Views toward merit pay by certificated personnel in the Griffin-Spalding County school system

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VIEWS TOWARD MERIT PAY BY CERTIFICATED PERSONNEL IN THE GRIFFIN - SPALDING COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF SPECIALIST IN EDUCATION

BY
MAY DOROTHY SAMPSON

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
ATLANTA, GEORGIA
JULY 1989

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APPENDIX D - COPYRIGHT PAGE

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May Dorothy Sampson

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This study was undertaken to present the views of elementary, middle school and high school certificated personnel in the Griffin-Spalding County School System toward merit pay and to determine whether these views positive or negative. An educational opinionnaire was designed and pilot tested on a small group of central office personnel, including two schoolbased administrators. The pilot test opinionnaire instrument was calculated at a coefficient alpha reliability of .78. Following the pilot testing, the opinionnaire instrument was distributed to 100 elementary, middle school and high school certificated personnel in the Griffin-Spalding County School System. Sixty four percent of the total opinionnaires distributed were returned. From the tabulation and analytical treatment of the data, it was concluded that certificated personnel in the Griffin-Spalding County School System displayed strong negative attitudes about merit pay as the means to reward master teachers or superior teachers. Participants' responses suggest strongly that there is no fair way to implement any form of merit
pay. It was also concluded that the certificated personnel generally held positive attitudes about their overall commitment to the educational system and about the educational system in Griffin-Spalding County. Negative views reported regarding the ability of the school system to provide for a fair and impartial implementation of merit pay. The major recommendations are that the Griffin-Spalding County Board of Education study the issue of merit pay very carefully and that classroom teachers, along with administrators, have adequate input in devising local guidelines for merit pay.
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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

Even though it is impossible to defend the philosophy of the single salary schedule, which ostensibly supports equal salary increases for all teachers in the same classification with the mere passage of time, its opposite—merit pay—has not yet proved its lasting worth in very many instances (Burrup and Brimley, 1982). The arguments have changed little in the last half-century; the salaries of teachers should be determined by the merit or contribution teachers make to the education of boys and girls. But such merit cannot be measured objectively. Consequently, the subject is under constant research, but its practical applications are never realized, (Burrup and Brimley, 1982).

Toch (1983) pointed out that an opinion poll taken in October, 1983 showed that the majority of teachers oppose merit pay. In the researcher's opinion, however, much of the general public favors paying teachers according to the quality of their work. Yet the general public is not all too sure as to exactly what or which criterion should be used to measure or determine the quality of the work.

In the business world, including state and local governments, employee incentives are used to spur and
ensure productivity. The type of employee incentives has covered a broad spectrum; some employed to date and used most frequently have included educational incentives, suggestion awards, output oriented merit increases and task systems (Robinson, 1983). Few federal employees receive merit raises, although government proposals and recent legislation have advocated compensating high level workers according to merit.

Education and business are now partners in education; we can readily see the influence of business in our leadership structure through leadership style as well as management style. What then are the implications of merit pay for teachers and other educators? One must be cognizant of the issue of merit pay; it is not new. Merit pay for teachers reached a peak in the 1920s; however, it was first introduced in American public education in 1910, and keen interest in the issue resurfaced in the 1950s (Robinson, 1983).

During the 1960s approximately 10 percent of the nation's school systems had merit pay plans in effect for teachers. But by 1972, this percentage had dropped to 5.5 percent (Porwell, 1979). It is the researcher's opinion, based on the literature, that in the eighties the keen interest in merit pay has been rekindled.
According to Kirst (1986) in the early 1980s a pessimistic view of the funding prospects of education prevailed; real revenues for education (after inflation) declined between 1980 and 1982, and the United States suffered a recession that devastated many of its basic industries. Kirst (1986) stated the following:

The fiscal and political pictures of education drastically and unexpectedly changed. Education became top priority in most states, as a wave of concern for academic excellence swept the nation. The underlying negative trends cited in 1979 were replaced by a new willingness to fund "reforms" in the name of quality. Furthermore, education was featured as a solution to the problem of economic stagnation at home and a shrinking share of markets abroad. (p. 341).

More than 300 state commissions and many more local groups pushed for new agendas for education. Per-pupil expenditures shot up by about nine percent in real terms during 1983 and kept increasing faster than inflation during 1984 and 1985 (Guernsey, 1986).

The Georgia Department of Education published tentative recommendations for a career ladder program as the means of merit pay for educators in Georgia. The State Board of Education appointed a Career Ladder Task Force to
study the issue. In February 1987, from these recommendations, the Georgia Department of Education published the draft of the Georgia Center Ladder for Public Elementary and Secondary School Professional Personnel. As a matter of fact, the Quality Basic Education Act (QBE) (1987) mandates the implementation of career ladder as the means of merit pay in the state of Georgia. This mandate reads as follows:

The Georgia Board of Education is directed to devise a career ladder program for all certified personnel to provide salary supplements for those who consistently demonstrate outstanding competency and performance. Such performance shall include the achievement of students beyond the level typically expected for their ability when specified by the state board.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study seeks to examine the views of merit pay of a randomly selected group of certificated personnel in the Griffin-Spalding County School System. This study will investigate the views held by these educators and seek to provide information for officials of the school system to determine the extent to which merit pay is perceived negatively or positively.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The results and interpretations of the findings in this study should provide administrators and the school board with the general perception and reception of a merit pay plan in the Griffin-Spalding County School
System by its certificated personnel. It should provide both groups with valuable information from which they can look at ways to make teaching more rewarding financially and professionally in Spalding County. From this study, the administrative staff and school board will have the opportunity to develop a plan which reflects the views of certificated personnel. It should yield results that will give both the school board and administrators the opportunity to weigh the issues of merit pay.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the investigation:

1. Is there any difference toward views on merit pay on the bases of types of certification?
2. Is there any difference at the views toward merit pay by certificated personnel according to the school level in which they work?
3. Do younger certificated personnel hold different views toward merit pay than older certificated personnel?
4. Does the length of teaching experience make a difference in the views of certificated personnel toward merit pay?
5. Is there any difference in the views of personnel who are members of the Georgia Association of Educators and the members of the Professional Association of Georgia Educators toward merit pay?

