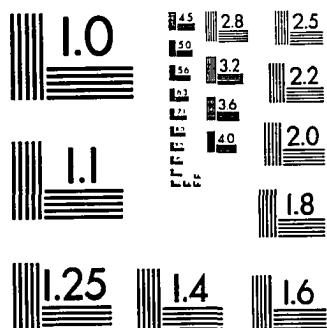
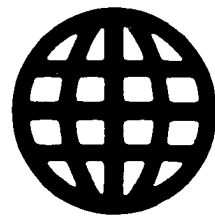


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**A STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MERIT-BASED PAY FOR
TEACHERS IN THREE SCHOOL SYSTEMS**

The University of Oklahoma

Ph.D. 1985

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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

A STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MERIT-BASED PAY
FOR TEACHERS IN THREE SCHOOL SYSTEMS

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By
Mildred L. Clarke
Norman, Oklahoma
1985

A STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MERIT-BASED PAY
FOR TEACHERS IN THREE SCHOOL SYSTEMS
A DISSERTATION
APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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CHAPTER I
A STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MERIT-BASED PAY
FOR TEACHERS IN THREE SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Background of the Problem

In 1981, Secretary of Education T. H. Bell established the National Commission on Excellence in Education. Its purpose was "to examine the quality of education in the United States and to make a report to the Nation and to him within 18 months of its first meeting" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 1). Because of the recent study by the National Commission on Excellence in Education entitled A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, many articles have been published in newspapers and magazines across the country and news coverage has appeared on television and radio concerning the present state of public education in the United States.

The Commission identified "four important aspects of the educational process: content, expectations, time, and teaching" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 18) for which it specifically delineated findings and recommendations. With regard to findings concerning teaching:

The Commission found that not enough of the academically able students are being attracted to teaching; that teacher preparation programs need substantial improvement; that the professional working life of teachers is on the whole unacceptable; and that a serious shortage of teachers exists in key fields. (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 22)

With regard to recommendations concerning teaching, the Commission stated, "Each (recommendation) is intended to improve the preparation of teachers or to make teaching a more rewarding and respected profession" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 30). Three of the seven recommendations on teaching can be directly linked to merit-based pay and career ladders for teachers:

Recommendation 2.

Salaries for the teaching profession should be increased and should be professionally competitive, market-sensitive, and performance-based. Salary, promotion, tenure, and retention decisions should be tied to an effective evaluation system that includes peer review so that superior teachers can be rewarded, average ones encouraged, and poor ones either improved or terminated.

Recommendation 4.

School boards, administrators, and teachers should cooperate to develop career ladders for teachers that distinguish among the beginning instructor, the experienced teacher, and the master teacher.

Recommendation 7.

Master teachers should be involved in designing teacher preparation programs and in supervising teachers during their probationary years. (National Commission on Education, 1983, p. 30-31)

The Education Commission of the States formed a Task Force on Education for Economic Growth which produced a report entitled Action for Excellence. The Task Force was comprised of governors, state legislators, business leaders, labor representation, educators, and organization leaders. It was chaired by James B. Hunt, Jr., Governor of North Carolina, and co-chaired by Frank T.

Cary, Chairman of the Executive Committee, IBM Corporation, and Pierre S. du Pont, IV, Governor of Delaware.

This Task Force stated:

In every state, moreover, teachers are paid according to rigid salary schedules based primarily on training and years of experience. No state, to our knowledge, has a system for rewarding exceptional teachers for their superior performance. The idea of extraordinary rewards for extraordinary performance, in fact--an idea which is accepted in virtually every other career field, public and private--does not apply in the field of public-school teaching. The system of tenure in most school systems also makes it difficult, if not impossible, to deal with the problem of ineffective or unmotivated teachers. (Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, 1983, p. 26)

In conclusion, this Task Force stated:

Action Recommendation 4: Express a new and higher regard for teachers and for the profession of teaching.

We recommend that every state and every local school district--with the fullest participation of teachers themselves--drastically improve their methods for recruiting, training and paying teachers. This improvement should begin with schedules of teacher pay that are competitive with pay in other jobs and professions. . . . It should feature financial incentives for teachers, keyed to differing responsibilities and to filling critical needs in certain subject areas. And it must go on to create extraordinary rewards for extraordinary teachers: expanded pay and recognition for teachers, not just for reaching the upper levels of seniority, but for reaching the upper levels of competence and effectiveness as well.

We strongly recommend that each state create a "career ladder" for teachers that will help attract and keep outstanding teachers. There should be changing levels of responsibility, pay and status for teachers as they move through their careers. . . . Finally, in addition to higher salaries, we recommend that the states and communities, the media and business leaders establish new forms of recognition to honor the contributions of teachers and to underscore publicly their crucial importance in our national life. We have in mind special scholarships, financial awards and other tributes which express the value we place upon teaching as a profession--and our appreciation for great teachers. (Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, 1983, p. 37)

The recent introduction of the concept of merit pay has not been new to educators in the United States. Various forms of merit pay for teachers have been documented since 1908. Throughout the past six decades, there have been periods of increased interest in the merit pay concept and periods of declining interest.

The problem, as reflected in the literature, was not with the concept but rather with the implementation of a system of merit pay for teachers. Kidwell found that approximately one-third of the 140 school systems that reported a merit pay plan for teachers in a study by McKinley (1958) were known to be operating such a plan ten years later. The reasons these plans were discontinued, he believed, included the lack of implementing suggestions contained in the research literature and the lack of success in meeting stated objectives (Kidwell, 1968).

There has been evidence to show that merit pay plans in different school systems and at different times have failed for a number of the same reasons. In

1961 the National Education Association Research Division reported the results of a survey conducted to find out why school systems had abandoned their merit pay programs. NEA contacted 91 systems that had superior-service maximums for teachers in at least two different years from 1938-39 to 1959-60, but had discontinued them later. Thirty systems gave some indication of why the plans were abandoned (Robinson, 1979). The two reasons cited most often for the failure of these merit pay plans were unsatisfactory evaluation procedures and staff dissension (Davis, 1961). The evaluation procedures and the morale of the staff are an integral part of the implementation process of a merit-based pay program.

Recently, The American School Board Journal conducted a nationwide poll of United States teachers on the merit pay concept. The findings revealed that 62.7 percent of teachers endorsed the core concept of merit pay (Rist, 1983). Teachers responding to the poll agreed that teachers should be paid according to how well they perform in the classroom.

The recent emphasis on merit pay plans has many states looking at career ladders for teachers as well as master teacher and mentor teacher plans to find ways to honor excellence in teaching. After meeting with educators, other taxpayers and legislators, the Governor of Tennessee recommended specific legislation and a tax increase to pay for a \$210 million "Better Schools Program" which included a Master Teacher/Master Administrator Act for his state (Alexander, 1983).

To date, the issue of merit pay has not been resolved. Experiences of school systems using various forms of merit pay during the decade of the 80's will serve to add to the research literature on the success or failure of merit pay programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to describe the methods and procedures of the implementation of merit-based pay programs in three school systems. Existing research has provided information about attitudes toward merit-based pay plans and the effectiveness of past merit-based pay plans. What has been lacking has been a careful description of current methods by which merit pay plans could be implemented.

A comparison and contrast of alternative merit-based pay plans may lead to alternative outcomes regarding the implementation process. More specifically, this study examined the following research questions which illustrate the guiding framework of the study:

1. What was the history of the implementation of each of the merit-based pay plans in the three systems? Where did the impetus for each plan begin?
2. How did the implementation of merit-based pay progress in each of the systems? What was the chronology of the events that took place in the implementation of the merit pay plans?
3. What was the extent of the involvement of administrators, teachers, and boards of education in each of the systems during the implementation process?
4. What were the similarities and differences in the implementation of the merit-based pay programs?
5. Were there common characteristics and unique characteristics of the plans for implementing merit-based pay in each of the systems?

Any ethnographic study will take on a life of its own. Questions may change during the process of collecting data, drawing inferences, and blending

the observation with the written analysis. These research questions serve as a guiding framework. However, additional questions may emerge during the course of the study.

Need for the Study

To date, very little current information concerning the implementation of merit-based pay programs was available. Statistical data were available concerning the number of programs that have existed. There were data available on attitudes toward merit-based pay programs, outcomes of past merit-based pay plans, and the effectiveness of past merit-based pay programs. Research was lacking an in-depth examination of the process whereby current merit-based pay plans were implemented. These data highlight the need to research the implementation process of current merit-based pay plans.

To determine how to implement successful merit-based pay plans, there was a need to study in detail methods and procedures of the implementation of existing merit-based pay programs. This study added to the research available on the implementation of merit-based pay programs.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the term "merit pay" included all types of financial reward plans. The American Association of School Administrators (1983) defined merit pay in the following manner: "Merit pay is any device that adjusts salaries to reward higher levels of performance. This definition takes into account all the different forms of what people are calling 'merit pay,' be it differential staffing, incentive pay, or master teaching plans" (p. 8).

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study included the participation of three school systems that agreed to allow the researcher to study the methods and procedures used in their systems to implement a merit-based pay plan.

This study was limited to the collection of data concerning the implementation of a merit-based pay plan in each of three school systems. Data were gathered about the present status, past experiences, and environmental forces that impacted each system. Personal interviews were conducted within each system. In addition, documentary sources were analyzed.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Lessons from the Past

Merit pay programs for teachers has not been a new concept of the 1980's. As early as 1908 in Massachusetts at Newton Public Schools one of the first merit pay programs for teachers was instituted (Holloway, 1959). According to an Educational Research Service study in 1979, "Since that time, many school systems have experimented with the concept of merit pay, most discarding the idea as unworkable after a relatively short period of time" (p. 26).

Merit pay plans were at their peak in the 1920's. However, the 1930's and 1940's brought about the increased use of the single salary schedule. During the 1950's, there was again interest in merit pay with declining interest in the 1960's and 1970's. The following outline of Trends in Merit Pay Programs was prepared by Schneider in 1983:

- 1908 - First attempt at merit pay plan in Newton, Massachusetts; discarded as unworkable.
- 1920 - Merit plans reported to be common (salary based on training, sex, school assignment).
- 1930 - Peak of merit systems which diminished toward single salary schedules.
- 1940 - Study of merit plans indicated unreliability of measuring teaching efficiency.
- 1950 - Interest in merit pay reviewed. Task groups set up to study merit pay in North Carolina, Utah, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

1968 - Merit plans stabilized and began to decline. One third of systems in operation that were reported in 1958.

1973 - School systems of 6,000 plus enrollment, having plans, fell to 5.5% after peaking to 11.3% in 1968.

1975 - Delaware, Florida and New York legislated plans for teachers and abandoned them as unworkable.

1978 - Educational Research Service study of 11,502 school systems indicated:

- 4% had a plan in operation
- 4.7% were considering plans
- 6.4% had programs which were not operating
- 31.7% of discontinued plans lasted one or two years
- 21.6% of discontinued programs lasted 3 or 4 years
- 15.1% had a plan that was more than 10 years old when it was discontinued

1979 - Survey of systems (30,000 + population) indicated 170 having merit plans in 1959, but only 33 in 1979.

1980 - Resurgence of interest in merit plans by larger school systems and state legislatures. (pp. 2-3)

A number of suggestions for making merit pay a success have been documented by researchers, teachers, and administrators who have been involved with planning, implementing, and evaluating teacher merit pay programs. The Educational Research Service study published in 1979 was the most comprehensive of the studies which have been performed. The writer is indebted to the Educational Research Service (1979) report for the following compilations. The following composite list is largely based on the guidelines described by

McDowell in 1973 (pp. 16-18), with additional suggestions incorporated from the merit pay literature:

I. Prerequisite Criteria

1. The primary objective of any merit plan must be to improve instruction. A merit pay plan cannot be used to penalize poor or unsatisfactory teachers or be based on popularity (Liechti, 1972, p. 27).
2. Input for developing the plan should come from many sources, including teachers, administrators, the school board and the community. Past practice has shown that attempts to mandate a merit pay plan upon teachers, by either local or legislative action, have failed completely (Teacher Merit and Teacher Salary, 1957, pp. 45-46).
3. An atmosphere of confidence, respect, honesty, and trust must exist among the persons involved in the plan.
4. There should be no discrepancies between administrative practices and the principle of merit (Thorne, 1957, p. 147). One of the most important factors contributing to the success of a merit pay program is the strong dynamic leadership provided by the school administration.
5. Before the plan is actually begun, thorough research is necessary to pinpoint problem areas that have hampered or defeated merit pay plans in other school systems (McKenna, 1973, p. 71).
6. There should be no limit to the number of "meritorious" teachers in the school system. Eligibility for the plan must be

based on recognized predetermined standards, not on artificially established quotas or percentages. A teacher should be allowed to receive merit pay at any time during his or her career (Liechti, 1972, p. 27).

7. The plan must be evaluated continually, so that problem areas can be identified and corrected and new features can be added to the program (Thorne, 1957, p. 146).
8. Problems inherent in establishing a merit pay program take time to identify, discuss, and resolve.
9. Provisions should be made for continuing the plan from year-to-year. When merit pay is awarded one year and not the next, staff morale and confidence in the program will deteriorate (Thorne, 1960, p. 23).
10. After the plan has been in operation, its rationale and applications should be carefully explained to teachers new to the school system (Thorne, 1960, p. 23).
11. After the plan has begun, the role of the board of education as policy maker is finished. Many merit plans have failed because of board interference with the operation of the plan (Rhodes, 1973, p. 46).

