



# Faculty Performance-Based Compensation and Evaluation

# Independent School Executive Forum

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# 1) Executive Summary

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## Key Observations

**Profiled schools implement two distinct salary increase models within banded, performance-based compensation systems.** Administrators at all profiled schools implemented compensation systems that incorporate salary “bands” (i.e., ranges of possible salaries) between which faculty can advance based on their performance in and outside of the classroom. Profiled schools implement different models of banded compensation systems to determine faculty salary increases:

- **Annual/Biannual Merit Increase Model:** This model—used by **School A, School C, School D, School E, and School F**—allows for both annual/biannual (i.e., every other year) performance-based compensation increases within bands and salary increases tied to band transitions. Annual compensation increases may also incorporate increases tied to experience and/or cost-of-living.
- **Promotional Model:** This model—used by **School B**—does not allow for annual performance-based increases but instead rewards faculty with large increases in salary when they advance a salary band. Teachers still receive board-approved, cost-of-living increases.

**Use multiple, varied types of evidence to measure faculty performance holistically.** At most profiled schools, administrators rely on a combination of classroom observations, student and parent feedback surveys, faculty self-reflections, sample parent communications, and sample classroom materials to evaluate faculty effectiveness. Administrators also track faculty leadership positions and completed faculty professional development. Administrators at most profiled schools do not weight one form of evidence over any others but rather seek to identify trends across all forms of evidence. That said, administrators at **School F** rely primarily on classroom observations to evaluate faculty, as contacts report that classroom performance is the most important aspect of an effective faculty member.

**To improve salary system financial sustainability, require faculty to complete long-term projects to advance bands.** At **School B**, faculty who wish to transition bands must set a long-term promotional goal and work to accomplish that goal for at least 1.5 years. For example, a faculty member could set the goal of improving their assessment and feedback strategies by developing new exit tickets. Similarly, faculty at **School F** must complete both a year-long professional mentorship program and a long-term, school-improvement research project to advance to the highest salary band. Contacts at School F report that these requirements serve a dual purpose—to slow the rate of expensive band transitions and provide a meaningful professional development opportunity.

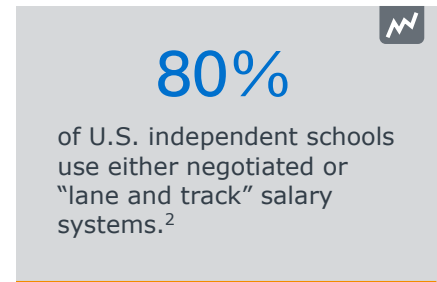
**To transition salary bands, ask faculty to develop a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates achievement in all band criteria.** Administrators at **School A** and **School B** use faculty portfolios to identify examples of teaching excellence that may not be apparent in brief classroom observations or other evaluation factors. Portfolios also require faculty to demonstrate consistent, long-term achievement. Administrators at School A ask faculty to submit approximately ten-page portfolios that contain evidence associated with three categories: general information, classroom instruction/faculty effectiveness, and personal and professional development. Faculty members then defend their portfolio in an interview with their department chair, division head, associate head, and head of school. If successful, faculty members transition to the next salary band and receive a corresponding salary increase.

## 2) Compensation System Design

### Motivations

#### Profiled Independent Schools Transition to Performance-Based Compensation Systems to Motivate and Reward High- Performing Faculty

Research by [Littleford & Associates](#)—a management consulting firm that serves independent schools— found that most independent schools across the United States rely on either negotiated salary systems or “lane and track” salary scales to determine faculty compensation.<sup>1</sup> In negotiated salary systems, faculty negotiate starting salaries based on the competitive hiring market and renegotiate raises with the head of school each year.



In “lane and track” salary systems, independent school administrators develop separate salary lanes that determine compensation ranges for faculty. Each lane corresponds with a level of education (e.g., master’s degree). Heads of school place new faculty in a lane that corresponds with their education level, and faculty move one step (or track) up the lane for each year of experience. Each step increase corresponds with an annual salary increase. If a faculty completes additional graduate education, they may advance to a different “lane” with higher maximum salary tracks and/or larger per-year increases.

While common, researchers and profiled independent school administrators have identified some shortcomings associated with these traditional approaches.

#### Problems with Traditional Independent School Compensation Systems<sup>3</sup>

##### Negotiated Salary System



- The absence of specific criteria to set salary allows heads of school to unwittingly perpetuate **age discrimination, sex discrimination, and favoritism**.
- New faculty who apply in competitive periods may receive far higher salaries than faculty who applied previously, **negatively impacting morale**.
- Negotiation meetings **do not reward the strongest faculty** but rather the strongest negotiators.
- **Lack of public criteria** prevent faculty from predicting compensation increases.

##### “Lane and Track” Salary System



- Faculty receive the same salary increases **regardless of performance**, which can discourage high performers.
- Consistent annual salary increases allow faculty compensation to increase rapidly, often forcing administrators to **cap mid-career faculty salaries**.
- Lane structure encourages pursuit of advanced degree over **more-focused professional development** aligned with school values.
- The system contains no mechanism to incentivize faculty to contribute to school life beyond **additional stipends**.

1) John Littleford, “Faculty Salary Systems: Rapid and Systematic Changes in Schools Worldwide,” *Littleford & Associates*, <https://www.jlittleford.com/faculty-salary-systems-rapid-and-systematic-changes-in-schools-worldwide/>

2) Ibid.

3) Ibid.

Faced with these and other concerns, all profiled schools implemented banded, performance-based compensation systems. These systems incorporate flexible or structured salary bands (i.e., ranges of possible salaries) between which faculty can advance based on their performance in and outside of the classroom.<sup>4</sup>

Contacts at profiled schools cite several reasons for performance-based compensation system implementation.

## Motivations Behind Performance-Based Compensation Systems



### Emphasize School Values

Contacts at **School B** report that the performance-based compensation clearly outlines expectations for faculty. Before, new faculty could only infer the school's expectations from supervisor comments and the behavior of other faculty. Under the new system, faculty receive clear evaluation and compensation documents that outline the values of the school and performance expectations. Contacts assert that the new compensation system also increases the transparency of evaluation standards and values.



### Reward High-Performing Faculty

At **School C**, contacts transitioned from a "lane and track" compensation system to better reward faculty for their contributions to the school. Under the previous system, more effective faculty with more responsibilities might receive equivalent or lower compensation than faculty who meet the minimum requirements. Administrators implemented a performance-based compensation system to ensure they reward high performance alongside experience.



### Compete for Exceptional Faculty

Contacts at **School C** report that they implemented a performance-based compensation system in part to recruit high-performing faculty in a competitive market. Though the school cannot necessarily afford to pay faculty more than competitors, they can tell potential new hires that the performance-based compensation system will allow them to earn equitable, predictable salary increases based on performance.



### Improve Equity

Contacts at **School B** report that they implemented the performance-based compensation system to eliminate salary negotiations that may disadvantage younger, inexperienced faculty. At **School A**, contacts note that structured performance-based compensation systems mitigate potential gender and divisional biases in compensation, as now administrators must assign faculty salaries based on defined criteria.