Analysis of Data

Data were analyzed by analysis of variance using the Chi Square instrument. To determine whether or not the variables were independent, the two-sample test of proportion was used to look at the responses on each individual question.

Population and Sample

The population in this study was limited to public school certificated personnel in a combined city and county school district. One hundred subjects were randomly selected from a total population of 684 certificated personnel to participate in the study from elementary, middle school and high school levels. Of the twelve elementary schools, four were randomly selected for participation; of the three middle schools, one was randomly selected; of the two high schools, one was randomly selected. Fifty certificated personnel were chosen randomly from each level—elementary and secondary, disregarding age, race, sex, experience, and certificate level. The middle school respondents were combined with the high school respondents, forming the secondary level.
Their views were examined to determine whether they were positive or negative in regard to merit pay.

Limitations
Overall this study was limited by the number of participants in the sample population; thus, the findings of the study may not be generalizable to other audiences.

Summary
Merit pay has its advocates, its advantages, its disadvantages, and, yes, its dangers. Rewarding excellence in teaching—beyond recognition of seniority or degrees attained—may be necessary to attract bright young people and retain the best teachers in the classroom. However, as the literature suggests, the salary problem of teachers is twofold: the need to increase or raise the base salary and, on the other hand, the need to reward excellence. Within the last ten years, southern states have made considerable progress toward closing the gap between their teacher salaries and salaries of teachers in the rest of the nation, but the gap remains.

It is the researcher's opinion that in the same sense, the general public is generally opposed to raising property taxes for the needed increase in funds for education, particularly in Georgia. According to the literature on merit pay, as we take a look at current fiscal stringencies, across-the-board increases are difficult, and sufficient funding for merit pay in some states is
not likely in the foreseeable future. On the other hand, wealthier states will plow ahead with the implementation of some form of merit pay program.

Definition of Variables

The following variables provided the backdrops against which views of members of the sample population toward merit pay were examined:

1. Level of Certification
   a. PBT-4 Bachelor's Degree—Provisional Certificate—Teacher Certification Test needed.
   b. T-4 Bachelor's Degree—all requirements satisfied
   c. T-5 Master's Degree

2. School Level
   a. Elementary (grades K-5)
   b. Middle School (grades 6-8)
   c. High School (grades 9-12)

3. Professional Association Affiliation
   a. Georgia Association of Educators (GAE)
   b. Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE)

4. Views on Merit Pay - The opinions, positive or negative held by teachers on extra payment for outstanding performance in instruction.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Much has been written about the prevalence of the concept of merit pay and various methods of meeting this challenge. An examination of the published research on the pros and cons of the various incentive plans as they relate to criteria, method of evaluation, feasibility, professional growth, level of certification, and source of funding will be presented in this chapter.

For three quarters of a century, merit pay for teachers has been vigorously debated in virtually every state in the nation. The issue of merit pay for teachers has caused controversy and even stress among educators, resulting in numerous studies on the subject. In this decade, there has been an outcry for educational reform which grew out of one of the most famous national reports on education in the United States - A Nation At Risk by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (Uzell, 1983). In the wake of this report, renewed concern over academic excellence in our schools was vigorously coupled with an increased interest in paying teachers on the basis of their performance - merit pay. Governors, legislators, school board members, business leaders, concerned citizens, the press, and even the President of
the United States were all urging some form of increased efficiency and productivity in our schools (Robinson, 1983). Many of these persons were proposing various types of merit pay or incentive plans for teachers as a means of achieving these goals. Robinson further states that serious consideration of merit pay or incentive plans for teachers requires careful examination of the research and the history of past attempts to establish and maintain workable plans.

According to Robinson (1983), the first recorded merit pay plan for teachers was established in Newton, Massachusetts in 1908. Interest in such plans grew rapidly, with use of merit pay reaching a peak in the 1920s and diminishing with the move toward single salary schedules for teachers in the 1930s and 40s. However, the literature further shows that in the 1950s, interest in merit pay was revived with several state legislatures considering and some of them even enacting state mandates for merit pay plans. During the 1950s the use of merit pay was more or less stabilized and began to decline in the 1970s. According to the research, by the late 1970s most school systems using merit pay had all but abandoned the concept and implementation of merit pay. A research study of 239 school districts that once had merit pay or
incentive plans for teachers and later decided to abandon these plans, the following reasons for discontinuing merit pay were noted (Robinson, 1983):

1. Forty percent of the districts gave administrative problems as one of the reasons they abandoned their merit pay or incentive plan for teachers.

