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Raising Teacher Salaries

Bill Gates once said “Research shows that there is only half as much variation in student achievement between schools as there is among classrooms in the same school. If you want your child to get the best education possible, it is actually more important to get him assigned to a great teacher rather than to a great school.” Teachers have and always will be the unsung heroes of the youth. They have the power to shape the youths’ future. For this reason teachers should get paid more. Without their contributions society could not move forward.

Teachers spend at minimum thirty five hours a week with the students. Teacher are important to the development of students. Teachers help shape the students in to contributing members of society by giving them the tools academically to not just succeed in higher institutions of learning but to also thrive. Teachers also help students develop their strengths. Teachers help students further develop their special interest rather it be science, or math, or literature. That is why teachers are there. They in some cases are like second parents to the students.

Before explaining why it is important to raise teacher salaries the reader needs to first understand the relationship between education and teacher salary. It has been found that higher teaching salaries attracts more qualified individuals to teaching positions (Fuller 4). By raising the salary the school boards are able to raise the qualifications of what they expect for the position. In other words the school gets what it pays for. By increasing the teacher wages the schools getter a better quality of teacher.

With that being said some would argue that better paid teachers does not necessarily mean better quality teachers. However if a teacher wants to continue working in their job then they have to produce results. High wages give the educators incentive to make sure the students are being taught what they

need to know to be successful in higher learning institutions. If that educator does not produce results they do not get to keep their job. It is as simple that.

Raising teacher salaries should not be looked at as a way to raise taxes or just paying teachers more for no reason, but as an investment in the youth's education. Education is a pivotal part of any society. In order for society to continue to evolve as a collective it is vital that education be taken seriously. The occupation of teaching has a low retention rate. Studies show that between 40% and 50% of teachers leave within the first five years of teaching (Fuller 3). One of the reasons for this could possibly be the amount the teachers are getting paid. If the educators know they can get paid more to do something else, they will. In order to prevent this, the teachers should be paid more to give them incentive to stay. While raising the teacher salary will not completely solve the problem of low retention for the teaching occupation it is definitely a good place start (Ingersoll 4).

While many would agree that teachers should get paid more, there is not much evidence to support the claim. This is part of the reason it is so hard to raise teacher salaries. Not many studies have been done on the correlation between higher teacher wages and student performance (Figlio 2). With that being said how is the United States supposed to test the correlation if it is never implemented. In order for the United States of America to find out if there is actually a correlation between the two it has to first implement it in all the states.

There is, however, another way to raise wages for teachers other than just raising the salary. Another way to raise wages for teachers is incentive programs. There are two ways to implement these incentive programs. With one of these incentive programs the school would pay more to the teacher's whose students perform better (Figlio 7). From the few studies done it was found that this tends to be the most effective program (Figlio 7). The other Program would be paying all the teachers more, the problem however, is that the teachers have no incentive to perform better (Figlio 7). David Figlio makes this point by saying "teachers in schools with no merit pay or in schools that award merit pay to all or most of their teachers have no or little incentive to be better teachers. On the other hand, merit programs that offer merit pay to a small fraction of teachers likely provide teachers with a stronger incentive to do well."

With all that being said most schools evaluate their teachers at least annually (Figlio 8). If teachers are getting high marks on these evaluations then they should be paid for that. That means they are, by the state school board's requirements, meeting all expectations and in some cases exceeding them.

Now back to public opinion of teachers. While one could assume that public opinion views teachers and the teaching occupation in itself in a favorable position there is again little or no evidence to support this in the last decade. The biggest opposition to raising teacher salaries is the lack of evidence. There is little to no support to back up the claims that there is a correlation between higher teacher wages and higher student performance. This could be due to a couple things. The first would be what the school boards are required to submit to the federal branch of the government. The second could be the lack of surveys being done on the issues by the federal government or even the state governments. The third could be the lack of public sentiment in support of teachers.

In regards to the social status teachers come in on the low side according to the 2013 global status index by the Varkey Foundation (Dolton 13). The United States of America has a Programme International Student Assessment ranking (PISA) of twelve (Dolton 13). The average teacher salary in America according to this 2013 study is roughly \$45,000 a year (Dolton 13). This 2013 study demonstrates that teachers in Asian countries are treated with more respect than teachers in European countries as well as the United States of America (Dolton 14).

Some could argue that teachers in recent times have a lot more to deal with than teachers twenty years ago. With the advancement of technology students have so many more things to distract them. So now teachers have to do more to keep their students' attention. The teachers have to come up with more interactive curriculums to keep their students engaged. Teachers continuously have to find new ways to connect with the students of today. It seems teachers have a job that is constantly evolving from generation to generation.

With all that has been said throughout this paper teachers are the unsung heroes of our society. They hold a very important position in helping to shape and mold the generation of tomorrow. With that

being said most would agree that teachers are underpaid and unappreciated here in the United States. So moving forward teachers should be paid more for the contribution they make every day to society.

Work Cited

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