II. The Evaluation Process

1. Evaluation standards chosen to distinguish superior teachers from average teachers must be applied objectively and reflect what actually takes place in the classroom. Teachers should know the criteria that will be used in their evaluation (Thorne, 1960, p. 22).

2. Merit rating should be carried out continuously by a team of evaluators, rather than irregularly, by a single evaluator. A group approach lessens the chance for bias.
3. Teachers must have confidence in the impartiality and competence of the evaluators (Liechti, 1972, p. 27).
4. One criteria [sic] for assessing merit, pupil achievement, should be measured objectively each year by means of standardized achievement tests (Stoops, 1975, p. 634).
5. The administrative and supervisory staff should be adequately trained for their duties under the merit program. Skill in applying the rating instrument fairly and similarly can be gained through workshops and actual practice (Rhodes, 1973, p. 44).
6. The evaluation results obtained through observation should be related in a statistically valid method to the established standards of qualification (Bell, 1963, pp. 13-14).
7. Follow-up conferences with teachers after the evaluations take place are vital to the success of the program, if the real goal is to improve the quality of instruction (Rhodes, 1973, p. 45).
8. Enough time and adequate staffing should be provided to allow for complete merit evaluations. Merit rating will increase the workloads of both professional and support staff (Teacher Merit and Teacher Salary, 1957, p. 48).
9. Superior merit evaluations should be valid for one year and extended only through a re-evaluation the next year (Stoops, 1975, p. 634).

10. Administrators who participate in teacher evaluation also should be rated according to established standards. Administrative accountability calls for those doing the rating to realize that how well they evaluate teachers serves as a basis for their own evaluations (Rhodes, 1973, p. 45).
11. In all cases, avenues for teacher appeal on merit ratings should be provided.

III. Financing the Plan

1. The basic salary schedule must be sound if a merit pay program is to succeed (McKenna, 1973, p. 71).
2. Most school systems that have implemented merit pay plans have based teacher salary increases on other factors, such as academic preparation and years of experience, in addition to merit.
3. Merit increments awarded to superior teachers must be large enough to provide a real incentive for outstanding service.
4. School management must realize that a good merit pay plan will cost more than a regular salary schedule. Besides the merit increments, there will be additional administrative costs, put at an extra 18 percent of payroll by one estimate (Templeton, 1972, p. 5).
5. Enough money must be provided for the plan if it is to operate as intended. Because a merit pay program is an extra expense, the cost-benefit aspects must be considered carefully (Liechti, 1972, p. 27).

In 1973, Rhodes described 12 basic flaws common to unsuccessful merit pay programs:

1. Insufficient discrimination among teachers.
2. Artificial cutoffs on the number who could receive merit recognition, thus sometimes arbitrarily denying recognition to deserving teachers.
3. Poor evaluators.
4. Mistaken concepts by board members and administrators.
5. Lack of clearly understood goals.
6. Lack of a clear definition of the job. Good job descriptions are an important part of a good merit plan.
7. Lack of priorities in the job. A good merit plan should help to direct teachers toward the primary goals.
8. Lack of an effective evaluation instrument. Many teacher evaluation instruments are too simple in their structure and invite a subjective approach which naturally breeds concern among teachers.
9. Inability to measure results. Most merit systems look at the way a teacher acts, rather than the results the teacher produces.
10. Inability to translate evaluation into improved instruction.
11. Inadequate financial incentive. A merit stipend which represents only a small increment beyond that which one would normally receive for minimum performance is not geared to stimulate or give real recognition to teachers.
12. Too limited a concept of merit. If only a few teachers are to gain recognition or any type of salary advancement from a merit plan, obviously the plan will not be popular with the majority of teachers (Rhodes, 1973, p. 3-4).

Schneider (1983) compiled a list of selected factors associated with the discontinuance of merit plans in different schools and at different times. The compilation is subdivided into four categories as follows:

1. Administrative

- difficulty in applying evaluation criteria fairly
- change in leadership
- plan failed to accomplish major objective
- difficult to administer
- eligible limits too arbitrary
- teacher misunderstandings
- principal's role misinterpreted
- unsatisfactory evaluation procedures
- mistaken concept by board members
- goals not clearly stated
- lack of clear job descriptions
- lack of effective evaluation instrument
- inability to measure results
- inability to translate evaluation into improved instruction
- inadequate financial incentive
- merit concept too limited

2. Personnel

- dislike of merit plan by teachers/teacher unions
- diminished morale
- staff dissension/jealousy
- difficulty in distinguishing between merit and favoritism
- individual performance taking preference over cooperation

- parents wanted only the "superior" teachers
- poor evaluators
- 3. Collective bargaining
 - merit plan negotiated out of contracts
 - merit pay diverted to "across the board" raises
- 4. Financial
 - lack of funds
 - incentives not high enough
 - inflation
- 5. Other
 - merit plan considered illegal
 - media destroyed confidentiality of the plan (p. 7)

An article in The American School Board Journal entitled, "Heed these voices of merit pay experience" (1983) offered eight considerations to be addressed by any system weighing the pros and cons of merit pay. The sources for this article included a school board member and two superintendents among others. The insights of those interviewed included:

- If your state school code does not allow differentiated pay schedules, work with your legislators to pass laws or amend the state education code to permit merit pay.
- Discuss your merit pay idea with principals and other key administrators.
- Make sure your merit pay plan doesn't penalize some teachers.
- Train principals and other evaluators to measure teachers' effectiveness on the basis of agreed-on criteria.

- Make sure school system policies and practices reflect the role of principals as instructional leaders and personnel evaluators.
- Don't overlook the public relations aspect of merit pay programs.
- Make sure you have enough money available to make merit pay attractive to teachers.
- If teachers fight you about performance evaluation and merit pay, ask them to defend the existing lock-step salary schedule. (p. 35)

As an update to the 1979 Educational Research Service survey of merit pay plans, ERS (1983) surveyed school systems currently linked with having merit pay plans for teachers. According to Glen Robinson,

This report provides specific information on the many varieties of merit pay plans employed by school districts to reward good teachers. Unlike the 1978 survey, it is not a census of all school districts in the United States that have merit pay plans for teachers. (p. 2)

The results of this study was entitled, "Merit Pay Plans for Teachers: Status and Descriptions." There were 115 affirmative responses to the ERS study.

In the 1983 study, Robinson cited criteria based on "a concept of increased educational productivity that is objectively measurable and visibly fair" (p. 11). Criteria for successful merit pay plans included:

- have effective evaluation procedures;
- have workable administrative procedures;
- have the commitment of the school board and the school administrative staff;
- involve the staff in developing the program;
- promote teacher satisfaction;
- have adequate financing;

- be available to all who qualify;
- have a plausible definition of superior performance;
- have valid and verifiable measures of results;
- apply assessment measures objectively and consistently;
- promote increased learning of pupils. (Robinson, 1983, p. 11)

According to Robinson (1983),

Responses to the 1983 survey instrument basically confirmed the reasons found in the 1978 survey as to why school districts have discontinued merit pay plans for teachers. Respondents in 1983 referred to unsatisfactory evaluation procedures, administrative problems, staff dissension, and lack of funds as the reasons they dropped merit pay for teachers. (p. 18)

States as well as local districts face the issue of merit pay for teachers. The ERS (1983) study included responses from state departments of education and the state associations of school administrators. According to the study,

States interested in developing plans face extremely complicated issues, including:

- the need for an adequate basic salary schedule for all teachers with financial incentives large enough to motivate teachers
- the importance of teacher involvement in the planning for and administration of the plan
- the training of evaluators
- the question of limits placed on the percentage of the teaching staff that can qualify
- attention to the problem of removing talented teachers from the classroom if their new master teacher responsibilities include heavy emphasis on curriculum development and administration

- teacher union opposition.

Underlying all of these issues is that of cost (ERS, 1983, pp. 59-60).

The Issues of Merit Pay for Teachers

Positions of Teachers. A nationwide poll conducted by The American School Board Journal in 1983 revealed that 62.7 percent of teachers in the United States concur with the concept of merit pay. The "survey asked teachers three questions related to merit pay," according to Marilee C. Rist (1983):

1. It asked them to agree or disagree with the statement, 'Teachers who are more effective in the classroom should receive larger salary increases than teachers who are less effective';
2. It asked them to identify who should evaluate teachers' classroom performance; and
3. It asked how they think teacher salary increases should be determined. (p. 23)

Thirty-nine percent preferred principal evaluation of performance, 25.4 percent preferred teacher peers, 15 percent preferred department head, 12.1 percent preferred a combination of administrators and other teachers.

The survey asked the teachers to check one of the following choices pertaining to the preferred method for determination of salary increases:

1. by classroom effectiveness alone,
2. by seniority/academic credits alone,
3. by a combination of these two factors, with greater weight given to effectiveness,
4. by a combination of the two factors, with greater weight given to seniority and credits, and
5. by a combination, weighting both factors equally. (Rist, 1983, p. 23)

The results showed that 41 percent of the teachers surveyed thought that effectiveness and seniority/credits should be given equal weight in determining salary increases. Twenty-seven percent thought that both factors should be considered, with greater weight given to effectiveness.

Another survey conducted by Jordan Brooks in 1979 revealed that 923 of 1,756 principals and teachers in Texas public schools "agreed with the philosophy of merit pay" (Brooks, 1979, p. 58-59). However, Brooks concluded that the "arguments for and against merit pay balanced the opinion to neutral The uncertainty of implementation and administration was counterbalanced by their belief in the positiveness of the concept itself" (Brooks, 1979, p. 94). The bottom line appears to be that educators support the concept of merit pay, but are apprehensive about its implementation and administration.

Positions of Administrator Groups. In July of 1983 Jordan and Borkow reported the positions of several administrator groups regarding merit pay:

- American Association of School Administrators gives qualified support to merit pay for teachers. The qualifications include: prior to implementation of merit pay, all teachers' salaries should be raised to "competitive levels"; before implementation, teachers, the community, and administrators should agree on the administration of the system; school systems should consider incentive pay plans rather than "master teacher plans."
- Council of Chief State School Officers does not have an official position on merit pay. It believes that "it is not the role of the Federal government to establish a position regarding teachers' salaries."

- National Association of Elementary School Principals states that "systems of merit pay do not work because of the many inequities and difficulties encountered in establishing, implementing, and maintaining meaningful measurable criteria." Merit pay plans are "often divisive and counter-productive."
- National Association of Secondary School Principals believes that incentive pay plans are "worthy of further discussion."
- National School Boards Association encourages local school boards to review their teacher salary schedules for elements that are "competitive, market sensitive, and performance based" (p. 24-25).

Positions of Teacher Unions. Traditionally, the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers have opposed any form of merit pay. Their purpose is to improve the working conditions of all or the majority of teachers. Merit pay plans single out those teachers who are performing exceptionally. By mere definition, merit pay does not reward the majority.

However, with the recent publicity aroused by politicians and the public demanding greater perceived excellence in schools, the unions are reconsidering their stance.

The AFT, through President Albert Shanker, has expressed a willingness to consider merit pay plans if three conditions were met:

- if evaluations were made by "somebody teachers had confidence in";
- if the proposal did not establish a "super salary for some people to keep the majority of teachers at a low salary"; and
- if the proposal "actually helped teachers teach or helped the school perform in a better way." (White, 1983)

At the annual AFT convention in July of 1983, a resolution specified that merit pay plans must offer higher base pay for all teachers, rely on evaluations that avoid all chance of favoritism by administrators, and account for the full complexity of classroom teaching in determining ratings. The resolution opposed relying solely on student achievement as a measure of a teacher's success (Education Daily, July 11, 1983).

Willard McGuire, past president of NEA, has stated, "NEA will consider any fair and equitable salary proposal." He adds "our quarrel is generally with a clear definition and how it is implemented." NEA urges merit pay plans to include "competitive entry level salaries" for all teachers; "career ladder" options for all teachers; "adequate" evaluation processes; and allowances for adaptations at the local level (McGuire, 1983; Jordan & Borkow, 1983, p. 25).

Current Data on State Merit Pay Plans

A Career Ladder Clearinghouse has been approved by the Southern Regional Education Board and endorsed by the Southern Governors' Association and the Southern Legislative Conference. The Clearinghouse has collected information pertaining to state-level plans. The following summary of state plans was taken from Career Ladder Plans: Questions Faced By States published by the Career Ladder Clearinghouse (1984).

Who Is Included in the Career Ladder Plans?

Approximately three-fourths of the states that have plans or proposals for career ladders limit the incentive programs to teachers. In many states "teacher" is defined to include instructional personnel such as media specialists or guidance counselors. Other states, especially in the Southern region, include administrators in their plans. Tennessee, which is implementing a career ladder for teachers this year, will include principals,

assistant principals, and supervisors beginning next year. Plans in North Carolina, Alabama, and Delaware call for career development for all certified school personnel in the state. Georgia's and New Mexico's proposals include school administrators.

All plans have provisions for moving veteran teachers into career ladder systems, although participation is usually optional. Those programs which tie certification to a career ladder, such as in Texas and Tennessee, require all new teachers to be a part of the plan.

State and Local Control of Career Ladder Plans

Across the nation, the majority of states are using statewide criteria to guide local districts in design and implementation of incentive programs. Arizona's legislation outlines the procedures for local development of career ladder plans for teachers who possess advanced teaching skills or those with advanced skills who take on additional responsibilities. Each local plan must include: how the plan will improve student achievement, criteria for movement up the ladder, how responsibilities will be incorporated into contracts for teachers, and general procedures for evaluation. This general pattern of developing local plans based on state guidelines is followed in California, Colorado, Idaho, Utah, and Virginia.