2. Thirty-eight percent said merit pay created personnel problems so they discontinued it.

3. Eighteen percent said collective bargaining brought an end to their merit pay plan.

4. Seventeen percent of the districts gave financial problems as a reason for abandoning merit pay.

5. Six percent gave other problems as a reason for abandoning their merit pay plan.

A congressional task force was appointed to examine the idea linking teacher's pay with their classroom performance. The task force recommended that every state sponsor experimentation with the concept and that the federal government play a greater role in improving the caliber of teaching in the public schools by making larger grants to outstanding teachers for one-year sabbaticals, by providing summer institutes for all teachers, and by helping states pay an immediate $6,000.00 salary increase to all teachers who meet a series of higher standards.
(Toch, 1983). The report also outlines two general ways of linking teachers' pay to their performance: a bonus or an increase in the annual salary paid to the best teachers and/or a career ladder that allows the best teachers to earn higher salaries and take on new responsibilities. This task force was chaired by Representative Paul Simon, Democrat of Illinois; several renown legislators and educators from the educational community such as Mary Hatwood Futrell, president of the National Education Association and Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers were also members of this task force.

Furthermore, accumulated research on merit pay and incentive plans by the Educational Research Service on Merit Pay for Teachers shows that the following reasons stand out as to why merit pay plans for teachers have failed (Robinson, 1983):

1. Unsatisfactory Evaluation Procedures
   - difficult to determine who deserved extra pay.
   - not enough data to support evaluation
   - no assurance that ratings were accurate
   - subjective evaluation
   - inconsistency among evaluators
   - no satisfactory instrument for evaluation
   - impartial ratings impossible

2. Administrative Problems Created
   - difficulties in administering
   - changes in school system leadership and philosophy
- too heavy a burden on limited number of administrators.
- too much record-keeping
- plan too complicated
- plan lacked sufficient structure
- parents wanted children taught by "superior" teachers
- plan made no difference in teaching performance

3. Staff Dissension Created

- teacher morale suffered
- friction among staff members occurred
- created jealousy and charges of favoritism
- emphasized individual performance at the expense of cooperative team work
- opposition of teachers
- opposition of teacher unions.

4. Artificial Cutoffs Restrictive

- arbitrary cutoffs illogical
- quota system froze opportunity for younger teachers

5. Inadequate Financial Incentives

- lack of funds
- too expensive
- incentives too low to make plan work
- plan dropped after a negotiated increase in salary schedule
- plan negotiated out of budget by teacher union, and funds for its added and base pay

6. Initiated Without Consent of Teachers

7. Lack of Definition of Superior Results

8. Inability to Measure Results
On the other hand, Robinson (1983) gives several criteria for developing incentive pay plans for teachers that would appear to have a reasonable chance of success. Such criteria include:

1. Effective evaluation procedures - Effective evaluation procedures are essential and fundamental to the successful operation of any pay plan based on teacher performance.

2. Administratively Workable - The plan must be administratively workable, with enough trained management and supervisory staff to administer the plan effectively.

3. Board and Management Commitment - Both the school board and school administrative staff must be firmly committed to the plan and willing to spend sufficient time and resources to make the plan work.

4. Staff involvement in program development - Although there may not be staff enthusiasm for the establishment of an incentive pay plan, there should be staff knowledge and involvement in developing the best possible plan.

5. Promotes teacher satisfaction - The plan should be designed so that teachers who are the recipients of the rewards will find them personally and professionally satisfying.

6. Adequately financed - It should be clearly understood by all concerned that incentive plans are not cost-saving and that successful plans will probably cost more money, not less.

7. Available to all who qualify - One of the surest ways to build failure into an incentive plan is to restrict arbitrarily the extra pay to a small portion of the staff, such as 10 percent. Increases should be available to all who meet the incentive criteria. On the other hand, the wholesale granting to those who do not clearly qualify will soon destroy the system.
8. Plausible definition of superior performance - It is essential that the performance criteria be visibly fair and equitable, not only to teachers and administrators, but also to the school board and the public.

9. Valid measures of results - There should be valid and verifiable measures of the results of superior teaching that provide a sound basis for determining appropriate compensation.

10. Assessment measures objectively and consistently applied - Consistency and objectivity in the application of assessment measures are basic to the effective operation of an incentive pay system.

11. Promotes increased learning - The most fundamental criterion of any incentive pay plan for teachers is that it promotes increased learning for pupils.

By the end of 1984, many state legislatures were proceeding to revise the monolithic pay systems that so starkly and mindlessly embodied the education establishment's obsession with equality at the expense of excellence. It was contended that the evidence strongly suggests that the implementation of merit pay in the true sense of the concept is not likely to happen (Uzell, 1984). It is not likely to happen because the education establishment is skillful at disguising trivial adjustments as fundamental reforms, and politicians lack either the knowledge or the will to reject these disguises. Also, at the time, California, Florida, Oklahoma, and Tennessee had forged ahead with merit pay reform and were being reviewed by other states as models in devising
their own merit pay plans. California's comprehensive reform package was developed with advice from the California Teacher's Association. The package included a career-incentive "teaching mentor" plan and raised beginning teacher salaries by 10 percent (Lytle, 1983); however, in Tennessee, by stark contrast, the governor unveiled a master plan on which teachers had not been consulted. The Tennessee Education Association pointed out that the proposal opened the door to favoritism and threatened teacher tenure and local negotiating rights. The legislature saw the problem too and thus devised a plan to include Tennessee Teacher Association Representatives (O'Hara, 1983).

Overall, most teachers polled are still looking for the merit in merit pay. In Texas, for instance, teachers find their merit pay lacking in merit. A number of teachers applied in the plan's first year but few were rewarded and the gathering of proof of merit - documentation is so time consuming that most teachers no longer bother (Clayton, 1983). On the other hand, Tennessee's plan seeks to minimize the problem of local politics, personalities, and unfairness that many teachers fear. The evaluation will be done at the state level, and a
panel of two master teachers and a master principal will be in charge of each teacher's evaluation (Alexander, 1983).