## Structure

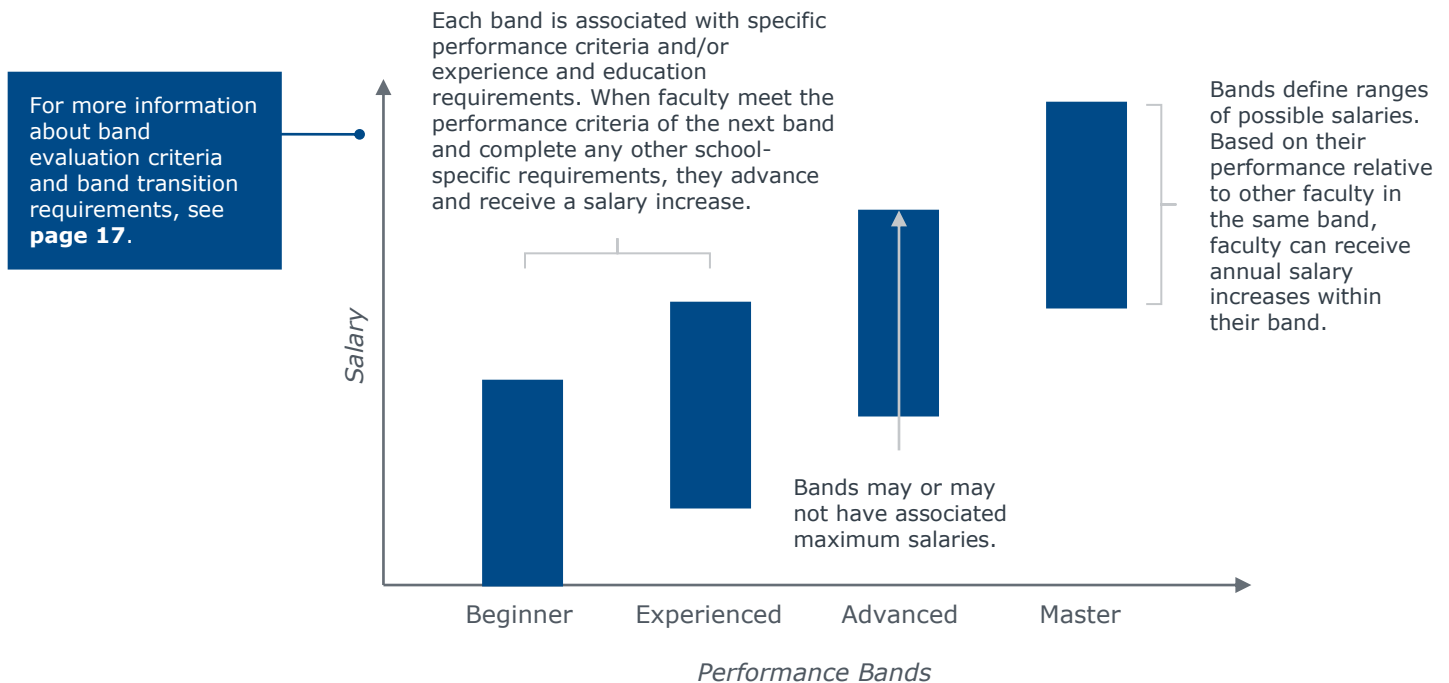
## Banded Salary Systems Establish Performance Expectations to Advance to Higher Salary Ranges

At all profiled schools, administrators developed compensation systems in which faculty can earn salaries based on their placement within one of four to six salary bands (i.e., salary ranges). Administrators place faculty within bands based not only on experience and education (as in a "lane and track" system) but also based on their performance evaluation ratings, volunteer work in the school community, completion of professional development, and leadership roles.

Administrators design requirements to enter new bands to reflect a typical faculty career path: faculty advance in responsibility, meet more stringent evaluation criteria, and gain additional compensation as they move across bands. For example, administrators at **School A** assign faculty to one of four escalating bands: *Associate*, *Instructor*, *Mentor*, and *Veteran*.

4) "Independent Schools' Next Top Model: Changing Perspectives on Faculty Compensation," *Net Assets*, January 6, 2017, <https://www.netassets.org/blogs/net-assets/2017/01/04/independent-schools-next-top-model>

## Overview of Salary Bands in Performance-Based Compensation Models



## Profiled Schools Implement Two Distinct Salary Increase Models Within Banded Compensation Systems

Though compensation systems at profiled schools share the banded structure, profiled schools implement different mechanisms to determine specific faculty salary increases. For the purposes of this report, EAB separated these mechanisms into two distinct models.

- **Annual/Biannual Merit Increase Model:** In this model—used by **School A**, **School C**, **School D**, **School E**, and **School F**—faculty can earn annual/biannual (i.e., every other year) performance-based compensation increases and salary increases tied to band transitions. Faculty earn annual/biannual compensation increases if they perform exceptionally on the criteria associated with their current band. In addition, faculty may receive salary increases for experience and/or cost-of-living. To transition salary bands, faculty must meet the more-intensive criteria associated with the next band (e.g., higher performance, advanced degrees) and/or complete additional tasks (e.g., application processes, portfolios, mentorship programs).
- **Promotional Model:** In this model—used by **School B**—faculty cannot earn annual performance-based raises or experience-based raises but earn large increases in salary each time they advance a band. Faculty still earn annual, board-approved cost-of-living increases.

## Implement the Annual/Biannual Merit Increase Model to Reward High Performance Regardless of Band Eligibility

In the Annual/Biannual Merit Increase Model, faculty receive a salary within the range established by their band, but can earn regular (e.g., annual, biannual) merit-based increases within that band based on faculty evaluations. In this way, administrators can compensate faculty for exceptional performance and experience relative to those faculty within their band (through annual compensation increases). Also,

administrators can reward faculty for taking on the additional responsibilities and meeting higher expectations associated with band transitions.

### Band Transition Compensation Increases in the Annual/Biannual Merit Increase Model

#### Bonus

At **School E**, faculty receive a \$5,000 bonus each time they advance a band.



#### Salary Increase

At **School A**, faculty receive double the typical annual compensation increase (i.e., five percent versus two to three percent) when they transition bands.



#### Combined

At **School C**, administrators increase faculty salaries to the starting salary in the next band and then provide a three to four percent increase. Faculty also receive a bonus of \$3,000-\$5,000.



Faculty at **School F** earn a large salary increase when they transition bands, as administrators designed the system to heavily incentivize promotion. For example, the gap between the end of one band and the start of another might be \$10,000 or more in base salary.

At **School D**, faculty members do not receive large bonuses and/or increased salaries when they transition bands. Instead, when faculty advance a band, they become eligible for a higher maximum salary. Thus, if a faculty member earns the highest possible salary in their current band, they cannot receive any more annual performance-based compensation increases until they advance to the next band.

## Simplified Annual/Biannual Merit Increase Compensation Model at *School A*<sup>5</sup>

All faculty salaries within this report **do not** reflect the actual faculty salaries at profiled schools. Percentage increase and bonus values are approximated.

Faculty may transition across bands once they meet experience, education, and performance requirements.

Faculty may advance one or multiple salary levels within the band based on performance relative to other faculty members within their band.

| Years | Associate (1-3 years) | Instructor (4-10 years) | Mentor (11-20 years) | Veteran (21+ years) |
|-------|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1     | Level 1: \$40,000     |                         |                      |                     |
| 2     | Level 2: \$41,000     |                         |                      |                     |
| 3     | Level 3: \$42,000     |                         |                      |                     |
| 4     | Level 4: \$43,000     | Level 1: \$43,000       |                      |                     |
| 5     | Level 5: \$44,000     | Level 2: \$44,000       |                      |                     |
| 6     | Level 6: \$45,000     | Level 3: \$45,000       |                      |                     |
| 7     |                       | Level 4: \$46,000       |                      |                     |
| 8     |                       | Level 5: \$47,000       |                      |                     |
| 9     |                       | Level 6: \$48,000       |                      |                     |
| 10    |                       | Level 7: \$49,000       |                      |                     |
| 11    |                       | Level 8: \$50,000       | Level 1: \$50,000    |                     |
| 12    |                       | Level 9: \$51,000       | Level 2: \$51,000    |                     |
| 13    |                       | Level 10: \$52,000      | Level 3: \$52,000    |                     |
| 14    |                       | Level 11: \$53,000      | Level 4: \$53,000    |                     |
| 15    |                       | Level 12: \$54,000      | Level 5: \$54,000    |                     |

To transition bands, faculty must complete additional responsibilities and meet stringent performance expectations. For example, faculty must compile a portfolio of evidence and undergo an application process.

Because faculty are expected to quickly move from *Associate* to *Instructor*, the band only contains six levels, three of which overlap with the next. As the jump from *Instructor* to *Mentor* is more difficult, the instructor band contains 14 levels, seven of which overlap with the next band.

Bands continue beyond year 15 and consider faculty experience. Faculty may not enter the *Veteran* band until they reach year 21.

Administrators at profiled schools use distinct techniques to determine annual/biannual faculty salary increases (i.e., salary increases distinct from band transitions).

## Techniques to Determine Annual Salary Increases in Annual/Biannual Merit Increase Models at Profiled Schools

### Predetermined, Rigid Increases

1

At **School A**, administrators define clear salary levels within each band. Faculty advance one level annually to reflect increased experience, but high-performing faculty may advance two to four levels in one year, which administrators call "acceleration." Administrators rely on performance evaluations—which are separate from band-transition criteria—to determine whether faculty are eligible for acceleration. Administrators do not accelerate faculty beyond the last level in their band (i.e., into the next band) however.

5) "Contract Banding Scale Chart." School A, provided August 14, 2019.

### Administrator-Determined, Flexible Increases

- 2 At **School D**, administrators dispense performance-based raises based on faculty evaluations from a pre-determined salary pool. Similarly, at **School C**, faculty receive percentage salary increases based on performance and determined by principal discretion. Principals also determine annual, performance-based bonuses to those faculty that have exceeded expectations. Faculty can receive these bonuses even if they do not advance bands, though they can expect larger bonuses tied to band increases.

