

For many teachers 8 percent salary hike is only the beginning

For many of the state's public school teachers, the 8 percent salary increase proposed by the governor for the 1991-93 biennium is only the beginning of the increases that they could see over the next biennium.

In addition to any across-the-board increases provided by the 1991 Legislature, those teachers and other certificated instructional staff who have not reached the top of their salary range — more than half, according to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction — receive automatic annual pay hikes of about 3.2 percent for their additional experience based on the state's salary allocation schedule.

Some teachers, including some of those at the top of their salary ranges, could also see more money for additional education or responsibilities. Additional education is reflected in salary increases of about 3.0 percent for every 15 credit hours on the state's salary schedule.

Additional responsibilities, like coaching the baseball team or curriculum development, also offer teachers the opportunity to increase their pay above their base salary. These supplemental contracts are a local funding responsibility and averaged \$2,244 during the 1990-91 school year.

In addition to across-the-board increases provided by the legislature, many teachers receive automatic annual pay hikes...

Salaries are bargained at the local level within available funds. While state government plays a major role in funding local school districts, it does not mandate the salary schedules they use. The state's 44,756 public school teachers and other certificated instructional staff, such as reading specialists and counselors, received an average base salary of \$30,670 during the 1989-90 school year. The average supplemental

salary in that year was \$2,139.

As figure 1 shows (see page 2), spending on base salaries for certificated instructional staff grew about 18 percent in inflation-adjusted terms between 1979-80 and 1989-90. This was faster than a 15 percent increase in the number of teachers and other certificated instructional staff and faster than a 5 percent increase in the number of students over the period.

The faster growth in the number of certificated instructional staff, relative to the number of students, reflects a policy decision to improve the student-teacher ratio.

Salary Growth Over Time

The examples in the box below illustrate how the system works by tracing the salaries of three hypothetical teachers between 1989-90 and 1992-93. As the examples demonstrate, the potential salary increases over the period could range from 19 percent for an experienced teacher at the top of his or her

Salary Progression of Three Hypothetical Teachers

- Miss Davis started teaching in 1989-90. As a beginning teacher with no experience and a bachelor's degree, she earned **\$18,304** that year. This year, with one year of experience, she earns **\$20,656** (up 13%). After completing 15 credits of additional education, she would earn **\$22,864** in 1991-92 under the governor's proposal (up 11%). The following year her salary would be **\$24,512** (up 7%). Over the three-year period, Miss Davis' salary would have increased 34 percent, or an annual average of about **10 percent a year**.
- Mr. Brown has a master's degree and had been teaching for 10 years in 1989-90. This gave him a salary of **\$30,879**. This year, with 11 years of experience, he earns **\$33,508** (up 9%). Under the governor's proposal he would earn **\$36,087** in 1991-92 (up 8%) and **\$38,642** in 1992-93 (up 7%). This is an increase of 25 percent over the period, or about **8 percent a year**.
- Mrs. Jones is an experienced teacher who has earned 90 credits since her bachelor's degree. With 20 years of experience in 1989-90 she was at the top step of the salary schedule for her education level and earned **\$34,448**. In 1990 the legislature expanded the salary schedule to account for additional experience at her education level and she now earns **\$37,718** (up 9%). She is again at the top step of the schedule and would, therefore, only receive the across-the-board increases proposed by the governor to **\$39,378** in 1991-92 (up 4%) and **\$40,874** in 1992-93 (up 4%). This is an increase of 19 percent over the period, or about **6 percent a year**.

salary range to 34 percent for a beginning teacher.

The examples are based on the statewide salary allocation schedule and the salary increases proposed by the governor for the 1991–93 biennium. They do not include supplemental contracts.

Over the next couple of weeks, salary proposals for teachers will emerge from the House and Senate. Given the amount of money available for the state budget, they are unlikely to differ substantially from those proposed by the governor. In any case, the examples indicate the potential increase that could be received by teachers over the coming biennium.

Who Sets Teacher Pay?

Local school boards around the state determine the number and type of staff they employ, based on estimates of the amount of available revenue. They also set the salary and benefit levels of those employees. Employee compensation accounts for about 80 percent of local school district spending.