Accordingly in Georgia, as with all other states in the wake of educational reform, the need to attract competent individuals and retain effective teachers has become a critical problem. The Personnel Committee of the Commission, chaired by Dr. Alton Crews, Superintendent of Schools in Gwinnett County, explored the concept of a career ladder as one potential approach for enhancing the ability of public education to attract and retain effective teachers (Governor's Education Review Commission, 1983). Governor Joe Frank Harris' Quality Basic Education Act includes state mandated career ladder implementation. The Georgia Department of Education Office of Evaluation and Personnel Division of Personnel Development (1988) has released the following:

The Georgia Career Ladder program represents the thinking of many Georgians-those involved in guiding education policy at state and local levels. The Governor appointed Education Review Commission, which examined the condition of public education and whose recommendations are reflected in QBE, considered alternative career ladder approaches and recommend:
The adoption and further development of a career development plan that reshapes the compensation, training and evaluation structure to better recognize, utilize and support teachers' efforts at various stages in their career. These incentives should be built on top of a base salary which is professionally competitive.

It is intended that a professionally competitive base salary coupled with career development incentives will provide a framework for a balanced and comprehensive system of teacher compensation that will recognize proficient and productive performance of teachers and to reward them for it.

The Review Commission identified the following purposes for the Georgia Career Ladder Program:

1. Attract talented and academically-able individuals into teaching.

2. Ensure that individuals who complete an approved program of professional development to become teachers enter the profession.

3. Provide a means for the classroom teacher to earn a salary which is competitive with salaries of other professions for which a minimum of a bachelor's degree is required for entry into employment.

4. Provide meaningful opportunities for teachers to work with their peers in improving and supporting the instructional program.

5. Provide recognition and rewards for high-level teacher performance and student outcomes.

The General Assembly concurred with the central theme of the Education Review Commission's recommendations and incorporated the Career Ladder Program concept into the Quality Basic Education Act. The law was modified in the 1987 General Assembly session; however, its basic directions remained unchanged.
At this writing, the Georgia Career Ladder Program is being piloted in five Georgia public school systems: Appling, Colquitt, Columbia, Twiggs and Wilkerson Counties. By participating in the voluntary program, teachers could earn salary supplements ranging from $2,250 to approximately $15,915. The amount of the supplement is determined by several factors: the degree(s) the teacher has, the years of teaching experience, the length of contract, and the career ladder level for which the teacher has applied (Grier, 1989).

It is interesting to note that the first step in the development of the career ladder program in Georgia was to convene a task force composed of teachers, administrators, and business representatives to identify teacher concerns that the task force needed to address in devising the career ladder plan. Advancement on the career ladder is based on four factors: performance, productivity, service and growth. Teachers' performance will be measured by the Georgia Teacher Observation Instrument (GTOI). Using the GTOI, the teacher is observed in 11 areas during four visits by an evaluation committee. Productivity, or student achievement, using a plan designed by the teacher and approved by the career ladder supervisor and the local review team will be used. The teacher may use test scores, student products or student behaviors to meet multiple
student achievement goals and demonstrate outstanding student performance (Grier, 1989). To meet service requirements, the teacher is expected to participate in from 10 to 30 hours of service activities per year in his/her school system.

In the beginning of the 1980s in the researcher's opinion, the literature and research were highly focused on the issue. Educational reform was alive and well. The answer to all the ills in public education throughout the nation was to award outstanding teachers; the problem of the incompetent teacher was not addressed. During the latter part of 1985, the literature and research on merit pay became sparse, to say the least. At this time many state legislatures had enacted legislation in the wake of the report, A Nation At Risk, by the National Commission on Excellence in Education to include some form of merit pay (Toch, 1983); thus, the answer to the nation's poor report on education was provided. Many critics felt that this wave of reform would simply be a wave with little substance and no longevity because of feasibility, funding criteria, method of evaluation, etc. The Career Ladder Program, which is a part of the Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act of 1987 is a care in point; still unresolved is the issue of the program's funding. The Career Ladder Program asked the
General Assembly for $23.2 million dollars in salary supplements and operating costs (Grier, 1989). When fully funded in 10 to 12 years, the program will cost more than $200 million per year. According to Stephen Preston, Director of the Personnel Developmental Division of the Georgia Department of Education, the 181 other school systems will be added to the program in five waves (Cornett and Weeks, 1985). All systems will be offered the opportunity to develop operational programs by 1998. This situation is not just unique to Georgia. Many states face the same problem. Merit pay programs are on paper but are far from the reality of actual implementation.

The review of the literature has shown that the issue of merit pay and the various methods of implementing merit pay are as debatable today as they were at the beginning of this century. There is not an exact answer on the issue of merit pay. It has been debated on all levels of government in the United States. It is agreed upon by all concerned that there needs to be a system for rewarding superior teachers who exhibit superior teaching performance. How to do it fairly is questioned by the educational community. Educators do not foresee a plan that will work for all concerned. The literature shows that plans which did work in the beginning have either failed or have been revised and put on hold. We will no doubt continue to see this trend as we move into the next century.
CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

An opinionnaire instrument was administered to elementary, middle and high school certificated personnel in the Griffin-Spalding County School System in order to determine their views about merit pay and the use of career ladder as the type of merit pay implemented in Georgia.

The instrument was pilot tested and reliability figures were obtained. The procedures, methods, instrumentation, and analytical treatment of data used in this study will be described in the following section.

