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UPDATE **PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES' POSITIONS ON TEACHER PAY** **December 28, 2007**

In advance of the Iowa caucus, the Educator Compensation Institute has now updated its report on the 2008 Presidential candidates' positions on education employee pay. (Recent additions are in green.) 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.

NOTE: 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.

Joe Biden (D)

Senator Biden pledges to support and retain teachers with higher salaries and a college loan payment assistance program.

Source: Boston Herald

Teachers, Biden said, need to be supported and retained as "teacher attrition costs our schools \$2 to \$7 billion a year." To save money in the long run, Biden has proposed improving teacher pay, which includes providing bonuses for teachers who teach in high-need schools, providing new teachers with a bonus in exchange for a commitment to teach in the same school for five years, providing incentives to reward professional development like National Board Certification and assisting teachers with student loan repayment.

Source: Foster's Daily Democrat

Research has consistently shown that teachers are the single most important factor in determining how well a student performs in school, yet we can't keep talented teachers in the classroom. Teacher attrition costs our schools \$2 to \$7 billion a year. Each year 270,000 of our 3.2 million public school teachers leave the field. Every school day, over 1,000 teachers leave the field for reasons other than retirement. Teachers leave for a wide range of

reasons – from low pay to burn out. To support and retain our teachers Joe Biden would:

- ✧ **Improve teacher pay:** The average starting salary of engineers is \$53,000, while the average starting salary of a public school teacher is \$32,000. To attract the best and brightest to teach our children, we have to pay them better. Joe Biden would:
- ✧ **Provide bonuses to teachers who teach in high-need schools.** Teacher attrition is twice as high at high-poverty schools than low-poverty schools. Poor and minority students are more likely to inexperienced teachers. As President, Joe Biden would reward teachers who take on these challenging, yet critical jobs.
- ✧ **Provide new teachers with a bonus in exchange for a commitment to teach in the same school for five years.** About half of all new teachers leave the profession within five years. The average starting salary of teachers is \$32,000 a year. Joe Biden would increase the salaries of new teachers to provide the incentive to stay in the field – and in their schools -- by providing them with bonuses in exchange for a five- year commitment. Funding would be targeted to high-need schools to alleviate the teacher attrition problem where it is most severe.
- ✧ **Provide incentives to reward professional development like National Board Certification.** Joe Biden believes that teachers who have completed this rigorous, high quality, and effective certification process should be compensated in a manner fitting their new credential. He would supplement salaries of teachers who attained National Board Certification.
- ✧ **Assist teachers with student loan repayment.** Joe Biden would help teachers defray the costs of education in exchange for a four-year commitment to teaching – particularly in a high need school.
- ✧ **Fund mentoring and induction programs:** One of the best ways of supporting teachers is to provide them with on-going opportunities for professional development. Joe Biden believes that teachers deserve support from the very first day they begin teaching. When properly designed and implemented, mentoring and induction programs have been found to improve teacher performance and retention, while also providing experienced teachers with additional opportunities for advancement and increased pay.

Source: Candidate's Education Plan Fact Sheet

Candidate's Campaign Contacted: No Response

Hillary Rodham Clinton (D)

Senator Clinton has pledged to recruit more teachers and increase teacher salaries. She has also pledged to recruit and train teachers and principals in hard-to-serve areas.

Source: Boston Herald

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)

John Edwards has pledged to help states pay \$5,000 bonuses to teachers in "successful" high-poverty schools and up to \$15,000 a year for veteran teachers who serve as mentors in high-poverty schools. He also supports creation of a "National Teacher University" to recruit and train 1,000 top students a year.

Source: Boston Herald

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

We think about education the wrong way in America. We think about it as K through 12, and I think education should be thought of as a birth-to-death experience in America. For the K-12 component, the most important thing is to get the highest-quality teacher in front of every classroom, which I think means raising base teacher pay, but it also means creating incentives. Pay bonus incentives for teachers to go to the places where we need them the most. I proposed a "college for everyone" idea that basically covers college tuition and books for kids who are willing to work when they're in college.

Source: Interview by Stephen E. Wright, Mercury News Editorial Page Editor and V.P.

Rudy Giuliani (R)

Candidate's Campaign Contacted: No Response

Mike Gravel (D)

Candidate's Campaign Contacted: Response Pending

Mike Huckabee (R)

Mike Huckabee supports bonuses and loan forgiveness for high-performing teachers to work in low-performing schools.

Source: Boston Herald

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)

Senator McCain supports teacher testing and merit pay for the best teachers.

Source: Boston Herald

Candidate's Campaign Contacted: No Response

Barack Obama (D)

Senator Obama supports recruitment of a "new generation" of teachers and improving teacher pay. He supports merit pay for "master teachers" but opposes merit pay for teachers based on test outcomes.

Source: Boston Herald

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)

Congressman Paul has sponsored H.R. 1059 which allows full-time teachers a \$3,000 yearly tax credit.

Source: Boston Herald

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)

Governor Richardson has set a goal of \$40,000 starting pay for teachers and has pledged to recruit and train 100,000 new teachers.

Source: Boston Herald

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

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](#)

Fred Thompson (R)

[Candidate's Campaign Contacted: No Response](#)