

A STUDY OF SELECTED LITERATURE  
PERTAINING TO MERIT SALARY SCHEDULING  
IN UNITED STATES' SCHOOL SYSTEMS

by

CALVIN C. CORMACK

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Approved by:

  
Major Professor

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## INTRODUCTION

The scheduling of teacher's salaries has been, and continues to be a problem of great concern. There has been considerable discontent with salary schedules such as the position-type or the preparational-type which are commonly employed in school districts. Accordingly, school finance authorities such as Mort and Reusser state that obvious weaknesses exist in the aforementioned types of salary scheduling. They write concerning the position-type salary schedule, that:

"An obvious weakness of the position-type salary schedule lies in the fact that it is based upon the assumption that different amounts of preparation are needed in teaching children of various grades. Thus, teachers in the lower grades are paid lower salaries than those teaching in upper grades."<sup>1</sup>

With reference to the preparational-type salary schedule, Mort and Reusser assert that it is limited by employing only credits earned as a measure of teaching competency.<sup>2</sup>

The position-type salary schedule is based on the assumption that different teaching positions within a school system represent different levels of competence and salaries are fixed accordingly. Although some basis for

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<sup>1</sup>Paul R. Mort, and Walter C. Reusser, Public School Finance (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1941), p. 289.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 189.



this assumption existed at one time, the practice of paying the elementary teacher less than the secondary teacher has generally been rejected.

Since the 1930's the position-type salary schedule has been largely replaced by the preparation-type salary schedule. The preparation-type schedule, also called the single-salary schedule, is considered by Mort and Reusser superior to the position-type schedule. This schedule utilizes both professional preparation, measured either by hours of college credit or specific degrees, and years of teaching experience as the criteria for determining teacher salaries. Thus, the preparation-type salary schedule provides an incentive for continued professional growth, while equal salaries are paid all teachers of equal preparation regardless of the position held.

With respect to measuring teacher merit, the advantage of the preparation-type schedule over the position-type schedule is quite obvious. However, authorities in school finance have emphasized the fact that the preparation-type salary schedule is far from perfect. In this regard, Mort and Reusser state that:

"The preparation-type schedule is the measure of teaching merit in terms of the initial preparation of the teacher. While such preparation may be a general index, the relationship between the number of

college hours and successful teaching is far from perfect.<sup>1</sup>

Other authorities have identified the above mentioned imperfection in the preparation-type salary. For example, Morris, an early authority on the single salary schedule, wrote that preparation alone is not sufficient and the teaching efficiency may depend upon the kind of training as well as the amount.<sup>2</sup>

A third type of salary schedule, with which this study is mainly concerned, is the merit type schedule. In theory, the advantage which the merit-type schedule holds over the position and preparation-type schedule is that it rewards teachers according to their teaching power. During the past decade, however, the merit-type schedule has been the subject of intense debate because of difficulties encountered in the measurement of teacher ability and other reasons connected with the administration of the salary schedule. It was with these views in mind that this study of merit salary scheduling in the United States was conducted.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 291.

<sup>2</sup>Lyle L. Morris, The Single Salary Schedule (New York: Bureau of Publication Teachers College Columbia University, 1930), pp. 72-79.



## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purposes of this study were: (1) to show the extent to which merit-type salary schedules are used in the United States, (2) to develop and understand the basic issues of the current merit rating controversy, (3) to identify the major issues in planning, administering and evaluating merit salary scheduling, and (4) to present authoritative opinion concerning the establishment of a merit salary plan.

The study made no attempt to offer solutions to the problems identified except where such solutions were offered in the literature.

## LIMITING THE STUDY

Certain limitations upon this study should be noted. For example, a review of the literature pertaining to merit salaries was limited to material of a more recent date. This limitation resulted from the fact that most merit salary plans now in operation have been instituted in the last two decades.

Mitchell revealed the above limitation when he pointed out that although the history of merit rating began in the early 1900's, with a flare-up of interest in the 1920's and 1930's, the major interest is found in the

1950's.<sup>1</sup>

One further limitation is as follows: In addition to the failure to effectively trace merit salary plans, beyond 1945, it should be also noted that there has not been sufficient time to evaluate merit salary plans instituted since the late 1950's. Therefore, the major part of the review for this study was confined to the literature of the 1950's.

#### PROCEDURES EMPLOYED IN THE STUDY

To begin the study, an intensive review of selected literature contained in the libraries of Fort Hayes State College and Kansas State University was conducted. The greater part of the pertinent literature was found in periodicals and selected bulletins. The sources selected for use in the study were identified through the Education Index and various prepared bibliographies.

#### MERIT SALARY SCHEDULING IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The purpose of this section is to discuss the extent to which merit type salary schedules have been used in school districts in the United States. Several studies were helpful in attempting to determine the extent to

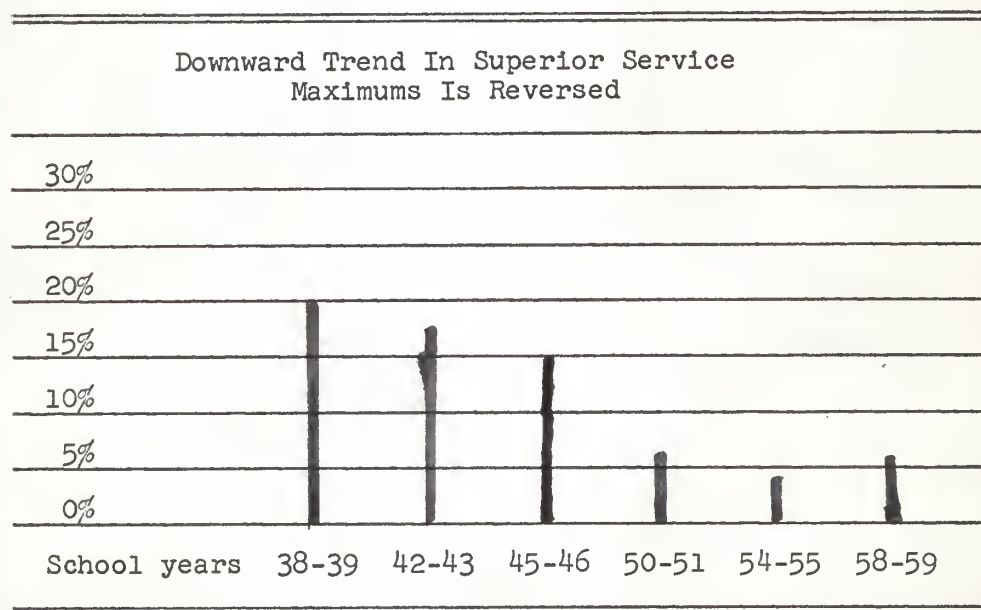
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<sup>1</sup>Jerry B. Mitchell, "Merit Rating; Past, Present and Perhaps," Phi Delta Kappan, January, 1961, p. 139.

which merit type salary schedules were being used. In this respect a comprehensive study concerning the extent of use of merit salary schedules was begun in 1958 by the Research Department of the National Education Association.<sup>1</sup>

The study was designed to ascertain trends over a 20 year period, in the use of superior service maximums in school districts with populations of 30,000 or more. Data reported in the study may be seen in Figure I.

FIGURE I



\*National Education Association Research Bulletin, December, 1959, p. 109.

<sup>1</sup>"Salary Provisions for Quality of Service," National Education Association Research Bulletin, 37:106-110, December, 1959.

Data presented in Figure I show that in 1938, twenty percent of the school districts with a population of 30,000 or more had a provision in their salary schedule for awarding a maximum salary above the normally scheduled amount. In contrast, it can be seen from Figure I that only four percent reported provisions for superior service maximums in 1954-55. On the other hand, data presented in Figure I show that since 1958-59 six and two tenths percent of those school districts reporting had included a superior service maximum. Furthermore, it may be of interest to note that a later study, 1960, reported that eight and three tenths percent of the school districts with populations of 30,000 or more employed superior service maximums.<sup>1</sup>

In the late 1950's there seemed to be an upsurge of interest in, and the use of, merit salary schedules. Gren F. Ovard pointed out that for a three year period, June of 1947 to May of 1950, there were only twenty articles on merit salary scheduling listed in the Education Index. In one month, in 1957 fifteen articles were listed on the subject.<sup>2</sup> Figure I above supported Ovard's

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<sup>1</sup>"Why Few School Systems Use Merit Ratings," National Education Association Research Bulletin, 39:61, May, 1961.

<sup>2</sup>Gren F. Ovard, "Teachers Merit Rating," The American School Board Journal, 139:35, October, 1959.

statement by also showing an upsurge of interest in merit salary scheduling after 1955.

In 1959, the Research Division of the National Education Association completed a study of the use of superior-service maximums, a form of merit rating employed in certain urban school districts. The study included some 2722 salary schedules, or nearly seventy-two percent of all urban school districts. Data reported in the 1959 study are shown in Table I.

TABLE I  
PERCENT OF SALARY SCHEDULES HAVING PROVISIONS  
FOR SUPERIOR-SERVICE MAXIMUMS,  
URBAN DISTRICTS 1958-59

Population groups	Number of salary schedules received	Schedules having provisions for superior-service maximums			
		specified amounts	Authori- zation	Totals no.	%
500,000 and over	25	-	-	-	-
100,000 to 499,999	110	0.9%	2.7%	4	3.6%
30,000 to 99,999	394	2.6%	4.8%	29	7.4%
10,000 to 29,999	1121	3.6%	7.0%	117	10.4%
5,000 to 9,999	800	3.1%	8.4%	92	11.5%
2,500 to 4,999	272	1.8%	10.0%	32	11.8%
All Districts	2722	3.0%	7.1%	274	10.1%

\*National Education Association Research Bulletin, 1959, p. 108.