More than three-quarters of the operating revenue for the average school district came from state government during the 1989–90 school year. Enrollment is the key factor governing how much money local school districts receive from the state.

The state uses a formula based on the number of students to determine the number of staff to be funded. These staff units then translate into dollars based on the education and experience (staff mix) of the employees in each district. Thus, the amount of money school districts receive for salaries is based on the number of formula-generated staff, rather than on the actual number of staff hired by the district.

Because salaries represent such a large portion of school district expenditures, equalization of funding among school districts—one of the goals of the 1977 Basic Education Act—requires closing the gap in local district salary practices. Since passage of the act, the gap has been closed somewhat. This has been accomplished by allocating

different percentage salary increases to different districts in some years, depending on the district's relationship to the statewide average salary.

While the statewide salary allocation schedule is used to determine the amount of state funding provided to a local district, the district is not required to use the schedule for setting its actual salary levels.

As part of the state's effort to equalize funding, a statewide schedule is now used to allocate money for salaries to most of the state's 296 school districts. For the 1990–91 school year, 34 districts have salaries above the state-recognized salary schedule.

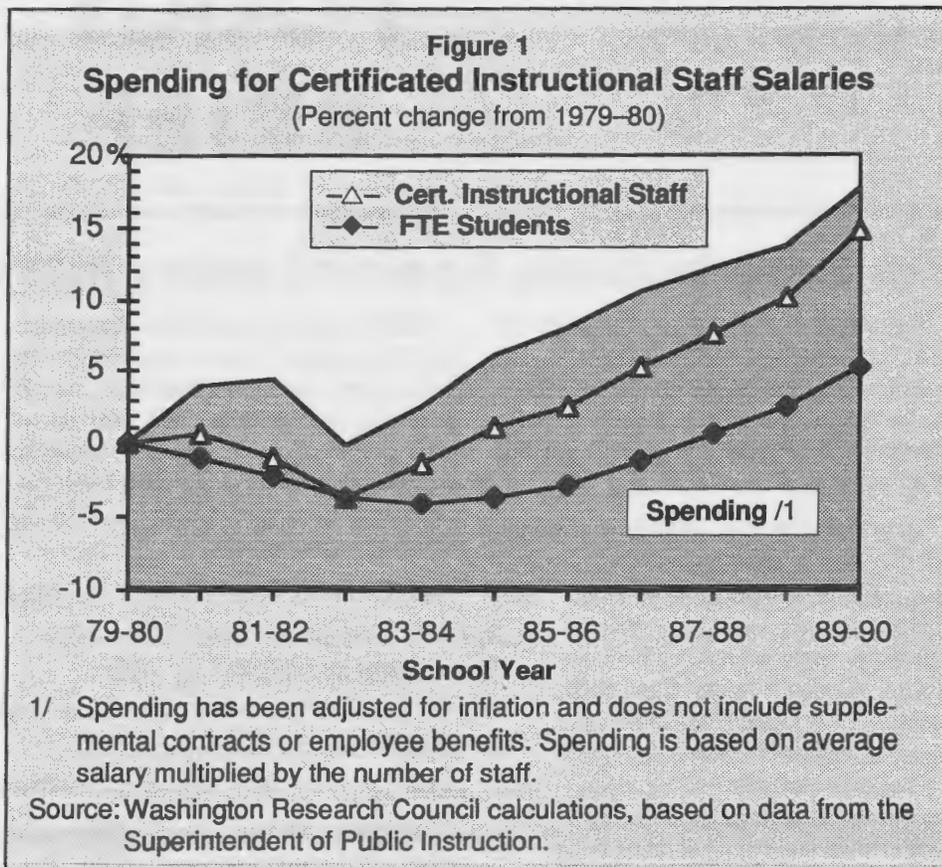
While this schedule is used to determine the amount of state funding provided to a local district, the district is not required to use the schedule for setting its actual salary levels. For example, additional funding provided by the legislature for senior teachers through the

allocation schedule may go to those teachers, or a local district may elect to provide higher across-the-board increases to all teachers. The state sets minimum salaries for certificated instructional staff, however, and overall district average actual salaries can't exceed the average salary as calculated by the statewide salary schedule. This second limit does not apply to supplemental contracts.