Instrumentation

The opinionnaire survey used in this study was first administered to central office certificated personnel, including two school-based administrators. Using the non-parametric technique, Chi Square, as the statistical procedure, a reliability coefficient of .78 was calculated. All statements used in the survey were devised by the researcher. The opinionnaire originally consisted of forty-six statements. Stimulus items were designed to ascertain subjects' opinions about criteria, performance, feasibility, type, and funding of merit pay using the following variables: age, level of certificate, experience, school level (elementary or secondary), and professional association affiliation. After the pilot test, only items
pertaining to the feasibility of merit pay were left in place, since Georgia already has in place career ladder as the means of rewarding teachers for superior performance. Finally thirteen statements were used to ascertain subjects' opinions regarding the feasibility of merit pay in the Griffin-Spalding County School System using the following variables: level of certificate, age, experience, and professional association affiliation.

The opinionnaire survey used in this study was administered by taking a random sample of 100 teachers (educators) from a population of 684 certificated personnel in the Griffin-Spalding County School System.

The subjects consisted of elementary, middle and high school classroom teachers, media specialists, reading specialists, lead teachers and principals. A total of 100 opinionnaires were distributed - 12 to 2 randomly selected elementary schools; 25 to a randomly selected middle school; 25 to the high school. From this distribution sixty-four were returned. This represented a percentage return of sixty-four.

Data Collection Procedures

The opinionnaire instrument (see appendix A) used consisted of 13 statements devised for this study to elicit views of certificated personnel in the Griffin-Spalding
County School System toward merit pay. Response alternatives were provided: "strongly agree", "agree", "uncertain", "disagree", and "strongly disagree". Each individual response was assigned the numerical value of one. The approval disapproval scores were derived by summing up the values of the individual responses checked.

All elementary, middle and high school principals in the Griffin-Spalding School System whose schools were participating in the survey were given copies of the opinionnaire to administer to their faculties. The opinionnaire was secured from each principal upon completion by the respective faculties with each individual school designated by a code number. The data were assembled and computed at Clark Atlanta University.

Data Analysis Procedures

All tests were conducted at the alpha level of .05 using a Chi Square table value of 21.026 (critical value) with 12 degrees of freedom. The Chi Square test of independence was conducted for each of the 13 statements.
Variables

Four variables were under consideration for the present investigation:

a. level of certificate
b. age
c. experience
d. professional association affiliation

Treatment and Analysis of Data

Table 1 lists the number of years of experience in two respective groups, 0-10 years and 11 years and over. The numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, are the specific questions identified in the opinionnaire. The number before each set of parentheses represents the number of agreed responses and the observed values; the value within the parenthesis is the expected value.

The data are analyzed in tables according to the five research questions to be answered. The response in each question is identified as being significant or non-significant according to the frequency of responses. In each table, the numbers 1-13 represent the question identified in the opinionnaire.
The results of the opinionnaire are presented in the pages that follow in the order in which they appear on the survey instrument:

Question 1. Merit pay will improve instruction.

Question 2. Teacher morale will be increased with a merit pay plan.

Question 3. There is no fair way to evaluate teachers for merit pay.

Question 4. Merit pay will cause too much competition among teachers.

Question 5. Instruction will not be improved through merit pay.

Question 6. Merit pay actually reduces higher teacher performance.

Question 7. Merit pay when implemented will raise the status of the teaching profession.

Question 8. A merit pay plan will motivate teachers.

Question 9. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and administrators.

Question 10. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and their colleagues.

Question 11. Merit pay plans are an inadequate means of motivating employees.

Question 12. There is too much prejudice and or favoritism by administrators for a merit pay plan to be fairly and impartially applied.

Question 13. In general, do you support the concept of merit pay?
Research Question 1: Is there any difference toward views on merit pay on the bases of types of certification?

Table 1 shows that there is no relationship between responses received and level of certificate. For statements 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, and 13 there is no significant difference in the proportion of personnel who agreed and the proportion who disagreed. For statements 1, 2, 6 and 7, the proportion of personnel who disagreed is significantly greater than the proportion who agreed. For statements 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, and 12 the proportion of personnel who agreed is significantly greater than the proportion who disagreed. Regardless of the level of certificate of the respondents, there was significant agreement with the following:

3. There is no fair way to evaluate teachers for merit pay.

4. Merit pay will cause too much competition and dissension among teachers.

9. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and administrators.

12. There is too much prejudice and or favoritism by administrators for a merit pay plan to be fairly and impartially applied.

Research Question 2: Is there any difference in the views toward merit pay by certificated personnel according to the school level in which they work?

There is no significant difference in the views toward merit pay by certified personnel according to the school level in which they work. (See Tables 1-8.)
**TABLE 1**

**LEVEL OF CERTIFICATE ELEMENTARY**

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<td>AGREE</td>
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<td>5 ( 6.47)</td>
<td>11 ( 9.50)</td>
</tr>
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<td>7.</td>
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<td>10 ( 8.71)</td>
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<td>20 (19.40)</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>10 ( 9.50)</td>
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</table>

Agree \( \chi^2 = 8.23 \)
Disagree \( \chi^2 = 14.27 \)
Table Value \( \chi^2 = 21.026 \)

0 = Observed frequency
E = Expected frequency
Table 2 shows that there is no relationship between the certificate level of the respondents and responses received at the high school level. For statements 8, 11, and 13, there is no significant difference between the proportion of personnel who agreed and the proportion who disagreed. For statements 1, 2, 6 and 7 the proportion of personnel disagreed is significantly greater than the proportion who agreed. For statements 3, 4, 5, 9, 10 and 12, the proportion of personnel agreed is significantly greater than the proportion who disagreed. The statements are as follows:

3. There is no fair way to evaluate teachers for merit pay.
4. Merit pay will cause too much competition and dissension among teachers.
5. Instruction will not be improved through merit pay.
9. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and administrators.
10. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and their colleagues.
12. There is too much prejudice and/or favoritism by administrators for a merit pay plan to be fairly and impartially applied.
### Table 2

**Level of Certificate High School**

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<td>Disagree</td>
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<tr>
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<td>13 (13.58)</td>
<td>2 (3.65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2 (3.35)</td>
<td>10 (11.22)</td>
<td>5 (3.65)</td>
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Agree $\chi^2 = 3.42$  
Disagree $\chi^2 = 4.14$  
Table Value $\chi^2 = 21.026$

0 = Observed frequency  
E = Expected frequency
Research Question 3: Do younger certified personnel hold different views toward merit pay as opposed to older certified personnel?