More centralized approaches are found in Tennessee, Florida, and Texas. The Tennessee plan rewards teachers for performance using classroom observations, peer and student questionnaires, teacher portfolios, and written tests to determine which teachers will advance on the career ladder. At the lower levels of the ladder, evaluations are local. At the highest career levels, peer evaluators (members of state evaluation teams) assess teachers in the classroom. Regional commissions, overseen

by a state certification commission, make decisions about movement up the ladder at the upper levels, and approve local-level decisions on advancement at the first two levels. In Florida, all teachers who want to become associate master teachers (the first level) must meet state criteria and are to be evaluated through statewide written tests (under development) and a state classroom observation instrument. All must score at a specified level on the classroom observations and tests in order to be eligible to become an associate master teacher. The next step, master teacher, has similar requirements. The Texas legislation outlines a statewide plan, and provides for the development of a statewide evaluation system which will be administered at the local level. The local agencies will use the state-developed evaluation instrument for decisions about movement up the career ladder.

Criteria for Salary Awards

What are the criteria for the salary awards that teachers and administrators receive? Are teachers being rewarded for excellent performance, for extended hours or contract year, or for additional duties? Is differentiated staffing, with differential compensation, a part of the plan?

The Florida Master Teacher Plan rewards the performance of the teacher rather than asking for additional work or extended hours. Many plans use excellent performance (however defined) to determine which teachers will be eligible to move up the career ladder or be designated a master teacher; however, most require extra work in the form of additional duties or extended contracts. Some plans provide for differentiated responsibilities at the upper levels, such as serving as department

chairperson. The master teacher or "mentor teacher" plan in California calls for a teacher's primary duties outside of the classroom to be guiding and assisting new teachers, although additional duties, such as staff development and curriculum design, may be part of the job. Sixty percent of the teacher's time must be spent in direct instruction of pupils. The New Jersey Pilot Master Teacher Plan requires that master teachers, chosen by district committees, aid in the training of new teachers as well as work the equivalent of an 11th month (20 days), either during the school year or in the summer. This time can be used for additional projects, staff development, curriculum development, or for research in their teaching field. The Virginia Career Ladder Plan calls for superior teaching for advancement. Differentiated assignments, such as "department supervisor" or "teacher mentor," are options at upper levels. Senior teachers may have longer work days or extended contracts; the next higher level, master teachers, will have extended contracts. The Idaho legislation states that career ladders, to be developed at the district level, provide reward and recognition for extraordinary teaching, innovation, leadership, and additional responsibilities. Extended contracts for teachers may also be provided. Advancement on the ladder is based on performance. Almost all plans call for a majority of a teacher's time to be spent in the classroom.

Requirements for Career Ladder Advancement

How does a teacher advance on a career ladder or become a master teacher? Experience? Academic credits or staff development? Classroom performance? Activities outside the classroom? Measurement of student progress? In all of the statewide plans, experience is a requirement for becoming a master teacher or for advancing on a career ladder. The New

Jersey Pilot Master Teacher Program and the California Mentor Teacher Program require seven and three years of experience, respectively, in order to be eligible for nomination as master or mentor teachers. Florida teachers must have four years of experience to become an associate master teacher, two of which must be in the state. State career ladder plans, such as those in Virginia, Tennessee, Texas, and North Carolina, generally require two to five years of experience at each level before advancement to the next. States, such as Arizona, Colorado, and Idaho, that have programs designed and implemented locally are leaving that decision to the districts.

Academic credits or staff development are used less often than experience as criteria for career ladder decisions, although North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas plans combine experience, performance, and academic training as requirements to advance. Texas specifies that the credits must be in the areas of certification and teaching assignment. Florida currently requires a master's degree in the subject area, but will remove that criterion for most fields when written tests (which are being developed) are available.

All plans use the classroom performance of the teacher as a criterion; some also use leadership within the school and work with professional organizations. Innovative leadership is a criterion in Idaho's plans, along with extraordinary teaching. Knowledge skills are included in the Colorado guidelines, and in states such as Florida and Tennessee that require written tests. Several plans, such as those in Utah and Texas, specify that compensation under these plans cannot be based on additional duties related to extracurricular activities.

Plans in Arizona and Virginia include student progress as a factor in determining the performance of their teachers. The Utah legislation states that assessment of student progress shall play a significant role in teacher evaluation. Tennessee has considered using student achievement data. Georgia's career ladder proposal includes student achievement data for evaluating teachers. The District Quality Incentive Program in Florida, which rewards personnel on a school-wide basis, requires that student progress be recognized for identifying meritorious schools.

Methods of Evaluation

What methods and instruments will be used in evaluating teachers? Classroom observations? Written tests? Who will be responsible for conducting the performance evaluations--peers, supervisors, teams, the school principal? Will decisions be made at the state or local level?

Four states--Florida, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Texas--are using or are planning to use a state-developed instrument for assessing the performance of teachers in the classroom. In Tennessee, the instrument is used at the upper levels by state assessment teams to determine classroom performance of teachers; local districts design instruments and make decisions at the lower levels of the ladder. For Florida's Master Teacher Plan, teachers' classroom performance will be observed by the principal and one other observer. To be eligible for associate master teacher status, teachers must make a score in the top quartile of the scores of all teachers who have been assessed by the instrument. The Texas instrument (under development) will be designed for use by the teacher's supervisor and a peer teacher. Levels of attainment for each career level will be set by the state; however, local decisions will determine movement up the career

ladder. The North Carolina plan, to be piloted in 1985-86, is similar to the one in Texas. It involves the use of a state instrument, with levels of "better than satisfactory" required on teacher evaluations for Career Status II and "exceptional" for Career Status III. Evaluations are to be conducted by peers and supervisors. School-based review panels will make determinations for the lower levels of the ladder; a district-wide review committee will make recommendations for the two upper levels.

Other state plans provide for district-designed evaluation methods, usually within state guidelines and requiring state approval. In programs such as California's and New Jersey's the master or mentor teachers are chosen by district committees, with teachers making up the majority of the review committee.

Written tests are a part of the Tennessee and Florida programs. Many states are utilizing tests for entry-level or provisional status on career ladders, as well as for initial certification. Texas is requiring that all teachers pass a written test within the next two years. Other indicators of teacher competency, such as information from the school principal, student questionnaire responses, and peer assessment of leadership qualities in the teacher, are used in the Tennessee plan. These are all weighted along with classroom evaluations and tests for determining the movement of teachers up the career ladder.

Student achievement or progress has been cited in several states as a criterion for evaluating the effectiveness of teachers. In some cases, decisions about including student progress have been postponed or made part of the latter phases of implementation. (pp. 1-6)

Types of Incentives

Although there is an abundance of material available on the success and failure of merit pay plans in the past and there is beginning to be more available on current plans, there is very little in-depth material available on the steps to follow in actually implementing a merit-pay plan. This researcher did uncover two very helpful resources: Teacher Incentives: A Tool for Effective Management sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the American Association of School Administrators and Some points to consider when you discuss MERIT PAY published by the American Association of School Administrators.

The publication sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the American Association of School Administrators entitled Teacher Incentives: A Tool for Effective Management was prepared by the firm of Cresap, McCormick and Paget (1984). This publication categorized teacher incentives into five categories:

- Compensation plans (including performance-based salaries and bonuses),
- Career options (including career ladders),
- Enhanced professional responsibilities (including master teacher plans),
- Nonmonetary recognition, and
- Improved working conditions. (p. 16)

The following chart which illustrates type of incentive and the purpose of each incentive is reprinted from the foregoing publication. (p. 17)

FIGURE 1

Purposes of Teacher Incentives

Type of Incentive	Purpose			
	Attract High Quality Teachers	Retain Superior Teachers	Motivate Effort and Improvement	Accomplish Other Goals
Compensation Plans				
-Performance-Based				
Salaries	*	*	*	
-Bonuses	*	*	*	*
-Market-Sensitive Salaries	*	*		*
-Salary Differentiation				
Based on Job Factors	*	*		
-Loan Forgiveness and				
Scholarships	*			
-Grants, Sabbaticals,				
Training		*	*	
-Modification in Base				
Salaries and Benefits	*	*		
Career Options				
-Career Ladders	*	*	*	
-Short-Term Career	*			

FIGURE 1**Purposes of Teacher Incentives**

Type of Incentive	Purpose			
	Attract High Quality Teachers	Retain Superior Teachers	Motivate Effort and Improvement	Accomplish Other Goals
-Part-Time and Joint				
Appointments	*	*	*	
-Early Retirement				
	*			
Enhanced Professional Responsibilities				
-Master Teacher				
Assignments		*	*	
-Teacher Projects				
		*	*	
-Longer Day or Year				
	*	*	*	
Nonmonetary Recognition				
		*	*	
Improved Working Conditions				
	*	*	*	

Performance-based salaries reward outstanding teachers by paying them more than their counterparts who do not meet the criteria established for an outstanding teacher. It is not necessary that all teachers who receive increases

in salary based on performance must receive the same amount. Provisions may be made to reward teachers based on different levels of performance quality.

A modified salary schedule uses the traditional factors of cost of living adjustment and years of experience as well as a third factor of performance. Over a period of time teachers' salaries vary significantly depending upon the amount of increases based on performance. According to the study prepared by Cresap, McCormick and Paget (1984), "All performance-based plans require an adequately valid, reliable, objective performance appraisal method and qualified, well-trained evaluators" (p. 18). Although these requirements are widely accepted in the research literature, it is also generally understood that it is these criteria that make performance-based pay so difficult to administer.

Bonuses are considered to be awarded on a one-time basis. A bonus is not added to the annual salary of a teacher on a permanent basis. Bonuses may be used as an incentive to attract outstanding college graduates or may be awarded on an annual basis to outstanding teachers. An advantage to the school system is that bonuses do not have a multiplier effect on long-term budget requirements as do increases in base salaries.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) recommended the initiation of market-sensitive salaries. In this case, a teacher would be paid the salary that would be earned in industry by a person with comparable skills.

The Cresap (1984) report sponsored by NASSP, NAESP, and AASA speaks to the strengths and weaknesses of market-sensitive salaries:

The plan's main weakness is its fundamental impact on current salary arrangements. It requires a new salary structure (which is subject to negotiation in many districts) and would not be achieved without struggle.

Furthermore, as it changes the definition of "equity" among teacher salaries, many incumbent teachers would be affected negatively. Finally, as market conditions change, there would be the continued need to revise salary schedules. There is also the technical difficulty of defining the market for cost comparison purposes. (p. 21)

Salary differentiation based on job factors receives very little support in the research literature. "This type of plan cuts to the heart of assumptions underlying existing salary schedules, would require negotiation in many districts, and would likely encounter resistance from teachers" (Cresap, 1984, p. 21).

Loan forgiveness and scholarships are methods of inducing outstanding college graduates to enter the field of education. Grants, sabbaticals and special training opportunities are awards that might be given to outstanding teachers. Modifications in base salaries and benefits include across-the-board salary increases, higher starting salaries, and flexible benefits.

Career options are designed to enhance the field of teaching by attracting larger numbers of highly qualified persons. According to Cresap (1984):

The basic purposes of career ladders are:

1. To encourage good teachers to stay in the profession by providing advancement possibilities within teaching,
2. To counteract stagnation by varying teachers' responsibilities and activities at each level,
3. To reward and motivate superior teachers through enhanced prestige, responsibility, and increased remuneration.

Career ladders typically have three or four levels including some combination of entry (or probationary, or apprentice), continuing (or regular, or career), senior, and master (or mentor) categories. (p. 22)

Master teachers are given more responsibility in return for higher pay and professional recognition. They may be asked to assist or train other teachers, to coordinate instruction or curriculum improvement efforts, or to serve as a member of an evaluation team as a part of a performance-based evaluation program. Career ladder plans and master teacher plans serve to link merit, higher pay and increased responsibility.

Variations on the idea of entering teaching as a short-term career are designed to encourage people to enter teaching for a short period of time during their career. These are people who would never enter the teaching profession otherwise. Examples include talented college graduates who will move on to a career in another field, older persons who have retired early from other jobs, and by persons at mid-career in businesses and industries who can arrange a temporary assignment in the teaching field (Cresap, 1984, p. 25). Part-time and joint appointments are designed to allow qualified persons to teach and school districts to expand their pool of teaching talent (Cresap, 1984, p. 25). Early retirement enables those persons who have lost their fervor for teaching to make way for new and enthusiastic talent.

Enhanced professional responsibilities allow teachers to be paid for more hours of work per year. This is particularly important to sole or primary income earners who are unable to live on a 9 or 10 month salary. An example of such expanded responsibilities is through the use of "mentor" teachers who receive extra pay for assisting other teachers to improve their skills (Cresap, 1984, p. 25). In addition, according to the Cresap study:

- Teachers can be paid for doing projects beyond regular classroom instruction.

- Teachers can be paid for working more hours per day or more days per year to teach an extra period, advise students and provide remedial assistance, consult with parents, train other teachers, observe and assist other teachers, develop instructional materials, teach summer school, teach under a year-round school arrangement, provide supervision, assist cocurricular activities, or perform other professional tasks. (p. 26)

Nonmonetary recognition may be in the form of awards. "Awards are usually most effective when they are not too few or too many and when used in combination with other types of incentives" (Cresap, 1984, p. 27).