In addition to across-the-board increases, the legislature has modified the allocation schedule over the last several years to address policy concerns, such as improving the compensation for beginning teachers. These actual and potential increases are summarized in table 1 on page 3.

Teacher Compensation: A National Perspective

Responding to controversy during the last legislative session over how much teachers make and how teachers salaries in Washington compare to those in other states, the Washington State Sen-



ate, the House of Representatives, the Office of Financial Management, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Washington Education Association (WEA) commissioned a nationwide survey in order to get a better handle on how teacher compensation in Washington compares to other states.

Although interstate comparisons, particularly between group averages, are difficult to make, the survey sponsors agreed upon the methodology to be used and selected the firm of Fairbank, Bregman and Maullin from a list of consultants submitted by the WEA.

The consultant conducted two surveys between November of 1990 and January of 1991: one of school districts and one of state education departments.

Because most state education departments do not collect complete data on teacher contracts and compensation, most of the information reported is based on the survey of individual school districts.

Table 1
Certificated Instructional Staff Salaries

Year	Across-the-board Increases	Other Potential Increases			
		Additional Education/1	Additional Experience/1	Avg. Supp'l Contract	Other
87-88	2.1%	3%/15 credits	3%/year	\$1,469	/2
88-89	2.1	" "	" "	1,771	/3
89-90	4.0	" "	" "	2,139	/4
90-91	8.1	" "	" "	2,244	/5

1/ Until top of salary range is reached or doctorate is earned. Percentages are based on statewide salary allocation schedule.

2/ Additional 1.2 percent to districts funded using state allocation schedule.

3/ Additional 1.1 percent to districts funded using state allocation schedule.

4/ Minimum salaries increased for bachelor's and master's degrees.

5/ Minimum increase of 3 percent and average increase of 8 percent. Increases targeted toward staff entering the education field with few years of experience, those with master's degrees, and senior teachers.

Source: Superintendent of Public Instruction, Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program Office.

The study found that Washington ranks 12th of 49 states in total compensation (base salary, other pay and benefits) during the 1990-91 school year. This is higher than its rank of 14th of 49

states for total pay and 19th of 50 states for average salary. Also the state's rank improved in several categories between 1989-90 and 1990-91. Table 2 summarizes the highlights of the study.

Table 2
Washington's Rank in Teacher Compensation
(Based on national survey of school districts)

Item	1990-91			Rank in 1989-90
	Wash	Rank	US Avg.	
Average Total Compensation/1	\$44,551	12 of 49	\$40,154	13 of 50
Average Total Pay/2	\$35,430	14 of 49	\$34,428	17 of 50
Average Contract Salary/3	\$32,660	19 of 50	\$33,178	22 of 51
Average Per Day Contract Salary + Benefits	\$230	12 of 50	\$206	15 of 51
Average Per Day Contract Salary/3	\$179	17 of 50	\$176	21 of 51
Student-Teacher Ratio	46 of 51	19.0	16.4	NA
Average Starting Salary				
Bachelor's Degree/3	\$19,778	32 of 50	\$22,565	39 of 51
Master's Degree/3	\$23,662	21 of 50	\$24,694	31 of 51
Doctoral Degree/3	\$26,162	22 of 50	\$27,419	32 of 51
Average Years of Experience	13	14 of 50	12	NA
Average Years of Education	5.7	1 of 50	4.8	NA
Average Days in Contract	182	40 of 51	189	NA

1/ Includes contract salary, extra-curricular pay, other pay and benefits.

2/ Includes contract salary, extra-curricular pay, and other pay.

3/ Data were not available for the District of Columbia in 1990-91. Compensation in D.C. most likely is higher than in Washington, which would decrease the state's rank by 1 out of 51 states.

Source: Fairbank, Bregman and Maullin, 1991.

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Public Policy Brief Enclosed:

The enclosed policy brief is the first in a series by the Washington Research Council on issues related to public employee compensation in Washington State. In addition to this report which examines teacher salaries, briefs on state employee salaries and health insurance benefits are currently being prepared and will be mailed in the next several weeks.