Table 3 shows there is no relationship between the responses received and the age of the respondents. For statements 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 and 13, there is no significant difference between the proportion of personnel who agreed and the proportion who disagreed. For statements 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11 and 12, the proportion of personnel who agreed is significantly greater than the proportion who disagreed. For statements 2, the proportion of personnel who disagreed was significantly greater than the proportion who agreed, indicating teacher morale will not be increased with merit pay.

Respondents show a stronger position on the following questions:

3. There is no fair way to evaluate teachers for merit pay.

4. Merit pay will cause too much competition and dissension among teachers.

5. Instruction will not be improved through merit pay.

9. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and administrators.

10. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and their colleagues.

11. Merit pay plans are an inadequate means of motivating employees.

12. There is too much prejudice and/or favoritism by administrators for a merit pay plan to be fairly and impartially applied.
TABLE 3

AGE GROUP ELEMENTARY

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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>3 (3.81)</td>
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Agree $\chi^2 = 5.41$  
Disagree $\chi^2 = 3.68$  
Table Value $\chi^2 = 21.026$ 

$0$ = Observed frequency  
$E$ = Expected frequency
Table 4 shows there is no relationship between the age of the respondents and the responses received. For statements 6, 8, and 13, there is no significant difference between the proportion of personnel who agreed and the proportion who disagreed. For statements 1, 2, and 7, the proportion of personnel who disagreed is significantly higher than the proportion of personnel who agreed. For statements 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, and 12, the proportion of personnel who agreed is significantly higher than the proportion who disagreed.

The statements are as follows:

3. There is no fair way to evaluate teachers for merit pay.

4. Merit pay will cause too much competition and dissension among teachers.

5. Instruction will not be improved through merit pay.

9. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and administrators.

10. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and their colleagues.

11. Merit pay plans are an inadequate means of motivating employees.

12. There is too much prejudice and or favoritism by administrators for a merit pay plan to be fairly and impartially applied.
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<thead>
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<th>36 - OVER</th>
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</thead>
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<td>DISAGREE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>6 (4.91)</td>
<td>1 (1.81)</td>
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<td>5 (4.91)</td>
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<td>2 (1.81)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>2 (2.84)</td>
<td>4 (3.61)</td>
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Agree $\chi^2 = 11.98$  
Disagree $\chi^2 = 4.27$  
Table Value $\chi^2 = 21.026$  

$0 =$ Observed frequency  
$E =$ Expected frequency
Research Question 4: Does the length of teaching experience make a difference in the views of certified personnel toward merit pay?

Table 5 presents the results of subjects' responses. There is no relationship between experience level of respondents and the responses received. For statements 1, 2, 8, and 13, there is no significant difference between the proportion of personnel that agreed and the proportion that disagreed. For statements 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, and 12, the proportion of personnel who agreed was significantly greater than the proportion who did not agree. For statements 6 and 7, the proportion of personnel who disagreed was significantly higher than the proportion who agreed.

6. Merit pay actually reduces higher teacher performance.

7. Merit pay when implemented will raise the status of the teaching profession.

The findings presented on Table 6 show that there is no relationship between the experience level of respondents and the responses received. For statement 8 there is no significant difference between the proportion who agreed and disagreed. For statements 1, 2, 6, 7, and 13, the proportion of personnel who disagreed is significantly greater than the proportion who agreed. For statements 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11 and 12, the proportion of personnel who agreed is significantly greater than the proportion who disagreed.
The high school respondents disagree significantly with the following:

1. Merit pay will improve instruction.
2. Teacher morale will be increased with a merit pay plan.
7. Merit pay when implemented will raise the status of the teaching profession.
13. In general, do you support merit pay?

On the other hand, the respondents agree significantly with the following:

3. There is no fair way to evaluate teachers for merit pay.
4. Merit pay will cause too much competition and dissension among teachers.
5. Instruction will not be improved through merit pay.
9. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and administrators.
10. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and their colleagues.
11. Merit pay plans are an inadequate means of motivating employees.
12. There is too much prejudice and or favoritism by administrators for a merit pay plan to be fairly and impartially applied.
TABLE 5
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE ELEMENTARY

<table>
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<th>QUESTION</th>
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<th>11 YEARS - OVER</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AGREE</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O  E</td>
<td>O  E</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>5 (4.84)</td>
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</table>

Agree $\chi^2 = 4.69$  \hspace{1cm}  $O =$ Observed frequency
Disagree $\chi^2 = 2.56$  \hspace{1cm}  $E =$ Expected frequency
Table Value $\chi^2 = 21.026$
### Table 6

**Years of Experience High School**

<table>
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\[ \chi^2 = 11.93 \quad 0 = \text{Observed frequency} \]

\[ \chi^2 = 7.39 \quad \text{E = Expected frequency} \]

**Table Value** \[ \chi^2 = 21.026 \]**
Research Question 5: Is there any difference in the views of personnel who are members of the Georgia Association of Educators (GAE) and the members of the Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE) toward merit pay?

