



BOARD OF EDUCATION
Teacher Compensation Philosophy
Board Approved February 12, 2019

Background: The idea to develop a Compensation Philosophy began as part of the 2017-18 “Long Term Financial Planning Initiative” to provide clarity around the Board’s priorities and vision as it relates to compensation. The Philosophy effort has since evolved to be a core component of the MPCSD Board’s larger effort to develop a definition of “Full Funding” for the Menlo Park City School District. This approved document represents input at 1:1 meetings, Closed Session labor negotiation discussions, open Board meetings, and open Study Sessions with MPEA. The Teacher Compensation Philosophy is not Board policy. The intentions highlighted within represent the interests of the Board. The document will help inform district and teacher negotiators for as many years as the Compensation Philosophy exists as a representative document of the Board’s vision. The details of how to accomplish these intentions are determined at the negotiating table. A separate “Non-Teaching Staff Compensation Philosophy” will be drafted to compliment this document and serve a similar purpose; the timeline for the second Philosophy is yet to be determined.

Purpose

The Teacher Compensation Philosophy is a written document that reflects the Board’s commitment to provide the highest quality education possible, understanding that our ability to recruit, retain, and develop gifted teachers is the single most important factor in accomplishing this goal. The Philosophy will detail the Board’s high-level direction regarding teacher compensation and the requisite long-term plan for funding that compensation, as well as a vision for what our community should be able to expect as a result of pursuing the philosophy. It is meant to be an aspirational document that encourages all parties, individually and collectively, to think beyond the constraints of traditional public school funding and collective bargaining, while staying within the bounds that state and federal law requires. If there are new and creative ways to accomplish the goals of public education around compensation, then Menlo Park City School District is a perfect place to prototype.

Influences

Our philosophy is informed by what helps us accomplish our vision and the input received over years of contract negotiations, public debate, feedback sessions, and elections that have ultimately resulted in relatively competitive compensation and increased community funding. Additionally, research around what attracts teachers to the profession and what keeps them invested and growing informs this effort.

Our philosophy is also influenced by the financial opportunities and constraints of our community-funded district. While resources are more plentiful than many public school districts in the state, our resources are not endless. Our community is not interested in writing a “blank check” to the school district. Our community, informed and insightful as it is, understands that to achieve a powerful vision for teaching, learning, and competitive compensation (which includes more than just salary) requires a higher commitment on the taxpayer and philanthropic giver than it does in some of our neighboring communities. Without the ability to clearly communicate a ‘return on investment’ (ROI), our community will be rightfully reticent to invest. This document is also informed by the aspirational vision, collaborative spirit, and design mindset of MPCSD.

Beliefs

We begin with a fundamental belief in Menlo Park City School District’s mission:

- Every child achieves academic excellence.*
- Every child becomes emotionally and physically stronger.*
- Every child discovers and grows their talents.*

If we are to accomplish this vision for every child, we must recognize that the employees closest to the student-teachers—are the most critical factor toward achieving this mission. Clarity around why we exist, what we are trying to accomplish, and who are the primary drivers of this work is necessary in order to establish priorities.

We recognize that a bold and unique vision for compensation and the resulting learning and social-emotional outcomes require the buy-in and trust of our teacher’s union, the Menlo Park Education Association (MPEA). In partnership with MPEA, the Board believes we can realize livable Bay Area salaries for our teaching professionals and remarkable outcomes for students.

Commitments

We commit to be an example for other districts in the elevation of the teaching profession. We commit to raising the achievement and outcomes for **ALL** students. We commit to lead-in teacher compensation. With the right value proposition to the community and to staff, we believe MPCSD can accomplish all three.

Since we believe the above, we will actively engage to...

1. Set as our highest priority the recruitment, retention, and development of high-quality teachers.
2. Become leaders in the elevation of the teaching profession in our community, the Bay Area, the State of California, and possibly beyond, with particular expertise in achieving this goal within public education.
3. Ensure a highly talented and collaborative pool of educators in MPCSD and provide the compensation and/or conditions that encourage teachers to stay, even in the challenging economics of the Bay Area, and grow with us as professionals.
4. Think broadly about staff roles and compensation to the extent that doing so may better achieve desired increases in learning outcomes and student engagement.
5. Enter into negotiations with an expansive design mindset, facilitating a freedom from the constraints that often limits our creativity.
6. Redefine “comparability.”
 - Move beyond the goal of simply remaining competitive among our neighboring, high-achieving, community-funded school districts (*historically including: Las Lomas, Woodside, Portola Valley, Palo Alto, and Hillsborough*) to include a broad list of comparable districts.
 - Consider compensation increases *above what is considered comparable* to our neighboring districts, while ensuring the requisite ‘compelling and sustainable value proposition’ for our community.
 - Expand our comparable data beyond simply compensation, to include regular benchmarking comparisons to include achievement gains, programs, staffing ratios, and services.
7. Design a robust continuous improvement and evaluation system to support the individual and collective talents of the members of the organization resulting in a positive impact on learning outcomes and engagement.