Examples of possible improvements in working conditions capable of helping attract, motivate, and retain teachers include:

- Providing alternative arrangements for chronic discipline problems
- Establishing a more supportive school climate
- Increasing teachers' involvement in planning and decision making
- Reducing interruptions of classroom time by announcements, special pull-out programs, and cocurricular activities
- Hiring administrative aides (in addition to or instead of instructional aides) to handle routine administrative matters, thereby maximizing the time teachers and principals can devote to instructional matters
- Focusing more financial and other resources on support for classroom teaching
- Reducing the curriculum fragmentation and crowding that results from continuously adding new topics without dropping others
- Improving the balance in class sizes and teaching loads across schools, grade levels, and classrooms

- Providing discretionary funds to schools, departments, and/or teachers for supplies, materials, and other instructional expenditures
- Providing offices or improved work areas for teachers to use during planning and other noninstructional time
- Enhancing school building comfort and appearance. (Cresap, 1984, p. 27)

Development of a Plan

The American Association of School Administrators (1983) delineates five considerations when establishing a process to be used in developing a merit-based pay program:

- Avoid most, if not all, of the problems schools have encountered with merit pay.
- Build a solid base of support for your merit pay program.
- Design a program that meets your district's particular needs, while working within limitations unique to your district.
- Implement the program with as few snags as possible.
- Change your program as needed. (p. 19)

The report prepared by Cresap (1984) identifies six steps in developing a merit-based pay program:

- Establish a planning process.
- Determine objectives and criteria.
- Develop a plan.
- Determine cost.
- Develop an implementation plan.
- Approve and install the plan. (p. 37)

Participation from the board of education, administrative team, classroom teachers and patrons/community members should be evidenced in the planning process. "The level and type of involvement will vary by district and will be conditioned by the history of such participation" (Cresap, 1984, p. 38).

Research concerning the history of merit pay, the problems of implementation and the dissection of several merit-based pay plans is necessary during the planning process. In addition, problems specific to the school system need to be addressed.

Various types of data may assist in determining the nature and extent of these problems in specific school districts. These include:

- Community expectations and perceptions of the teacher quality desired and present in the district, and of problems in the areas cited; the community's willingness to provide resources for improvement
- Teacher and administrator perceptions of problems
- Characteristics of the teacher work force - age, longevity, subject specialty, qualifications, salary
- The supply of qualified applicants and newly hired teachers by subject and level in relation to current and future needs
- The characteristics of teachers leaving the district. (Cresap, 1984, p. 38)

Using the research that is available and the objectives and criteria established for the school system, a plan may be developed. Specific considerations which should be a part of the development process include:

- Selection criteria.
- Resource estimates.
- Participants, increments, and awards.

- Administration
- District needs and criteria (Cresap, 1984, p. 39-40).

Any obstacles that may need to be considered prior to implementation should be assessed. The following chart lists possible obstacles to incentives and ways of addressing each obstacle. The chart is reprinted from Teacher Incentives: A Tool for Effective Management by Cresap (1984, p. 41).

According to Cresap (1984), "The assessment of obstacles will ensure that the objectives and incentive plan are realistic. Some of the plan's features may have to be modified to reduce implementation obstacles" (p. 41).

FIGURE 2

Possible Obstacles to Incentives

Obstacle	Ways of Addressing
Financial Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Determine and demonstrate likely benefits. -Lower cost of incentive program to minimum acceptable point. -Set priorities among possible expenditures and reallocate funds accordingly. -Seek additional sources of funds.
Effective Performance Appraisal	-Demonstrate that performance appraisal requirements are possible to achieve and have been achieved in other districts.
-Validity	

FIGURE 2

Possible Obstacles to Incentives

Obstacle	Ways of Addressing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reliability -Objectivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -If priority is sufficiently high, invest sufficient time and funds in development effort.
Teacher Opposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Include teachers in all phases of planning, development, and implementation. -Reassess and modify plan periodically.
Administrative Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Simplify plan to fullest extent possible. -Calculate costs of adequate administration and ensure needed support. -Provide adequate training. -Strengthen criteria for selection of administrators.
Collective Bargaining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Involve teachers in planning and development work prior to bargaining. -Introduce intended plan into bargaining after sufficient planning. -Explain all potential benefits to teachers and safeguard against potential negative effects.

FIGURE 2

Possible Obstacles to Incentives

Obstacle	Ways of Addressing
Legal Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Design plan to comply with relevant laws and regulations. -Collaborate with other districts and state officials to obtain needed exemptions or changes.

A detailed analysis is necessary with regard to costs and benefits of a merit pay plan.

Costs typically associated with incentive programs include the following:

- Salary increases
- Bonuses
- Benefits
- Retirement payments
- Awards
- Loan and scholarship payments
- Grants and sabbaticals
- Staff time (planning, training, administration, performance appraisal). (Cresap, 1984, p. 41-42)

According to Cresap (1984), "Many good incentive programs have failed because of flaws in implementation strategies" (p. 42). Cresap recommends five elements to include in planning the implementation process:

1. Phase-in plan
2. Management plan
3. Communications plan
4. Monitoring and assessment
5. Reassess earlier decisions. (p. 42-43)

Following critical assessment and development of a plan and a strategy for implementing the plan, the final step is to gain final approval and begin the implementation process. Continued assessment of the merit-based pay program is necessary to determine whether or not the objectives of the system are being met. "Without that information, not only will you be unable to assess the program's value but you also will not be able to improve it" (AASA, 1983, p. 35).

CHAPTER III

Methodology

This research utilized ethnographic methodology. The ethnographic study is fairly new to the world of research outside the field of anthropology. To the general educational research community, it is a theory of methodology used to help solve problems in studying teachers, curricula, classrooms, and schools. According to Louis M. Smith (1982), "Quasi synonyms of 'ethnography' include 'case study,' 'field study,' 'naturalistic methods,' 'participant observation,' 'responsive evaluation,' and 'qualitative methods.'" These various concepts may have slightly different meanings; however, for the purpose of this study the researcher will be using the terms interchangeably. The writer is indebted to the organization scheme of Louis Smith (1983) in the section that follows.

Filstead (1970) describes the data collection techniques of qualitative research as follows:

Qualitative methodology refers to those research strategies such as participant observation, in-depth interviewing, total participation in the activity being investigated, field work, etc., which allow the researcher to obtain firsthand knowledge about the empirical social world in question. Qualitative methodology allows the researcher to "get close to the data," thereby developing the analytical, conceptual, and categorical components of explanation from the data itself. (p. 6)

Glaser and Strauss (1967) have called the process "theoretical sampling": "Data collection for the purpose of generating theory whereby the analyst jointly

collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges" (p. 45).

Ray C. Rist (1979, p. 17) states, ". . . the observation of human behavior in natural settings (as opposed to measurement of human behavior) is an appropriate means by which to understand that behavior." He further states, ". . . the positing of alternatives suggests that there are multiple means of knowing about an event, an interaction, or a pattern of social organization, and how it is that these are interpreted by the participants." Bogdan and Taylor (1975) concur with, ". . . qualitative methodologies assume there is value to an analysis of both the inner experience and outer behavior of a subject as viewed by both the researcher and the participants."

Rist (1979) in explaining the qualitative approach to research states:

Stress is made on the need for the researcher to "take on the role of the other," and to understand "the definition of the situation" from within the framework of the participants. Emphasis is placed on the perceptions and values given to different behaviors and objects as they are manipulated by man. Qualitative research is predicated upon the assumption that an "inner understanding" enables a comprehension of human behavior in greater depth than is possible from the study of surface behavior, from paper and pencil tests, and from standardized interviews. (p. 20)

According to Rist (1979) ". . . in qualitative research, theory is developed from an understanding of 'grounded events,' i.e., the experiences as shared and understood by the participants and the observer. . . . The task is always one of learning how those involved interpreted and gave meaning to the situation" (p. 20).

Rist (1979) goes on to state ". . . Different problems require different types of investigations. The decision on the style of research one chooses to employ should be a matter of informed judgment. . . . one chooses a methodological approach based on a need for varying levels of analysis and for selective emphasis on particular aspects of the issue at hand" (p. 18).

Louis M. Smith (1983) summarizes the use of educational ethnography as follows:

. . . a large body of research exists within the qualitative, ethnographic, participant observational genre. Its roots lie especially in anthropology and in several traditions within sociology. . . one educational research practitioner's use of these methods suggests its applicability to a broad array of problems within education--schools, classrooms, curriculum development, and evaluation. (p. 81)

Research Plan for this Study

Three basic research strategies of ethnography were utilized: researcher observation, interviewing, and analysis of written sources. The researcher travelled to each of the selected locations for the purpose of conducting interviews, collecting written sources and observing the school systems from the viewpoint of the implementation of the Master Teacher Program which was an attempt to reward teachers based upon merit or excellent performance.

Personal interviews were conducted with each of the superintendents, every principal in each of the systems, master teachers, non-master teachers and a board member from each of the systems. In addition, documentary sources were available for the researcher to study. These written sources included minutes of the planning committee meetings, a Report on the Review of the Literature Pertaining to the Master Teacher concept, the Master Teacher

Program application packet, the Master Teacher Program Evaluation Report prepared by Oklahoma State University, a Survey of District Teachers and Administrators distributed in Systems B and C regarding the Master Teacher Program, The Master Teacher Program submitted by the Master Teacher Planning Committee for the three districts, and a packet of materials collected by a member of the planning committee for System A during the committee process.

Raw data were collected in the form of written notes taken at every interview. A tape recorder was used to record immediate reactions, insights and observations of the researcher about the visits to each of the systems and communities. Notes were dictated into the tape recorder and transcribed from tape. From the transcribed material notes were categorized and analyzed as to perceptions concerning the implementation process. The researcher used the multi-instrument approach in treating data. According to Harry Wolcott (1975), "the strength of fieldwork lies in its triangulation--obtaining information in many ways rather than relying solely on one." The researcher looked for explanations which allowed interpretation as to what was occurring and what it meant to those who had been involved in the events leading to the present status. As a result of the investigation the researcher was able to write up a description of the planning process and implementation stages of the Master Teacher Program as perceived by teachers, administrators and board members of each of the systems.

Sample

There were three school systems in Oklahoma that were currently implementing a merit-based pay plan called a Master Teacher Program for the 1984-85 school year. For this reason, they were selected for this research study.

Each of the systems is considered to be rural as their economies are agriculturally based. The following table indicates the student body population, faculty size and approximate town population for each of the systems.

Table 1

Student Body Population, Faculty Size and Town Population

	Student Body Population K-12	Faculty Size	Town Population
System A	1205	88	5000
System B	500	43	1500
System C	966	80	4000

The composition of the interview participants is reflected in the table below:

Table 2

Composition of Interview Participants

	Board Member	Superin- tendent	Principals	Master Teachers	Non- Master Teachers
System A	1	1	4	0	10
System B	1	1	2	2	4
System C	1	1	3	4	7

There were seven master teachers selected in the three systems. The master teacher from System A had moved out of state and was unavailable for an interview. The remaining six master teachers were interviewed. Every superintendent and every principal in each system was interviewed. Non-master teachers were selected based on availability and willingness to participate.

All information was solicited on a promise of anonymity. The researcher selected to maintain maximum anonymity by designating the systems by A, B and C rather than their actual community/school names.

CHAPTER IV

Results

General Information

While the research questions in this study directed attention to the differences and similarities of the implementation process of the three school systems, one of the major findings was that there were few differences among the groups. During the course of conducting the research natural themes or interest areas evolved relative to the implementation of the Master Teacher Program. These themes served as the topic headings for discussion of the results. In all categories, committee process, community support, application process, National Teacher Examination, incentive, additional duties and morale, no appreciable difference was found. Therefore, these results have dealt with all three of the school systems as a unit.

Master Teacher Program Background

Interviews with the superintendents of the three systems revealed that the Master Teacher Plan idea was spawned at a national convention of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) in Atlantic City in 1982. One of the superintendents attended the conference which had as a speaker then Secretary of Education Terrell Bell who suggested establishing a plan in public school systems similar to that which has been established in colleges with identified rankings of professors, assistant professors, endowed chairs, etc.

Returning home from the conference, he visited with one of his colleagues from another system. The two superintendents realized that the issue of

excellence in education and the corresponding issue of excellence in teaching would be topical issues of concern in education for the next few or perhaps several years. They decided to research the idea of a career ladder/master teacher plan. They were seeking research that would lead to formulating a program that would work in a public school system and not be an off-shoot of the college system. They asked another of their colleagues to join in this effort with them. There was a meeting of the three superintendents who shared the goal of recognizing and rewarding excellent teachers.

The three superintendents went to Oklahoma State University and approached the Office of Education Extension with their preliminary ideas and solicited help in developing a program around the master teacher concept. OSU helped the three school systems develop a three-year proposal. They went to the Oklahoma State Legislature to secure funds for the pilot project. Monies for the grant were made available through the Oklahoma State Department of Education on July 1, 1983. During the 1983-84 school year the Master Teacher Program was designed. Research was conducted, committees established and the pilot program finalized for implementation during the 1984-85 school year. Seven master teachers were selected: System A had one master teacher, System B had two master teachers and System C had four master teachers.

The three school systems are within close proximity. System B is forty miles from System C and sixty-eight miles from System A. Each of these communities is considered to be agriculturally oriented. Two of the systems are located in the county seat and are the largest systems in their respective counties. The other system is not the county seat but is the largest system in the county. System B, the smallest of the three districts, was housed at one

location. The other two districts had separate elementary, middle and high school locations.

