

**REVAMPING THE TEACHING WORKFORCE  
OR  
“IT’S A FULL TIME JOB FOLKS!”**

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Across the nation our teacher workforce solutions tend to be on the margins. We negotiate additional stipends, per diem rates of pay, workshop rates of pay, curriculum rates of pay, and other methods of adding bits of time and compensation. Some states and policy makers are now revisiting merit pay, or performance pay, each of which remains on the margin. We work on the margins simply because we have not created a compelling vision of a new teacher compensation system, a system based on the real, day-to-day, month-to-month and annual work requirements of our nation’s teachers.

We must stop working on the edges of this issue and restructure the teacher work/compensation system. Our current systems will never change unless we recognize the teaching profession has changed drastically. We must create a new paradigm of teaching and the resources must follow that paradigm.

Our redesign must also recognize that many adults now wish to have multiple careers inside and outside of education. We must recognize that people enter the profession to work with children. Teachers typically do not aspire to become administrators, yet they do seek an active voice in the decisions impacting their classrooms and their working conditions.

First, let’s look at the current job expectations. We now ask teachers to perform a multitude of duties outside the classroom. Schools now require a leadership structure that includes people inside and outside the schoolhouse. We expect teachers to teach, perform leadership functions, participate in school improvement decisions, monitor progress, and involve parents in classroom activities. The list of expectations, pressures and demands is lengthy, and all are issued in the name of either “leaving no child behind”, or in creating world class school systems. It is time to redesign the work/compensation structure of our teaching workforce.

The work/compensation system of the future must recognize five current realities:

1. Teaching is a full-time profession and can no longer be viewed under an “hourly” employment paradigm of so many hours per day and so many days per year.
2. Teachers no longer “just teach.” They must perform a multitude of duties in and out of the classroom to be successful.
3. There are multiple careers within the teaching profession, none of which need include the title of “administrator.”
4. Education must be attractive to large numbers of potential teachers – fresh from college as well as career changers.

5. We must look within a school system's current resource pool (over time) to make changes. Significant additional resources are not universally available.

Finally, to recognize the multiple set of professional expectations, professional roles and professional salaries, we must recognize that the specific work year (and day) will vary within schools and across school systems. Just as we now recognize that no one instructional approach works for all children, we must recognize that no one "job description" encompasses the set of duties for all teachers, nor does one work calendar address the variety of necessary roles and functions in any school. We must rethink current roles and responsibilities in education and design a system that will work in the "high stakes, high standards for all students" environment.

### **The New Teacher Workforce Model**

The proposed teacher work/compensation model is based on teachers opting and being selected into one of many role options. The options include not only the current set of responsibilities – the Traditional Role – but also, an additional set of role options that will form the core of the redesigned school system. The role options are designed around the core functions of any school. All schools must provide leadership to the entire school community. This function has moved beyond the confines of the principal's office and typically includes a leadership team comprised of teachers and community members as well as the principal. In addition to school leadership, there must be coordination between school levels – elementary, middle and high schools. Both of these leadership functions must occur outside the 180-day school year and are probably best addressed before the school year starts.

Training and mentoring of new staff is another necessary leadership function, especially with the highly qualified staff requirements. This function begins before the school year starts but must also be ongoing throughout the year. The work calendar for this function is different than the calendar for the other school and feeder leadership functions.

The new teacher leadership functions are all in addition to the normal 180-day teaching duties. Each recognizes the importance of teachers as key leaders and decision makers for other necessary school endeavors. Because the time demands are different, each will require a different work calendar, but all new roles are based on the same length of work year – 11 months instead of the current 10-months. A complete list of proposed teacher roles includes the following:

1. **School Improvement** Teacher Leader – 11 months of work that includes the normal teaching duties plus additional school leadership responsibilities that are shared with the principal.
2. **Feeder/Cluster Improvement** Teacher Leader – 11 months of work that includes the normal teaching assignment focused on connections and collaboration with schools within a K-12 cluster that students would attend during their school years.

