

Public Education Compensation Committee

Meeting Minutes

March 13, 2023

Virtual Meeting

Anchor Location: Delaware Department of Education, Secretary's Office Suite,
401 Federal Street, Suite 2, Dover, DE 19901

The Public Education Compensation Committee (PECC) meeting was held virtually on March 13, 2023, with the following members in attendance:

Brian Pettyjohn, Cerron Cade, Chuck Longfellow, David Kohan, Eric Anderson, Jonathan Starkey, Kimberly Williams, Laura Sturgeon, Mark Holodick, Michael Smith, Nicholas Konzelman, Ruth Ann Jones, Sara Croce, Stephanie Ingram, and Tammy Croce.

Also participating were Alonna Berry, Carla Cassel-Carter, Faith Rentz, Kimberly Klein, Sarah Barzee, Gretchen Weber, Raifu Durodoye, Ione Heigham, Nancy Tien, Anna Sullivan, Amanda Ebersole, Andrew Hults, Audrey Noble, Amy Mirolli, Casey Montigney, Christy Wright, Dawn Alexander, Deanna Killen, Deb Stevens, Debbie Schrass, Dennis Arden, Jarek Ruiz, Jeannette Wilt, Jess Hurst, Jon Neubauer, Julia Zammith, Justin Richards, Karen Walsh, Mary Zober, Maureen Keeney, Michael McKibbin, Michael A. Smith, Mike Kempski, Monica Moriak, Paul Kiefer, Ricky Penland, Sherry Long, Susan Wagner, Taylor Hawk, Tina Beres, and VJ Leonard.

[Audio Recording of Meeting](#)

Welcome/Introductions

The Chair asked for a motion to begin the meeting. A motion was made by President Stephanie Ingram and seconded by Senator Brian Pettyjohn. All members were in favor, and the meeting began at 4:30 p.m.

Dr. Sarah Barzee conducted a member roll call. A quorum was present. Secretary Mark Holodick welcomed everyone and shared comments regarding the momentum needed to make decisions about recommendations for Section 1305 in order to meet the timeline of complete recommendations by November 2023. He also expressed appreciation for PECC members Sara Croce and Chuck Longfellow and Cabinet member Kim Klein for their time and expertise in preparing for today's meeting.

Approval of March 13, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Sec. Holodick asked for a motion to approve the February 13, 2022 meeting minutes. Representative Kimberly Williams motioned to approve and Director Cerron Cade seconded the motion. All members were in favor and the motion carried.

In Old Business, Dr. Barzee shared a change in procedure regarding decision making with voting by verbal roll call rather than the previous consensus protocol. She also reminded members to use the raise hand function in Zoom to indicate a desire to speak. She reviewed the PECC charge as outlined in SB 100 with specific focus on today's meeting objective to vote on a recommendation regarding employees included in Section 1305. Dr. Barzee then

introduced Faith Rentz, Director of Statewide Benefits and Insurance Coverage. Ms. Rentz shared detailed information about health and other benefits offered to public employees in Delaware, information comparing plans in Delaware in other industries against the government/public/education sector, including plan offerings, premium cost share, total cost and contributions, enrollment by plan type and by age. Ms. Rentz answered questions from members including one about how Delaware compares with other regional states regarding the average cost of benefits for educators.