Table 7 shows that there is no relationship between the views of personnel who are members of the professional educational association of the respondents and responses received. For statements 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, and 13, there is no significant difference in the proportion of personnel who agreed and disagreed. For statements 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, and 12, the proportion of personnel who agreed is significantly greater than the proportion who disagreed. There is nearly an even division of the respondents who agreed and disagreed on the following:

6. Merit pay actually reduces higher teacher performance.

7. Merit pay when implemented will raise the status of the teaching profession.

8. A merit pay plan will motivate teachers.

13. In general, do you support the concept of merit pay?

However, with the remaining statements, responses show a significant difference in the number who agreed and disagreed. The majority of the respondents agreed with the following:

3. There is no fair way to evaluate teachers for merit pay.

4. Merit pay will cause too much competition and dissension among teachers.
# Table 7

<table>
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<th>QUESTION</th>
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</tr>
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<td>5 (4.19)</td>
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Agree \( \chi^2 = 4.81 \)

Disagree \( \chi^2 = 5.30 \)

Table Value \( \chi^2 = 21.026 \)

0 = Observed frequency

E = Expected frequency
Respondents significantly agreed with the following:

3. There is no fair way to evaluate teachers for merit pay.

4. Merit pay will cause too much competition and dissension among teachers.

5. Instruction will not be improved through merit pay.

9. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and administrators.

10. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and their colleagues.

11. Merit pay plans are inadequate means of motivating employees.

12. There is too much prejudice and or favoritism by administrators for a merit pay plan to be fairly and impartially applied.

Again, the following research questions were used to guide the investigation:

1. Is there any difference toward views on merit pay bases of types of certification?

2. Is there any difference in the views toward merit pay by certificated personnel according to the school level in which they work?

3. Do younger certification personnel hold different views toward merit pay as opposed to older certificated personnel?

4. Does the length of teaching experience make a difference in the views of certificated personnel toward merit pay?

5. Is there any difference in the views of personnel who are members of the Georgia Association of Educators (GAE) and the members of the Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE) toward merit pay?
<table>
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<tr>
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<td>6 (7.44)</td>
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Agree \( \chi^2 = 4.65 \)
Disagree \( \chi^2 = 3.23 \)
Table Value \( \chi^2 = 21.026 \)

0 = Observed frequency
E = Expected frequency
In terms of level of certificate for both elementary and secondary respondents, there is no relationship between the responses received based on whether the respondent taught in elementary or high school as shown in Tables 1 and 2. While in regard to whether or not they support the concept of merit pay and whether merit pay will make teachers do a better job, there is no significant difference between the proportion of personnel who agreed and the proportion who disagreed. On the other hand, the proportion of personnel who disagreed is significantly greater than the proportion who agreed on the following statements:

1. Merit pay will improve instruction.
2. Teacher morale will be increased with a merit pay plan.
6. Merit pay actually reduces higher teacher performance.
7. Merit pay when implemented will raise the status of the teaching profession.

The proportion of personnel who agreed is significantly greater than the proportion who disagreed for the following questions:

3. There is no fair way to evaluate teachers for merit pay.
4. Merit pay will cause too much competition and dissension among teachers.
5. Instruction will not be improved through merit pay.
9. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and administrators.
10. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and their colleagues.

11. Merit pay plans are an inadequate means of motivating employees.

12. There is too much prejudice and/or favoritism by administrators for a merit pay plan to be fairly and impartially applied.

Overall there was no significant difference in the views toward merit pay by certificated personnel according to the school level at which they work. Younger certificated personnel in both high school and elementary school did not show a significant difference in the proportion who agreed and disagreed in their responses as shown in Tables 3 and 4.

There is no relationship between the responses received and the employment level of the respondents (See Tables 5 and 6). There is no significant difference between the proportion of personnel who agreed and the proportion who disagreed with statement 8, a merit pay plan will motivate teachers to do a better job. The proportion of personnel who disagreed was significantly greater than the proportion who agreed for the following statements:

1. Merit pay will improve instruction.

2. Teacher morale will be increased with a merit pay plan.

6. Merit pay actually reduces higher teacher performance.
7. Merit pay when implemented will raise the status of the teaching profession.

13. In general, do you support the concept of merit pay?

On the other hand, respondents significantly agreed with the following:

3. There is no fair way to evaluate teachers for merit pay.

4. Merit pay will cause too much competition and dissension among teachers.

5. Instruction will not be improved through merit pay.

9. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teacher and administrators.

10. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and their colleagues.

11. Merit pay plans are an inadequate means of motivating employees.

12. There is too much prejudice and or favoritism by a merit pay plan to be fairly and impartially applied.

(See Tables 5 and 6.)

Consistent with the research findings, there is no relationship between the professional association affiliation of the respondents and the responses given by those in elementary or high school. (See Tables 7 and 8.)
CHAPTER IV
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

A background description of the merit pay movement which gathered momentum in the early 1980s on the heels of educational reform indicated a growing concern by various elements in American society to identify some method of assessing and rewarding outstanding teachers as a means of improving the quality of public education. Merit pay has been in existence for three quarters of a century, and it has been debated in virtually every state in the nation. In the opinion of the researcher, A Nation At Risk added renewed vigor to the proponents of merit pay, and the yell, "foul" from the opponents. The only promise of a viable solution to merit pay is to carefully study the research and the history of past attempts to establish and maintain workable plans. It appears that the issue of merit pay will continue to be an on again, off again issue in terms of what criteria will be used to determine recipients.