Following are two statistical reports taken from the 1983-84 Annual Report of the Oklahoma State Department of Education:

Table 3

School District Net Valuations--1984-85--As Certified To State Board of Equalization

System	Total Net Valuation	Per Capita Valuation	General Fund Surplus July 1, 1984
A	22,055,693	19,338.28	833,252.66
B	14,532,534	30,136.73	1,064,735.89
C	17,946,535	19,508.38	938,652.84

Table 4

Statistical and Financial Information--Total Revenue Received by School District--1983-84

System	ADM	ADA	Total Revenue Received	Revenue Per Capita Basis ADA
A	1,205.30	1,140.52	3,483,124.54	3,053.98
B	500.47	482.22	2,106,122.89	4,367.56
C	966.31	919.94	3,134,934.23	3,407.76

In comparing the three systems, System B was the wealthiest of the systems based on revenue per capita of \$4,367.56. System A was the largest of the systems with an ADM of 1,205.30 and an ADA of 1,140.52. The state average of revenue per capita based on ADA for 1983-84 was \$2,513.83; these systems were all above the state average.

Plan Development

In the planning stage of the Master Teacher Program, each superintendent formed a local committee of volunteers. The composition of the initial planning committee from each system was not uniform.

A table illustrating the composition of the committee of each district follows:

Table 5

Planning Committee Composition

	Administration	Teachers	Board Members	Community Members
System A	2	10	1	1
System B	1	2	1	1
System C	2	5		2

Each school system held a public hearing. The purpose of the hearing was to invite people to comment on the local ideas as well as to submit their own ideas and suggestions. The committees within each system also began to develop their own ideas.

The Master Teacher Planning Committee was comprised of the membership of each of the local committees. The entire planning committee met five times. Meetings of the planning committee were held on November 28, 1983; January 26, 1984; February 9, 1984; February 16, 1984; and February 29, 1984. Research was conducted and presented to the planning committee by the Office of Education Extension, College of Education, Oklahoma State University.

Selection Criteria

The Committee process resulted in an application packet which teachers were required to complete in order to be considered for the master teacher designation. Among the documents available for analysis was the application packet developed by the Master Teacher Planning Committee. The researcher is indebted to the Master Teacher Planning Committee who prepared the report The Master Teacher Program which contained the guidelines for the implementation of the Program. The sections entitled Selection Criteria and Selection Decisions reflect the organization scheme of The Master Teacher Program report. The criteria established as minimum requirements for the program included:

- 1) Be a classroom teacher holding standard certification who is employed full-time with the district and spends a minimum of three periods each day in the classroom
- 2) Have been awarded tenure by the district in which he/she is employed
- 3) Have seven years of full-time professional experience
- 4) Have earned at least a master's degree
- 5) Have performed satisfactorily on the Core Battery Tests of the National Teacher Examination (NTE) in the areas of communication skills, general knowledge, and professional knowledge.

In addition to the minimum requirements, the master teacher was to be involved in curriculum development, to prepare in-service presentations for other teachers, to serve as advisor or mentor teacher to other teachers, to be willing to perform teacher evaluations for the next group of master teacher applicants and to work a minimum of two additional weeks during the summer.

The process included the evaluation of oral and written communication skills of the teacher through a Selection Committee interview with the applicant and classroom observation by a special evaluation team from outside the district which was to be appointed by the Selection Committee. Classroom observation was not a part of the selection process in the first year of implementation because applications from teachers were not due until July. In subsequent years, the program's timeline would call for the receipt of applications in ample time to arrange for the classroom observations.

A portfolio of materials submitted by the teacher was to have demonstrated outstanding teaching performance and exceptional classroom practice as documented by at least above-average student growth on:

- (1) a standardized achievement test and/or a criterion-referenced test approved by the district, and/or
- (2) other measures of student growth, as available, which were deemed appropriate and acceptable by the committee.

In addition, evidence of outstanding teaching performance and exceptional classroom practice was submitted by completion of a self-evaluation instrument which included the opportunity for the applicant to attach additional information in the form of a written narrative describing such things as the applicant's philosophy, methods and significant achievements in the area of teaching performance and classroom practice. The applicant's principal also completed

the same evaluation instrument which included the opportunity for the principal to attach additional information in the form of a written narrative.

The applicant submitted a portfolio of relevant materials, including but not limited to samples of instructional plans; classroom policies, rules and procedures; samples of tests and testing procedures, etc. In addition, the portfolio included a questionnaire to be completed by three of the applicant's colleagues, chosen by the applicant, and by three other persons, also chosen by the applicant, who were either patrons of the district or parents of current or former students of the applicant, with no more than one respondent to be the parent of a current student.

The applicant was to have demonstrated significant participation in professional growth activities, to include but not be limited to participation in educational courses, workshops, conferences, etc.; participation in professional organizations and committees; participation on curriculum committees; sponsorship of student extracurricular activities, etc., with supporting data which included a narrative from the applicant that described the extent, nature, and significance of the applicant's contributions in these areas and their relationship to his/her professional development and/or classroom performance. In addition, the applicant was to have demonstrated participation in community and civic affairs, with supporting data which included a narrative from the applicant that described the extent, nature, and significance of the applicant's contributions in these areas.

In the application packet criteria deemed of highest importance and criteria deemed of secondary importance were delineated. Those criteria deemed of highest importance were: demonstrated outstanding oral and written communication skills; at least above-average student growth; responses on the

self-evaluation instrument completed by the applicant; responses on the evaluation instrument completed by the applicant's principal; and the portfolio of teaching materials submitted by the applicant. Those criteria deemed of secondary importance included: interview with the applicant; interview with the applicant's principal; completion of a questionnaire by three of the applicant's colleagues and by three school patrons or parents; classroom observation; and professional activities. The criterion dealing with participation in community and civic affairs was considered less significant than the other criteria.

Selection Decisions

All applicants were notified in writing of the decision of the selection committees regarding their application. Those who were not selected as master teachers were given the option of meeting with the representatives of the committee for a post-selection conference to discuss the committee's evaluation of the applicant's packet or of receiving a written statement from the committee regarding their rejection.

Those persons selected as master teachers during the first year of the pilot program were assigned by lot to serve either one- or two-year appointments. Thereafter, master teachers were to be appointed for three years. This process was used in order to stagger the introduction of master teachers into the program. A few teachers mentioned in the interviews that the master teacher appointments should be for one year only. This was not, however, a key issue.

Re-evaluation guidelines provided for a limited review at the end of the first and second years. An observation visit to the teacher's classroom by an outside team of evaluators and an interview of the applicant with the members of the Selection Committee for that district would serve as the review. The

master teacher would also have the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the Master Teacher Program from his/her perspective. Formal re-application will be required every three years. At that time the teacher will be required to undergo the entire selection process with the exception of the National Teacher Examination.

Interview Data

This study did take on a life of its own during the interviewing process. The categories for the analysis of interview data were determined as they appeared as natural themes. The seven areas that emerged during the course of the study which served as subheadings for the interview data were: committee process, community support, application process, National Teacher Examination, incentive, additional duties and morale.

The following outcomes will be mentioned with elaboration of each item to be found throughout this section of the chapter:

1. The committee process was a positive experience for those who participated and became involved in the development of the plan. However, there was disagreement as to exactly what type of plan should have been used by the three systems.
2. All interviewees believed that each community was supportive of education.
3. General consensus was that the application process was thorough and that it required diligence by the applicants to complete it. It was the application process which determined the success or failure of the plan in terms of the selection of excellent teachers.

4. While there was general consensus that the National Teacher Examination required physical and mental endurance capabilities, there were mixed data regarding the appropriateness of the NTE as a selection criterion.

5. The \$6,000 incentive was believed to be more than adequate compensation for the master teacher designation. However, that amount also caused mixed reaction from interviewees about its effect on teacher attitude toward the Master Teacher Program.

6. There were mixed data on the requirement of additional duties for the master teachers. Some believed that the master teacher status and compensation were rewards for excellence in teaching. Others believed that master teachers should be required to perform additional duties in order to receive additional pay.

7. While the morale issue induced a variety of responses, it was generally supported that morale, referring to teacher attitude toward the Master Teacher Program, needed to be improved in each of the three systems.

Committee Process. The data concerning the committee process revealed that there was disagreement regarding the exact plan that should be implemented. System A had taken a different approach to developing a plan. Their members had designed a "step" plan using a career ladder format. Systems B and C through communication from their respective superintendents were of the belief that the "step" approach was not the intent of the grant. This belief was exemplified in the following statement:

"There was conflict about what we were looking for. System A had good ideas but they were out for a "step" program. It was my understanding that was not what we were to do. In a different situation, I would have gone along with what they said. But the way it was funded, it was not what we set out to do."

Another member stated,

"It seemed from the very start Systems B and C never varied from the original plan that the superintendents gave them. System A just did not accept this. They wanted a different plan. A compromise came about. If Systems B and C had not had some real strong leadership, it would have never gotten through."

The plan that was implemented was selected by majority vote with each system having one vote. The vote was two to one with System A voting against the plan. There were members on the planning committee from System A who chose to discontinue participation as a result of the disagreement and a strong belief in the "step" plan. One of the participants from System A indicated that there were a lot of compromises and their system's representation was narrowed to members who were willing to continue participation with the other systems.

There was a diversity of opinions expressed about the meetings of the combined Master Teacher Planning Committee. One observer noted,

"Serving on the committee was really an experience. There was such a wide range of ideas from teachers, administrators and lay people. I couldn't believe how wild a variety of ideas there were. Tempers even flared a little. When the whole thing was finished, I think they came up with a pretty good way to select master teachers."

From those participants who maintained involvement in the program there was support for the process. Many of the supporters of the process were strong supporters of the program. However, some who supported the process were not necessarily satisfied with the outcome of the committee.

Positive comments concerning the committee process included:

"The Master Teacher Program becomes an individual performance plan. I believe this to be one of the better plans of this type. I felt that the committee work was well done and that it took time."

"I enjoyed serving on the committee because it made me think of things I wouldn't have otherwise. Interacting with that many other teachers was good for me. Some were bashful at the first meeting. We tried to find the loopholes--tried to set up an objective method. They really worked at it. I think the committee probably did a good job. It was a good experience for me."

"The committee process was positive. I did not agree with all of the opinions expressed by members of the committee."

"There were aggressive people on the committee. If you served on the committee you began believing in the program."

Community Support. Data indicated across all three systems that the faculty, administration and board members felt that the citizens of the communities as a whole were supportive of the education system. There was no difference as to system. Illustrative of System A was the comment,

"Very few bond issues have ever been turned down here. In addition, our band trip cost \$30,000, which was supported by businesses and the community in general."

There was also a feeling of pride exhibited by the teachers, administrators and board members regarding System B. This school system recently received national recognition through an Excellence in Education program funded by the National Institute of Education. Community support for System C was evidenced by an honors/awards banquet sponsored by the local Lion's Club. At this banquet, the master teachers received plaques in recognition of their accomplishment. The banquet also included awards and recognition for students.

In spite of no differences among interview responses to questions of community support, System A had experienced some unusual circumstances before and during the implementation of the Master Teacher Program. There had been controversy between the teachers, administration and board members which caused a division in the system concerning actions of the high school principal. The rift was significant enough that the Board of Education approved the recognition of the master teacher selection with only a three to two vote. The person selected as the master teacher had taken sides on the issue.

Comments that describe the feelings of staff members relative to the impact of the situation upon the Master Teacher Program follow:

"Problems of the district spilled over into the Master Teacher Program."

"It (Master Teacher Program) didn't work from the word go; the school system was already having problems."

"The situation at the high school had something to do with the Board's three to two vote. But overall, the Program's success was not really impacted by the high school situation."

"This school system has gone through a controversial period for a year. I think that has affected the Master Teacher Program."

"I don't think the implementation was good timing because of strife in the school system."

"I don't think that the environment affected the implementation at all in the beginning. By the time the selection process had concluded, I think things had changed. Maybe there was some impact at the time the Master Teacher was selected."

Application Process. The application process was crucial to the selection of the master teachers. If excellent teachers were not selected once the process

was completed, there would be a great deal of criticism as to the inherent failure of the plan to accomplish one of its major goals. On the other hand, the successful selection of not only competent teachers, but outstanding ones would speak to the thoroughness and accurateness of the plan and the process. Therefore, the application process was crucial in terms of (1) the perception of teachers regarding the procedures of selection, and (2) the perception as to whether those procedures were successful in selecting excellent teachers. There were three general areas of comments regarding the perception of teachers with respect to the procedures of selection (the application process itself): (1) the process was overwhelming, (2) the process seemed to emphasize written tasks, and (3) the process was apparently fair. Comments regarding the perception of teachers as to whether or not excellent teachers were selected are also included.

The first observation that was apparent in all three of the systems was that the process was overwhelming. Illustrative comments from System A regarding this issue follow:

"The Master Teacher Program looks like an elephant to a new teacher."

"I felt the packet was too overwhelming--thick. The application was kind of like building a resume. It takes stock of what you've done over the years and that's important."

"Basically it is an investment of time in the application and more time if selected."

"My reaction to the packet was wow--so much paper work. They gave me a packet because I was eligible, but there was so much paper work that I declined. Also there was a short period of time in which to do it. For these same reasons, I am not applying this year."

"Some teachers didn't want to go to all of that trouble."