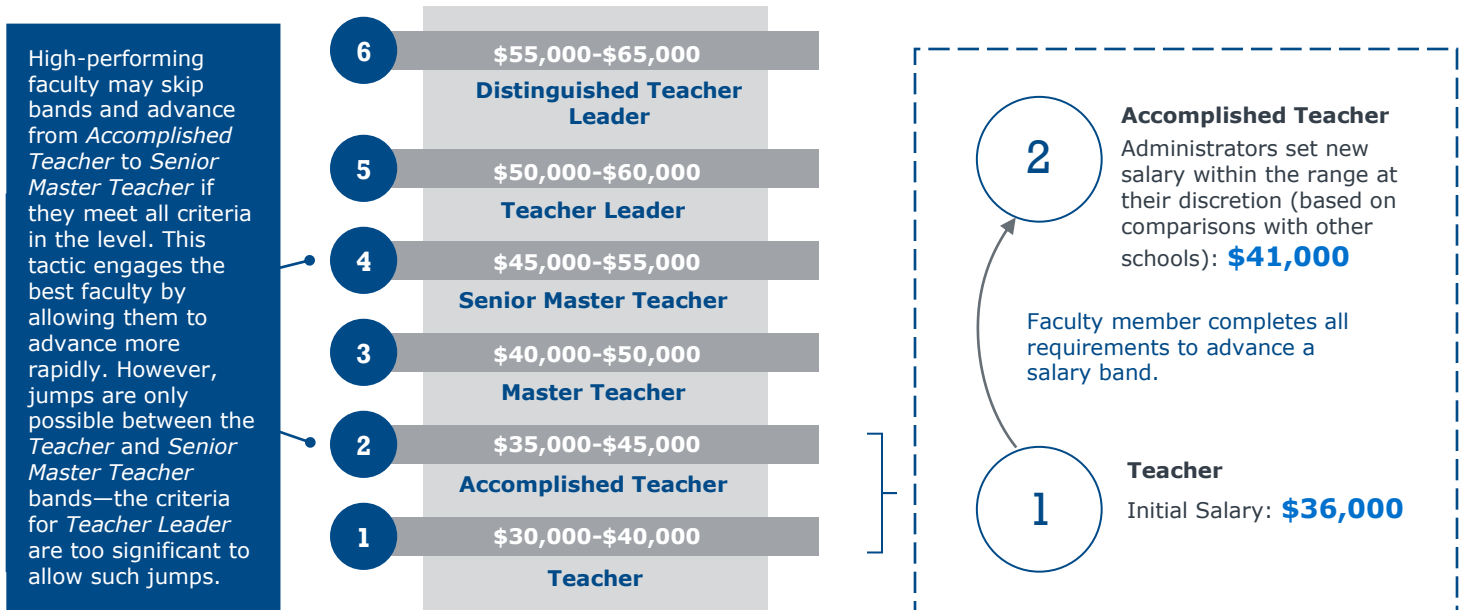
### Points-Based Increases

- 3 At **School E**, faculty earn one experience point and up to three performance points each year. Based on annual evaluations, underperforming faculty receive 0-1 performance points, faculty who achieve expectations receive two, and faculty who exceed expectations receive the maximum three. Administrators adjust the value of each point yearly based on comparisons of current faculty salaries to competitor salaries. Points may be worth either flat dollar amounts or represent percentage increases.

## Implement the Promotional Model to Reduce Administrative Workload

In the Promotional Model at **School B**, bands still represent salary ranges (e.g., \$65,000-\$75,000), but faculty do not receive performance-based or experience-based raises within bands. Faculty still receive annual cost-of-living increases. Administrators provide performance-based salary increases only when faculty earn a promotion to the next band. Contacts report that they adopted this model to limit administrative duties—an annual, performance-based compensation increase process is time intensive. Administrators evaluate faculty performance every year but only adjust compensation/conduct promotional evaluations when faculty meet performance requirements to advance salary bands.

### Simplified Promotional Model at *School B*<sup>6</sup>



6) "Process Document for Faculty Evaluation and Growth," School B, provided 8/12/2019.

## Overlap Band Salary Ranges and Eliminate Maximum Salaries to Recognize Experienced Faculty Who Choose Not to Pursue Band Increases

At all profiled schools except **School F**, administrators intentionally assign salary ranges to bands that overlap with the range associated with the next band. For example, a *Master Teacher* at **School B** could receive the same salary as a *Senior Master Teacher*.

### Reasons for Band Overlap at Profiled Schools



#### Recognize Tenure

At **School B**, contacts report that because salary bands overlap, administrators can offer a highly experienced faculty member (e.g., a faculty member with 25 years of experience) a salary somewhat commensurate with the salaries of faculty in higher bands.



#### Account for Alternate Commitments

Contacts from **School D** report that the band overlap allows administrators to engage faculty who cannot immediately commit the time to complete the additional responsibilities required to advance bands. Though salary bands do have associated maximum salaries, faculty who qualify for the new band can continue to earn increases for a few years until they are ready to move forward.



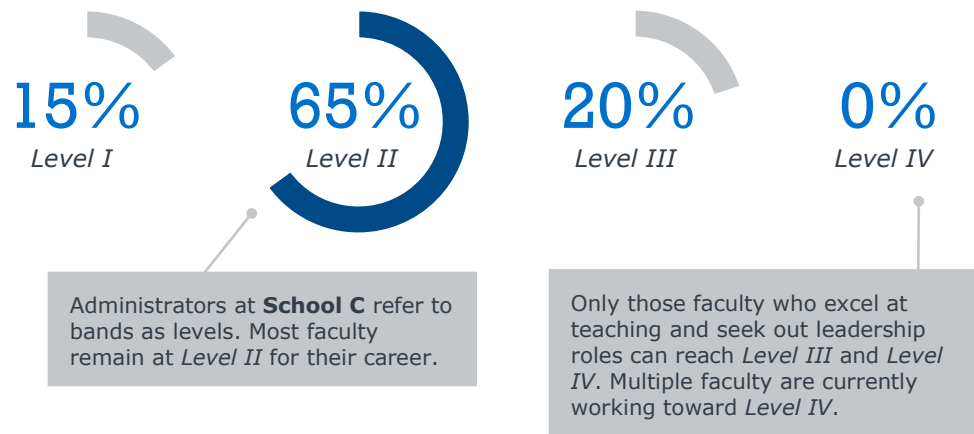
#### Reward Young High Performers

Contacts at **School A** report that band overlaps allow administrators to reward high-performing faculty who have not yet qualified for the next band based on experience. When faculty with overlapping salaries advance to the next band, they start two levels above their current salary in the new band.

To further engage faculty who may not have the time to advance bands, administrators at School C and **School E** do not implement maximum salaries in any bands except the first, introductory band. Under this model, faculty can still earn experience-based and performance-based salary increases in perpetuity without advancing bands. This incentivizes faculty who do not plan to advance salary bands to implement effective teaching strategies. However, administrators at School C set a maximum salary for the introductory band, as that band is intended only for beginning teachers.

Because teachers can continue to earn raises without advancing bands, administrators set and maintain stringent requirements to reach the highest-level bands without alienating faculty. By limiting the number of faculty who can reach higher salary bands, administrators minimize salary expenditures. For example, administrators at School C expect that most faculty will remain with the second salary band for the duration of their career. Only extremely strong faculty who are willing to take on additional leadership roles and responsibilities can reach the third and fourth bands.

## Distribution of Faculty by Salary Band at *School C*



Conversely, administrators at School A and School D set maximum salaries in each band. Contacts at School D cite these maximum salaries as motivation for faculty to move to the next band and take on additional responsibility. Also, contacts at School A note that maximum salaries prevent administrators from overly increasing the salaries of faculty whose performance is not at the highest level.

## Provide Regular, Cost-of-Living Increases in Addition to Performance-Based Salary Increases

At **School E** and **School B**, contacts report that due to high costs of living, all faculty receive an annual, cost-of-living increase at approximately two or three percent of their salary. Faculty receive this increase regardless of their performance. At **School A** administrators raise all salary levels within the bands between 0.5 and one percent every three years to account for cost-of-living. By providing cost-of-living increases, administrators emphasize that performance-based increases serve as incentives for good performance rather than just replacements for traditional, experience-based increases.

### 3) Faculty Evaluation

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#### Compensation and Evaluation

#### Develop Both Annual and Band-Specific Evaluation Protocols

To determine faculty salary based on performance, administrators need to ensure they can accurately measure faculty performance both annually and across the course of faculty careers.

#### Compensation Uses of Annual and Band-Specific Evaluation Protocols



##### Annual Evaluations

Effective annual evaluations allow administrators to compare faculty performance to other faculty with similar levels of experience. School administrators can develop a single evaluation rubric that incorporates criteria that apply to all bands or develop separate evaluation rubrics for each band. Administrators can use annual evaluation ratings to determine annual salary increases or consider performance growth across review periods when evaluating a faculty member for a band increase.