Dr. Barzee then reviewed key dates from the Maryland “Blueprint” timeline and transitioned to a continued discussion of Salary Policy Options for Employees under Section 1305. She introduced members Sara Croce and Chuck Longfellow who presented revised salary cost options featuring a percentage only increase and a percentage increase plus a flat amount increase, each with a 3-year or 4-year phase-in option. Dr. Croce and Mr. Longfellow proposed to members the recommendation of a percent plus flat amount increase phased in over 4 years, in part because that approach gets money to employees faster. Members posed questions including how the percentage is added to the base salary and how the flat amount would be applied, as well as questions about additional benefits of the percent and flat amount option, clarification around costs between the 3-year and 4-year phase-in options and the impact of the costs each fiscal year, clarification that the new base salary each year is what the percent increase is applied to, the impact of the proposed option on mid- and late-career teachers. Members shared comments regarding the committee’s charge to make recommendations as opposed to determining budget and fiscal responsibilities or constraints, recent news about Pennsylvania’s plans to increase educator salaries, and caution around the budget ramifications of a decision regarding 1305 employees on other employee groups covered by the state salary schedule. Sec. Holodick clarified that the group will move onward to recommendations for employees’ salaries under Section 1308 following the vote on the recommendation for employees under Section 1305, and called for a verbal roll call vote.

Following discussion, Dr. Barzee indicated that the recommendation put forward by Dr. Croce and Mr. Longfellow was a percent and flat amount increase phased in over 4 years and asked for a motion to move that recommendation forward to a vote. Director Cade motioned to vote on the recommendation and it was seconded by Dr. Sara Croce. Dr. Barzee began the verbal roll call vote during which Senator Sturgeon raised an additional question regarding the PECC committee charge and urgency to make Delaware regionally competitive. Following a brief discussion, Dr. Barzee resumed the voting process via a verbal roll.

The motion carried with the following votes:

- 9 Yes votes (Tammy Croce, Sara Croce, Sec. Holodick, Chuck Longfellow, Eric Anderson, Jonathan Starkey, Director Cade, Rep. Williams and Ruth Ann Jones);
- 3 No votes (President Ingram, Sen. Sturgeon, and David Kohan); and,
- 2 Abstentions (Rep. Smith and Sen. Pettyjohn).

In New Business, Dr. Sara Croce and Chuck Longfellow presented information regarding employees classified under 1308. They shared information about Delaware’s regionally competitive salaries, salary cost options, and a proposal to collapse the current 1308 classifications from five to three. Following the presentation, they made a recommendation to

collapse classifications and provide a one-time 2% increase in FY25. This increase would be on top of the Governor's proposed 3% increase for FY24. Members asked questions about the 10-month and 12-month clerk designations and the collapse of classifications. A member indicated that the title changes may not translate to the local level in all cases due to collective bargaining and contract language. Following questions and some discussion, a member requested additional information outlining total current salary by district (i.e., State plus local) and total salary with the proposed salary increase to better inform decision making. Another member requested information about how school secretarial / administrative salaries compare to similar positions in private sector entities. Given the request for additional information about total current and proposed salaries, the vote on 1308 was postponed until the April meeting.

Dr. Barzee then transitioned to the 1311 employee group. Dr. Croce reviewed the current Section 1311 employee group classifications, and proposed changes to collapse classifications from six to four. Members posed questions and discussion ensued about the differentiation between the chief custodian, maintenance mechanics and skilled craftspersons classifications, and the differences between elementary and high school chief custodian responsibilities, as well as mention of the pay differences between school-based skilled craftspersons and skilled craftsmen in other sectors and its impact on recruitment. A member requested pay scale information comparing employees in this group to employees in similar positions in the private sector.

In Next Steps, Dr. Barzee shared that the working group will revisit Section 1308, including the request for additional salary information, and will continue discussion regarding Section 1311 in preparation to present additional information and proposed recommendations to the Committee at the April 17, 2023, meeting.

Public Comment

Two individuals contacted DDOE prior to today's meeting indicating a desire to provide public comment. Karen Walsh provided public comment during the meeting regarding the importance of maintaining current pensions and benefits for Delaware educators. Elizabeth Martin submitted written comments that will be shared with PECC members.