Similar comments were made by interview participants from System B. For example,

"The application was formidable. I almost quit, but I was so involved in the program that I had to keep going. The application took many hours. In preparing the application I probably had an advantage because of my background in language arts."

"I think people are pretty negative on filling out papers. The major deterrents are: fear of failure, all the papers to be filled out and references are thought difficult to get."

"I had part of the packet done but I didn't have time to finish the packet because the NTE scores were so late in getting back to us. There was so much to get ready for school that I did not have time to finish the packet. Filling out the packet was a lot, but I feel like for the amount of money it wasn't too much to ask. There is a teacher here who thought about applying, but decided that it was not worth it."

"I felt that the packet that was prepared giving the qualifications and requiring that the teachers apply for the program was very exhaustive and complete. You're always going to have a teacher that gets it that someone disagrees with."

The comments from System C were similar:

"I thought that the packet was almost an impossibility at first. It took time and soul-searching and the hardest part was the self-evaluation. I thought the packet was good because it selected based on a broad range."

"I feel like you have to brag so much on yourself to fill out the packet. I was glad other teachers were not going to read this. They would think I was it."

However, it was a well-rounded, good packet. Filling out the packet made me a better teacher because I was thinking about what I was doing. Having to think how to improve my strengths and weaknesses was good."

The second observation that seemed to cut across all three systems was that the process seemed to emphasize written tasks. Examples of comments by participants from System A included:

"The only relevant thing in it is student growth. I am opposed to so much of your acceptance being based on your writing ability."

"In the evaluation process, the high and low averages (based on points) didn't range much and the person who writes well has an edge."

A comment from a board member from System B regarding the written process also reflected on the fairness of the evaluation process:

"The evaluation packet was lengthy. I felt that maybe I couldn't give a fair evaluation to everyone because I wasn't a teacher or an administrator with the appropriate background, but I could tell who the better teachers were based on the packets. I thought maybe the evaluation could have been better but I don't know how. I felt the teachers could better evaluate themselves. They knew more what to look for. They were more discriminating, but when all was done, a fair evaluation resulted from the total points."

Regarding the written process, participants from System C commented:

"The way they are choosing the packet, it's like writing a dissertation. You have to do several papers so you can compile all of this and write well. Does that mean you are a master teacher in the classroom?" (Compared putting the packet together to last summer in school.)

"I'm a good essay writer. I assumed when I was filling out the packet that it was how we presented ourself and the issue. You have an edge if you have a background with written communication skills."

"Writing doesn't bother me, I like to write, that's no problem."

"I was disappointed in the total outcome. I think more emphasis was placed on the ability to fill out the forms in the application process than was intended at the original committee meeting."

"The packet was thorough and well done. There was a lot of writing for the packet. There were many areas in which you were judged. No one knew ahead of time where the emphasis was going to be placed. There could be some work done on evaluation. Maybe there were too many points on some area. Some of the teachers serving on the evaluation committee said that it was difficult to assess how many points to give a certain area. I support out of district people being the evaluators."

The third observation that was found in all three systems was that the process was apparently fair. While there was an exception regarding the fairness of the application process, "I felt the packet might not have been totally fair," in general comments indicated that the application process was fair. Illustrative comments from System A follow:

"Some who did not qualify had holes in the packet; they did not go through the entire process. Those who go the extra mile in preparing the packet have the edge. Evaluations seemed to be as objective as you could probably hope for."

"Each member of the evaluation team evaluated the packets based on a point system. Point-wise, the committee members' evaluations were very close."

A participant from System B commented,

"In the evaluation there were 200 points maximum. Each evaluator judged each packet separately. We were usually close--within two or three points of each other. All of us were thinking on the same basis as we were doing it."

Comments from System C included,

"In the packet, we wanted to be objective. We did not want the principal to be able to have enough power to keep someone out."

"While evaluating the packets, I kept thinking that I should have thought of some of the things the other teachers included. It was obvious how much work some had put in and how little others. That was the difference. We could tell who was really interested in becoming a master teacher. After I saw the packets I felt that the administrative evaluation was certainly important. I was surprised at the closeness in agreement of the members of the evaluation committee. I don't feel that any one person had an advantage over another."

"I'm not upset at having to wait a certain number of years. I think you have to have some type of guidelines. Maybe I need to know more about the requirements."

The respondents indicated that those selected were excellent teachers. Several of the interview participants also said that they believed that there were other outstanding teachers in the systems who chose not to make application to the Master Teacher Program. One of the findings was that relatively few teachers made application to the program, and even fewer were designated master teachers. In System A one teacher was designated master teacher out of nine who took the National Teacher Examination. In System B two teachers received master teacher status out of four who took the NTE. Four out of six were designated master teachers in System C.

Following are the responses of participants in System A regarding the selection of the master teachers. In each system, the list of comments could be extended; however, those chosen illustrate the representativeness of the comments. For reasons of anonymity and to avoid sexist language, regardless of gender the generic s/he was used in the comments below:

"I feel if they put out the effort they deserve recognition and monetary reward."

"S/he turned out well prepared students from my viewpoint. S/he was qualified."

"Everyone I talked to said s/he was an outstanding teacher."

"S/he was not more deserving than others; s/he was a good teacher."

"S/he was truly deserving of the title or distinction."

"S/he definitely was a deserving teacher, s/he put in a lot of time and was really good."

"From all of the involvement and if s/he passed all requirements, no doubt s/he is an excellent teacher."

"(I have) doubts as to her/him being an excellent teacher."

Responses of participants in System B regarding the specific selection of the master teachers follow:

"I feel they are really excellent. They are outstanding. I feel good about them being selected."

"I have no basis to judge one of them; the other definitely is excellent."

"The teachers selected as master teachers are excellent teachers."

Responses of participants in System C regarding the selection of the master teachers follow:

"Both of the teachers in this building selected are excellent teachers."

"I agree that those selected are excellent teachers. I respect the people who have it; they have worked hard to get it."

"I would have picked the same teachers. They are above-average at least."

"I think they are probably qualified. From what I know of those chosen, they are qualified. I don't know who all applied."

"The teachers that were selected as master teachers definitely are qualified. They feel confident enough to apply for a master teacher. I think that they are the cream of the crop."

"No doubt the people selected were excellent. Two of the four have taught my children."

"I think they (peers) saw me as an excellent teacher."

National Teacher Examination. The National Teacher Examination was provided free of charge to any teacher in the systems who wished to take it. Some teachers indicated that they took it because it was free of charge this one time and they did not want to have to pay to take it later. Some teachers who took the National Teacher Examination and who passed it did not apply for the Master Teacher Program. The NTE required six hours of testing during an eight-hour period of time.

The cut-off score for the NTE was validated by the Master Teacher Planning Committee under the supervision of a representative from the NTE organization. The first year of operation the cut-off scores for each section had to be determined by the Committee. However, the plan for the future was that the cut-off scores would be adjusted if necessary as a result of scores made by local teachers.

There were two themes that became evident in interviewing participants from all three systems in regard to the National Teacher Examination. There were no differences among the groups concerning (1) the difficulty of the test and (2) the appropriateness of the test for the Master Teacher Program.

Respondents from all three systems felt that the NTE was difficult. Comments referred to the physical endurance of taking the test as well as to the mental endurance required for good performance on the test.

Regarding the difficulty of the test, comments from System A included:

"I do not believe that the test is an indicator as to whether you are a good teacher or not. (This teacher passed the exam.) It was difficult; it was an all-day test with six hours of actual testing. Teachers' ability in the classroom should not be based on an exam."

"The NTE was a difficult test. Maybe too much weight was placed on the test."

"The test was downgrading to teachers who have been teaching a long time."

"I am not sure the test is a good judge of who is qualified and who is not. If your background and environment do not match up with that type of test, you might not do well."

Comments from participants from System B regarding the difficulty of the NTE follow:

"The NTE was tougher than I thought it would be. Communication skills were very important. The professional section was especially tough using hypothetical situations. Were the NTE to be given to everyone, many would not pass."

"I had taken the test ten years before. I did not prepare for it. I thought I only had to take one part but I had to take it all again. It was very difficult."

"I was discouraged by the way the NTE was given. It was the worst torture you could put anybody through, but I did pass."

System C participants made the following remarks concerning the difficulty of the NTE:

"A more general background provides the best chance of passing the test--for example, elementary teachers with a background in art, science and math."

"A lot of teachers were skeptical about the exam. Teachers who did take it said it was the most exhausting experience they had been through."

"I felt challenged by the NTE and wanted to see if I could pass it. At that time I was not sure if I would complete the process. The NTE was very difficult and long. You could be brilliant in one area and not in another and not pass. It's hard to be a jack-of-all-trades. Art was a weak area for me. I feel that teachers need to be competent and have the basic skills of reading and writing. I don't think the test should be the NTE. It was a very broad, general test."

"I passed the NTE. It's been ten years since I took a standardized test. I felt real unsure. The positive thing is that I passed the test which was hard. The science was hard for me. There was a booklet which was used as a sample but it was not like the test. There is no way to study for the test. The sample gives you the procedure. It does not mean that you are a better teacher than the others; but it is as suitable as any other criteria. It has nothing to do with classroom ability. Some are not applying because they are scared of the test."

"The degree of difficulty of the test was partly determined by the type of questions and the combination of answers as well as the subject matter being tested. The test takes much concentration and logical critical thinking."

The second observation that was apparent in all three systems was the fact that there was some question as to the appropriateness of the NTE in evaluating classroom effectiveness and subject matter knowledge. Comments from System A included:

"The NTE was probably the most fair element (of the application process). Fair game, you either knew it or you didn't."

"If you are a good test taker, you do okay. If not, you will fail."

"The NTE should not carry that much weight."

"A person needs to be competent in his/her field. I support a test in the appropriate subject area or general literacy."

"If the NTE is used, let a test in the specific teaching field override that test."

Speaking to the appropriateness of the NTE, participants from System B said:

"The NTE tests alertness. I think it's a good thing. I think it tests competence. I had to take my licks in the art area just like everybody else. There must be some guidelines. The Master's degree and the NTE are guidelines. They are setting high goals for the program. I don't believe it should be watered down."

It is a reasonable criteria for the program. It is like having the criteria of 32 hours before you can have a Master's degree."

"They took too long to get the results of the test back to us. I think the NTE cut-off score was too high. We needed some kind of measurement tool but it was the wrong thing. It would be better to have a test over the subject area."

Comments regarding the NTE by participants of System C included:

"The NTE probably is a good criteria to use. Not everyone should be able to be a master teacher."

"English, art and science majors have an advantage. There was so much art on the test and so many questions about public school law. There was so much about perspective and dimensions, science questions on the test. I did not resent the writing and grammar part; every good teacher must know how to write. Maybe I should have been given a test in my field."

"Probably there are master teachers who will not pass the test. However, the committee knew that we needed a test to establish a criteria. The question was how to do the test. The plan was to later determine the cut-off level by using the scores of those who have taken it."

"There was more emphasis on the NTE than I expected. In an early meeting I attended, I remembered that the teacher was to be judged strictly on area of expertise rather than an overall score. There was a discussion about a student coming out of college being able to take the test better than a teacher that had been in the field several years. I thought that they would take the score in their area of expertise. I think some of the teachers that did not file did take the test. Some of the things on the test were so foreign that they were not just pertaining to a basic education."

Incentive. Each master teacher received \$6,000 in additional pay as a result of being selected as a master teacher. In addition to their regular contract time, they were required to work an extra two weeks in the summer. This extra time was designed to provide the master teachers with time to perform extra projects that would benefit the school system and their classroom. They were to serve as consultants to other teachers, to provide in-service activities for other teachers, and to serve on evaluation teams.

The \$6,000 incentive became a double-edged sword. The amount was sufficient incentive to cause interest in the program. However, with few teachers receiving this additional amount, it also became a source of resentment. There was no difference among the groups concerning the incentive amount.

Responses to questions concerning the \$6,000 incentive from participants of System A follow:

"The money sounded good."

"Six thousand dollars is not always a big amount to some of the teachers here."

"The \$6,000 was worth the effort" (referring to taking the NTE).

"The prime mover in applying was the \$6,000."

"There needs to be a differential between a poor teacher and an outstanding one."

"Why did you decide to apply this time?" "The money amount of \$6,000."

"When I get a Master's, I will apply if the money is still being awarded."

"I am reapplying for the \$6,000."

Participants from System B made the following comments:

"The \$6,000 looks great."

"The \$6,000 was a great incentive. I would not have bothered to fill all of that out otherwise."

"The \$6,000 amount of money was a motivator."

"Six thousand dollars was a good incentive."

"In some instances, where strong peer pressure exists, the \$6,000 is not enough to make them go ahead and apply."

Responses to questions concerning the \$6,000 incentive from participants of System C follow:

"Six thousand dollars was incentive. It was prestigious; it did encourage teachers to participate."

"It is too large an amount of money for what they do."

"My motivation to apply for the program was monetary."

"I feel that \$6,000 might be a little steep. But I've never seen a teacher yet that is over paid. If I were eligible, I think I would apply for the money. Why wouldn't you do that?"

"The \$6,000 was set by the committee. In the beginning, no one knew exactly how much the master teachers would receive. I was much more interested in having the respect that I have gained--as much self respect as respect from others."

"Only two from the high school took the test that I know of. Maybe we didn't explain it well enough to the high school teachers. I think the money was down the list as to why they applied. I think everyone of them go above and beyond."

"Six thousand dollars is a very good incentive. It's very positive."