It may be of interest to note that a higher percentage of smaller districts provided a superior-service



maximum than did larger ones. Table I, for example, shows that eleven and eight tenths percent of all districts in the 2,500 to 4,999 population group reported a merit provision in their salary schedule. Table I also shows that of the 2722 districts reporting, 274, or ten and one tenth percent authorized some kind of superior-service maximum.

It was apparent from later studies that the percentage of school districts actually using superior-service maximums, or other merit provisions, was smaller than the number of districts reporting such provisions. In this regard, the findings of one study to determine the extent of use and non-use of superior-service maximums, by the 2722 school districts cooperating in the aforementioned studies, are shown in Table II.



TABLE II  
 PERCENT OF DISTRICTS REPORTING NONUSE  
 OF SUPERIOR SERVICE MAXIMUMS  
 AND SALARY PENALTY PROVISIONS

Population groups	Maximums superior-service		Penalty provisions	
	Number reported	Percent of nonuse	Number reporting	Percent of nonuse
500,000 and over	-	-	1	100 %
100,000 to 499,999	2	50 %	9	66.7%
30,000 to 99,999	14	43.0%	42	64.3%
10,000 to 29,999	42	35.8%	92	78.3%
5,000 to 9,999	35	42.9%	91	85.7%
2,500 to 4,999	11	45.4%	45	75.6%
All Districts	104	40.3%	280	77.8%

As may be seen in Table II, more than forty percent of the school districts that earlier reported the inclusion of a superior-service maximum, indicated non-use of that provision. Thus from this finding one may conclude that the number of merit salary plans in actual use is small despite the fact that provisions for superior-service maximums is found in a reasonably larger number of school districts.

Additional information concerning the use and non-use of merit provisions reported in the 1957-58 salary schedules is presented in Table III.

TABLE III  
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE 1957-58 SALARY  
SCHEDULE PROVISIONS FOR  
SUPERIOR-SERVICE MAXIMUMS

Population groups	Provisions dropped in 58-59		Provisions continued in 58-59		Schedules not received in 58-59	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
100,000 to 499,999	1	25.0%	3	75.0%	-	11.1%
30,000 to 99,999	5	18.5%	19	70.4%	3	10.8%
10,000 to 29,999	32	28.8%	67	60.4%	12	17.2%
5,000 to 9,999	27	29.0%	50	53.8%	16	45.2%
2,000 to 4,999	6	19.4%	11	35.5%	14	16.9%
All Districts	71	26.7%	150	56.4%	45	

\*Ibid., p. 110.

It can be seen from Table III that almost twenty-seven percent of the school districts reporting the inclusion of a superior-service maximum in 1957-58 had dropped that provision from their 1958-59 salary schedule. Furthermore, with almost seventeen percent of the districts contacted in the study not responding, it may be assumed that the percentage of districts discontinuing merit salary provisions in 1958-59 would have been greater than twenty-seven percent if all districts contacted had cooperated in the study.

On the basis of the pertinent studies conducted by the Research Division of the National Education Association it was evident that several plans which provided for some

salary reward for meritorious service were in operation. It was further evident, however, that while nearly ten percent of all salary schedules studied made some provision for paying a merit salary, a much smaller percentage actually utilized that provision.

#### REPRESENTATIVE SALARY PLANS

A variety of merit salary schedules were found in the pertinent literature. These salary plans differed mainly in the method used to award meritorious teachers; although all of the plans provided some type of merit salary. The purpose of this section of the study is to discuss several of the various merit salary plans revealed in the review of the literature. Such discussion should acquaint the reader with both the common types of merit salary scheduling and issues relative to merit salary scheduling.

The merit salary plans presented here, although of different types, all have one common characteristic. All such plans were based on the assumption that teaching competence varies from teacher to teacher and is not necessarily related to the position held by that teacher or to his hours of college credit or years of teaching experience. In all merit plans studied, the salary paid teachers was based in part upon an evaluation of that teacher's success in addition to professional preparation

and teaching experience.

The Glencoe Illinois Career Teacher Plan. In 1946, as a result of a two year study conducted by a group of teachers and administrators, the Career-Teacher Plan of Glencoe was adopted.<sup>1</sup> The study group based the need for such a plan on the following conclusions:

1. Teacher turnover was due to higher salaries elsewhere. Elementary teachers were not being held.
2. Equal pay for equal work was not being achieved by paying men more than women.
3. Opportunities for continuing professional growth should be granted all teachers.
4. Advancement on salary scale should show adequate evidence of professional growth and competence.
5. Opportunity for the experienced professional teacher is essential.
6. Teaching should never be considered a part-time job.

The plan suggested by the aforementioned study group was more than an effort to raise the salaries of meritorious teachers. It was an attempt to thoroughly involve teachers of Glencoe in the teaching profession as may be seen in the objectives of the plan which are listed below:

1. Teachers recognize themselves as full time professional people.

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<sup>1</sup>Jack Cushman, "The Glencoe Career-Teacher Plan," The Journal of Teacher Education, 8:154-156, June, 1957.

2. Community members recognize teachers as professionals and readily approve building plans and underwrite other school needs.
3. Superior teachers are attracted and retained while poor and insincere teachers are weeded out.
4. Situations which allow for the utilization of various talents are provided.
5. Leadership among teachers is developed.

At the basis of the Glencoe Merit Salary Plan was the belief of the study group that all teachers should be full-time members of the teaching profession. Therefore, it was suggested that all teachers be employed on a twelve-month basis. Such employment would free all teachers for participation in a variety of activities during the summer months. The activities conducted during the summer would include orientation of new teachers, evaluation and revision of the curriculum, and various work shops. Clearly, such activities would provide ample opportunity for professional growth while aiding the effort to improve the educational offerings of the school system. In addition to the summer activities stated above, teachers were to take part in various study groups and evaluative sessions throughout the year enabling them to recognize themselves as full time professional people.

The salary schedule of the Glencoe Career-Teacher Plan provided for three promotional levels with all teachers beginning at the first or probationary-teacher



level. If a teacher had previous experience before entering the Glencoe system he could advance to the next promotional level in two years. Inexperienced teachers however, must remain at least three years at the probationary-teacher level. The salary schedule provided different increments within each promotional level. As teachers advanced through the three promotional levels, the annual increments increased.

The second promotional level was the professional-teacher level. All teachers who indicated continuing competence and some intention of remaining in the system were promoted to the professional-teacher level. Only in cases where a teacher's professional competence was questioned was a teacher denied the promotion.

The final promotional level in the Glencoe Plan was the Career-teacher level. This level was reserved for meritorious teachers who had progressed through the lower levels and had met the following requirements: (1) have at least a Masters Degree, (2) have demonstrated a high level of direct pupil service, outstanding personal qualities professional qualities, professional preparation and training, and community service. There were seven annual increments at the career-teacher level.

The Glencoe Career-Teacher Plan was administered by (1) the Personnel Committee and (2) the Teacher's Affairs Committee. The Personnel Committee was composed of the



Superintendent of Schools, the Assistant Superintendent, School Principals, Chairman of the Committee of the Glencoe School Board, the School Psychologist, and four classroom teachers. Selection of the four classroom teachers was determined by a two-thirds vote of all teachers in the system. The duties of the Personnel Committee, which functioned as an advisory group to the Superintendent, included the following:

1. Assisting in recruitment and selection of personnel.
2. Advising the Superintendent on the advancement of teachers from probationary-teacher level to the professional-teacher level.
3. Consideration of all questions concerning the continuous progress of teachers at the professional-teacher level, and advising the Superintendent accordingly.
4. Advising the Superintendent on the advancement of teachers from the professional-teacher level to the career-teacher level.

Two advantages of the Personnel committee functioning primarily as an advisory group were given. First, the system provided for a central singular head, the Superintendent of Schools. Decisions could be made quickly and firmly without costly delay in time or uncomfortable divided opinions. Secondly, the Superintendent could seek the advice of the Personnel Committee, a process which gave the Superintendent added assurance while giving the teachers a voice in their promotion.

The Teacher's Affairs Committee, composed of the

four classroom teachers on the Personnel Committee and four additional teachers elected by a two-thirds vote of all teachers in the system provide a most important function. This committee, in addition to helping to determine personnel policies, functions as a representative body of the faculty to which members of that group can make appeals. The importance of this function of the Teacher's Affairs Committee is seen in the fact that many times throughout the literature it was suggested that teachers are much more receptive to merit salary plans if they have some means of appealing decisions. For example Harry A. Fosdick, in 1956 wrote:

One common denominator of all successful measuring devices was that teachers were confronted with the evaluation, allowed to discuss it, and given opportunity for appeal where teachers may receive a hearing if their evaluation is undesirable.<sup>1</sup>

More recently, 1961, Robert C. Gibson stated emphatically that:

.....continuing success of merit salary plans depended upon; (1) constant evaluation and change, (2) teachers being acquainted with their evaluation, (3) the acquainting of new teachers with merit salary provisions, and (4) opportunity for appeal on the part of teachers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Harry A. Fosdick, "Merit Rating--How and by Whom," The Nations Schools, 57:58, January, 1956.

<sup>2</sup>Robert C. Gibson, "Paying for Pedagogical Power," Phi Delta Kappan, 42:149, January, 1961.

The Glencoe Career-Teacher Plan follows the recommendation of the aforementioned authorities by providing teachers the opportunity to see and discuss their evaluations. The teachers in the Glencoe schools are visited regularly by members of the Personnel Committee who judge each teacher according to an established criteria. Objective evaluations are sought and teachers who feel they have been dealt with unfairly may appeal to the Teacher Affairs Committee.

The result of the study group's activities and the implementation of the Career-Teacher Plan have resulted in a workable merit salary plan in Glencoe since 1946.

The Ladue, Missouri Public School Teacher Evaluation Program. In 1955, the Ladue Public Schools of Ladue, Missouri adopted a merit salary program.<sup>1</sup> The program, entitled the Ladue, Missouri Teacher Evaluation Program, is based upon the following democratic principles deemed essential to the success of merit salary scheduling:

1. Teachers and community must understand the basic purpose of education.
2. The Board of Education must be interested in providing high quality education.