Adjournment

Dr. Barzee requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by David Kohan and seconded by President Ingram. All members were in favor and the motion was carried. The meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nancy Tien, WestEd



Public Education Compensation Committee (PECC) Meeting

March 13, 2023
4:30 - 6:00 PM



Welcome and Remarks from the Chair





Meeting the Charge of SB 100

1. Make recommendations that **strengthen Delaware's ability to compete with regional school districts** in recruiting and retaining qualified and diverse educators.
2. Make recommendations for competitive base pay for educators at all steps in the compensation structure.
3. Make recommendations for achieving competitive career level earnings in fewer, more meaningful steps.
4. Specify how educators can achieve additional opportunities for career advancement...based on acquisition of relevant degrees, certifications, and competencies, the acceptance of leadership responsibilities, and must fairly compensate for additional professional responsibilities.
5. Make recommendations that include approaches to the acquisition of skills and knowledge that are timely, relevant, and affordable.
6. Provide recommendations on the creation of leadership roles through which educators will receive additional compensation for assuming leadership responsibilities.
7. Additional compensation for professional responsibilities that are not generally required in the classroom
8. **Applicability of new system for individuals paid under §§ 1305**, 1306, 1307, 1310 and 1321
9. Increase base levels of pay for education support staff as defined by §§ 1308, 1311, 1322, and 1324
10. Identify and consider adopting state pay scales for job categories where one does not exist.

Delaware Benefits System





State Group Health Insurance Program

Public Education Compensation Committee
March 13, 2023

State Employee and Pensioner Benefits

- 29 Del. C. §5202 defines eligibility for benefits and the cost structure for health benefits

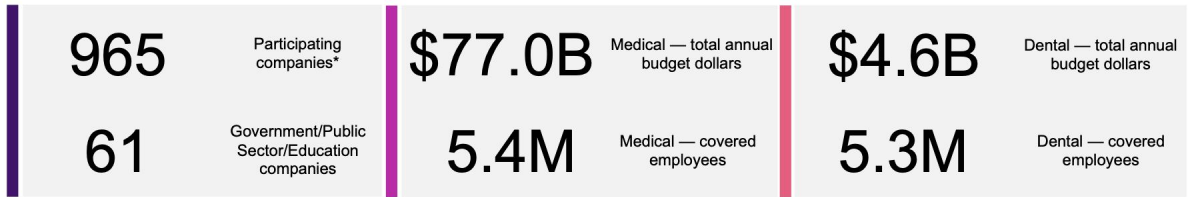
State Group Health Insurance Program Plan Offerings and Premium Cost Share			
	Actives	Non-Medicare	Medicare Primary
Premium Cost Share Percentage Split	State / Employee	State / Retiree	State / Retiree
Highmark Comprehensive PPO	86.75% / 13.25%	86.75% / 13.25%	
Aetna HMO	93.5% / 6.5%	93.5% / 6.5%	
Aetna CDH Gold (with HRA)	95.0% / 5.0%	95.0% / 5.0%	
Highmark First State Basic	96.0% / 4.0%	96.0% / 4.0%	
Highmark Special Medicifill Supplement			100% / 0% * 95.0% / 5.0% **

* Retirees with full state share who retired before July 1, 2012.

** Retirees with full state share who retired after July 1, 2012.

WTW 2022 Healthcare Financial Benchmarks Survey

Survey overview



* Database Participation as of April 20, 2022

Major focus areas

Cost efficiency

Medical and dental plans are evaluated on how efficiently they perform by adjusting cost data for plan design, demographics, family size and geographic cost differences. This helps employers understand how their plan costs compare on an apples-to-apples basis.

Employee cost sharing

Explore how employee costs compare, from a dollar and percentage of premium standpoint — including not only premium costs, but out-of-pocket (OOP) expenses as well.

Account funding and incentives

Compare HSA and HRA funding amounts, and wellness incentives and delivery methods amongst employers.

