are.*

Source: Speech to the National Education Association, July 2007

Candidate's Campaign Contacted: No Response

**Ron Paul (R)**

*Ron Paul does not have a position on teacher compensation per se, since this is a local and not a federal issue. In 2003, however, Congressman Paul proposed legislation that would give all teachers a \$1,000 tax credit.*

Source: Candidate Response to ECI Inquiry, August 2007

**Bill Richardson (D)**

*Teachers need to be paid more. Period. My first act as Governor was to raise teacher salaries. New Mexico started at 46<sup>th</sup> in the nation in teacher pay and we're now 29<sup>th</sup>.*

*I support standards – we need all of our teachers to be great. In New Mexico we created a three-tier system with tough licensing requirements for teachers. We put more money directly into the classroom and we raised salaries – tying the raises to standards and accountability.*

*We ought to have a minimum starting wage for teachers of \$40,000 – that will help to attract and retain better people. More than a million veteran teachers are nearing retirement, and we will need more than two million new teachers in the next decade. This wage will help eliminate the shortage. The future of our country is in the hands of our teachers and so many are doing a heroic job against impossible odds; as a society we need to step up and support them.*

Source: Candidate Response to ECI Inquiry, August 2007

**Mitt Romney (R)**

*Our schools today are falling further and further behind world standards. It is my firm belief that if the United States is going to compete in the global economy, we have to set our education goals higher. It is time to raise the bar on education by focusing on math and science, increasing parental involvement, and encouraging our best and brightest to enter the teaching profession.*

*Another key component is to continue to measure and monitor student progress. I supported No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and think it is an important first step toward enhanced accountability. However, I see room for improvement. I would like to see modifications made in terms of giving states that are meeting or exceeding the testing requirements some additional flexibilities in how student performance is measured.*

*As Governor of Massachusetts, I proposed the unlimited expansion of public charter schools to encourage competition and excellence in the*

*Commonwealth's public school system. Charter schools embrace innovative educational practices that encourage competition and hold teachers and administrators accountable for the academic achievement of their students. This accountability is the key to our students' success.*

*I also created a scholarship program to provide free tuition at Massachusetts' public colleges and universities to the highest performing high school graduates. We must foster the educational growth of one of the United States' most valuable assets and the future of our great nation - our children.*

*I am running for President because I fervently believe that I have the experience and vision to address the issues facing our country. Throughout my years in both the private and public sectors, I have been successful by pursuing innovation and transformation. If there ever was a time when innovation and transformation were needed in government, that time is now.*

[Source: Candidate Response to ECI Inquiry, August 2007](#)

**Tom Tancredo (R)**

[Candidate's Campaign Contacted: Response Pending](#)