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<sup>1</sup>R. Virginia Alexander, "Teacher Evaluation Program, Ladue Public Schools," The Journal of Teacher Education, 8:148-153, June, 1957.

3. The community must cooperate by providing a salary schedule high enough to reflect the importance of the position.
4. The effectiveness of teaching must be judged in terms of the objectives of education.
5. Any evaluative program must be made<sup>1</sup> by and for those who are to participate in it.

The criteria for evaluation of classroom teachers in the Ladue public school system was divided into three basic areas as follows:

1. Personal qualities of the superior teacher.
2. Professional growth and training leading to superior teaching.
3. Evidence of superior teaching.<sup>2</sup>

With respect to the first area of evaluative criteria in the Ladue Teacher Evaluation Program, the personal qualities of the superior teacher were held to reflect the following:

1. Strong basic character.
2. Strong mental and physical health.
3. Understanding of the role played by amenities in good personal relations.<sup>3</sup>

In this connection, it may be of interest to note the above mentioned item, "strong basic character," is

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

consistently reported in the pertinent literature as being a requisite of good teaching.

Concerning the second basic area of evaluative criteria, "Professional growth and training leading to superior teaching," the Ladue Teacher Evaluation Program spells out the areas in which the additional training should be manifest. The areas are:

1. Basic training.
2. Experiences which contribute to the effectiveness of teaching.
3. Other experiences in the areas of scholarship, social awareness, etc.
4. Professional organizations, (membership in and participation in).
5. Observance of professional ethics.<sup>1</sup>

The third area of evaluative criteria in the Ladue Teacher Evaluation Program concerns "Evidence of superior teaching." In this regard, the effectiveness of teaching according to the Ladue plan, is evidenced by the degree to which:

1. Pupils are led to govern their own behavior in accordance with democratic ideals, group planning and responsibility and self discipline.
2. Well defined course objectives are achieved.
3. Activities and opportunities are provided to help pupils achieve planned goals.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 150.



4. The needs of the individual pupil are recognized and met.
5. The classroom environment is conducive to training.
6. Wholesome and friendly relationships within the school and community are developed.
7. Constructive evaluation of student growth is carried out.<sup>1</sup>

The responsibility for evaluating teachers, in the Ladue Teacher Evaluation Program, was given to the building principal. This procedure was recommended by the teaching staff because the evaluation required several classroom observations of each teacher in addition to many hours of evaluation of activities outside the classroom. In addition, it may be of interest to note that the Ladue plan suggested that the evaluators must be:

1. Professionally trained in administrative and evaluative method.
2. Must have a philosophy of education consistent with the school.
3. Must be in direct personal contact with people being evaluated.
4. Must have ample time for evaluative visits to classroom and for conferences with people being evaluated.
5. Must have the capacity to evaluate each teacher without bias or prejudice.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 152.



Furthermore, it was recognized in the Ladue Teacher Evaluation Plan that study and change would be necessary for improvement of the plan. Such study revealed that the following changes were necessary to make the plan more nearly accomplish the purposes for which it was intended:

1. Evaluators needed to work toward greater uniformity.
2. The need for orientation meetings and conferences with new teachers to clarify and interpret the program.
3. Certain time consuming procedures need revision to save evaluators time.
4. Communication between the committee on evaluation and each staff needed to be improved.
5. Evaluation of specialized fields needed careful study.<sup>1</sup>

Upon implementation of the changes mentioned above it was held that the plan was not only accomplishing those purposes for which it was intended, but it was also believed that the teachers generally recognized the program as being beneficial and challenging. In addition, it was believed that as a result of the teacher evaluation program a closer working relationship had developed between the administration and the teaching staff.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 152.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

The Professional Growth Plan, Grosse Point, Michigan.

The Professional Growth Plan was adopted by Grosse Point, Michigan as a merit-type salary plan. The Grosse Point plan is unique because of its "earned increment" principle which requires teachers to demonstrate some evidence of personal and professional growth before advancing to the next step on the salary schedule. Evidence of personal growth on the part of teachers in the Grosse Point plan is based on one or more of the following activities:

1. Completion of a regularly approved course at a college or university.
2. Participation in a workshop or other practical course requested by the Board of Education.
3. Service on professional committee serving outside of school hours.
4. Supplementation of teaching with approved work experience.
5. Travel warranting educational and cultural values.
6. Participation in other outstanding professional activities such as serving on a national or state committee.
7. Other professional work recommended by the evaluation committee and approved by the Superintendent.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the "earned increment" principle, the Grosse Point Professional Growth Plan provided for a

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<sup>1</sup>James W. Bushong, "The Story Behind Grosse Point's Professional Growth Program," The Journal of Teacher Education, 8:171, June, 1957.

super maximum. The super maximum is an additional step on the salary schedule above the regular maximum. It is granted to meritorious teachers who continue to demonstrate personal and professional growth.

The success of the Grosse Point Professional Growth Plan has been stated as follows:

"The earned increment principle has brought Grosse Point schools excellent community relations, outstanding professional improvement, and a superior salary schedule."<sup>1</sup>

The Revised Teacher Rating Plan, Ithica, New York.

In 1947, New York State adopted a mandatory salary schedule which provided for four promotional increments. The purpose of this mandatory salary schedule was to encourage professional growth and to attract and retain superior teachers by providing larger increments for teachers judged superior on the basis of a pre-arranged criteria. The insuing discussion of the Ithica, New York Teacher Rating Plan reveals how one New York State school system implemented the state mandated salary schedule.

In 1948, Ithica, New York adopted a seventeen step salary schedule in keeping with the New York State statute. The evaluative process was coupled with a complex mathematical formula. The teacher being evaluated was then assigned an index number which would place him along

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 170.

the salary schedule. In 1952, the formula was deliberately scrapped and replaced with a direct subjective evaluation.

Each teacher in the Ithica plan was evaluated in these five areas: 1.) Direct service to pupils, 2.) Teaching ability, 3.) Contribution of the teacher to the total school program, 4.) Personal qualities of the teacher, and 5.) Professional growth.<sup>1</sup>

Evaluation of teachers in the Ithica Teacher Rating Plan was based upon an Evaluative Guide which was developed cooperatively by the teachers and administrators. In addition to outlining the five general areas in which a teacher was to be evaluated, the Evaluative Guide provided other information to be used in the evaluative process. Also, a statement of the philosophy of education of the Ithica schools was included in the guide. This was deemed desirable as the evaluative guide was developed in relation to the general philosophy of education in Ithica's schools and more specifically in relation to the goals and purposes of the school.

In the Evaluative Guide, various administrative duties were assigned. The responsibility for evaluation of the classroom teacher was placed with the department supervisors and building principals. Each evaluator was

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<sup>1</sup>W. L. Gragg, "Ithica's Revised Teacher Rating Plan," American School Board Journal, 125:42, October, 1952.

required to visit at least fifty minutes each time a teacher was observed. Evaluators could make as many visits as was deemed necessary. Visits might be pre-arranged with teachers, but they did not need to be. The Evaluative Guide also provided for various culminating activities such as scheduled conferences with the teacher being evaluated, as all written evaluations were subject to discussion with the teacher.

The Evaluative Guide was valuable to this study for two reasons. In the first place, it provided additional information concerning the evaluative process, and secondly, it revealed another method of administering merit pay, the accelerated increment. This method awards the meritorious teacher a larger increment than the basic salary schedule. Accordingly, in the Ithica plan, after evaluations were made and discussed, each teacher was assigned a specific increment according to the degree of success achieved by that teacher. Teachers judged superior were assigned larger increments than were those receiving lower ratings. Once the teacher reached the maximum salary provided by the Ithica salary schedule he no longer earned annual increments under the salary plan as super maximums were not provided.

The Newton Awards for Notable Service Plan. As the result of a committee project in 1948, the public school



system of Newton, Massachusetts adopted a merit salary plan.<sup>1</sup>

The plan was entitled the Awards for Notable Service Plan, and incorporated three types of merit salary scheduling: 1.) a multiple track salary schedule, 2.) an accelerated increment plan, and 3.) a super maximum provision.

The multiple track schedule provided three salary levels: 1.) the standard track, 2.) the professional track, and 3.) the master track. Each track operated independently of the other two. Increments provided by the professional level were larger than those provided by the standard track, while increments along the master track were the highest of the multiple track schedule. Increments along all of the tracks came automatically each year, although promotion from one track to the next was accomplished on the basis of personal evaluation by the superintendent. All new teachers started on the first level, the standard track, and were not eligible for advancement to the professional track for three years. After three years, if the teacher held a Baccalaureate Degree and received his principal's recommendation, he was eligible for the professional level. The teacher was then

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<sup>1</sup>Harold B. Gores, "Awards for Notable Service," Journal of Teacher Education, 8:167, June, 1957.



required to advance for two years along the professional track and hold a Masters Degree before he was eligible for promotion to the highest level, the master's track. Promotion to the next highest level on the salary schedule came only after careful evaluation and recommendation by the Principal.

In addition to the multiple track plan discussed above, the Newton system provided for an accelerated increment procedure which granted teachers who had rendered notable service an additional increment of \$150.00 over and above the ordinary increment provided by the particular track they were on. This award, called the "notable service award," constituted an accelerated increment. Teachers were eligible for the award only after they had served in Newton for two years, and every three years thereafter. The accelerated increment provided a means whereby meritorious teachers could be rewarded without being elevated to the next promotional level.

After a teacher had attained the maximum salary provision on any of the three salary tracks, he was still eligible for two additional "notable service awards" of \$150.00, each. These additional awards constituted a third type of merit salary plan, the super maximum, which made it possible for teachers to receive in a minimum of six years \$300.00 above the regularly scheduled maximum.