##### Band-Specific Evaluations

Band evaluations allow administrators to determine when faculty members have completed a significant advance in their quality of teaching, professionalism, and leadership. At many profiled schools, administrators develop separate criteria to define the qualities associated with each band and ask teachers to complete intensive projects and tasks to prove their eligibility for bands. Profiled schools, however, also consider annual evaluation scores when determining band eligibility.



#### Consider Biannual Evaluations to Reduce Administrative Workloads

At **School A**, administrators report that the intensive evaluations associated with the performance-based compensation system required significant time from division heads. Administrators plan to transition to a biannual evaluation structure to reduce division head workload.

#### Annual Evaluations

#### Develop Faculty Performance Rubrics that Outline Clear and Measurable Teaching and Professional Expectations

At **School B** and **School F**, administrators use research-supported evaluation models and/or faculty feedback to develop annual evaluation rubrics. Each rubric outlines clear success criteria tied to specific faculty member responsibilities.

Evaluation Rubric Sources at *School F* and *School B*



Research-Backed External Rubrics

At both schools, administrators used rubrics developed by external researchers as models. At **School F**, the head of school identified commonalities across multiple external rubrics.



Faculty Feedback

At **School B**, administrators sourced faculty insights on the defining qualities of exceptional teaching and professionalism at faculty meetings.



External Sources for Annual Evaluation Criteria



Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development



Independent School Management



Danielson’s Framework for Teaching



Association of Christian Schools International

Evaluation rubrics at profiled schools evaluate faculty members for both their teaching skills and their professionalism. **School A**’s rubric evaluates teaching across three domains: scholarship, creativity, and compassion. A fourth domain contains criteria related to professionalism.<sup>7</sup> At School B, the rubric contains two sections. The first, “teacher” section evaluates teaching preparation, implementation, and assessment. Administrators developed specific criteria to assess teachers on each of these subcategories. The second, “faculty member” section evaluates professionalism, specifically collaboration, communication, leadership, and contribution to the community.<sup>8</sup>

To connect annual performance rubrics to compensation, administrators develop scoring techniques for all matrix criteria. For example, at School F, division heads score faculty performance on a rating of between one and four for each of the 14 criteria on the rubric. If faculty achieve a high enough average score based on the division head’s rating, they can earn an annual salary increase of two to six percent, separate from a band increase.

Similarly, division heads at School A rate faculty as either Improvement Needed (I), Working Toward Proficiency (W), Proficient (P), or Distinguished (D) in all criteria associated with each of the four domains in the rubric.<sup>9</sup> If faculty score low, they do not earn a salary level increase. If faculty score well, they can move one, or even multiple levels up the salary band via acceleration.

7) “School A Faculty Evaluation,” School A, provided August 14, 2019.  
8) “Process Document for Faculty Evaluation and Growth,” School B, provided August 12, 2019.  
9) “School A Faculty Evaluation,” School A, provided August 14, 2019.

## Professionalism Evaluation Rubric Criteria for Annual Evaluations at School A<sup>10</sup>

| Rubric incorporates specific metrics to clarify potentially subjective requirements.            | Professionalism                                                                                                                                                                          | Proficiency |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
|                                                                                                 | Communicates well with colleagues and supervisors                                                                                                                                        | D           |
| Flexible criteria allow administrators to recognize faculty for above-and-beyond contributions. | Responds to parents' concerns/questions appropriately and in a timely manner (typically within 24 hours).                                                                                | P           |
|                                                                                                 | Complies with policies and procedures articulated in the school's Faculty Handbook and is punctual with school deadlines.                                                                | P           |
|                                                                                                 | Is involved in school community by engaging in co-curricular responsibilities and attending games, plays, lectures, concerts, etc.                                                       | P           |
|                                                                                                 | Appropriately carries out specific assignments, including but not limited to service learning, advisory programs, assigned supervision, and other areas determined by the division head. | D           |

If this faculty member continues to earn Proficient (P) and Distinguished (D) ratings on other components of the matrix, they can expect an increase of one or multiple salary levels within their current band.

## Examples of Teacher Evaluation Rubric Criteria at School B<sup>11</sup>

| Teacher Dimensions    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Preparation           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Content Knowledge     | Strong                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Excellent                                                                                                                                                    | Exemplary                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                       | Demonstrates foundational content knowledge that allows her to clearly explain material to students in the subject area.                                                                                                      | Demonstrates thorough content knowledge that allows her to clearly explain and respond to students and draws on current research and thinking in discipline. | Demonstrates masterful command of content and an agility with student contributions that allows her to recognize and form interdisciplinary connections. Student comments and questions reflect a deeper level of understanding. |
| Curriculum Design     | Strong                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Excellent                                                                                                                                                    | Exemplary                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                       | Develops a clear scope and sequence while seeking departmental and grade-level input on content and skills; adapts lessons appropriately.                                                                                     | Continues with clear scope and sequence design; iteration demonstrates responsiveness to student learning, current pedagogy, and the school environment.     | Deepens the scope and sequence to develop enduring understanding. Seeks interdisciplinary input, reviews current pedagogy and developments in content area, and revises accordingly.                                             |
| Classroom Environment | Strong                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Excellent                                                                                                                                                    | Exemplary                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                       | Creates an appropriate environment for learning. Classroom design reflects dynamic and content-appropriate approach to course material. Approaches the sharing of student work and/or grades with discretion and sensitivity. | Establishes a classroom culture of care and respect. Creates an inclusive environment which encourages student collaboration and engagement.                 | Maintains a culture of care and respect for diversity of opinions. Inspires students to be risk-takers and collaborators who are enthusiastic about learning.                                                                    |

To qualify for an exemplary rating in each criterion, faculty must meet all qualifications established in the Strong, Excellent, and Exemplary categories.

10) "School A Faculty Evaluation," School A, provided August 14, 2019.

11) "Process Document for Faculty Evaluation and Growth," School B, provided August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019.



## Design Evaluation Rubrics to Reflect the Importance of Instructional Excellence

At **School B**, administrators intentionally designed their evaluation rubric to incorporate eight “teacher” criteria and only four “faculty member” (i.e., professionalism) criteria. Contacts report that this design increases the weight of teaching excellence in evaluations, which aligns with the school’s belief that teaching should be the top priority of all faculty members.

## Consider Developing Separate Annual Evaluation Rubrics for Faculty in Different Salary Bands

To reflect the differences in experience and capability among faculty in different salary bands and career stages, administrators at **School E** developed separate evaluation rubrics for each distinct salary band (i.e., *Beginning Teacher*, *Experienced Teacher*, *Faculty Leader*, and *Distinguished Faculty Leader*), as defined by their compensation system. These articulated teaching standards allow administrators to define different standards of excellence based on the skills expected of beginning versus tenured, strong faculty. In this way, beginning faculty can still receive annual performance-based raises even if they do not demonstrate the same level of achievement as faculty in higher bands.

The standards also allow administrators to establish different priorities based on level—the first two bands focus on teaching excellence, the third band asks faculty to share their expertise with the larger school community, and the last band asks faculty to take on educational leadership beyond the school community.

Each rubric contains separate descriptions associated with unacceptable performance, performance that reflects an area for growth, performance that demonstrates accomplishment, and next-level performance.

### Differences in Evaluation Criteria Across Bands at **School E**<sup>12</sup>

#### *Beginning Teacher*

##### Criteria One: Demonstrates Knowledge of Subject Matter

| Unacceptable | Area for Growth | Area of Accomplishment | Next Level |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------|
|--------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------|

Faculty indicates some awareness of prerequisite knowledge in concepts and topics. Faculty displays basic content knowledge and makes some connections with other parts of the discipline and in application to the real world. Student questions are followed up by attempts to present material more effectively.

#### *Experienced Teacher*

##### Criteria One: Designs and Sequences Short and Long-Term Plans that Interrelate Ideas and Information Across Subject Matter Areas

| Unacceptable | Area for Growth | Area of Accomplishment | Next Level |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------|
|--------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------|

There is evidence of consistent planning of daily instructional goals that reflect understanding of prerequisite knowledge important for student’s understanding of concepts and topics. Faculty makes some connections across disciplines and can articulate what they want students to Know, Understand, and be able to Do (KUD) for units of study. Explanations are clearly stated, and student questions are followed up to ensure student understanding.

12) “Beginning Teaching Level Rubric,” School E, provided August 15, 2019; “Experienced Teaching Rubric,” School E, provided August 15, 2019; “Faculty Leader Rubric,” School E, provided August 15, 2019.

**Criteria One: Demonstrates Mastery of Subject Matter**

Unacceptable

Area for Growth

**Area of Accomplishment**

Next Level

There is evidence of strong daily, weekly, and unit planning with continuity across units focusing on key concepts and KUDs. Faculty actively builds on prerequisite knowledge and relationships to other disciplines during instruction. Faculty displays extensive content knowledge with evidence of continuing pursuit of such knowledge. The faculty models enthusiasm for content area and provides relevant experiences to excite students about learning.