Plan design

Examine a side-by-side comparison of medical, pharmacy and dental plan benefits against both industry and database norms.

wtwco.com
© 2022 WTW. All rights reserved. Proprietary and Confidential. For WTW and WTW client use only. Not suitable for unintended purpose or use by unauthorized recipient.

wtw

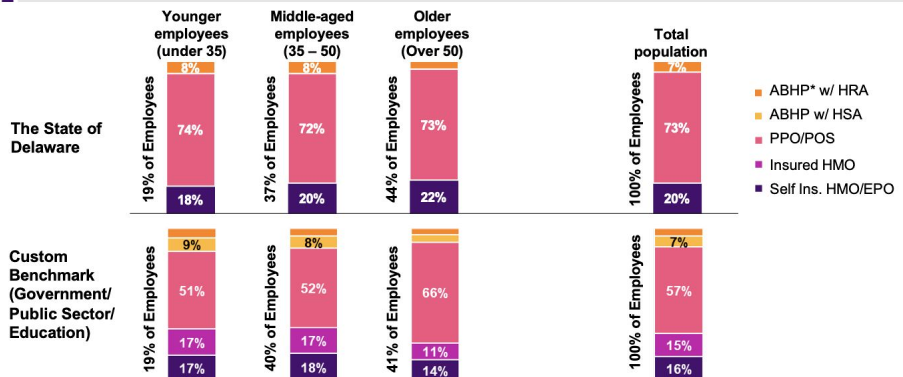
0



Medical cost benchmarks

Enrollment by plan type and age breakdown

? How does enrollment by plan type compare to the database?
Does the enrollment by age have implications for plan pricing?
Is the plan enrollment by age influenced by employer funding of employees/dependents?



✓ 15% of younger employees with Other Governmental plan sponsors enrolled in an Account Based Health Plan (9% with HSA)

*ABHP = Account Based Health Plan

wtwco.com
© 2022 WTW. All rights reserved. Proprietary and Confidential. For WTW and WTW client use only. Not suitable for unintended purpose or use by unauthorized recipient.

wtw

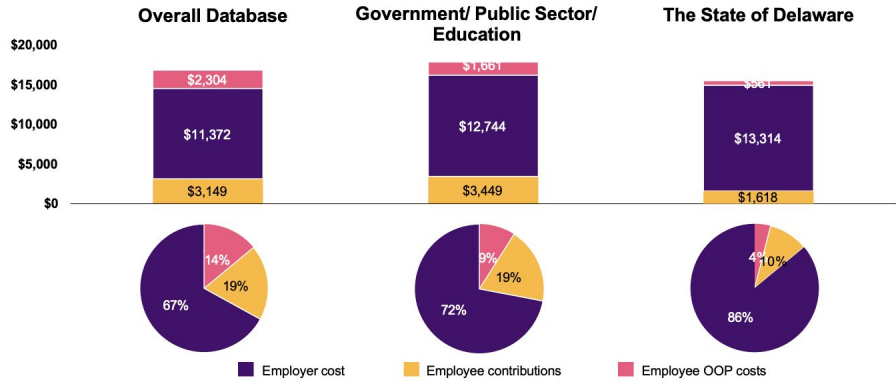
1



Medical cost benchmarks

Total cost and contributions

? How does your employees' share of total cost, including contributions and out-of-pocket expenses, compare to benchmarks?



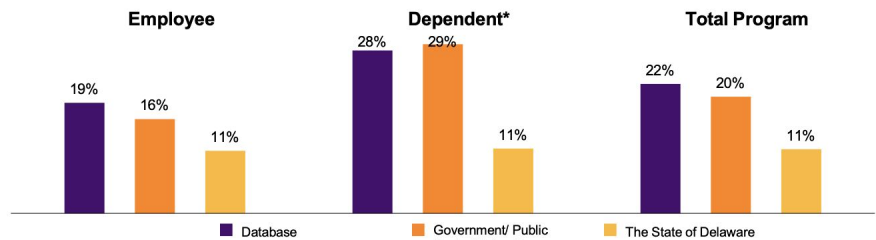
- ✓ The State has richer plans than both the database and industry benchmarks (employees pay less in out-of-pocket expenses at the point of care)
- The State also subsidizes those plans at a higher rate than the benchmark averages



Medical cost benchmarks

Employee contributions as a share of plan cost

? How does your cost sharing, for employees and dependents, compare to benchmarks?



