



**Education Reform
Commission
Funding Committee
Meeting
November 12, 2015**

Based on previous meetings where organizations were allowed to make remarks, President Chapman prepared comments based on a GAE in-depth analysis of the committee's teacher compensation recommendations. However, the committee surprised everyone by not allowing comments. GAE did pass out its comprehensive analysis to members of the committee.

Key motions that were made by committee members today included:

- Voting to make sure every school had at least one principal.
- Voting to lower the teacher-student ratio from 26.25:1 to 25:1 when funding becomes available.
- Sen. Tippins recommending to add an extra \$59 million to the funding formula for schools. His recommendation was voted down. However, committee members did vote to change the funding formula for grades 4 and 5 from .022 to .12 to help with math skills when money becomes available.
- Voting to hold harmless the nine school systems that would lose money under the new formula. Those systems will still receive normal funding based on the current QBE formula for three years; but after three years they would have to move to the new formula.

The following is the text of President Chapman's remarks followed by a link to GAE's full analysis report. Please send your comments to getinvolved@gae.org.

Good morning. I would like to thank this committee for asking the teacher organizations to give our input on the teacher compensation models that you have proposed. Before addressing this issue, I do want to express our concern about the new funding formula. The new formula will lock in the

deep cuts that have been made to the budgets of our Georgia Public Schools over the last few years under the current formula. While these cuts have occurred, more responsibilities have been placed on the plates of teachers. We keep holding out hope that things will get better now that the economy is improving. This new funding formula takes away that hope. The children and educators of this state will bear the burden of this decision for years to come unless we make adjustments now to fully fund our schools. GAE has developed an analysis of the ERC's current recommended teacher compensation models. Make no mistake that GAE wholeheartedly supports a state salary schedule and not the potential of 180 different local salary schedules. We also do not want to see the elimination of teachers receiving higher pay when they complete advanced degrees. The single salary schedule:

- Promotes equity, collaboration, and collegiality among colleagues. There is no competition among educators about who receive bonuses.*
- Is less costly and easier to administer. A school district can easily project future costs. Fewer local administrative staff is needed to maintain the system.*
- Requires no quotas. The pay increases apply to everyone.*
- Is transparent and understandable to all stake holders – to teachers, the school district, parents, and the community*
- Supports classroom autonomy because teachers can take risks without fear of their pay being affected.*

Per your request, GAE reviewed the draft models developed by the Education Reform Funding Commission, dated October 28, 2015. Our analysis focuses on structural issues and whether the models comply with best practices. Please keep in mind that these comments do not address the appropriateness of the existing certification or evaluation systems. In addition, the Governor's office did not provide cost estimates for any of the models. Therefore, it is impossible to project the economic impact of these proposals on the state or school districts. Similarly, the Governor's office did not note if there is sustainable funding for any of these options. We outline some general pros and cons for each model in our paper. In short, there are problems with all of them. Not one addresses the fundamental problems with the current minimum salary schedule – low starting salary and too many steps to reach the maximum. In fact, most of the models seem to add steps or levels to the schedule (referencing 30 plus years of service), thereby further compressing a teacher's career earnings potential. In theory, Model G is a career ladder, which GAE supports, but the

Governor's office does not provide enough details to permit a thorough analysis.

What problems are we trying to address by changing the compensation model? Some problems the ERC has identified are the lack of planning time, an abundance of extra duties, and the reality that half of our teachers leave in the first five years and over 70% leave before 10 years. How will the compensation models address these issues? They won't, they will only exaggerate the problems that the ERC has identified. The reason we have an issue with planning time and additional duties is because of the lack of funding. Instead, we should look at how to increase funding to lift some of these burdens and look at ways we can incentivize teachers to stay in the profession.

Also, rather than seeking to create a pay scheme built on measurement of student performance, a pay system's goal should be to encourage teachers to remain career-long learners, to increase and update their skills, and to be visible models as learners to their students.

No matter which course you choose, we recommend you do three things.

- 1. Educators and the community need to participate and have buy-in the development of any plan.*
- 2. Pilot projects and/or studies should be completed before adopting any statewide changes.*
- 3. Do not rush. These decisions are too big to get wrong. Slow down and take your time.*

[Georgia Association of Educators' Analysis of the
Education Reform Commission's Teacher Compensation Recommendations
November 2015](#)

The **full Education Reform Commission** meeting will be held on **Thursday, November 19, 2015, from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.** in the **DECAL Oak Conference Room, Sloppy Floyd Building, Suite 824 (East Tower)**. Let's show up in full force on November 19th to the full ERC meeting! [Please contact Commission members](#) and remind them of who they've not heard from in creating their plan for Georgia's future.