## To Encourage Faculty Growth, Ask Faculty to Set Annual Performance Goals

At **School A**, **School B**, **School C**, **School E**, and **School F**<sup>13</sup>, faculty set one to three annual improvement goals. At School B, administrators ask faculty to pick goals that align with school priorities for the year. For example, if administrators want faculty to implement project-based learning, they ask faculty to set an annual goal related to developing project-based curricula in their classes. This ensures that faculty dedicate time and professional development to tasks that align with the values of the school. Administrators assess faculty progress on their annual goals at mid- and end-of-year evaluations.

At School E and School A, faculty set goals that align with their areas of weakness according to the school's evaluation matrix and/or weaknesses identified from administrator observations and student feedback. Faculty identify criteria in which they would like to improve and spend the year implementing new strategies.

For example, a faculty who struggles with classroom management could attend a professional development conference on the subject and then implement three conference strategies in the classroom. To encourage consistent improvement, administrators at School E focus the end-of-year evaluation on these goals and update the faculty member's evaluation rubric score based on their progress.

### Consider Annual Goal Performance During Band Transition Evaluations

At **School C**, administrators set annual goals for teachers based on the requirements of the next salary band. At the end of the year, administrators consider salary-band advancement for teachers who make adequate progress on their goals, engage with school life through volunteerism, and demonstrate leadership qualities.

## Band Transitions

## Use Multiple Evaluation Techniques to Determine Faculty Eligibility for Band Transitions

Rather than rely on annual evaluation scores alone to assess faculty performance for band transitions, administrators at profiled schools incorporate additional evaluation techniques such as band-specific teaching and professionalism criteria, long-term projects, and/or dedicated application processes.

13) "Faculty Performance," School F, provided August 27, 2019.

## Overview of Band Transition Requirements at Profiled Schools

| School   | Annual Evaluation Performance | Annual Evaluation Benchmarks | Band-Specific Criteria | Long-Term Project | Required Portfolio | Application Process |
|----------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| School A |                               |                              |                        |                   |                    |                     |
| School B |                               |                              |                        |                   |                    |                     |
| School C |                               |                              |                        |                   |                    |                     |
| School D |                               |                              |                        |                   |                    |                     |
| School E |                               |                              |                        |                   |                    |                     |
| School F |                               |                              |                        |                   |                    |                     |

Though all profiled schools require faculty to perform well on annual evaluations to advance bands, some profiled schools design their annual evaluations rubrics scores to correspond with bands. To demonstrate eligibility for a new band at these schools, faculty must reach certain score benchmarks on evaluation rubrics.

Band-specific criteria can include independent, targeted professional development, leadership requirements, and/or mentorship stipulations. Band-specific criteria also include requirements for professional and instructional excellence.

## Use Annual Evaluation Rubric Benchmarks to Define Eligibility for Band Transitions

At **School B**, **School E**, and **School F**, administrators define eligibility for a new salary band based on benchmarks within the school's annual evaluation rubric. For example, to advance to the *Master* salary band at School F, faculty need to average a rating of four (i.e., *Master*) on all evaluation matrix criteria, while at School E faculty must demonstrate that they meet all criteria in the evaluation rubric associated with the next salary band. At School B, administrators define specific evaluation score benchmarks associated with each of the school's bands. Faculty do not have to achieve that score benchmark in all associated annual evaluation criteria, but instead must meet that standard in most criteria. Administrators place greater emphasis on faculty achieving their annual goals.

## Band Eligibility Benchmarks Based on Annual Evaluations at *School B*<sup>14</sup>

**School B's** annual evaluation rubric ranks faculty as either Strong, Excellent, or Exemplary on multiple "Teacher" and "Faculty Member" criteria. Administrators set standards for each salary band related to average scores on the evaluation rubric. For example, a *Master Teacher* should approach an Excellent rating on most rubric "Teacher" criteria.

*Teachers and Accomplished Teachers* are not expected to place above Strong on the matrix, but rather must demonstrate a commitment to improved teaching practice (i.e., "Focus on Teaching")

| 1. Teacher              | 3. Master Teacher        | 5. Teacher Leader               |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| New to Teaching         | Excellent Teacher        | Exemplary Teacher               |
| New to the School       | Strong Faculty Member    | Excellent Faculty Member        |
| Focus on Teaching       |                          |                                 |
| 2. Accomplished Teacher | 4. Senior Master Teacher | 6. Distinguished Teacher Leader |
| Strong Teacher          | Excellent Teacher        | Exemplary Teacher               |
| Strong Faculty Member   | Excellent Faculty Member | Exemplary Faculty Member        |
| Focus on Teaching       |                          |                                 |

Though other profiled schools take performance on annual evaluations into account when evaluating faculty members for band transitions (i.e., faculty members are expected to perform exceptionally on evaluation to advance bands), they do not use annual evaluation benchmarks to define the additional responsibilities and qualifications of faculty in higher salary bands. Instead, other profiled schools develop separate evaluation criteria that establish band eligibility.

## Consider Developing Salary-Band Criteria Separate from Annual Evaluations to Outline Faculty Career Paths

At **School A**, band criteria are separate from annual evaluation criteria. At **School C**, administrators did not create an annual evaluation rubric. Principals instead conduct annual evaluations based on band criteria.

Administrators at **School A**, **School C**, and **School D** developed specific eligibility criteria for each band to reflect the additional responsibilities expected of faculty in higher bands. Often, these criteria establish leadership, mentorship, and volunteerism expectations in addition to the performance dimensions outlined on annual evaluation matrices. As faculty advance bands, they must meet the criteria of the initial band and the new band. Faculty should also take on new challenges and leadership roles.

At *School C*, *Level I* and *Level II* (i.e., band one and band two) emphasize commitment to the craft of teaching, while *Level III* and *Level IV* emphasize leadership, mentorship, and self-guided professional development. *Level I* faculty must be willing to learn new practices to enhance teaching effectiveness, but *Level II* faculty must be capable of customizing teaching approaches to differentiate instruction based on student need.<sup>15</sup>

Further, *Level III* faculty must contribute to launching new initiatives, but *Level IV* faculty must directly lead school committee work.<sup>16</sup> These band criteria map out an ideal career path for a faculty member at the school. Principals consult classroom observations, sample communications, student feedback, and faculty performance on annual goals to determine if faculty meet the criteria to advance to the new band.

14) "School B, Faculty Evaluation and Growth Process, History, Process, and Protocols," School B, provided August 10, 2019.

15) "School C Compensation Philosophy and Policy," School C, provided August 20, 2019.

16) Ibid.

## Sample Salary Band Eligibility Criteria at *School C*<sup>17</sup>

### **Level I (1-3 Years' Experience)**

- Demonstrates **best practices for the grade level/content area** and has appropriate certification and degree.
- Demonstrates **the highest personal/professional behavior and conduct** including attendance, punctuality and appropriate dress.
- Is **willing to learn** new practices to enhance teaching effectiveness.
- **Develops a rapport** over time with students, members of division/department and the principal.
- Demonstrates a **passion for teaching** grade level/content area.
- Aligns teaching practices with **Mission and Core Values** of the School.
- **Communicates effectively** with all constituents—students, parents, department/division colleagues and principal.
- Performs all teaching and related responsibilities at a **high level**.
- Applies and integrates **technology** wherever appropriate to enhance student learning.
- Fosters a warm and **accessible learning environment** for students.
- Welcomes and **accepts constructive feedback** and applies to teaching practices.

### **Level III (10+ Years' Experience)**

- Builds on the characteristics of *Level II*.
- **Engages students** through various and innovative teaching techniques.
- Emerges as a **faculty leader** who collaborates effectively with others.
- **Launches new initiatives** for the benefit of students and the school's reputation as an excellent educational school.
- Contributes constructive solutions and promotes a **positive culture**.
- Serves as a **mentor/coach** to new faculty members.
- Openly supports the **values** and the **philosophy** of the school.
- Contributes as an **active participant in school committee work**.
- Is a **visible presence** at school events.
- Continues to demonstrate professional growth through taking on appropriate, **self-guided professional development** opportunities along with those provided by the school.

### **Level II (4-5 Years' Experience)**

- Builds upon the characteristics of *Level I*.
- Demonstrates a **commitment to teaching** as a craft and pursues a professional development plan that enhances his/her teaching effectiveness.
- Builds an **effective partnership with parents and students** through proactive and responsive communication.
- Engages in the **life of the school** through attending/volunteering at school-wide events.
- Maintains requirements for appropriate **certification**.
- **Customizes teaching approaches** to students' varying learning needs.

