

SALARY & BENEFITS SCHEDULE AND TEACHER TENURE STUDY

Project overview

House Bill 278, passed by the legislature in spring 2014, instructs the Department of Administration to "present to the legislature a written proposal for a salary and benefits schedule for school districts, including an evaluation of, and recommendations for, teacher tenure" (Sec. 52). The Department of Administration has contracted with CAEPR to develop:

1. **Salary & benefits schedule** for teachers and principals, including a review of current salary schedules, a profile of current benefits, geographic & job differentials, and identification of issues for consideration
2. **District profiles for other positions**, which will describe the complexity & diversity of district personnel, including the range of superintendent duties
3. **Recommendations for teacher tenure**, including a review of the current structure, a presentation of alternate models, and a review of the value of tenure to teachers as it affects the teacher labor market

CAEPR has operationalized these three responsibilities and action steps for each include:

Salary & benefits schedule for teachers & principals	District profiles for classified staff, related personnel & superintendents	Teacher tenure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe different salary structure models• Inventory and describe benefits in different AK districts• Discuss how compensation structures attract teachers, retain teachers, and incentivize improvement• Explore types of pay differentials• Solicit stakeholder input• Develop schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inventory types of positions employed• Describe different approaches to filling positions, including recruitment, hire, and employment v. contract appointments• Tabulate FTEs in different job types• Describe superintendent roles, duties, hiring protocol, and compensation• Develop comprehensive profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe tenure's historical context, structure in other states, and contemporary intent and impacts• Describe Alaska's tenure policy in print and in practice• Identify alternative tenure structures and their impacts, pros, and cons• Model the impact of tenure on the teacher labor market, including its impact on compensation and teacher turnover• Solicit stakeholder feedback• Make recommendations

Data collection & analysis

Data collection for this project will occur in four phases:

- The **literature review** will include comprehensive reviews of empirical studies, case law, other states' policies, and position papers from professional organizations.
- The **document review** phase will examine Alaska's policies and context, including collective bargaining agreements and job descriptions.
- A **review of existing data** will include the certified & classified staffing databases, as well as the statewide survey of teacher working conditions.
- **Collection of new data** will include data requests to district offices, surveys and interviews, and periods for stakeholder input.

Data analysis will use these data to define the labor market for Alaska teachers and principals, estimate job and community differentials, and triangulate these findings with stakeholder perspectives identified in the qualitative analysis.

FAQs

Why is the state conducting this study?

The legislature is interested in exploring different models for setting salary and benefits. Preliminary stages of the project will include conversations with legislators who developed the bill to ensure that the research is responsive to their objectives.

Other state employees in Alaska use a common schedule; why are teachers different?

Teachers in Alaska are employed by their respective districts, rather than the state. Teachers negotiate contracts with over 50 different employers. In other states with common salary schedules, districts still negotiate with teacher organizations, but use the schedule as a common base.

What kinds of benefits are considered in compensation?

The project will review negotiated agreements for all aspects of monetary and non-monetary compensation. Health and retirement are the most common benefits; however the project will also look at travel allowances, housing (provided, cost-subsidized, or both), life insurance, tuition assistance and retention bonuses, as well as personal and sick leave (both the number of days and when they can be used) and contract days required.

How will CAEPR accomplish all of this in the given timeframe?

Though CAEPR will collect some new data, much of the information needed for analysis already exists in negotiated agreements, databases, and information collected as part of other studies. The CAEPR project engages a talented research team of 8 people who will use a well-organized timeline to meet the project deadlines.

Is this study going to take away teacher tenure or limit districts' control?

This study will only make recommendations based on research findings. Decisions regarding policy are the responsibility of the state legislature. Other states that use a common salary schedule have addressed this issue in various ways depending on the legislative intent and constituent needs.

Will teacher salaries be published as part of the analysis?

The analysis will not publish individual teacher salaries. However, teachers' salaries are public record.

Why is the Department of Administration tasked with recommendations for teacher tenure?

The Department of Administration is responsible for negotiating state employee compensation, and tenure can be regarded as a benefit. Stakeholders including the Department of Education and Early Development will have input into teacher tenure recommendations.

What happens next?

CAEPR will begin data collection in January, present a draft report for public comment in May, and present a final report to the legislature on June 15. Actions and follow-up are the purview of the Alaska State Legislature and Governor.

For more information

Visit the Department of Administration has a website: <http://doa.alaska.gov/dop/HB278SchoolStudy/>

Visit the CAEPR website: <http://www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu/CAEPR/>

Contact the researchers:

Diane Hirshberg
dbhirshberg@alaska.edu
907-786-5413

Alexandra Hill
arhill@uaa.alaska.edu
907-786-5436

Project stakeholders

- Alaska Department of Education and Early Development
- Alaska Native education organizations
- Community members
- Education advocacy organizations
- Education-related professional organizations
- Legislators
- Not-for-profit education organizations
- Parent organizations
- Postsecondary Education Programs
- School board members
- School business officers
- School district employees
- State Board of Education
- Students
- Teacher unions
- Teachers

We seek stakeholder input; if you would like to participate, please contact Diane Hirshberg at dbhirshberg@alaska.edu