	ABHP w/ HRA	ABHP w/ HSA	PPO/POS	Insured HMO	Self Ins. HMO/EPO
The State of Delaware	5%	N/A	12%	N/A	7%
Overall Database	23%	18%	26%	24%	23%

- ✓ State employee contributions significantly lower than the benchmark averages, especially dependents

*Dependent includes spouse, children, family, etc.

Thank You



Phone: 1-800-489-8933

Email: benefits@delaware.gov

Website: de.gov/statewidebenefits

Like us on Facebook: [delawarestatewidebenefits](https://www.facebook.com/delawarestatewidebenefits)

11



Title 14, Chapter 13 Salaries and Working Conditions of School Employees

1305 Basic salary schedule for **teachers, nurses, principals, superintendents, and other administrative and supervisory** employees

1306 Salary schedule for **chief school officers**

1307 Salary schedule for **principals** subordinate to a chief school officer

1308 Salary schedules for **administrative secretaries, financial secretaries, senior secretaries, secretaries and clerks**

1311 Salary schedule for **school custodians**

1322 Salary schedule for **school food service** employees

1324 Salary schedule for **paraprofessionals**

Note: SB 100 also addresses job categories where state pay scales do not exist, including bus drivers and information technology employees.



Scope and Sequence to Address SB100

Employee Group	Presentation and Discussion	Decision/ Recommendation
1305 teachers, nurses, principals, superintendents, and other administrative and supervisory employees	January	March
1308 administrative secretaries, financial secretaries, senior secretaries, secretaries and clerks	March	April
1311 school custodians	March	April
1324 paraprofessionals	April	May
1322 school food service employees	May	June
bus drivers	June	July
information technology employees	July	August
Other charges from SB100 (e.g. teacher leadership, etc.)		



Maryland “Blueprint” Key Dates

February 12, 2021 Blueprint for Maryland’s Future legislation passed.

July 1, 2026 (FY27) **The minimum teacher salary of \$60K is to be implemented.**

Revised 1305 Salary Cost Options



Revised 1305 Salary Cost Options

PECC's goal is to focus on the state's contribution to teacher salaries.

- Goal is \$60,000 starting teacher salary.
- 70% of \$60,000 = state contribution of \$42,000.



Discussion: Phase-In Timeline

Two phased approaches to increasing 1305 base salary:

1) Percent increase only:

- 9.9% Increase per year over 3 years; or,
- 7.3% Increase per year over 4 years

2) Percent AND flat rate increase:

- 2% Increase per year over 3 years AND \$2,750 flat rate increase; or,
- 2% Increase per year over 4 years AND \$1,875 flat rate increase



Revised 1305 Salary Cost Options: Percent Increase Only (Timeline)

State phases in \$42,000 contribution to starting teacher salary over **3 years**;
or,

State phases in \$42,000 contribution to starting teacher salary over **4 years**.

Phased Approach Over 3 Years				
Percent Increase Only - 9.9% (70% of the \$60,000 Goal)				
		Salary State Share	Total GF Cost	Total Cost With OECs
Year 1	Fiscal 2025	\$ 34,830	\$ 49,717,329	\$ 65,592,072
Year 2	Fiscal 2026	\$ 38,278	\$ 54,368,359	\$ 71,728,176
Year 3	Fiscal 2027	\$ 42,068	\$ 59,759,717	\$ 78,840,995
				\$ 216,161,243
Phased Approach Over 4 Years				
Percent Increase Only - 7.3% (70% of the \$60,000 Goal)				
		Salary State Share	Total GF Cost	Total Cost With OECs
Year 1	Fiscal 2025	\$ 34,006	\$ 36,725,242	\$ 48,451,612
Year 2	Fiscal 2026	\$ 36,488	\$ 39,134,917	\$ 51,630,697
Year 3	Fiscal 2027	\$ 39,152	\$ 42,007,094	\$ 55,419,959
Year 4	Fiscal 2028	\$ 42,010	\$ 45,063,834	\$ 59,452,717
				\$ 214,954,984