### **Level IV (15+ Years' Experience)**

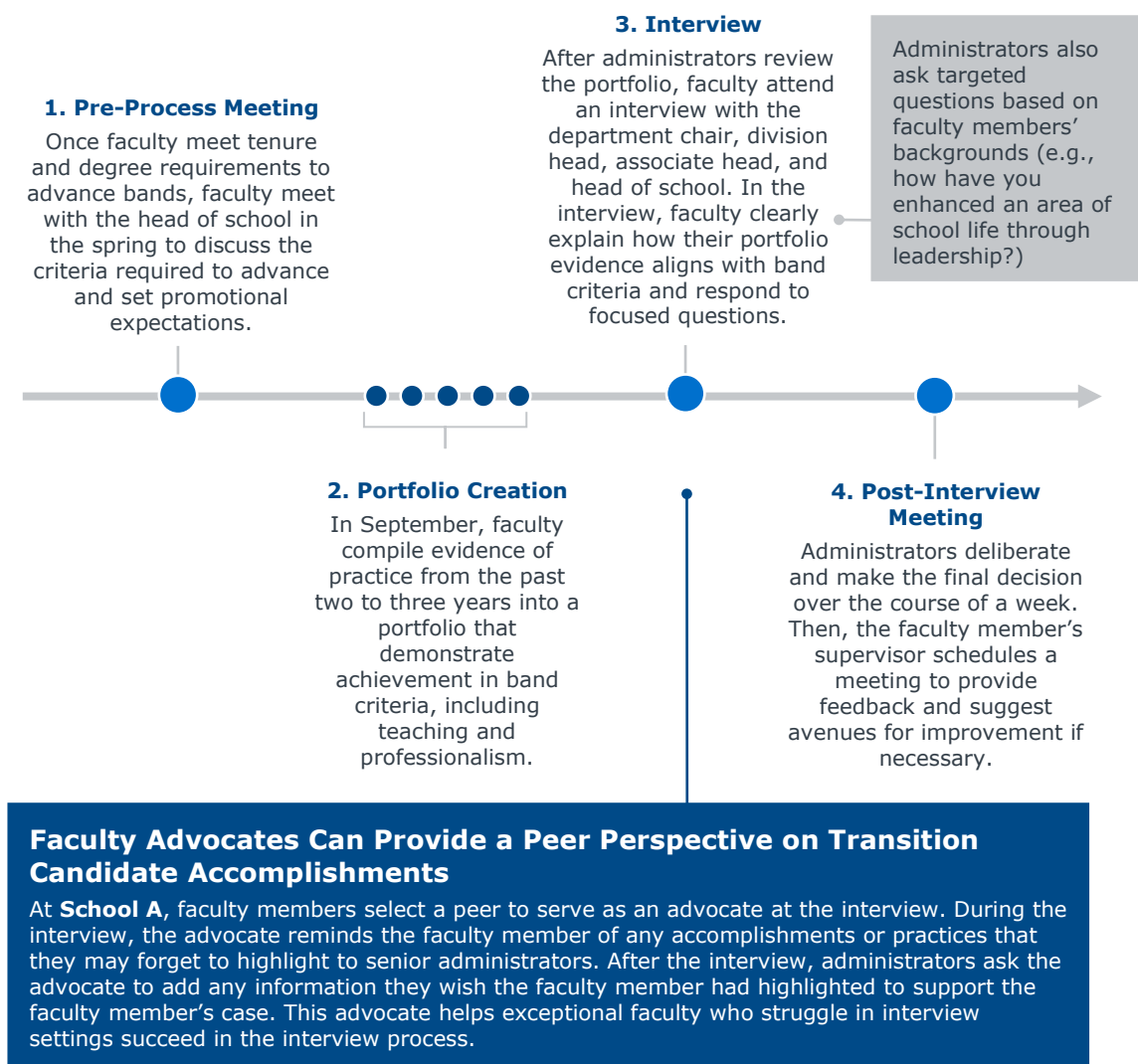
- Builds on the characteristics of *Level III*.
- Viewed as a **teaching role model** and a committed member of the school community by all relevant constituents, especially the principals and the Head.
- Viewed as an **expert in his/her academic field** and may be called upon by school leaders to make presentations to the staff and at external conferences.
- Demonstrates a thoughtful, caring attitude about the welfare of students and their academic achievements; and has a reputation as the "go to" faculty member for **new and innovative instructional practices**.
- Openly supports and promotes the **values and philosophy** of the school.
- Called upon to **lead** school committee work.

17) "School C Compensation Philosophy and Policy," School C, provided August 20, 2019.

## Develop Defined Promotional Processes That Require Faculty to Qualify to Advance Salary Bands

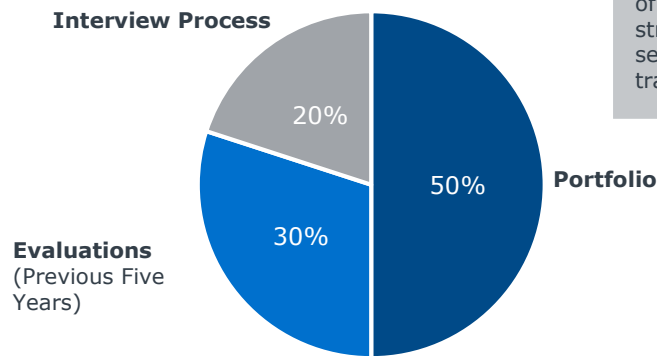
At **School A**, administrators require faculty members to complete an application and interview process if they wish to advance bands. This process both ensures that administrators only promote qualified faculty and prevents faculty unwilling to commit to additional responsibilities from advancing.

### Band Application Process at *School A*



Though the interview allows faculty to provide important context for their portfolio, contacts from School A note that the portfolio is the most important aspect of the application process.

## Weighting System for Band-Transition Application Components at School A



Increased emphasis on past performance and evidence of success helps faculty who struggle in interview settings to succeed in band transitions.

### Ask Faculty to Provide Varied, Long-Term Portfolio Evidence to Demonstrate Consistent Achievement

At **School A** and **School B**, administrators require faculty to compile portfolios of evidence to qualify for salary band transitions. Administrators use portfolios to identify examples of excellence that may not be apparent in classroom observations or staff meetings and consider more objective indicators of teaching excellence (e.g., differentiated assignments, effective classroom transition protocols).

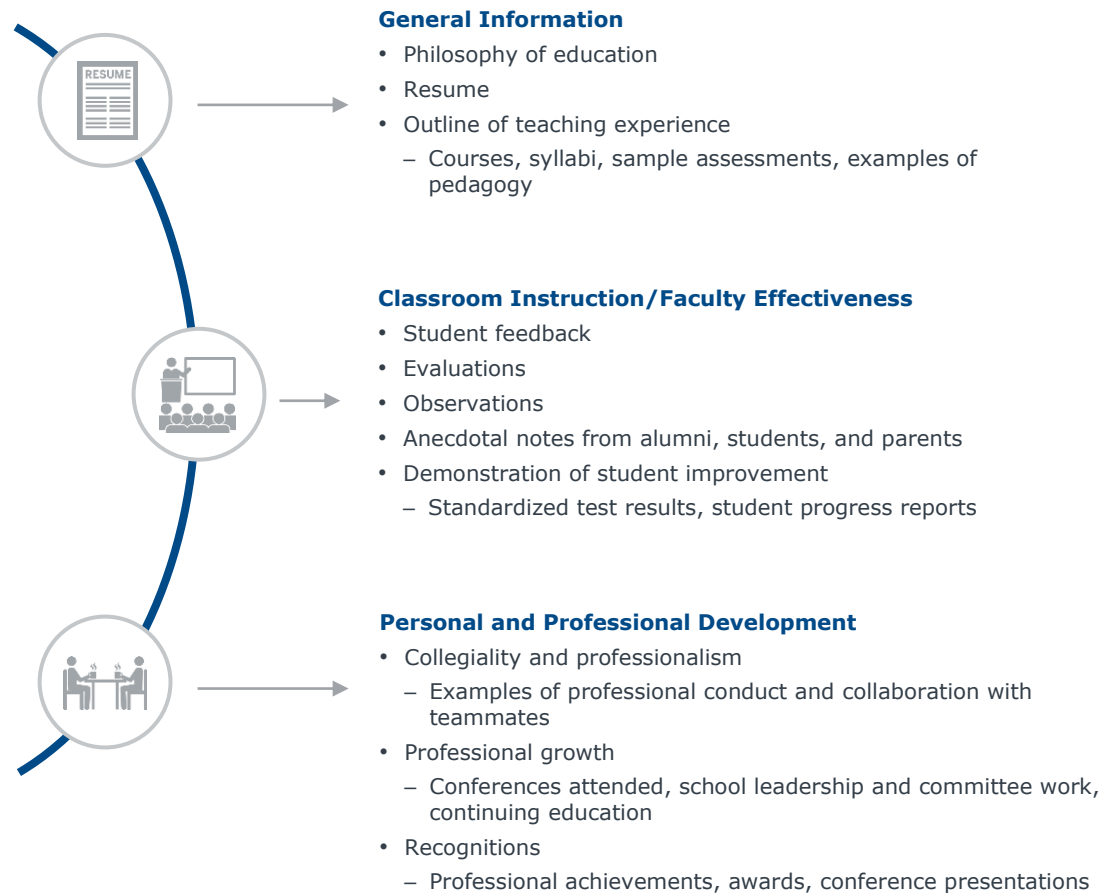
Also, because faculty must update their portfolios between band transitions, the portfolio process encourages them to reflect consistently on their career and teaching practice. At **School C** and **School E**, administrators give faculty the option to either create a portfolio or communicate evidence of practice during supervisor meetings.