3. **New Teacher Trainer/Mentor** – 11 months of work that includes the normal teaching assignment plus a focus on training new teachers prior to the start of school, and mentoring the new staff during the school year.
4. **Extended Student Learning** – 11 months of work that includes the normal teaching assignment plus a focus on tutoring and nurturing students performing below grade level. Such work would be done after school, during school breaks, etc as needed to leave no child behind.
5. **Student Transition Leadership** – 11 months of work that includes the normal teaching assignment plus a focus on analysis of individual student's academic and social progress and coordination of support services for children needing added social/transition skills.
6. **Traditional Role** – 180 school days plus the typical additional 5-15 contracted days; this includes "normal" duties that are essentially the same as current teaching duties.

Many of these functions are already being addressed in many schools. We currently devote a great deal of money to many of these functions, but we do so on a "piecemeal" basis. Rarely do we group them in a manner that creates a comprehensive teacher work and compensation system. We must create such a system if we wish to become more intentional about "leaving no child behind"; if we expect and allow professionals to engage in all the necessary roles and responsibilities for sustaining high-performing schools, if we recognize that distributed, aligned leadership is a must in our ever-changing society, and, if we hope to compensate professional teachers for the full-time set of duties that are now part of the profession.

The new model assumes a portion of the staff will be willing to assume additional responsibilities for which they will receive an 11-month contract, representing an additional 10 percent compensation (or, whatever is negotiated). This also assumes that enough staff to create no more than a 12:1 ratio for such assistance would address the area of greatest need – extended student learning. Flexible scheduling of the added time is necessary to meet the needs of the students needing help. This means that not all teachers will be working the same hours – a paradigm shift for management.

Other roles – school and cluster leadership – will likewise require different work calendars. These staff members would presumably do much of their work prior to the start of each school year as their focus must be planning for and leading the entire school or set of schools in a cluster. Mentoring the new staff would probably be scheduled before the school year, as well as during the school year. Again, this would have to be flexible based on the needs of the new staff.

This is a very different approach from many new compensation models that focus on adding stipends/per diem for added knowledge, skills or responsibilities. The choice of model belongs to each jurisdiction. This model does make a significant departure from many old models, as well as those being explored in many places in our nation.

Let me now present the "real world" application of this model. Or, even if we wish to change the paradigm of the teaching profession, how does one do so? What are the

issues? What system components must also change? How many will ask “Who moved my Cheese?”

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS:  
GOOD TO GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHER LEADERS**

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) recently issued a unique grant initiative for school-based staff to create a cadre of teacher leaders and advance the professionalism of the teaching profession. The purpose of this pilot initiative is to provide schools with flexibility and funding for extended-year teacher contracts so that schools may create solutions to increase student achievement and ensure students reach their highest potential. It is designed to improve school-based instructional activities, thereby raising student achievement. Specific goals of the initiative include:

- Increased numbers of students achieving NCLB standards as well as School Board adopted goals covering Academic Achievement, Essential Life Skills and Responsible Citizenship
- Support for innovative and exemplary approaches to develop and utilize teachers as leaders in meeting the instructional needs of students;
- Support for the tenets of Professional Learning Communities;
- Support to strengthen the link between Professional Learning Communities and improved student achievement, life skills, and citizenship;
- Improvement of the efficiency, cost, and time of teacher training and use at the school and/or pyramid level; and

Sixty-two schools representing a wide range of elementary, middle, and high schools responded to the Teacher Leadership Request For Proposal (RFP). All schools and centers had the opportunity to apply for the grant. Schools responding to the RFP were distributed across all clusters with Cluster III submitting slightly more proposals (21% of all proposals) than other clusters (7% to 15% of all proposals). The largest percentage of proposals came from elementary schools: 68% of the proposals were from elementary schools, 13% were from middle schools, 16% were from high schools, and 3% were from secondary schools. From the proposals, twenty-two schools were selected as grantees or Teacher Leadership initiative sites.

Schools presented individualized pilot projects with extended-year teacher contracts to meet the unique needs of their staff and student population. Nearly all schools (91%) proposed initiating a curriculum development project. These projects included general curriculum development projects (64%) and specific curriculum development projects such as integrating arts and technology into the curriculum (1%), remediation programs for at-risk or struggling students (18%), enrichment programs for advanced learners (14%), and summer school programs (18%). Nearly half of the schools (45%) proposed school-based staff development activities as a component of

the Teacher Leadership initiative. Schools also proposed activities targeted to the needs of their individual school communities, including the review and use of data to inform instruction and staff development (23%), development of common assessments across grade levels (18%), involvement of the community in the school (18%), resource development (9%), and support to increase enrollment in advanced level courses (9%).