Revised 1305 Salary Cost Options: Percent Plus Flat Increase (Timeline)

State phases in \$42,000 contribution to starting teacher salary over **3 years**;
or,

State phases in \$42,000 contribution to starting teacher salary over **4 years**.

Phased Approach Over 3 Years

2% Plus \$2,750 Flat Increase (70% of the \$60,000 Goal)

	Salary State Share	Total GF Cost	Total Cost With OECs
Fiscal 2025	\$ 35,076	\$ 52,856,544	\$ 69,733,638
Fiscal 2026	\$ 38,528	\$ 53,676,839	\$ 70,815,853
Fiscal 2027	\$ 42,049	\$ 54,750,724	\$ 72,232,630
			\$ 212,782,122

Phased Approach Over 4 Years

2% Plus \$1,875 Flat Increase (70% of the \$60,000 Goal)

	Salary State Share	Total GF Cost	Total Cost With OECs
Fiscal 2025	\$ 34,201	\$ 39,292,660	\$ 51,838,806
Fiscal 2026	\$ 36,760	\$ 39,833,787	\$ 52,552,715
Fiscal 2027	\$ 39,370	\$ 40,626,910	\$ 53,599,083
Fiscal 2028	\$ 42,032	\$ 41,437,423	\$ 54,668,393
			\$ 212,658,996



1305 Proposed Recommendation

Given discussion from past PECC meetings, the proposed recommendation is the phased approach over 4 years and percent plus flat increase cost option.

Phased Approach Over 4 Years

2% Plus \$1,875 Flat Increase (70% of the \$60,000 Goal)

	Salary State Share	Total GF Cost	Total Cost With OECs
Fiscal 2025	\$ 34,201	\$ 39,292,660	\$ 51,838,806
Fiscal 2026	\$ 36,760	\$ 39,833,787	\$ 52,552,715
Fiscal 2027	\$ 39,370	\$ 40,626,910	\$ 53,599,083
Fiscal 2028	\$ 42,032	\$ 41,437,423	\$ 54,668,393
			\$ 212,658,996

1308 Salary Cost Options



1308 Average Starting Salary by State

	DE Districts Step 1 Salary	MD Border Districts Step 1 Salary	PA Border Districts Step 1 Salary
Clerk	\$28,470	\$31,878*	\$35,962**
Secretary	\$31,445	\$32,074	\$35,190
Senior Secretary	\$33,068	\$35,130	n/a
Financial Secretary	\$34,597	\$35,363	\$40,514
Administrative Secretary	\$36,813	\$37,987	\$43,812

*Half or more of the districts do not have salary scales for this position.

**Includes only one district.



1308 Overview & Recommendations

- All 12-month employees: administrative secretaries, financial secretaries, senior secretaries, secretaries and clerks
 - SY22-23: 839 total employees
 - Recommendation to collapse classifications from 5 to 3.
 - Will impact 242 employees: 67 Clerks and 175 Senior Secretaries.
 - Recommendation to update titles on the state salary schedule.
 - Local districts would not be required to adopt proposed state changes to employee titles or salary scales.
-



1308 Proposed Changes to Classifications

Clerks	Administrative Assistant I
Secretaries	
Senior Secretaries	Administrative Assistant II
Financial Secretaries	
Administrative Secretaries	Administrative Assistant III

Local districts would not be required to adopt proposed state changes to employee titles or salary scale.