The committee of teachers and administrators which

established the notable service plan in Newton; Massachusetts set down a criteria for evaluation in the Guide To Identification of The Professional and Master Teacher. The guide was divided into three sections:

1.) personal qualifications, 2.) professional qualifications, and 3.) professional performance. Each section was exhaustive so as to provide the evaluator with a specific standard for evaluation and the teacher with a guide for better teaching.

Administration of the Awards for Notable Service Plan is handled by a school committee. After the building principal has identified notable service he submits his candidate to the assistant superintendent who in turn submits the name to the superintendent who receives the candidate in an interview. The candidate's name is then submitted by the superintendent along with his recommendation to the school committee who makes the award.

Teachers in the Newton system who were nominated for notable service awards were required to demonstrate the following qualifications:

1. The teacher must be superior in classroom activities and associations with pupils.
2. The teacher must constantly maintain friendly relations with other teachers and administrators.
3. The teacher must have confidence in himself and his profession because of the extent and quality of his preparation for teaching and his own personal advancement.

4. The teacher must work enthusiastically for the advancement of education.<sup>1</sup>

The progress of a typical meritorious teacher in the Newton schools may be seen in Table IV. The teacher's progress is based on information concerning the Newton Awards for Notable Service Plan, although the actual amount of the salary provision is suggested by this author and should not be considered authentic.

The Newton, Massachusetts Awards for Notable Service Plan required all teachers to begin on the basic or standard salary track. Promotion to the next salary level or the award for notable service could not be granted until the teacher had served three years or more in the Newton system. Accordingly, the teacher in the example was not promoted to the professional track until after his fourth year in the system. At that time, upon the recommendation of the Principal and fulfillment of all requirements the teacher was promoted by the Superintendent to the professional track. Increments along the professional track were \$200.00 annually, as opposed to the \$150.00 provided by the standard track. Therefore, the teacher in the example receives a salary of \$6000.00 his fifth year in the system.

Notable service awards were granted to meritorious

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 167.

TABLE IV  
A TYPICAL TEACHER'S PROGRESS  
THROUGH THE NEWTON SALARY SCHEDULE  
AS SUGGESTED BY THIS AUTHOR

Years in system	Salary level		
	Standard	Professional	Master
1.	<u>\$5000.00</u>	\$5200.00	\$5400.00
2.	<u>5150.00</u>	5400.00	5450.00
3.	<u>5300.00</u>	5600.00	5700.00
4.	<u>5450.00</u>	5800.00	5950.00
5.	5600.00	<u>6000.00</u>	6200.00
6.	5750.00	<u>6200.00</u>	6450.00
7.	5900.00	<u>6400.00</u>	6700.00
8.	6050.00	<u>6600.00</u>	6950.00
9.	6200.00	<u>6800.00</u>	7200.00
10.	6350.00	<u>7000.00</u>	7450.00
11.	6500.00	7200.00	7700.00
12.	6650.00	7400.00	<u>7950.00</u>
13.	6800.00	7600.00	<u>8200.00</u>
14.	6950.00	7800.00	<u>8450.00</u>
15.	7100.00	8000.00	<u>8700.00</u>
	*7250.00	*8150.00	* <u>8850.00</u>
	*7400.00	*8300.00	*9000.00

Underlined steps indicate the process of the teacher.

\*Salary provisions beyond the fifteenth step represent the super maximums.

teachers on the basis of a recommendation from the teacher's principal. The awards could be granted after a teacher had served in the system for three years and every two years thereafter. In the example, a notable service award was granted at the end of the fifth year which raised the annual increment to \$350.00, resulting in a salary of \$6350.00 as opposed to the \$6200.00 regularly provided by the professional track.

Teachers who had progressed for at least two years along the professional track, held a Masters Degree, and received the recommendation of their building principals were eligible for promotion by the Superintendent to the master track. Accordingly the teacher in the example was promoted to the master track at the end of his tenth year of service. In addition to promotion to the highest salary track, the teacher was granted a second notable service award at the end of his eleventh year of service raising the annual increment for that step to \$400.00 and the annual salary for the twelfth year to \$8100.00 as opposed to the \$6650.00 provided by the basic salary scale.

The Newton salary plan called for a regular maximum salary at the end of fifteen years, however, it provided for two notable service awards to be granted thereafter provided they are not granted within two years of each other. Notable service awards thusly awarded constitute a super maximum for the Newton salary plan. In the



example, one such award was granted, raising the maximum salary from \$8700.00 to \$8850.00. The maximum salary was then held indefinitely.

It may be seen from the example that the actual maximum salary attained by the teacher is \$1700.00 higher than the salary provided by the basic or standard salary track. During the seventeen years of teaching there were six different awards or promotions given. All awards or promotions in the Newton system followed the process of evaluation and recommendation provided by the Guide to Identification of The Professional and Master Teacher.

Although not all teachers in the Newton system reached the maximum salary suggested in the example, the plan does provide for positive identification of the meritorious teacher. Teachers who fail to qualify for notable service awards are nevertheless considered to be successful teachers.

The Newton Awards for Notable Service Plan was adopted in 1948 and with only slight revision is still in successful operation.

West Hartford's Career Salary Plan. The West Hartford, Connecticut public school system employs a merit-type salary schedule that is called a Career Salary Plan. The plan incorporates both the accelerated increment and the super maximum provision of merit-type salary

schedules. The superior teachers in West Hartford moved along the salary scale at an accelerated pace while the regular teacher progressed at an ordinary rate. The regular teacher received an annual increment of \$200.00 while teachers who had been identified as meritorious and had the approval of the School Board received an increment of \$400.00 annually. Teachers who reach the maximum salary provided by the schedule are granted a total of three "career teaching bonuses" of \$500.00 each. Bonuses of this type may be granted every three years.

The process for selection of "career teachers" was outlined by the committee that established the career program. In this respect, nominations for career awards could be made by the principal or any group of three or more teachers. Teachers not nominated by a committee or by the principal could apply for either the increased increment or the super maximum. In all cases, however, the teacher's consent is necessary before his nomination for a career award may be made.

In West Hartford, teachers considered meritorious demonstrated extraordinary success in these areas:

- 1.) skill in teaching, 2.) pupil-teacher relations,
- 3.) staff relations, 4.) professional activities, and

5.) community service.<sup>1</sup>

It may be of interest to note that a teacher-opinion poll in West Hartford revealed that eighty-five percent of the teachers favored the career salary plan while only fifteen percent opposed it. However, those in opposition to the plan reported they had no major objection to the West Hartford plan as such, but opposed merit-type salary plans in general.

Further, the opinion poll revealed that the most objectionable aspect of the salary plan was the use of other teachers on the evaluative committee. On the whole, however, and in spite of recognized weaknesses of the salary plan, it was the opinion of the West Hartford faculty that overall improvement had resulted from the plan as the following statement shows:

"There has been an increase in staff spirit since the adoption of the plan. The majority of the teachers who have not been selected are definitely trying to improve their work. They are trying also to take an active interest in the community affairs and are showing more interest in all school activities, perhaps in anticipation that they will be nominated some time in the future."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Edmund H. Thorne, "West Hartford's Career Salary Plan," The Journal of Teacher Education, 8:145, June, 1957.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 146.

The Schodack Central School District Merit-Type Salary Plan Castleton-on-Hudson, New York. The Schodack Central District School Board, Castleton-on-Hudson, New York, recognized several problems related to salary scheduling in that community. Among those problems identified by the school board were the following: 1.) less successful teachers tended to stay in the system while better teachers moved on to more challenging positions, and 2.) qualified teachers would not even consider a small school district like Schodack unless they were offered some bonus or incentive.

The source of the problem seemed to be in the salary scale. Teachers in the Schodack system were paid on the basis of a preparation-type salary scale. Teachers with equal experience were paid equal salaries providing they held comparable degrees. Teachers who felt they were doing a superior job became increasingly dissatisfied with the lack of reward for their meritorious service and tended to leave, while the teachers who were less successful enjoyed the security of the system and stayed.

Equally significant in the Schodack system was the inability to attract qualified new teachers. It was increasingly difficult to fill positions with qualified teachers because of a lack of applicants. Therefore, a merit-type salary plan was recommended to the teachers of Schodack.

The proposed merit-type salary plan was typical in that it utilized a standard criteria for evaluation. The teachers of Schodack voted the plan down, stating that they preferred a plan where the supervising principal evaluated teachers on the basis of his day-by-day experiences. The opinion of the teachers was that since parents, students, and even other teachers know who the best instructors are, certainly the supervising principal should know.

Accordingly, a one-man, subjective, merit-type plan was established. Each year the supervising principal selects teachers whom he thinks deserve merit pay and the school board accepts or rejects his recommendations. While the Schodack salary evaluation procedures were simple when compared with such procedures in other school systems, it was the belief of the Schodack teachers that any honest school man could handle all of the requirements of a merit system himself.

In the Schodack School system evaluation is based upon the day-by-day experiences of the supervising principal despite the fact that he does not have time for regularly scheduled visits to the classroom. However, teachers are observed from time to time from the corridor and accept this kind of visitation as natural and professional. Information is gathered from other sources also. Comments from parents, students, and other teachers are all considered. One evaluator described the process of



evaluation as follows:

"I hear from parents. I talk with students. In my position I see teachers all day long, and I know what they think of each other. Our district is not blessed with supervisors, so there are no intermediaries and I'm in constant touch with the faculty. Its just a matter of keeping my ears to the ground."<sup>1</sup>

The Schodack plan calls for merit pay to be administered in the form of \$300.00 increments. Up to three increments may be granted and a teacher may receive three increments in three successive years if the supervising principal recommends it. Teachers in the system may receive as much as \$900.00 of merit pay. Once awarded merit pay, a teacher received it every year until withdrawal is recommended by the supervising principal. In addition to the regular merit increments, there are two super maximum steps which may be attained after completing courses of study for "professional growth."