"There is a bit of resentment from other teachers toward the dollar amount."

Additional Duties. Acceptance of the Master Teacher designation required the teacher to work an extra two weeks in the summer and perform extra duties during the school year. There was some discussion from the teachers regarding the extra duty assignments. The crux of the discussion was whether or not the extra pay was to reward the teachers for excellent performance and attainment of the master teacher designation or whether it was to compensate for an

additional work load because of their recognized ability. Below are listed some of the comments from System A:

"During the preliminary meetings, some felt that teachers shouldn't be paid more unless they did more. It was my understanding that the program was to pay teachers who taught well more money. I questioned their fundamental attitude toward paying teachers. It makes me mad that they think you should work all summer if you're selected as a master teacher. They expect extra work. We had no chance of ever changing anything."

"The Master Teacher Program gives you an extra job for two weeks in the summer. I feel that it requires the master teacher to do too much in addition to their regular job for the \$6,000. They have to do staff development or in-service activities and go to other schools to serve on evaluation teams."

"I believe that additional pay for added work is okay."

"There is an argument about requiring the two weeks plus work throughout the year as additional duties. I believe this was for justification to the outside public to say that we are getting something for the extra money."

Comments of participants from System B regarding additional duties required of master teachers included:

"In this pilot program several wanted to let them work out the kinks first before actually applying themselves. They are watching the two that got it to see what they have to do extra. If the requirements were six weeks of summer work, farm people would be prohibited."

"The master teachers here were asked to serve as chair and co-chair of the committee for the application for the national Excellence in Education program. I felt we were asked because we are the master teachers. My extra work includes an in-service on communications in the classroom."

"Extra duties included chairing the committee on short and intermediate range goals in computer education, an in-service workshop in the fall on computers and being available to neighboring school systems. I have consulted more with administration and co-chaired the committee for Excellence in Education. During the summer two weeks, perhaps I will finish the computer goals."

"It was supposed to be a reward for a teacher being good. It turned out that they had more work; they couldn't say no to committee work and it had a lot of extra work attached to it. The intent of the committee was that the two weeks should receive regular pay for working during the summer. Now it turns out to be included in the \$6,000. It was supposed to be a reward for excellence and turns out to be an obligation. Both of our master teachers are on almost every committee. It is maybe a little bit too much."

Comments from System C regarding extra duty assignments follow:

"I thought that there would be more responsibilities expected of master teachers. I have never seen a list of the activities they are doing. Perhaps there is a need to communicate to teachers what master teachers are doing for the \$6,000, above and beyond what other teachers are nicely asked to do. One of our master teachers presented an in-service program to the faculty."

"I feel people here selected as master teachers have no assignments to merit the extra pay."

"Both master teachers went through the principal and the superintendent with ideas for the in-service. The master teachers identified a need and proposed a presentation to the faculty."

"I wanted to teach in order to have my summers free. I don't want extra demands on my time. If they took that requirement off, I probably would apply. It would depend on how much other was required during the year."

"Two master teachers here have presented a workshop."

"The idea I got was extra pay for extra work. You have to put in two weeks extra, be a resource person, and do after-school work. The master teachers in this building are really helpful. I don't think very many have used them or asked them. One of them helped me a great deal last year."

"I feel that the master teacher program is good because it rewards teachers who want to do a little extra. I don't think it has put any burden on the ones that received the master teacher designation because they were doing extra anyway. It may have added a little bit more."

"In August I will teach an alternative teaching techniques in-service program for instructors. I am willing to put in the extra. Perhaps a master teacher could be utilized more in the summer because it is difficult to add more in the school year."

"Other teachers have come to me for advice and comfort."

Morale. Teacher morale has long been cited as an area of concern when implementing merit pay plans. The issue of morale did surface during the interviews in these three school districts. There was no difference among the groups regarding the condition of morale in the three systems.

The researcher approached the analysis of the morale issue by asking, "What is the nature of morale in each of these systems?" One observation that appeared in each instance was some teacher concern over the use of the word "master teacher" as the status designation. Comments from System A voicing concern about the status designation were:

"I didn't want someone else to be chosen as better than I was. I feel it puts one teacher against another and I'm afraid the parents won't want their kids with teachers other than those designated as master teachers. I think it does more harm than good to the system as a whole. It's fine if you are the one chosen."

"Some teachers didn't like the words 'master teacher'."

The following remarks are illustrative of comments concerning the status designation in System B:

"Number one complaint is the word 'master.' It denotes being an expert and it sounds as if you can't progress. It is bad that the community sees these as masters. They wonder, 'Are the rest of us not master teachers?' A group of teachers were talking informally and they thought that the strength of the program was the money aspect and the weakness was the words 'master teacher.'"

"Teachers fear patrons only wanting their kids to be with master teachers. That hasn't happened. It is an option just like getting a master's degree."

The following remarks exemplify comments concerning the status designation in System C:

"I attended a rally for pay increase in February where the word 'master teacher' at the rally received boos and jeers. Teachers of Oklahoma do not want Master Teacher Plans. Six thousand dollars seemed to represent so much money. If it was not that much, maybe the faculty would feel better. But they think it is too much."

"I question whether a Master Teacher Program will last five years. The criticism is that it causes division between groups of teachers. I have the feeling boundaries are being drawn between master teachers and non-master teachers. In some cases there is jealousy because of the \$6,000. I think some felt that they

were not selected for political reasons, but the selection committee was not from this district so that could possibly be discounted."

A second observation that seemed to be applicable across the three systems was that there was an element of "jealousy" on the part of the teachers who were not designated as master teachers. The "jealousy" most often appeared in discussion about the \$6,000 or in connection with the recognition of "master teacher." Comments regarding this element of morale from participants of System A were:

"It caused hard feelings among the teachers."

"There was a lot of jealousy with the Master Teacher Program. I'm not totally against the Master Teacher Program, but I'm glad I didn't get it. Had I known that there was so much hate toward it, I wouldn't have even tried. I am not reapplying. It is out of the question for me. I feel like I get along with other teachers, but if I got it, I would be a loner. Others feel that they are just as good a teacher and deserve the money too."

"Jealousy was definitely involved."

"I don't believe merit pay will work; it will cause dissension between teachers. Most all teachers believe that they are doing a good job. Jealousy is a good word for the problems between the staff here."

"It seemed like there was a dogmatic resentment towards the program."

"People here just didn't want the program. It seems like it has sort of lost interest here because I haven't heard of anything this year."

"I sense a little resentment of a master teacher. I felt if a person had ambition and did hard work, it was difficult for me to think it wasn't jealousy instead of resentment."

A slight difference was noted in the comments of participants from System B. The words "jealousy" and "resentment" were not used. A few comments that differentiated System B from Systems A and C follow:

"We had teachers totally against it. Maybe they didn't have their master's or maybe they thought having master teachers would cause others not to feel as good."

"One teacher who is especially qualified is one of the most negative about the plan. Last year two or three were negative and others encouraged me. I have only had encouragement this year, no discouragement. To me the money alone is enough incentive. I don't know why more didn't apply. Some fear the test."

"The closeness of the faculty may cause teachers to feel that they don't want to be identified as better than their peers and, therefore, would not volunteer and apply for the Master Teacher Program."

Comments illustrative of participants from System C regarding jealousy and morale included:

"I do not believe the atmosphere at the high school was positive for implementing the Master Teacher Program. Teachers have too much jealousy. They don't want to see other teachers making \$6,000 more than they are. Some say they just don't like it. Maybe there is peer pressure not to apply."

"I believe a lot of teachers felt that we had more master teachers in my school. They felt that we should have taken the money and given everybody a raise. I don't necessarily agree. I believe good teachers should be rewarded for their effort, but I don't know exactly the best way to do it."

"I don't begrudge the money for them. I'm not a jealous person and I don't envy others. But deep down I think that this has caused jealousy."

Additional comments that reflected on the morale issue are equally important in order for the reader to see the whole picture. Other illustrative comments from System A included:

"At the end of the process, I said that I would never go through the embarrassment and humiliation of being turned down again. However, I am reapplying."

"Some teachers have students they don't believe allow them to excel in the area of student growth."

"Most teachers here did not think it was a good program to begin with. They were not in favor of how it was put together."

"Our system felt that this plan had some loopholes and that this plan was not the way to go, but that the idea or concept is terrific."

Examples of other comments of participants from System B were:

"The bugs include no place for librarians or counselors. It would take another addition of rules and regulations. One of my main concerns and why I almost didn't go for it was because of my peers. I didn't think it was worth it, but it hasn't worked out all that bad. At first I was worried because some of my peers were down on the program from the beginning because they didn't have a master's and didn't plan to get one. They have accepted it quite well. I haven't noticed a change. Some of the beginning teachers have come to me for advice since publicity has not put us on a pedestal. We're just one of the teachers."

"Master teachers find they need to be gone to do things. There was an argument that they need to be with their kids if they are truly master teachers. They are gone a lot while working on committees."

"Attitude was that the teachers didn't care much. We had to try to promote it. I believe in the program all the way."

"There was no resistance to the Master Teacher Program whatsoever. It was perceived as an optional-type thing and everything towards it or about it has been positive."

Additional comments of participants from System C follow:

"Six thousand dollars is almost a third of my salary. Many teachers put in hard work and long hours and are not recognized or rewarded. It has been a negative factor in morale. It should be an annual thing, not granted for three or four years and then renewable. I'm truly happy for the master teachers, but many other people also deserve the recognition."

"Extra activities at the high school take a lot of work. Activities such as school before school, student council sponsor and junior class sponsor receive additional pay ranging from \$150-\$250 a year. This causes resentment when a master teacher gets \$6,000 a year. It affects the high school teachers more than the other schools. This is where the morale problem comes in. It might be a complete lack of communication between the Master Teacher Program and the high school because the high school doesn't have any master teachers."

"The program was not well received initially. I think most teachers felt that it might turn out not to be fair. I think we have other teachers in the system who are master teachers who will never apply. I believe it's becoming more well received than it was. I don't think there is much conflict at the middle school but at the high school there is." (This teacher was at the elementary school.)

"There was a feeling that not just a few teachers should be getting a pay raise but that all should. I really don't think from the very beginning the high school teachers liked it."

"Maybe if more people become involved in it, I might try. I need more information to see if this is really what I would want. I think that's great that they have it, the master teacher designation."

"I first thought that I would not apply because there was so much anti-merit pay sentiment in the school. The high school received us very poorly. The peer pressure is very stiff there. The high school is more departmentalized. There is more resentment at the high school. Peers at my school see me as having the same status--no change. I do not believe that there is a change in attitude toward me in this building."

"We could improve the program by better communications."

Unexpected Findings

A Survey of District Teachers and Administrators which was distributed to teachers and administrators in Systems B and C by Oklahoma State University at the end of the 1984-85 school year identified a significant misperception of the respondents concerning the composition of the selection committees for Systems B and C. System A was not surveyed because there was no master teacher in the program from that system for the majority of the school year. The person who had been selected had moved out of state.

The survey served to corroborate information that was obtained during the interview process. The response rate to the questionnaire in System B was 53%; the response rate to the questionnaire in System C was 59%.

When the Survey of District Teachers and Administrators was analyzed:

. . . 50% of the 24 System B respondents and 26% of the 47 System C respondents believed that someone from their district served on the selection committee when the applications from their district were being reviewed; another 42% of the System B respondents and 55% of the System

C respondents answered that they did not know if this was the case. Only 8% of the System B respondents and 19% of the System C respondents knew that no one from their district served on the selection committee which considered the applications from their district. (Oklahoma State University, 1985)

The interviews also revealed that there was a lack of confidence in the impartiality of the evaluators. Another question on the Survey of District Teachers and Administrators revealed:

Question #15 asked respondents if they thought the Master Teacher selection process was fair. Of the 23 System B educators responding to this question, 43% responded "yes," 4% responded "no," and 52% responded "don't know." Of the 47 System C educators responding to this question, 30% responded "yes," 30% responded "no," and 40% responded "don't know." (Oklahoma State University, 1985) (The writer substituted "System B" and "System C" for the names of the districts to maintain anonymity.)

The lack of knowledge concerning the composition of the selection committees coupled with the percentage of "don't know" responses regarding fairness of the selection process pointed out the need for better communication to staff members about the Master Teacher Program.

In addition to the need for better communications arising as an unexpected finding, there was also the issue of the nature of the merit concept itself. Is merit pay "extra pay for extra work" or is it extra pay for teaching better. Both sides of the issue were expressed by those interviewed. It appeared to the researcher that there were members of the initial Planning Committee as well as other teachers who felt that recognition and extra pay were rewards for excellence in the classroom. However, there was also the notion expressed that

those receiving extra money should be doing "extra" for it. The master teachers interviewed said that they did not mind the extra requirements. None of them took a side on the issue.

There was a great deal of flexibility allowed the master teachers in their extra projects to be completed. They were able to identify what they wanted to do, present the idea to the superintendent and work on the project at their own discretion. The two week additional work period appeared as though it would occur immediately at the end of the school year. Again, flexibility was allowed as to what would be done in the two weeks.

Another unexpected finding was that the \$6,000 incentive had a positive and a negative side to it. In terms of its positive aspects, the amount was sufficient to attract interest in the program as evidenced in statements earlier cited in findings about the incentive amount. However, the negative aspect of the amount was that it appeared to affect morale adversely. There was a belief that other teachers deserved extra compensation rather than so few receiving such a large amount of extra pay. The amount, in some cases, also tended to cause other teachers to believe that those receiving the extra pay should be doing more for it.