Through the RFP process, FCPS gained invaluable insight into the ideas and plans generated by schools. The following sections provide a brief overview of the challenges and issues that surfaced through the two year development of the Teacher Leadership initiative.

### **Challenges in Revamping the Teaching Profession – the Paradigm Shift**

Change always brings challenges. The most significant challenge was to fully understand the philosophical change that underlies the structural issues. While teaching has traditionally been viewed as a profession, the reality is that teacher work days and work year are really not viewed from a professional perspective. Neither is teacher compensation viewed from a professional perspective. The last decades of discourse on teaching, the evolution of collective bargaining, and the ongoing policy debate in districts across the nation have lead us all to a paradigm of teacher work and compensation that is very piecemeal in its approach. We regularly talk about the teacher work day, the number of days in the work year, the daily rate of pay, the additional “piecemeal pay” for additional duties, etc. All of these are examples of how well ingrained the paradigm of a “piecemeal” work and compensation system is within education. This is true in union and non-union environments. In all cases, conversations about teacher work invariably deal with numbers of work days, work hours and rates of pay for particular sets of duties.

The first challenge, is to completely re-think the teaching profession. Is it possible to view the teaching profession as a set of duties and responsibilities that are fully compensated for with one salary? If it is possible to conceive of such a set of professional responsibilities for which a given compensation is appropriate, what are all the changes in the school system that naturally follow? Let us explore a few of the key issues that any school system must address if/when the new paradigm is embraced. For the sake of organization clarity, let us examine these issues within the traditional organizational structure found in any school system.

#### **Human Resources/Personnel**

The major challenge for HR is determining how to create, support and monitor the new contract for those teachers moving to full-time employment status. While most school systems do have teaching contracts of varying lengths, many have simply used additional “per diem” contracts to add additional days of work to selected teachers. These are clearly annual extensions of the basic contract could be used in this circumstance, but that methodology does not have the impact on revamping the teaching profession being proposed here. There are substantive benefits for changing the work and compensation structure that go well beyond “tweaks” on the edges. The most significant is the permanent change in the profession that is contemplated in this

proposal. Nevertheless, even this proposed permanent change in teacher work and compensation results in a host of issues within HR/Personnel. The issues that must be addressed include:

1. Time and attendance record keeping – how to determine days worked, days off, sick leave accrual, vacation or “non-work” days, eligibility for workman’s compensation.
2. Continuing contract rights – for “normal” teacher contract or for the full-time contract.
3. Flexible length days during year vs. required time each day.
4. Teachers with different contracts within the same building
5. Employment decisions for those not choosing full-time positions
6. Decisions on contract length in subsequent years – management decisions as well as employee decisions.

### Budget Planning

There are two major issues for the budget office. One is to determine the “savings” that can be had if we no longer utilize stipends, per diem pay, or any other compensation strategies for the work that is now subsumed in the full-time contract. Additionally, many school district currently pay for teachers attending workshops during non-school days as well as paying for substitutes when teachers are released to attend training during the school day. Depending on how these are scheduled – potentially during the extended contract time – there is a potential for substantial additional savings.

The second issue is determining the gross cost for the longer contract. Multiple methodologies are possible. One can simply calculate average salaries for regular and full-time contracts, and multiply that difference by the number of expected full-time contracts. One can also determine the actual pay difference on a person by person basis after the staff selection has occurred. So, in summary, the Budget issues include:

1. Calculating potential savings from: stipends, per diem, reduced substitute demand, and other compensation that would not be necessary
2. Added cost for full-time contracts
3. Added employer costs – retirement, social security, benefits (life insurance)
4. Change in overhead costs to administer full-time contract vs. regular contract plus “added pay for added duties” paperwork – a potential savings.
5. Developing a multi-year budget for phase-in period.

### Unions and Employee Groups

There are major issues to address when you are altering wages and hours, not to mention working conditions. Depending upon retained management rights in a union environment, a district may have the latitude to create longer employment contracts for teachers and have those contracts be specified for a different set of teaching duties – teacher leadership duties. Even in “right to work” environments, there are a host of management policies that probably define the flexibility of districts to create full-time

contracts. At the very least, there are clearly a set of past practices that create the current norms or employment culture within a district. Changing the teacher contract in any environment is challenging, simply because it is a change.