Many questions have been raised concerning this type of evaluation, however, in Schodack it is felt that a subjective evaluation is valid and is administratively more feasible for a small school system. For example, one supervising principal charged that: "I know my teachers so well I don't need a system to award merit pay."<sup>2</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup>Larry Davis, "A Merit Pay Plan For Smaller School Districts," School Management, 5:87, October, 1961.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

loss of objectivity in Schodack is balanced by the intimacy of relations between the teachers and administrator.

The Schodack merit salary plan appears to be successful according to the following statement:

"So far the teachers feel they are getting a fair shake. If there is an occasion for complaint, a teacher who feels that he deserves a recommendation is entitled to take his case to the board. About forty percent of our teachers are receiving merit increments. Those who aren't are broadminded enough to realize they are not the best teachers we have. They are doing a good job, and I tell them so but they accept the fact the other teachers are doing a superior job."<sup>1</sup>

#### ARGUMENTS AGAINST MERIT SALARY SCHEDULING

Study of the pertinent literature revealed numerous arguments against merit salary scheduling. It is the purpose of this section of the report to discuss some of those arguments.

Measuring Teacher Effectiveness. According to certain authorities, one basic weakness of merit salary scheduling is that of measuring teacher effectiveness. In this respect, many authorities believed that teacher effectiveness is too complex to be measured accurately. This belief is based on the conviction that the success of the teacher does not readily lend itself to accurate

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

measurement. Engleman, for example, presented the following reason why he thought measuring teacher effectiveness is inherently a difficult task. He pointed out that the teacher cannot be measured except through the change which comes about in student's attitudes and understandings.<sup>1</sup>

An earlier writer identified the following problems in regard to the difficulty of measuring teacher effectiveness:

1. A teacher functions as a part of a team so how do you measure individual effort? It is obvious that other teachers affect the outcome.
2. Merit of teachers can be measured only in terms of the teacher's services to individuals and society.
3. Many of the effects of good teaching can be carried over into future generations.
4. The effects of good teaching cannot be segregated from the effects of other educative influences.<sup>2</sup>

Burke, in 1961, referred to the problem of measuring teacher effectiveness when the results of that teacher's work may not be revealed until later. He asserted that merit rating of teachers for salary purposes tends to be unfair because the success of achievement of an effective teacher may not materialize in a student's life until

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<sup>1</sup>Finis E. Engleman, "Difficulties and Obstacles Inherent In Merit Rating For Teachers," The Journal of Teacher Education, 8:136, June, 1957.

<sup>2</sup>Arvid J. Burke, "Some Dangers of Merit Measurement," The Nation's Schools, 41:27, January, 1948.

later.<sup>1</sup>

Many authors questioned why merit rating is often accepted in principle but rejected in actual practice. One of the answers to the above point was that a teacher's worth cannot be measured accurately. One author pointed out the following reasons why failure to measure effectiveness has condemned merit rating in practice:

(1) No satisfactory plan could be used by personnel officers to make judgements on teacher effectiveness. As of yet, no criteria has been devised which would allow an evaluator to actually measure the total effectiveness of a teacher.

(2) Little has been done to evaluate the teacher in relation to his non-classroom responsibilities. Yet, most personnel officers felt that their teachers did have a significant responsibility to the community in which they were employed.

(3) In evaluating the complex task of teaching the concern has been with general merit, while we expect from the teacher special or differential abilities. Teachers are measured in terms of general principles such as student-teacher, teacher-teacher relationships, degree of discipline, administrative adaptness and community service.

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<sup>1</sup>Carl J. Megel, "Merit Rating is Unsound," Phi Delta Kappan, 42:154-156, January, 1961.

However, a teacher's worth is actually proven through his special talents which are utilized in affecting some change in a student's life. The teacher uses special talents, understandings, concepts or attitudes which he alone possesses and which are not enumerated and explored by a standardized criteria for evaluating teachers. Therefore, the measuring of a teacher's efficiency, seemed impractical.

(4) Good teaching qualities lie within the teacher and not in relationships with others. Yet, most measuring devices evaluate teachers according to their relationships with others.

(5) Teaching effectiveness has been treated as something abstract or apart from the situation giving rise to it. The failure to recognize that a successful teaching experience occurs within a specific situation with special circumstances and must therefore be evaluated in terms of that situation, has been a major weakness in evaluating teachers. Most measuring devices have not taken into account those special situations.<sup>1</sup>

It was apparent that the principle of merit rating of teachers was accepted by many writers on the subject. However, few believed that merit rating could be practically implemented in any school system as in their

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<sup>1</sup>Orvil S. Barr, "Measurements of Teacher Characteristics and Prediction of Teacher Efficiency," Review of Educational Research, 22:169-174, June, 1952.



opinion the professional task of the teacher is such that it cannot be measured by an ordinary standardized criteria. They held further that the specialized and individual nature of teacher services made the implementation of merit rating impractical. A quotation from the Bureau of Publications, Teacher's College Columbia University supports this point:

"The test of the worth of the teacher is the ability to influence the behavior of the children in his charge."<sup>1</sup>

The opposition to merit rating sees no method yet devised to measure that success.

Who Should Do The Evaluating. Many authors asserted that one glaring weakness of merit rating was the selection of persons qualified to evaluate the teacher. Those most often used as evaluators were building principals, supervisors, superintendents, committees of fellow teachers, and various combinations of administrators and teachers. Regardless of the person selected to evaluate, one can find some opposition to the use of that individual. One author pointed this out when he said that: "The problem of choosing those who are qualified to rate remains to be an obstacle inherent in merit rating."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Allan M. West, "Case for and Against Merit Rating," The School Executive, 69:49, June, 1950.

<sup>2</sup>Engleman, op. cit., p. 138.

A stronger statement appeared in the National Parent-Teacher Association magazine in 1957:

"Quite naturally and frankly, classroom teachers recognize that the normal pressures and prejudices, the likes and the dislikes, the bias of everyday humanity, prevent the actual accomplishment of fair and impartial objective rating. It may be that classroom teachers could approve a merit system were God to do the rating, but we cannot put that trust in mortal men and women. Inevitably favoritism, fears, and human imperfections must corrupt every such system---."1

Study of the literature also revealed a lack of faith in the ability of administrators to rate a teacher in relation to the difficult and complex task to which he has been assigned. This attitude was reflected in one teacher's comment:

"While the logic of merit rating in connection with salary scheduling seems inescapable, most of us are against it because the ninety percent of us who feel superior are afraid that you administrators will not recognize it."2

Another teacher charged that: "Administrators have never been able to decide what significant achievement really is."3

Opposition to the use of fellow teachers as evaluators was also reported in the literature. Opposition

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1"Merit Pay For Teachers," National Parent-Teacher 51:20, June, 1957.

2Earl H. Hanson, "Salary By Merit Rating Is Wrong," The American School Board Journal, 116:25, March, 1948.

3Marcella R. Kelly, "Let Us Have None Of It," The School Executive, 68:56, March, 1949.

to teachers as evaluators centers around the fear that to make some teachers evaluators of other teachers for salary purposes would destroy a cooperative relationship among teachers.

Problems of Administering Merit Plans. Certain authors believed that the problems of administering merit salary plans made such plans impractical. For example, it was pointed out that effective teacher evaluation requires a large amount of preparation. Evaluators would have to be thoroughly trained to evaluate even if a criteria could be established. The Ladue, Missouri Teacher Evaluation Program, for example, called for evaluators to be professionally trained in administrative and evaluative methods and for direct personal contact with the people being evaluated.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the administrative problems posed by the necessity of training enough evaluators, for the task of evaluating all teachers in a large system, there would have to be enough time allotted for all evaluators to visit each teacher several times in class and to hold several conferences with the people being evaluated.<sup>2</sup>

These requirements, deemed necessary for a successful

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<sup>1</sup>Alexander, op. cit., p. 152.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 152.

plan, present several administrative problems for merit salary scheduling.

Disintegration of Critical Relationships. A considerable amount of criticism devoted to merit rating plans was based on what authors believed to be the disintegration of critical relationships. Their position was that merit rating destroys teacher-supervisor, teacher-teacher, and teacher-student relationships. This disintegration of relationships destroys teacher effectiveness.

Many authors referred to the tendency for merit salary plans to destroy teacher-supervisor or teacher-administrator relationships. The belief that merit rating results in less profitable relationships between the teacher and the supervisor can be seen in the following statement by Hanson: "An autocratic superior-inferior attitude is bound to creep into supervisor-teacher relationships."<sup>1</sup>

Other authors agree that the relationship between the teacher and his supervisor would become strained whenever the supervisor was charged with the responsibility of rating the teacher. One administrator stated that this disintegration in relationships makes administrator's and supervisor's tasks more difficult because teachers tend to

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<sup>1</sup>Hanson, op. cit., p. 25.

draw into themselves and become less genuine and cooperative."<sup>1</sup>

One college professor identified the following reasons why merit rating was destructive to teacher-supervisor relationships:

1. Merit rating is oppressive politically because the ones who are affected do not originate it. That is most merit systems are imposed from above.
2. Merit rating tends to be authoritarian rather than operational. This represents a pattern of thinking on the part of the administration which is threatening to the teacher.
3. Merit rating is punitive philosophically in that it rewards a minority while punishing a majority. It is considered then by most of the staff to be punishment rather than reward.<sup>2</sup>

One author summarized the problem of teacher-supervisor relationships thusly:

"Barriers are drawn between teachers and supervisors who must evaluate. Thus, improvement is impaired. Rating reduces the supervisor to the position of an inspector and teachers become apple-polishers rather than sincere teachers."<sup>3</sup>

Critics also concerned themselves with the effect of merit salary plans on teacher-teacher relationships. It was believed that the existence of a salary plan which

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<sup>1</sup>Kelly, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>2</sup>C. Currien Smith, "Why Teachers Dislike Merit Rating," The Educational Digest, 25:19, April, 1960.