An opinionnaire instrument was administered to certificated personnel in the Griffin-Spalding County School System at the elementary and secondary level to elicit their views about the feasibility of merit pay. A total of 100 opinionnaires was distributed and 64 percent were returned.
The data were tabulated and various analytical procedures were conducted. The findings generally indicated that there is no relationship between the responses received and the experience level, certificate level, age, or professional association affiliation of elementary and secondary certificated personnel.

CONCLUSIONS

There is no relationship between the association of the respondents and the response given by those in elementary and high school. For statements 8 and 13 there is no significant difference between the proportion of personnel who agreed and the proportion who disagreed. The data are inconclusive about whether merit pay will motivate teachers to do a better job and whether or not they support the concept of merit pay.

For statements 1, 2, 6, and 7, the proportion of personnel who disagreed is significantly greater than the proportion who agreed. Teachers do not believe merit pay will improve instruction, increase morale, provide a fair way to evaluate, and raise the status of the teaching profession. For statements 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11 and 12, the proportion of personnel who agreed is significantly greater than the proportion who disagreed. The teachers accept the following:

- Merit pay actually reduces higher teacher performance.
- Merit pay causes dissension and too much competition.
Instruction will not be improved by merit pay.

Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and administrators.

Merit pay plans are an inadequate means of motivating employees.

There is too much prejudice and/or favoritism by administrators for a merit pay plan to be fairly and impartially applied.

Experience shows there is no relationship between the responses received and the experience level of the respondent or whether they taught elementary or high school. For statement 8, there is no significant difference between the proportion of personnel who agreed and the proportion who disagreed. For statements 1, 2, 6, 7, and 13, the proportion of personnel who disagreed was significantly greater than the proportion who agreed. For statements 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11 and 12, the proportion of personnel who agreed was significantly greater than the proportion who disagreed.

There is no relationship between the responses received and whether the respondent taught in elementary or high school in regard to level of certificate. For statements 8 and 13, there was no significant differences between the proportion of personnel who agreed and the proportion who disagreed. For statements 1, 2, 6, and 7, the proportion of personnel who disagreed is significantly greater than the proportion who agreed. For statements 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, and 12, the proportion of personnel who agreed is significantly
greater than the proportion who disagreed. The overall implications are that teachers view the merit pay plan negatively. They do not view merit pay as the means to improve public education. In other words, teachers appear to believe that instruction, morale, or motivation will not be improved with merit pay. Moreover, teachers' responses suggested a lack of trust in the fairness of the merit pay process. The researcher inferred a mood of "it will never happen anyway," from the responses. A careful look at the projected date for the full implementation of the Career Ladder Program - the year 1998, reveals that many respondents will have retired or left the profession. Those who remain will still not likely witness this projected implementation date.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for future research:

1. Gather the opinions of participants in a system that has field tested merit pay.

2. Compare administrators' and classroom teachers' opinions on merit pay.

3. Based on the findings teachers do not feel that merit pay can be fairly implemented, the school board should study the issue of merit pay carefully allowing input from classroom teachers.
REFERENCES


Southern Regional Education Board, p. 1.
QBE Passes Senate Overwhelmingly. (1985, February).


March 2, 1989

Dear Fellow Educator:

The Quality Basic Education Act (QBE) mandates the implementation of career ladder as the means of merit pay in the State of Georgia. It reads as follows:

The Georgia Board of Education is directed to devise a career ladder program for all certified personnel to provide salary supplements of those who consistently demonstrate outstanding competency and performance. Such performance shall include the achievement of students beyond the level typically expected for their ability when specified by the state board.

This questionnaire contains items that deal with merit pay in general and specifically career ladder. The questions asked about you (demographic information) will help me categorize the data gathered from your responses. Please respond to each item so that I may have the benefit of your views.

Why am I conducting this survey? This is a part of my research (thesis) project for the Ed.S. in Administration and Supervision.

Your cooperation, especially your time, is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Sampson
MERIT PAY SURVEY

School ____________________________

Which one best describes your present job assignment?

____ Classroom Teacher _______ Counselor
____ Principal _______ Other
____ Ass't Principal _______ Central Office
____ Media Specialist

Years of Experience

____ 0 - 3 years _______ 4 - 7 years _______ 8 - 10 years
____ 11 - 15 years _______ 10 - 20 years _______ over 20

Degree Held _______ School Level

Type Certificate _______ Elementary
____ Middle School
____ High School

Age (check one)

____ 20 - 25 _______ 26 - 30 _______ 31 - 35
____ 36 - 40 _______ 41 - 45 _______ 46 - 50
____ 51 - 55 _______ 56 - 60 _______ other

Professional Organization (check one)

____ GAE _______ PAGE
____ Other
SURVEY

VIEWS TOWARD MERIT PAY BY CERTIFIED PERSONNEL

Put a check mark in the blank that most represents how you feel about each of the following statements.
(SA - strongly agree, A - agree, U - uncertain, D - disagree, SD - strongly disagree).

1. Merit pay will improve instruction.  
2. Teacher morale will be increased with a merit pay plan.  
3. There is no fair way to evaluate teachers for merit pay.  
4. Merit pay will cause too much competition and dissension among teachers.  
5. Instruction will not be improved through merit pay.  
6. Merit pay actually reduces higher teacher performance.  
7. Merit pay when implemented will raise the status of the teaching profession.  
8. A merit pay plan will motivate teachers.  
9. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and administrators.  
10. Merit pay plans create conflicts between teachers and their colleagues.  
11. Merit pay plans are an inadequate means of motivating employees.  
12. There is too much prejudice and/or favoritism by administrators for a merit pay plan to be fairly and impartially applied.  
13. In general, do you support the concept of merit pay?