At School A, faculty may submit their portfolio in any format that is easily shareable (e.g., Word documents, online blog, Google Docs, flash drive). Administrators ask for a maximum of 10 pages of evidence. The portfolios must include evidence in three categories: General Information, Classroom Instruction/Faculty Effectiveness, and Personal and Professional Development.<sup>18</sup>

Administrators also ask faculty to submit evidence from within the last two to three years, which requires faculty to demonstrate consistent and recent efforts to improve their practice. If a faculty member submits a portfolio full of evidence from four years or more before the interview, administrators have no way of knowing if the faculty member has continued to innovate in recent years.

18) "School A Faculty Professional Growth Plan," School A, provided August 14, 2019.

## Types of Acceptable Portfolio Evidence at *School A*<sup>19</sup>



Contacts at **School B** report some frustrations with Folio. Folio is effective as a repository for information, but it can be difficult to upload evidence. Currently, faculty add links to Google Docs that contain their evidence of practice.

At School B, administrators purchased the software **Folio** to manage faculty professional development. Folio stores all faculty evaluation materials, including faculty goals, observation notes, and evaluation conversation documentation. Administrators also ask faculty to submit evidence of achievement and goal progress to Folio prior to review and promotional conversations, including lesson plans, 360 reviews, videos, and student work.<sup>20</sup> Contacts report that Folio allows department heads to easily analyze faculty progress across multiple years.

## Require Faculty to Complete Long-Term Projects That Demonstrate Commitment to the School

When faculty are ready to advance a salary band at **School B**, they schedule a meeting with their supervisor to establish a promotional goal in addition to their annual evaluation goals. This goal typically takes the form of a long-term project in which faculty improve an element of their classroom practice. For example, a faculty working on assessment and feedback could agree to develop new assessment surveys and exit tickets in partnership with the research department.

19) "School A Faculty Professional Growth Plan," School A, provided August 14, 2019.

20) "School B, Faculty Evaluation and Growth Process, History, Process, and Protocols," School B, provided August 10, 2019.

The supervisor and faculty then collaborate to develop a timeline, standards addressed by the project, and a body of evidence that the faculty will provide to prove success. The faculty documents this goal-based project in a promotional movement plan, checks in with the supervisor across the course of the project, and at the end of the project, presents the results in a formal meeting. This requirement forces faculty members to demonstrate consistent improvement to advance salary bands.

### Sample Promotional Goal for Band Transitions at *School B*

Administrators require faculty to work on the goal-based project for at least 1.5 years before approving a band transition to ensure faculty incorporate their findings into their teaching over the long term.

| Long-Term Promotional Goal: Improve Assessment and Feedback |                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Timeline</b>                                             | 1.5 years                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Standards (from Evaluation and Growth Matrix)</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment: Content and Modalities</li> <li>• Assessment: Feedback</li> </ul>                                                         |
| <b>Body of Evidence</b>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sample student exit tickets</li> <li>• Sample re-designed assessments</li> <li>• Improved student standardized test scores</li> </ul> |

Faculty set goals based on weaknesses identified from evaluations, classroom observations, and student surveys.

#### Ask Department Heads to Determine Acceptable Project Evidence Collaboratively

Faculty at **School B** commented that evidence requirements varied across supervisors for promotional projects. To address this issue, administrators at departments hosted a meeting where they proposed acceptable forms of evidence for all criteria on the school's evaluation matrix. Administrators recorded acceptable evidence in a document and presented final evidence standards to faculty members. Department heads chose to prioritize concrete evidence (e.g., awards, syllabi, conference presentations) over subjective administrator ratings.

At **School F**, administrators require faculty to complete two, 15-hour professional development courses to advance bands. One course focuses on teaching philosophy and the other focuses on specific pedagogical strategies. To advance to the highest band (i.e., *Master Faculty*) at School F, administrators also require faculty to complete both a professional mentorship program and a long-term research project. For the mentorship, faculty meet with a faculty or administrative mentor for 1.5 hours per month over the course of one year to learn advanced teaching skills and information about school functions necessary to assume a leadership role (e.g., school finances, board bylaws and responsibilities). For the research project, faculty write a research paper on a school improvement strategy and develop an implementation plan. Administrators require faculty to implement the strategy to advance. Mentorship and research projects require faculty to not only increase their own knowledge but also contribute to school improvement efforts.

## Evidence of Practice

## Use Multiple, Varied Factors to Measure Faculty Performance Holistically

At most profiled schools, administrators rely on multiple measures of teaching effectiveness to ensure that they capture how faculty members contribute to the school. This multi-factor approach decreases the subjectivity of performance evaluations, as evaluations incorporate quantitative elements such as student performance alongside subjective administrator ratings. Administrators can reference the holistic approach to evaluation evidence to justify and support final evaluation scores and compensation decisions.

These multiple evidential factors inform both annual evaluations and band transition evaluations.

Because student feedback can incorporate gender and age biases<sup>21</sup>, administrators should not rely on student feedback alone, but rather use feedback to complement evidence gleaned from observations and evaluation conversations.

To respond to faculty resistance to the use of student feedback, administrators at **School B** reference research that shows that to learn effectively, students need to feel connected to their faculty. Also, administrators clarify that student feedback complements trends in other evidence, including observations.

### Evidence to Evaluate Faculty Performance at Profiled Schools



Administrators (e.g., division heads, department heads) visit classrooms to assess teaching effectiveness, professionalism, and commitment to school values. At **School C**, principals visit the classroom—either announced or unannounced—several times per year to conduct observations. Principals expect to see growth between initial and final observations.

**Used by:** All profiled schools



Administrators solicit feedback from students and/or parents about teaching effectiveness. At **School A**, administrators ask students in grades 6-12 to fill out formal feedback surveys. In grades K-5, administrators ask parents to fill out surveys. At **School B**, administrators survey students twice per year. At **School C**, principals do not formally survey students but instead solicit anecdotal feedback from students on occasion.

**Used by:** School A, School B, School C, **School D**



Administrators ask faculty to evaluate themselves at the end of each year to identify any discrepancies and ensure that faculty members have the chance to highlight any achievements that supervisors may have missed.

**Used by:** School A, School B



Administrators track completed professional development, committee work, student group/activity leadership, and volunteer work at the school (e.g., chaperoning dances) to assess faculty commitment to the school. At **School C**, faculty self-report professional development to principals.

**Used by:** School B, School C, School D, **School F**



At **School C**, principals review parent communications to ensure faculty conduct themselves professionally. Faculty often seek principal advice when communicating with parents, and parents often reach out to principals with praise or complaints. At **School E**, faculty submit effective communications with parents to principals during end-of-year evaluations.

**Used by:** School C, **School E**



Administrators ask faculty to submit materials associated with evaluation criteria, including planning documents, assessment protocols, syllabi, etc.

**Used by:** School A, School B, School E

21) Joey Sprague, "The Bias in Student Course Evaluations," *Inside Higher Ed*, June 17, 2016, <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2016/06/17/removing-bias-student-evaluations-faculty-members-essay>

Administrators at **School B**, **School D**, and **School E** report that administrators do not weight any one form of evidence over any others when evaluating faculty. Rather, administrators look for trends across all forms of evidence to support ratings of faculty performance. However, because administrators at **School F** consider classroom observations to be more important than other forms of evidence, they elevate classroom observations as the primary factor by which they evaluate faculty members.

## Provide Classroom Observation Templates to Standardize Administrator Evaluations

At **School C**, principals originally relied on classroom observation rubrics and standards developed by researchers, but these rubrics proved too lengthy and complex for faculty and administrators alike. Instead, administrators developed an observation template that provides feedback tied directly to a specific lesson and related to the school's evaluation criteria. Contacts report that this criteria-based system reduces principal preparatory time and facilitates efficient post-observation feedback meetings. Similarly, at **School F**, administrators use the 14 criteria of their evaluation matrix to score faculty during classroom observations.