Prior to any logistical changes to HR, Budget, there must be extensive conversations with all key stakeholders – School Board, principals, teachers, parents, employees who are not teachers, etc. The notion that the teaching profession has profoundly changed over the past decade(s) resonates with all of these groups. Teachers will especially agree that their jobs have changed drastically and will begin to help determine the pros and cons of making changes to a full-time contract. Besides the obvious discussions with all stakeholders, some of the issues for unions include:

1. Right/expectation to negotiate pay, length of contract, etc.
2. The splitting of members into those with full-time contracts vs. those with regular contracts.
3. Adding time (number of days) vs. a long standing desire to reduce the time demands on teachers – limit length of work day, limit meetings, increase planning time during the school day, etc.
4. Union leadership, Board of Directors and member's view of additional compensation for additional time – is there alignment?
5. Where multiple associations exist, there is the issue of how the other association(s) are positioning themselves – competition for membership.
6. Process for selecting those with full-time contracts

### Principals and the Schools

The most important element in this new paradigm is school. The whole purpose is to ensure schools have a significant time resource to address the needs of the students and the community. As noted in the stated goals of this initiative, it is to provide significant additional time for teachers to address student achievement needs and to do so in the environment of a professional learning community. To that end, significant planning must be done at the school level. That planning must be done with the school leadership team and in alignment with the goals of the school and school district. Since this is such a significant increase in teacher time – about 10% – it is not unusual for such planning to take an entire year. As a school creates a plan to utilize full-time teaching positions, the issues to address include:

1. A purposeful school improvement plan must exist. Such a plan must specify the expectations, duties and functions that are needed in the school.
2. The plan can (and perhaps should) be multi-year to allow significant culture changes, necessary modifications to school plan, resource acquisition.
3. Clear job descriptions must be developed for each type of full-time position needed to support the school plan.
4. A master calendar must reflect the common working days for the appropriate teams of full-time teachers. This calendar must encompass scheduling the appropriate time for the teachers to fulfill the jobs expectations specified in the school plan.

5. Some duties may include time after the “regular” day (for example, student tutoring or enrichment) in lieu of added days.
6. The process for selecting staff to each of the full-time jobs
7. In concert with HR, the clear identification of which of the current supplemental payments would now be subsumed into the full-time contract. Some of these will be required – no longer will stipends be given to team leaders, department chairs, etc.
8. A clear delineation of duties for full-time teachers vs. regular contract teachers must be articulated and adhered to during the implementation phase
9. While some of the additional time will be used for “prep time” the major added time should be devoted to working with other adults on the school initiatives.
10. Not ever school has the culture that is compatible with this change.

### District and Community

There is usually a positive response from parents when we acknowledge the significant changes in the demand on teachers. School Board members likewise understand the significant challenges teachers face in the classroom, in preparation for the classroom and in time demands for a variety of other issues. In fact, there is usually a strong push from unions and teacher spokespersons to the School Board to reduce time demands. This paradigm shift has the potential to help the school board respond to the time issues by significantly increasing compensation (by about 10%) while recognizing the added duties that would go with the added salary. And, in many cases, teachers are already performing some of the added duties and this allows school boards and the community to give recognition for that work. Some of the public policy issues include:

1. Added compensation (and time) for (potentially) only one group of employees. This can be viewed positively – supporting teachers – or negatively by other employees.
2. Are there related time and compensation issues with other employee groups?
3. Supports a school-based leadership paradigm.
4. Provides an opportunity to mesh summer curriculum work and other extended time needs with full-time contracts
5. Significantly increases teacher pay and gives district greater competitive advantage for recruitment and retention. Full-time contract is also potentially more attractive to career changers.

### Summary

As a leading innovator of education practices and reform, Fairfax County Public Schools is moving to advance the professionalism of teachers and the education field. The Teacher Leadership initiative provides FCPS Leadership Team members a unique opportunity to cultivate talent from within the school division, create philosophical shifts that ensure only effective programs and practices are implemented to meet the needs of a changing student population, and share evidence of successful practices with the national education community.