1308 Salary Cost Option

Collapse 1308 Classifications with 2% Increase

	Cost
	\$863,587
Collapsed Lanes	\$184,982
2% Increase	\$678,606



1308 Proposed Recommendation

Given desire to remain regionally competitive, the proposed recommendation is to collapse classifications with a 2% increase.

	DE Step 1 Salary State Contribution (FY24)	Collapsed Classification	Adjusted Step 1 Salary State Contribution with 2% Increase (FY25)
Clerk	\$20,395	Administrative Assistant I	\$22,486
Secretary	\$22,045		
Senior Secretary	\$22,940	Administrative Assistant II	\$23,904
Financial Secretary	\$23,435		
Administrative Secretary	\$24,255	Administrative Assistant III	\$24,740

1311 Salary Cost Options



1311 Average Starting Salary by State

	DE Districts Step 1 Salary	MD Border Districts Step 1 Salary	PA Border Districts Step 1 Salary
Custodian	\$30,640	\$30,701	\$30,607
Custodian Firefighter	\$32,343	\$32,904	\$33,291
Chief Custodian	\$35,835	\$34,845	\$35,329
Maintenance Mechanic	\$36,882	\$36,505	\$43,927
Skilled Craftsperson	\$42,010	\$41,960	\$52,393



1311 Overview & Recommendations

- These employees are 12-month positions: Custodian, Custodian Firefighter, Chief Custodian (5 or Fewer Custodians), Chief Custodian (6 or More Custodians), Maintenance Mechanic, and Skilled Craftsperson.
 - SY 22-23: 1,492 total employees
- Recommendation to collapse classifications from 6 to 4.
 - Will impact total of 114 employees (Chief Custodian 5 or Less and Maintenance Mechanic).
- Recommendation to also update titles on the state salary schedule.
 - Local districts would not be required to adopt proposed state changes to employee titles or salary scale.



1311 Proposed Changes to Classifications

Custodian	Custodian
Custodian Firefighter	Assistant Chief Custodian
Chief Custodian (5 or Fewer Custodians)	Chief Custodian
Chief Custodian (6 or More Custodians)	
Maintenance Mechanic	Skilled Maintenance/Craftsperson
Skilled Craftsperson	

**Local districts would not be required to adopt proposed state changes to employee titles or salary scale.*

Questions and Discussion



Next Steps

April 17th Meeting:

- Employee Group 1311 Decision
- Other Items





Upcoming Meeting Schedule

April 17, 2023
May 15, 2023
June 12, 2023
August 14, 2023
September 18, 2023
October 16, 2023
November 13, 2023



Public Comment

- Members of the public are welcome to speak before the PECC during the scheduled public comment period as noted on the publicly posted meeting agendas. Interested persons should:
 - (1) send their name, the name of the group they represent and the topic of their comment via email to DOE, **ideally 7 days in advance of the meeting**, to request to have their name put on the public comment list for the upcoming meeting;
 - OR (2) **raise their hand during the meeting**. Those who register ahead of time will be called on by the facilitator to provide public comment first, followed by those who raise their hand during the meeting.
 - In order to provide all members of the public with an equal opportunity to speak before the PECC, **each individual is limited to two minutes**, unless otherwise noted at the beginning of the meeting.
 - Public comments received by DOE 7 days in advance will be sent to members with advance meeting materials via email. All written public comments will be included with the meeting minutes and publicly posted following each committee meeting.
-

Public Comment



Thank You



Fwd: [External] Educator Pay

Shockley Tina <Tina.Shockley@doe.k12.de.us>

Sat, Mar 11, 2023 at 8:09 PM

To: Tien Nancy <ntien@wested.org>, Barzee S <sbarzee@wested.org>, Weber Gretchen <gweber@wested.org>, R Durodye <rdurodo@wested.org>

Cc: Holodick Mark <Mark.Holodick@doe.k12.de.us>

From: Elizabeth Martin <bethmartin96@yahoo.com>**Date:** March 11, 2023 at 11:48:48 AM EST**To:** Shockley Tina <tina.shockley@doe.k12.de.us>**Subject:** [External] Educator Pay

WARNING: External Email - This email originated outside of the State email system.
DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and are expecting the email.