Summary

In summary, the establishment of a Master Teacher Program in three school systems in Oklahoma has provided current research data on current merit pay plans. The results of this research study have determined that there was a general belief among participants of the study that the respective communities were supportive of the local education system. In addition, this study did determine that excellent teachers were selected as master teachers in all three

districts. There was a feeling also that there were other excellent teachers in the systems.

The committee process that was utilized did create interest and support of those teachers that were involved throughout the entire process. However, those teachers who were not active in the committee process were lacking in communications about the program.

The application process was considered by all to be thorough and exhaustive, thus assuring that excellent teachers were selected. The use of the National Teacher Examination caused mixed feelings among the members of the staffs of the three school systems. On the one hand, there was the argument that it was necessary to have some kind of criterion to determine initial acceptability of teachers. On the other hand, there was argument as to the appropriateness of the NTE being that instrument versus a test specifically aimed at determining excellence in the teacher's area of expertise or teaching field.

There was no argument as to the \$6,000 being adequate monetary incentive for the program. However, the \$6,000 amount did cause "jealousy" or "resentment" on the part of other teachers.

There were two sides to the discussion concerning the requirement that the master teachers perform extra duties in return for the extra compensation. Some of the participants felt that the master teacher designation and the \$6,000 should have been rewards for excellent performance in the classroom without any stipulation of performing extra duties. Others felt that the \$6,000 was such a significant amount that extra work should have been required.

The issue of morale surfaced two general areas of comments: (1) the concern of some teachers caused by a differentiation between "master teachers"

and those not so designated, and (2) the element of "jealousy" or "resentment" on the part of the teachers not designated as master teachers nor receiving additional pay. The nature of morale with respect to the Master Teacher Program was determined as needing improvement in each of the three systems.

CHAPTER V

Discussion and Implications

Discussion

Six major issues are addressed in the following discussion:

1. the similarities and differences among the three school systems,
2. the administrative plan of implementation and the role of administrators, teachers and community members,
3. the breakdown in communications and resulting misconceptions about the program,
4. the application process which determined the awardees,
5. the double-sided issue of incentive and morale, and
6. discussion of the merit concept itself.

While it was the original intent of the researcher to look at differences in the implementation process of a method of merit pay in each of the three school districts, the major finding was that there were few differences among the three systems as the plan progressed. The similarities, as opposed to the differences, were explainable. The plan originated with a superintendent attending an AASA Conference that had as its main speaker, then Secretary of Education Terrell Bell, who was promoting the use of rankings to recognize excellent teachers. This superintendent collaborated with two of his colleagues to try to establish some form of merit pay to recognize excellence in the classroom in their respective systems. These superintendents operated districts within close proximity and had been colleagues in the education profession for several years.

To fund the idea, they approached the Oklahoma State Legislature. Working as a unit, funding was secured. The closeness of the men, the closeness of the school districts and the joint effort to fund the project caused this effort to be a singular cause. Thus, throughout the process, similarity was built into the implementation of the Master Teacher Program.

A difference was that the superintendents approached the administrators and teachers differently when positioning the development of a plan. System A left the developmental concept in the hands of a committee comprised primarily of teachers. Thus the "step" plan of System A was born. The superintendents of Systems B and C apparently remained as an integral part of the development of the plan and gave direction to their committees; thus, producing the Master Teacher Program.

The primary objective of the Master Teacher Program was to improve instruction. Each of the superintendents interviewed referred to a shared goal of recognizing and rewarding excellent teachers. In addition, there were comments indicating the improvement of curriculum through the use of the master teachers and the desire to help the students in each of the respective systems. The Master Teacher Program was a plan designed to reward excellence in the teaching profession.

The leaders of the program were the superintendents. They pointed out that it was their intent not to place the burden of the program on the principals. They did not want any misconception on the part of the faculties that a principal could determine who would receive the master teacher designation. They also expressed that they did not want to cause a situation that would cause a principal to lose rapport with the faculty. There was trust and respect shown in comments of the principals about their respective superintendents. They also

acknowledged that they acted in a liaison capacity between the superintendents and the staff in supplying memoranda about the program and application packets. Several indicated that they were skeptical of the program at first but that they were convinced of the worth of the program at a later time.

In providing the leadership for the program themselves, the superintendents' objective of keeping the principal's involvement to a minimum was achieved. However, it may have contributed to the lack of communications reaching all teachers. One of the main communication links was through the teacher representatives serving on the Planning Committee. With the principals remaining less involved, there was a communications breakdown evidenced in the lack of accurate dissemination of information.

Input for the plan came from teachers, administrators, school board members and patrons. However, the most extensive input was from teachers and administrators. System A experienced a setback in participation because their local committee had developed a "step" plan which could not be sold to the other two systems. This setback caused some of their members to discontinue participation.

An atmosphere of confidence, respect, honesty and trust existed among most members of the committee. A lack of confidence in the committee process was exhibited by teachers who were not involved in the process. Teachers who served on the committee indicated that they volunteered in order to have input into the plan. Some of them commented that they had been skeptical at first and felt that they could not complain about the outcome if they failed to participate. As a result, those who participated became believers in the program. There was a definite communications breakdown for teachers removed from the committee process, which caused misperceptions about the program.

An example of one of the misperceptions surrounding the implementation of the program was that some teachers believed that everyone deserving of the master teacher designation could not be rewarded. In actuality, there were no cutoffs on the number who could receive the master teacher designation. The guidelines in the Master Teacher Program report stated:

It is hoped that funding will be sufficient to support all those who merit the designation "Master Teacher." However, in those instances where available funding is not sufficient, the committee will designate as Master Teachers only the number of persons for whom funding is available, with the selection to be based on a comparative ranking of the meritorious candidates by the committee. In those cases where available funding exceeds that required to support the number of Master Teachers selected by the committee, the excess funds will remain uncommitted for that year.

This statement caused some teachers to believe that everyone deserving could not be rewarded. There were comments by the interviewees that they did not want to go to all the trouble of preparing the application packet for a few hundred dollars or to be excluded in the final analysis if there were not enough money to include everyone who was deserving. What actually happened was that so few teachers applied and were selected, that money was no problem. Even at the end of the first year of implementation there were teachers who did not know the amount of money a master teacher was receiving and were surprised to learn that it was \$6,000. This serves as further evidence of the lack of adequate communications to teachers.

In order for the program to be effective, it was necessary to be able to differentiate between teachers performing exceptionally in the classroom and other teachers who admittedly were competent but not necessarily exceptional

in performance. For this purpose, the application packet for the Master Teacher Program served as the means of assessing performance of the teacher. The criteria for selection were spelled out in detail in the packet. Criteria established to reward an optimum number of teachers would provide a plan that neither rewarded almost everyone nor rewarded only a slim majority.

The basic criteria requiring that the applicants be classroom teachers, have been awarded tenure, have seven years of full-time professional experience and have earned at least a master's degree initially discriminated between those eligible and those not eligible for the program. A major discriminator which lessened the number of applicants significantly was the requirement of taking the National Teacher Examination and making above a specified score on the general knowledge, professional knowledge and communication skills sections. Many teachers chose not to attempt the test and those who did take it reported to their peers that the test was extremely demanding physically and mentally. Some of the teachers who took the test did not score above the predetermined pass levels (failed). If a person failed the test, their application would not be considered. Therefore, there were persons who might have completed the application packet but who were stopped by their test scores. There were teachers who passed the test and teachers who did not pass the test who supported it as a criterion for the program. However, several teachers interviewed felt that a test relating to the teacher's subject area coupled with a test on communication skills might be more appropriate.

It was the opinion of the selection committees from each of the districts respectively that the application packet did reflect excellent classroom performance. It was also the opinion of the respective selection committees that the evaluation of each applicant's packet was done in an objective manner.

The rating method used by the selection committees involved each member separately evaluating each packet on a point basis and returning to the group for a final decision. Members of the selection committees commented on how close the team members were when assessing the point values. Although these evaluators were not trained for their role, they all had the experience base of being involved in the planning committee meetings. Some of the master teachers commented that new members of the selection committees should be trained in order to obtain background knowledge and skill in evaluating the packets.

The selection committees did a thorough job in evaluating the application packets. Through the use of a comprehensive application packet and the use of a selection committee made up of representatives from the other two systems for each respective district, popularity or favor as a basis for selection was virtually eliminated. The interviews confirmed that those teachers selected were outstanding. It was pointed out in the interviews that they (administrators and teachers) felt that there were other excellent teachers in each of the systems who were not recognized. The obvious statement is that those who did not apply could not be selected.

The evaluation instruments, the application packet and the National Teacher Examination, were effective evaluation instruments for determining excellent teachers. The question became, "Did the instruments impose too rigid a process?" There were instances concerning teachers who did apply but whose applications were rejected. One involved a vocational teacher who missed passing the National Teacher Examination by one point. This particular teacher has been recognized at the state and national levels as being an outstanding teacher in the field. The person has attained recognition and certification in six

of eight specific qualifying areas in the subject area. This particular situation supported the concept of competency testing in the area in which the person was teaching.

The other instance involved a special education teacher who did not show adequate student growth as adjudged by committee members. There was a feeling expressed that it was more difficult for some teachers to show student growth than others. This argument went further than just the special education arena. It was indicated that some classes by nature offer students more opportunity to show growth than others. The other side of the argument was that there were areas in the application packet that allowed a teacher to make up points lost in another section.

To carry this concept a step further, "Can it be determined whether or not the process was too rigid by evaluating whether or not too few teachers received the designation?" According to Rhodes (1973), "if only a few teachers gain recognition or salary advancement from a merit plan, the plan will not be popular with the majority of the teachers" (p. 3-4). This did happen with this plan.

There was no research which conclusively cited what percentage of teachers should be rewarded in order to feel sure that a plan would be successful or would not incur this objection. The answer is reflected somewhere between keeping the standards of the program high and maintaining a critical mass who have attained the goal. The small number of applicants was attributed to fear of the National Teacher Examination, the amount of preparation required by the application packet, and peer pressure representing anti-sentiment for the program.

The interviews indicated that the \$6,000 amount was sufficient incentive to attract applicants to the program. However, the \$6,000 incentive did arouse other issues relative to the concept of merit pay.

The feeling that \$6,000 was too large an amount did occur because there were too few receiving what was perceived as a lot of money. The individual reactions indicated that other teachers deserved raises and recognition as well as that the master teachers, in some instances, were not doing enough to earn the money. The \$6,000 incentive amount did cause mixed feelings which affected morale, as it related to the Master Teacher Program, in each of the systems.

One of the offshoots of the incentive issue was whether or not the master teachers should be required to perform additional duties. This issue was critical to the concept of merit pay. Was merit pay provided for the purpose of rewarding excellence in the classroom or was it provided as extra pay for extra work? The opinions of the participants were divided on this issue. If the merit pay was provided to reward excellence, then that status was reduced when other teachers saw the master teachers having to do extra work to earn the pay. There were responses that indicated that some of the teachers would not be interested in applying if summer employment was required. On the other hand, some teachers indicated that they did not see master teachers performing sufficient extra duties which were part of the agreed requirements to earn the incentive amount.

A relatively small amount of extra work was required in return for the incentive amount and master teacher designation. There was flexibility offered to the master teachers with regard to what extra projects they would do. In each instance the master teachers did things they were interested in doing. The only uncompromising requirement was the actual amount of time to be added to

their contract year which was two weeks. In each instance, the master teachers were people who were willing to put in extra work and did so regardless of the master teacher designation.

One of the members of the Master Teacher Planning Committee stated that, in his/her opinion, the requirement of extra work was to politically satisfy those interests who wanted something in return for the money. Did the requirement of extra work undermine the concept of merit pay? In the instance of those teachers who felt that the master teachers were not earning the additional incentive amount, the requirement of extra work did undermine the concept of merit pay. The intent of the program was to reward excellence in the classroom.

Implications

The following implications were derived from this study:

Implications for Practice.

1. Effective communication is imperative to the success of any merit pay plan. Involvement of principals in the communication process could serve to enhance the program.
2. Early involvement of the principals in the development of the idea which would enable the principals to "own" the concept prior to presentation to the faculty members is recommended in order to provide support for the program. Realizing that the concern of the superintendents was for the maintenance of rapport between staff and principal, the study reflected that the extensive nature of the application process effectively removed the principals from being able to determine those who would receive merit recognition.

3. The application packet process which was used did enable the selection of excellent teachers. Elements of this process could easily be adapted to meet the needs of other plans.

4. The composition of the selection committees should maintain neutral membership. Having representatives from other districts added credibility and neutrality to the selection process.

5. Based on a speculative estimate, the researcher would suggest that nothing less than ten percent nor more than twenty-five percent of the teaching staff receive the master teacher designation in a comparable program in order to offset a negative impact on morale.

6. This study challenged the legitimacy of the National Teacher Examination as a criterion for excellence in the classroom. Alternative methods of establishing subject matter competency and communication skill proficiency should be provided in the application process.

Implications for Research.

1. A study to determine what constitutes the optimum percentage of teachers to be rewarded in a merit program is needed.

2. Studies to determine the long-term effects of recently implemented merit-based pay plans will be significant to the future of the concept of merit pay.

3. A study to determine the impact of a master teacher plan upon teachers who were not selected to receive the designation would be timely.

4. A study to determine the implications of the implementation of a master teacher plan upon student learning is desirable.

5. A study to determine the effect a master teacher program has upon the community would add to the current research.

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