<sup>3</sup>Allen M. West, "The Case For and Against Merit Rating," The School Executive, 39:61-63, June, 1950.



elevates some teachers above others, sometimes on the basis of the teacher's harmonious relationships with the evaluator rather than actual success in teaching, strikes at the very heart of cooperative teaching. Several authors considered the problem of competition among teachers for salary purposes. They pointed out that many teachers advance the art of apple-polishing rather than teaching. These authorities feared an atmosphere in which teachers were encouraged to discredit others in order to raise their own rating. One author charged that: "Merit rating is psychologically disintegrative because it forces competition in a situation which calls for cooperation."<sup>1</sup>

Teaching effectiveness depends upon the cooperation of several teachers. The development of the student represents the collective work of many. Any system which tends to destroy this cooperation is negative rather than positive. Merit salary scheduling, because it fosters competition, was believed by many to be destructive to inter-staff cooperation.

In regard to teacher-student relationships, most objections centered around the belief that frustrations on the part of the teacher would result in poor teaching. It was pointed out that teachers could be more interested in winning the approval of supervisors than genuinely working

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, op. cit., p. 19.

with students. Teachers would cater to the whims of the rater rather than developing a natural genuine relationship with his students. It was also pointed out that merit rating puts a premium on the absence of problems. Teachers would therefore, try to suppress problems rather than solving them.<sup>1</sup> Thus, a major function of the teacher would be destroyed.

There was sufficient evidence in the literature to indicate some fear that teachers would be forced to work in a tense atmosphere and therefore destroy a natural, workable, relationship with students.

Merit Salary Scheduling Results In Teacher Insecurity. Several authors object to merit salary scheduling because of the resulting insecurity of teachers. They point out that anxiety and insecurity would be the resultant effect of subjecting teachers to an elaborate system of evaluation and reward. Merit rating, according to those critics, results in acknowledged mediocrity and discouragement on the part of teachers not recognized and rewarded. One author reveals this problem when he writes:

"The top twenty-five percent of teachers only will be designated as superior while the other seventy-five percent will be doomed to

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<sup>1</sup>Megel, op. cit., p. 155.

with students. Teachers would cater to the whims of the rater rather than developing a natural genuine relationship with his students. It was also pointed out that merit rating puts a premium on the absence of problems. Teachers would therefore, try to suppress problems rather than solving them.<sup>1</sup> Thus, a major function of the teacher would be destroyed.

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<sup>1</sup>Megel, op. cit., p. 155.

acknowledged mediocrity resulting in frustration and wrecked morale."<sup>1</sup>

Hanson further writes that the lack of selection on the part of many teachers would prove to be destructive to their own self-confidence and only result in frustration and discontent,<sup>2</sup> while Katz in criticizing merit salary scheduling holds that the net result of such frustration and discontent is the weakening of critical attitudes and sapping of teaching energies.<sup>3</sup>

Another author pointed out that merit rating might result in less efficient teaching because of the disintegration of staff morale. He states:

"The extent to which merit should be a factor in salary policy depends upon how it affects morale and operational achievements. No personnel policy is justified unless it increases the total effectiveness of the staff. The question then is to what extent will meritorious teachers offset the loss of moral of the judged mediocre teacher."<sup>4</sup>

Other authorities charged that teachers would worry that they were not going to receive top ratings, and after only a few are accepted those not receiving top ratings would worry about why they didn't receive them. These authorities believed that merit rating under these

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<sup>1</sup>Earl H. Hanson, "Salary by Merit Rating is Wrong," The American School Board Journal, 116:25, March, 1948.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>3</sup>Katz, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>4</sup>Burke, op. cit., p. 27.

circumstances would tend to decrease teacher efficiency. One author was certain that, "Merit rating, would result in a decrease in teacher efficiency because it strikes at the security of the teacher."<sup>1</sup>

Another by-product of teacher insecurity is the loss of desire to improve. One author who explored this problem pointed out that the failure to be recognized as superior, while teachers of apparent less quality are rated superior, would result in frustration and a lack of drive.<sup>2</sup> While only a few teachers will consider merit rating a system of reward, the vast majority of teachers will consider it punishment.

Teacher Conformity. It was pointed out in the literature that one dangerous result of merit salary scheduling is the tendency to destroy creative teaching. It was believed that teachers would conform to a stereotyped view of the meritorious teacher rather than following his own creative inclinations. This frequently supported view is succinctly stated by one teacher who said: "The teacher who wishes to advance must conform to the opinion of the

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<sup>1</sup>Jones M. Mason, "It Won't Work Yet," Kansas Teacher, 65:15, March, 1957.

<sup>2</sup>Currien C. Smith, "Why Teachers Dislike Merit Rating," The Educational Digest, 25:18-21, April, 1960.



rater."<sup>1</sup>

Community Disapproval. Another weakness of merit rating was cited by Hanson who pointed out that scheduling of teacher's salaries on the basis of merit ratings would be offensive to many communities. He wrote that:

"In the final analysis, all communities will reject any system which means only twenty-five percent of their children can be taught by superior teachers. Community pressure will result in elevation of all teachers to a superior level and the system will break down."<sup>2</sup>

The effect a merit rating program would have on the local community was considered by several authors. Some pointed out that local tax-payers would see the merit rating plan as a more efficient use of their money, but others rejected this idea. One author, for example, pointed out that parents of children assigned to regular teachers, in a system where some teachers are judged superior, would be resentful.<sup>3</sup>

Administrative Trick. A review of the pertinent literature revealed still another argument against merit salary scheduling. Merit scheduling, according to several authors, is held to be a cheap administrative scheme to

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<sup>1</sup>Megel, op. cit., p. 155.

<sup>2</sup>Hanson, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

make a school system appear more successful and progressive. One author charged that many merit plans are rejected by communities and teachers as cheap schemes to make salaries look higher than they are.<sup>1</sup>

The above point of view was supported by another author who writes:

"Merit pay is a substitute proposed by business minded educators who are trying to avoid the real solution which is across the board pay increases."<sup>2</sup>

The same author further writes:

"Merit rating is a dangerous mirage and cannot relieve the teacher shortage. No dollar and cents method of rating teachers can be presented as a smoke screen covering the real needs of education."<sup>3</sup>

Other authors pointed out that merit rating does not realize the objectives for which it is intended, i.e., 1.) improvement of quality of teaching, and 2.) solving the teacher shortage problem.

In regard to the first objective, it was pointed out that rating cannot improve the quality of teaching because teachers themselves many times oppose the system. In one instance it was written that merit salaries could never

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<sup>1</sup>Katz, op. cit., p. 162.

<sup>2</sup>Megel, op. cit., p. 155.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 155.

rehabilitate the "I don't give a damn attitude."<sup>1</sup>

Authors who believe that merit rating tends to create anxiety and insecurity resulting in frustration and discouragement, strengthened the argument that merit rating does not improve quality of education. One such author stated that he preferred a system where improvement of all teachers was stressed rather than just a select few.<sup>2</sup>

In regard to the second objective, solving the teacher shortage problem, it was pointed out that teachers generally disapprove of merit rating and would therefore not be attracted by a school system utilizing such a salary schedule. The belief that merit rating systems can attract and hold superior teachers is rejected by many authors. One author, for example, asserted that because of the limitations placed upon merit, most teachers will stay clear of merit rating systems.<sup>3</sup>

It may be significant to note that the review of the pertinent literature, revealed more publications opposing merit salary scheduling than supporting it. It may also be significant to note that certain arguments against merit salaries were specifically dealt with in some of the merit rating plans suggested in the previous section. In this

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Ovard, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

respect efforts were made to meet the weaknesses identified and in some cases there was significant success.

Most of the opposition to merit salary scheduling centered around the following items:

1. The difficulty of measuring teacher effectiveness.
2. The problem of selecting those responsible for evaluating teachers.
3. The problem of administering merit salary plans.
4. The disintegrating of critical relationships.
5. Resulting teacher insecurity.
6. Teacher conformity.
7. Administrative schemes covering real solutions of problems in education.

Certain writers were able to point out specific problems involving specific plans, but generally, opposition to merit salary scheduling in the school systems of the United States centers around the above points. It was apparent that this opposition which has resulted in less than ten percent of school systems using it, was based upon a well substantiated position.

#### ARGUMENTS SUPPORTING MERIT SALARY SCHEDULING

Study of the pertinent literature revealed several arguments for merit-type salary scheduling. It is the purpose of this section of the report to present some of those arguments.

Teachers Should Be Paid According To Their Worth.

Most authors, writing in support of merit salary scheduling, base their arguments upon the conviction that teachers should be rewarded according to their success in teaching. They believed that teacher's salaries should be based not only upon the amount of time spent in college, or years of experience in teaching, but in addition, upon the teacher's success in affecting some change in the lives of the young people he encounters. In agreement with this position, was one author who pointed out that teachers, like other professionals, should be paid according to the quality of their work.<sup>1</sup>

Considerable concern was expressed in the literature over salary schedules which failed to adequately reward teachers who were deemed successful. Many proponents of merit salary scheduling contend that teaching success should be a significant factor in determining teacher's salaries.

Merit Rating Is Consistent With Practices In Industry. One author concluded that the principle of merit rating is consistent with those in Civil Service and industry. He pointed out that under such disciplines the employee is evaluated in terms of the task to which he is

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<sup>1</sup>Ovard, op. cit., p. 35.



assigned and is rewarded accordingly. Therefore, merit rating of the classroom teacher for salary purposes is consistent with practices in other vocations.<sup>1</sup>

Quality of Teaching Improves With Merit Pay. Perhaps equally important to the merit rating controversy was the position, taken by many authors, that under merit salary programs the over-all quality of teaching is improved. One author defended this point of view when he pointed out that in most activities competition forces performance.<sup>2</sup>

Another author supports merit salary scheduling with the following statement:

"Merit rating stimulated teachers to look at themselves and evaluation is the first step in professional improvement.----merit schedules furnish incentives and a challenge to advance beyond the usual plateaus of effectiveness."<sup>3</sup>

Further support of merit salary scheduling was given by another author who pointed out that the single salary schedule lends security to the incompetent and holds him in a task which is beyond his interests and capabilities. Merit rating, on the other hand forces the individual to compete and weeds out the incompetent and those who don't

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<sup>1</sup>West, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>E. A. Hartsook, "Merit Rating--Key to Better Pay and Better Teaching," Phi Delta Kappan, 42:158, January, 1961.