Good morning, Ms. Shockley,

I am Elizabeth Martin, senior English and dual enrollment English teacher, journalism advisor, and English Department Chair at Dover High School in the Capital School District. Across Delaware, there are many vacant positions in education. Why?

Delaware educators, with comparable experience to Maryland educators make approximately 10% less per year, and that gap will widen over the next two years. I encourage young educators to leave Delaware to work in Maryland, so they can secure more pay and build a much better pension. I also could travel 25 minutes west to teach in Maryland, which is the same distance I travel to teach in Delaware, and I'd make \$8,000 more. In any Maryland high school, I would be compensated as a worthy professional due to my teaching experience of 21 years and my education—a B.A. in Journalism and a M.Ed. in English Education from The University of Georgia.

Seventy-four thousand is my salary including the department chair stipend. On the other hand, \$95,000 is my husband's salary as a police officer in Delaware with 60 college credits and 20 years of service. Paid vacation, paid holidays at double-time and a half, and paid overtime at time and a half is what he receives at his per diem salary rate. Zero paid vacation, zero paid holidays, and zero paid overtime is what I receive.

Our jobs are different; however, they're becoming more similar. In fact, he and I are both tasked with saving lives. Are you aware, teachers must now pack through-and-through gunshot wounds, must now apply tourniquets and must continue to stop an active shooter—just as my husband?

Educators never agreed to these things, yet these very things are now required and expected. Increase our pay to reflect our professional status. Furthermore, add compensation for the extra responsibility and duty to protect our students and save their lives when danger arises.

Justify educators' worth—there will be less vacancies. If not, then there will be even more, as Delaware educators will cross the state line to be paid as professionals.

In Solidarity with All Delaware Educators,

Elizabeth Martin
Capital Educators Association Representative
English Department Chair
English Teacher & Journalism Advisor
Dover High School

PECC Meeting Public Comment Remarks – March 13, 2023

Karen Walsh

Teacher of Talented and Gifted, Brandywine Springs School

- I applaud your efforts to find ways to attract new teachers to DE public schools.
- But do not be so short-sighted that you ignore how proposed changes will fail to encourage experienced teachers to stay.
 - My husband and I have both been teaching for the state for over 20 years, forgoing potentially much larger salaries, annual bonuses, flexible vacation time, and more, in return for the promise of a pension and benefits calculated based on the rates provided to us when we were hired.
 - For over 2 decades, we have budgeted, paid for college for our children, and made many other choices based on when we calculated we would be able to retire with some degree of comfort and certainty that any reasonable health and living expenses would be covered by our pensions and benefits, along with our personal savings.
 - If significant changes are made to the pension and benefits we receive in our retirement, and the age at which we can begin receiving them, it will significantly impact our quality of life
 - We may, for the first time in our lives (with the exception of our mortgage) be forced into debt
 - We could be forced to work until we are no longer healthy and physically able to actually enjoy retirement.
 - We would certainly notice a change in the quality of medical care if forced to change providers, wait for pre-approvals, and fight with a private, for-profit Medicare Advantage program.
- While you MAY attract new teachers with a higher starting salary - IF they believe the promises you feed them about their future pensions, etc.,
- And you MAY NOT lose people like me, who are too close to retirement to really make a career change and accumulate enough funds in a private retirement plan -
- you're BOUND TO lose many teachers with 10, 15 years of service - who still have enough time left in the "work phase" of life to make the shift to private sectors jobs.
- If you want to attract new teachers -and keep the teachers you have - and avoid an even greater shortage of qualified educators -you must continue to provide what has been promised to us AND look for ways to ADD benefits to the compensation structure.
- Thank you for your time.