<sup>3</sup>West, op. cit., p. 50.

care. Other authors supported the view that merit rating improves the quality of teaching. Accordingly, one author summarized the argument thusly: "There normally will be an overall improvement under a merit salary plan because those who are willing to work are rewarded while those who want only to get by are not."<sup>1</sup>

Merit Rating Improves Teacher Morale. The argument that merit rating positively affects teacher morale was also offered in the case for merit salary scheduling. In this regard, a representative of the Employee Relations Department of Esso Standard Oil Company, in a study of "Employee incentives" in industry, found that: "Financial incentives are necessary for good employee relations."<sup>2</sup>

The argument that merit rating systems promote teacher morale, was supported by other authors. Ovard, for example, wrote that merit scheduling promoted teacher morale because teachers are professionally and socially challenged to rise higher.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hartsook, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>2</sup>Charles E. Britton, "Incentives In Industry," The Journal of Teacher Education, 8:141, June, 1957.

<sup>3</sup>Ovard, op. cit., p. 40.

The Teacher's Social Status Is Improved. Another argument for merit rating concerns the failure of teachers to be recognized socially and professionally in the community. Misner, in the following quotation, asserts that it is this lack of recognition that is the very basis of our current educational crisis:

"Whether we like it or not, the single greatest weakness in the educational scheme of things in the United States has been our failure to recognize the vital and strategic roles played by teachers."<sup>1</sup>

Several authors attested to the fact that the teacher's status in the community is improved through merit rating and better teaching results. For example, this point of view is revealed in the following statement made by one of the proponents of merit salary scheduling:

"Social position in a community is not conferred, but is earned by the individual. If there is no evidence of superior work, training, and dedication, status is not improved."<sup>2</sup>

Merit Rating Is Good Public Relations. Glen F. Ovard holds that the community is more willing to pay for education when better teaching is developed through merit salary scheduling.<sup>3</sup> Other proponents of this view point out that

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<sup>1</sup>Paul J. Misner, "The Merit Rating Issue," Report of Studies to the National School Board Association, 1951, Organization and Action Project, August, 1958, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup>Hartsook, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>3</sup>Ovard, op. cit., p. 45.

community acceptance of a merit salary plan is high because taxpayers like to think they are getting their money's worth in education.

Merit Rating Is Valuable For Other Administrative Tasks. At least one writer on merit salary scheduling, Allan M. West believes that merit rating facilitates certain administrative tasks and is for that reason alone useful. He states that the records required for a merit rating program would be useful in other administrative tasks. Those systems with tenure would be secure where rating was normal and accepted, and evaluation for tenure would be facilitated.<sup>1</sup> Ordinary promotion of teachers would be simplified in systems where rating was common.

Teachers Are Rated Already. Toalson, in 1957, pointed out that merit rating as a practice is here already as teachers are rated many times throughout the year. Reasons given by Toalson for his evaluation are (1) Systems without salary schedules must evaluate teachers in order to establish salaries; (2) Specialists are evaluated and rated at the time of their selection and promotion as are all teachers; and (3) Coaches, music teachers, counselors, and administrators are constantly evaluated in all education

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<sup>1</sup>Allan M. West, "The Case For and Against Merit Rating," The School Executive, 69:49, June, 1950.

systems. Toalson concluded thusly: "Rating is inevitable. It involves evaluation which is a valuable and most necessary aid in determining any type of success."<sup>1</sup>

#### ESTABLISHING THE MERIT SALARY PLAN

The purpose of this section of the report is to discuss selected administrative practices which, according to authorities on merit rating, would insure the effectiveness of the salary plan.

"A merit policy does not function it is not accepted by the professional staff with whom it is used---the most effective method of securing this cooperation is to utilize the staff in the initial formulation of the plan."<sup>2</sup>

With the quotation above, McKenna has emphasized the most frequently mentioned practice for insuring the success of a merit salary plan: teachers, board members and administrators should be included in the initial planning activities. That this practice was mentioned most frequently should not be startling because administrative policy imposed from the top is usually resented by teachers. Furthermore, it is logical that through cooperative planning the acceptance of a merit salary plan would be much broader as both teachers and administrators would try to make the

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<sup>1</sup>Frank B. Toalson, "Its Here Now," Kansas Teacher, 65:37, March, 1957.

<sup>2</sup>McKenna, op. cit., p. 15.



plan work when all were involved in the initiatory activities.

Another practice for insuring success in a merit salary plan is that of cooperative planning on the part of the faculty and administrative staff regarding teacher evaluation. In this respect, Philip J. Hickey wrote:

"If teacher evaluation is to have a salutary effect, the criteria to be used in appraising teaching and its impact on the curriculum, should be prepared and applied cooperatively by faculty and administrative staff."<sup>1</sup>

Douglas S. Arbuckle, states that evaluation, the heart of a merit plan, should be performed by a committee of both supervisors and teachers. He suggested, for example, a seven man committee composed of the superintendent, a principal or supervisor and five senior teachers elected by the faculty.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Hickey, mentioned above, asserts that merit plans should not only be instituted cooperatively but also administered cooperatively by faculty and administration. Most merit plans, discussed earlier in the study, made some provision for involving teachers as well as administrators in the administration of the salary plan. To most authorities, it seemed logical that if merit plans were

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<sup>1</sup>Dr. Philip J. Hickey, "A Review of Research," Kansas Teacher, 65:46, March, 1957.

<sup>2</sup>Douglas S. Arbuckle, "A Merit Salary Schedule," Clearing House, 32:398, March, 1958.

more acceptable to teachers when teachers had some part in instituting them, they would be more successful if the teachers were involved in the administration of the plan.

Certain writers point out that teacher's acceptance of a salary plan depends upon the basic salary provision. Thus, these authors state that merit salary plans based on an already acceptable salary schedule are more likely to be successful than such a plan based on a basic salary provision not acceptable to teachers. On the other hand, authorities pointed out that where teachers were discontented with the salary schedule, merit salary plans would be destined to failure. Accordingly, it was asserted that merit salary plans must be based on already acceptable salary schedules if they are to be successful. In this regard, Paul J. Misner, in reviewing the Ladue, Missouri merit-type salary plan, asserted that one factor basic to the success of that plan was that the basic salary schedule already reflected the importance of the teacher's task.<sup>1</sup>

Another practice considered essential to the success of any merit type salary schedule is that of providing substantial increase in salary for meritorious teachers. With respect to this point, McKenna stated that merit plans

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<sup>1</sup>Paul J. Misner, "The Merit Rating Issue," Reports of Seven Studies To The National School Boards Association, 1951 Organization and Action Project, August, 1958, p. 43.

must be worthwhile to teachers if teachers are to give their interest and acceptance.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, he asserted that a merit reward should be a substantial award such as a fifty to one hundred percent increase over basic salary schedule increments.

McKenna further wrote that honesty of purpose was considered a necessity in initiating and operating a merit salary plan. Merit plans, should not be instituted as an attempt to cut expenses, but to honestly reward meritorious teachers.

Certain authors deem it necessary that the merit salary system be based on a broad criteria for evaluation. Such criteria should include not only a variety of activities in which the teacher would be involved, but should also cover a reasonable span of time. In regard to the length of time involved in evaluation of a teacher, McKenna also suggested that evaluation should cover at least a two year span.<sup>2</sup> Information secured in this manner would be broad and inclusive because several different activities over a period of time would be involved. Therefore, the validity of the evaluation, which was identified earlier as a serious weakness of merit-type salary plans, would be strengthened.

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<sup>1</sup>John J. McKenna Jr., op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

Another practice, believed by some authors to be essential to the success of merit salary plans, was that of providing some means of appeal for teachers who for some reason felt they were not being rated fairly. One author, for example, asserted that teachers needed not only assurance that they were being evaluated properly and correctly but that they had some means of appealing their case if they felt they were being rated unfairly.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, most successful merit plans granted each teacher a conference with his evaluator and or a means of appeal. The Gencoe Career-Teacher Plan, discussed in an earlier section of the report, provided for a Teacher's Affairs Committee to which faculty members could appeal. The Ithica, New York merit salary plan had a similar provision for teacher appeal. Speaking of the matter of appeal, Harry A. Fosdick, asserted that one common denominator of all successful merit rating plans was that teachers had an opportunity to receive a hearing if their evaluation is undesirable.<sup>2</sup>

Several authors assert that a significant factor in the success of any merit salary plan is the recognition on the part of any merit planning committee that all salary plans be individualized to fit a specific system. The

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Fosdick, op. cit., p. 58.

principle of fitting a merit plan to a specific system is met by utilizing the cooperation of several local professionals and lay-people in the formulation of the plan. If both teachers and administrators are utilized in the initiatory activities, the merit plan devised will be more successful because it will be tailored to the system by those who know it best. In this regard, Charles F. Haughey, and Merle W. Tate recognized this principle when in their conclusions to a report on teacher acceptance of merit rating they noted that:

"Opinion about merit rating is strongly influenced by intra-staff and intra-district conditions. Thus plans must be individualized to fit each district."<sup>1</sup>

The necessity of individualized merit salary plans was also recognized by Arbuckle when he wrote that merit plans would have to go into effect gradually in any one system.<sup>2</sup> This statement reflects an awareness that a merit salary plan must be flexible enough to form itself to the system using it.

One author broadened the above principle when he proposed that all merit salary plans should grow out of

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<sup>1</sup>Merle W. Tate and Charles F. Haughey, "Teachers Rate Merit Rating," The Nation's Schools, 62:48, September, 1958.

<sup>2</sup>Arbuckle, op. cit., p. 395.



and implement the school system's philosophy of education.<sup>1</sup> In the Ithica Teacher Rating Plan, Ithica, New York, the Evaluative Guide which was the basis for evaluation of teachers in that merit salary plan, included a statement of the school system's philosophy of education because the merit plan was to be developed and operated in relation to the general philosophy of education in Ithica's schools. No merit salary plan can be justified if it does not help achieve the goals and purposes of the school system.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purposes of this study were; (1) to show the extent to which merit-type salary schedules are used in the United States, (2) to develop an understanding of the basic issues of the current merit rating controversy, (3) to identify the major issues in planning, administering and evaluating merit salary scheduling, and (4) to present authoratative opinion concerning the establishment of a merit salary plan.

The study employed an intensive review of selected literature contained in the Kansas State University and Fort Hayes State College libraries. The major part of the pertinent literature was found in periodicals and selected bulletins and was identified through the Education Index.

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<sup>1</sup>McKenna, op. cit., p. 16.

The study was limited to the pertinent literature of a more recent date, due to the fact that most merit salary plans now in operation have been instituted in the last two decades. Because there has not been sufficient time to evaluate plans instituted since the late nineteen fifties, the major part of the study was also limited to the literature prior to 1960.

In 1938, twenty per cent of the school districts in the United States with a population of 30,000 or more provided for a superior service maximum, a form of merit salary scheduling employed by certain school districts. Although the number of school systems employing such a salary schedule dropped to four per cent in 1954, the trend was reversed in the 1955-56 school year and by 1958-59 the number of school districts reporting such a merit-type salary provision was about six per cent. The reversal of the trend in number of school systems reporting a superior service maximum coincided with an apparent upsurge of interest in the merit salary schedule which occurred in the late 1950's.

The literature revealed a larger percentage of smaller school districts, districts with a population less than 30,000 employing a merit-type schedule than did the larger ones.

Although it was apparent that about ten per cent of all school districts reporting a salary schedule, reported

a merit salary provision, it was also apparent that less than ten per cent actually use them. The literature further revealed that in some cases as many as forty per cent of the systems reporting a merit salary provision later reported non-use of that provision. Also revealed in the literature was the fact that twenty-seven per cent of the districts reporting a merit salary provision in one year had dropped that provision the following year.

A variety of merit salary plans were revealed in the pertinent literature. Three such plans included; (1) the multiple track salary schedule which employed various salary tracks along which teachers progressed, (2) the accelerated increment procedure which provided for larger increments for meritorious teachers along a regular salary schedule, (3) and the superior service maximum which provided for merit teachers increments or bonuses beyond the final step of the salary schedule.

In most cases, merit salary plans were administered by members of the administrative staff such as the building principal or the superintendent of the system. The literature also revealed that in some cases teachers participated with school officials in administering merit salary plans.

With respect to evaluating teachers where merit salary plans were in operation, the criteria employed centered around; (1) personal qualifications,

(2) professional growth, (3) and evidence of superior teaching. In certain plans such items as intra-staff relations, teacher-student relations, and community service were also considered. Further, the procedures employed in evaluating teaching varied from a detailed guide for evaluators to follow to a completely subjective evaluation made by one individual.

The following items were cited in the literature as arguments against merit salary scheduling; (1) the inherent difficulty of measuring teacher effectiveness, (2) the problem of finding qualified and objective evaluators, (3) the difficulty of administering a merit salary plan, (4) merit salary scheduling results in teacher insecurity, (5) merit rating results in teaching conformity, (6) communities would be dissatisfied where only one fourth of the children are taught by superior teachers, (7) merit salary scheduling is an administrative trick to make salaries look higher and systems more progressive.

Items cited in the literature in support of merit salary scheduling are; (1) teachers should be paid according to their worth, (2) merit rating is consistent with procedures employed in industry, (3) quality of teaching would be improved, (4) teacher morale would be improved, (5) and data resulting from rating procedures would be valuable for other administrative tasks.

The procedures most frequently reported as being

pertinent to the establishment of a successful merit plan are as follows: (1) the initial planning for a merit plan should include teachers, administrators, and board members, (2) merit salary plans must be based on already acceptable salary schedules, (3) merit salary rewards must be substantial in size, (4) merit salary plans must be honest in purpose, (5) the criteria for evaluating teachers should be broad, covering a variety of activities and extended over a period of time, (6) merit rating plans should provide teachers with some means of appealing decisions; (7) salary plans must be tailored for a specific system and must be flexible enough to fit that system, (8) and merit salary plans should be consistent with the school system's philosophy of education.

Conclusions. On the basis of the findings of this study it is apparent that while at least ten per cent of the school systems in the United States reportedly have a merit-type salary schedule such schedules are employed in fewer than ten per cent of the systems. A conclusion that may be drawn from the preceding statement is that certain school systems which report merit salary provisions do not use them while certain other school systems drop the provisions altogether.

Inasmuch as merit salary plans are based on the assumption that teaching competence does not necessarily



depend upon hours of college credit or years of teaching experience it is evident that considerable concern exists over evaluating teaching merit. Support of this view is seen in the inherent difficulty in measuring teacher effectiveness and the problem of finding qualified and objective evaluators.

Also evident from the study was the fact that in certain cities a comprehensive study of the school system preceded the implementation of a merit salary schedule. Presumably, in these cases, merit salary plans were instituted as part of an effort to upgrade the total educational offerings of the school systems.

The criteria most frequently used to determine merit awards is "superior teaching." In several of the merit salary plans studied, however, merit awards require continued professional growth and training of the teacher as well as evidence of superior teaching. From this one may assume that merit-type salary schedules are not intended to replace the criteria for promotion on the preparation-type salary schedule, but to supplement it.

Although a variety of merit-type provisions were revealed in the literature the most frequently reported provision was the super-maximum. Further, the extent to which super-maximum salary provisions are employed in school systems throughout the United States is representative of the actual extent of use of merit salary

scheduling.

Many of the merit salary plans reported in the study do not provide merit rewards for teachers until they have completed three or more years of successful teaching. In some respects, therefore, one may conclude that merit salary plans may tend to hold teachers in a more permanent capacity and encourage the development of more established career teachers. On the other hand, it is unlikely that teachers who tend to move frequently from system to system would ever be considered for a merit award.

The merit salary plans of many of the systems studied included a detailed description of the criteria and processes used for evaluating teaching. On this basis it may be concluded that many of those involved in establishing and administering merit salary provisions consider such evaluation to be of critical importance in merit salary scheduling.

Since teaching tends to be a cooperative effort involving several members of the teaching staff, and learning involves the interplay of many personalities, the relationships between the persons involved are important. In view of the concern of schoolmen in regard to these important relationships, one may conclude that some attention, at least, has been given to the argument that such relationships may be threatened by merit salary scheduling schemes.

In conclusion it seems appropriate to emphasize the fact that community relations are of major importance to schoolmen as communities take an active interest in their school systems and the attendant school policies. In this respect, the study revealed that considerable attention was given to community relations in both the initiatory and evaluative stages of the merit salary plans studied.

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A STUDY OF SELECTED LITERATURE  
PERTAINING TO MERIT SALARY SCHEDULING  
IN UNITED STATES' SCHOOL SYSTEMS

by

CALVIN C. CORMACK

B. A., University of Kansas, 1959

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

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The purposes of this study were; (1) to show the extent to which merit-type salary schedules are used in the United States, (2) to present issues in merit salary scheduling, (3) to identify major concepts in planning, administering and evaluating merit salary scheduling, and (4) to present authoratative opinion concerning the establishment of merit salary plans.

The procedure employed in conducting this study was an intensive review of the pertinent literature contained in libraries of Kansas State University and Fort Hayes State College.

Analysis of the pertinent literature revealed that in 1938, twenty per cent of the school districts in the United States with populations of 30,000 or more did provide a merit salary plan. By 1954, however, the percentage of systems providing such salary plans was only four per cent. By 1958, the downward trend had reversed, reaching about six per cent in that year.

Regarding merit salary scheduling according to school district size, it was evident from the literature that the percentage of small school districts employing a merit type schedule was greater than that of large school districts. The respective percentages are approximately 12.0 and 4.0 per cent.

The study also revealed that while approximately ten per cent of school districts included merit-type salary

provisions, fewer than six per cent, actually used or retained that provision in subsequent years.

The study revealed three typical provisions for awarding merit salaries: (1) the multiple track salary schedule, (2) the accelerated increment procedure, and (3) the superior service maximum or super maximum.

The tendency for merit salary plans to be administered by members of the administrative staff was evident in the study. However, many plans provided for teacher participation in planning and administering such salary plans.

The following arguments against merit salary scheduling were reported in the pertinent literature: (1) the inherent difficulty of administering a merit salary plan, (2) merit salary scheduling results in teacher insecurity, (3) merit rating results in teaching conformity, (4) communities would be dissatisfied where only one fourth of the children are taught by superior teachers, (5) merit salary scheduling is an administrative trick to make salaries look higher and systems more progressive.

Arguments given in support of merit salary scheduling were: (1) teachers should be paid according to their worth, (2) merit rating is consistent with procedure employed in industry, (3) quality of teaching would be improved, (4) teacher morale would be improved, and (5) data from rating procedures would be valuable for other administrative tasks.



The study also considered procedures frequently held pertinent to the establishment of a successful merit plan.

From the literature reviewed, it may be concluded that: (1) certain school systems reporting merit salary provisions do not use those provisions, while other school systems drop the provisions altogether, (2) concern exists among schoolmen over the problem of evaluating teaching effectiveness, (3) merit salary plans in certain school systems constitute an effort to upgrade those school systems (4) merit salary plans are designed to supplement criteria for promotion on the preparation-type salary schedule, (5) some concern has been given to the argument that merit salary plans threaten critical relationships in the learning situation.