To further standardize classroom observations, administrators at **School A** and **School B** developed classroom observation templates.<sup>22</sup> Templates contain the following components:

- **Effectiveness Ratings:** School A's template asks observers to rate faculty in four categories: classroom culture, student engagement, evidence of learning, and lesson development. The template suggests evidence of effectiveness in each of these criteria and highlights specific characteristics that administrators should expect of all faculty.
- **Lesson-Specific Feedback:** School B's template asks administrators to summarize the lesson purpose and provide specific feedback on the faculty member's command of lesson content, transition effectiveness, student engagement, and differentiation. Administrators also write down positive feedback wherever possible.
- **Recommendations of Practice:** At School B, administrators make targeted recommendations for adjustments to specific lessons based on observations.

22) "Class Observation Form," School A, provided August 14, 2019; "Observation Template," School B, provided August 22, 2019.

## 4) Implementation

### Financial Sustainability

### Long-Term Project Requirements Reduce Rate of Band Transitions

After transitioning bands at **School B**, faculty must remain in their new band for at least one year.

The long-term band transition projects (e.g., promotional goal project, professional mentorship program) at **School B** and **School F** improve the financial sustainability of the salary system. The demands of School B's promotional goal-based project ensure that only faculty who are ready to advance bands apply, which improves the financial sustainability of the system. In addition, the 1.5- to two-year promotional goal implementation timeline at School B limits rapid faculty advancement. Similarly, at School F, the total time commitment for both projects and other band requirements imposes a three-year waiting period to advance to *Master Faculty*. This waiting period limits faculty advancement and thus improves the financial sustainability of the system.

**~8%**  
of faculty members (i.e., five out of 65) at **School B** seek promotion each year.

### Include Additional Responsibilities in High-Level Band Criteria to Discourage All Faculty from Seeking Advancement

At **School B**, contacts report that they do not expect most faculty members to attempt to reach the highest salary band (i.e., *Distinguished Teacher Leader*) because faculty must complete extensive work to meet band criteria. In addition, administrators expect faculty members in the final two bands to lead school committees and assist with school initiatives without any additional recognition (e.g., a stipend). These additional responsibilities discourage faculty who do not wish to commit additional time to leadership responsibilities from pursuing the final bands.

### Examples of Additional Band Responsibilities at Profiled Schools<sup>23</sup>

At **School D**, administrators not only ask *Faculty Leaders* to lead committees but also ask them to demonstrate leadership by contributing to advancement efforts.



#### Leadership

At **School A**, *Veteran* faculty must "display leadership in multiple school areas." At **School C**, *Level IV* faculty (i.e., faculty in the highest band) must lead committees, and *Level III* faculty must launch new initiatives.



#### Pedagogical Support

At **School D**, *Faculty Leaders* must complete faculty observations and interview, train, and observe new faculty. At **School C**, principals may ask *Level IV* faculty members to deliver presentations to other staff.



#### Professional Development

At **School F**, administrators require faculty in the highest band to seek opportunities for professional growth and also share knowledge with colleagues.



#### Community Engagement

To receive an exemplary rating as a communicator at **School B**, faculty members must "advocate enthusiastically for the school in the broader community."

23) "School A Faculty Professional Growth Plan," School A, provided August 14, 2019; "School B, Faculty Evaluation and Growth Process, History, Process, and Protocols," School B, provided August 10, 2019; "Faculty Performance," School F, provided August 27, 2019; "Compensation Philosophy and Policy," School C, provided August 20, 2019.

## Add Years of Experience and Advanced Degree Criteria to Bands to Limit Faculty Advancement

Administrators at **School A** and **School D** include years of experience criteria to salary bands, which help to limit band transitions that might strain the school's budget. For example, faculty members at School A must possess at least 10 years of experience to advance from *Instructor* to *Mentor* and at least 21 years of experience to advance from *Mentor* to *Veteran* (i.e., the highest-ranking band).

Administrators at both schools also require advanced degrees to reach higher bands, which limits band transitions. Faculty at School D must possess a master's degree and/or a comparable teaching endorsement to advance from the *Experienced Teacher* band to the *Master Teacher* band. At School A, administrators offer some financial support to faculty who pursue continuing education to ensure all faculty can advance bands if they desire.



### To Recognize the Best Faculty, Initially Consider Exceptions to Advanced Degree Requirements

At **School A**, administrators noticed that a few of the school's best faculty—who clearly meet requirements for the highest salary band—remained in lower bands because they lacked an advanced degree. Rather than require late-career faculty to seek an advanced degree, administrators allow these faculty to enter the highest-ranked band despite their lack of advanced degrees. Contacts report this approach appropriately recognizes these faculty and preserves faculty morale. That said, as faculty grow used to compensation system requirements, administrators plan to adhere strictly to band criteria, including degree requirements.

## To Reduce Annual, Performance-Based Raises, Limit Principals to a Strict Salary Pool

Administrators at **School C** clarify in principal meetings that most faculty should receive a standard increase (i.e., an increase of between two and three percent).

At **School C**, senior administrators provide principals with a specific salary pool based on the school's budget each year. When principals determine performance-based raises for faculty members, the total cannot exceed this pool. Contacts report that this encourages principals to more clearly delineate between the top performers and those faculty who meet expectations. Principals must reserve exceptional annual raises for only those faculty who truly demonstrate outstanding performance relative to others.

## Example Salary Pool Limitation Process at *School C*

**1** **20** faculty in pool, each earning **\$50,000** for a total of **\$1,000,000**

**2** Senior administrators set new salary pool based on school budget at **\$1,027,000**

**2** Principal examines faculty evaluation ratings and identifies ten faculty who stand above the rest in terms of performance that year

### Initial Increase

|                                                                                       |                                                                            |                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>4</b> <b>10</b> faculty receive outstanding rating, earn <b>4 percent increase</b> | <b>10</b> faculty earn satisfactory rating, earn <b>2 percent increase</b> | Total Salary:<br><b>\$1,030,000</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|

**5** Principal reexamines evaluations, notes that in the initial pool of outstanding faculty, five faculty members outperformed the other five

### Final Increase

|                                                                                      |                                                                            |                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>6</b> <b>5</b> faculty receive outstanding rating, earn <b>4 percent increase</b> | <b>15</b> faculty earn satisfactory rating, earn <b>2 percent increase</b> | Total Salary:<br><b>\$1,025,000</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|

### Use Current Faculty Evaluations to Predict Annual Increases and Band Transitions

Contacts at **School A** and **School E** report that structured performance-based compensation systems allow administrators to predict future salary increases. For example, administrators at School A flag years where large numbers of high-performing faculty become eligible for a new band to ensure the school can accommodate the change. At School E, administrators use anticipated faculty salary needs to set tuition for the upcoming year.

## Engaging Faculty

### Recognize Strong Faculty Who Do Not Seek Band Advances at Staff Meetings and Assemblies

Some exceptional faculty may choose to not advance bands due to family commitments, external activities, or a lack of desire for leadership. To recognize and engage these faculty, administrators at **School C** and **School E** publicly recognize faculty achievements at school assemblies and monthly staff meetings.

Contacts report that these recognitions not only reward strong faculty, but also inspire other faculty to complete similar actions in their classrooms. For example, if administrators recognize one faculty member at a staff meeting for their exceptional feedback system, this praise may inspire another faculty member to implement the system in their classroom.

At School E, administrators host an annual ceremony to honor faculty who reach tenure milestones (e.g., faculty who have spent 15 years at the school). This tenure-

based ceremony engages experienced faculty regardless of their salary band. Administrators will also thank these long-tenured faculty publicly at community events.



### **Provide Increased Access to Leadership and Professional Development to Reward Exceptional Faculty, Regardless of Salary Band**

At **School C**, **School D**, and **School F**, administrators offer high-achieving faculty increased access to professional development and/or leadership opportunities. For example, administrators at School F reward faculty with department chair roles, speaking opportunities at parent events, and professional growth opportunities such as invites to attend administrative meetings. Though faculty who seek leadership opportunities will typically advance bands, leadership access is not limited to teachers in high bands.

## **Consider Developing Stipend-Based Leadership Roles to Engage Faculty in the Highest Salary Band**

Contacts at **School A** report that once faculty reach the highest possible (i.e., *Veteran*) salary band, they no longer have a strong incentive to pursue continued growth and excellence as they complete their careers. To ensure that veteran faculty remain engaged, administrators developed an additional *Master Teacher* designation that is separate from the salary band structure. Faculty may apply—through the standard, band-transition application process—to receive this designation after two years in the *Veteran* band. Selected faculty serve a two-year term as *Master Teachers*.

### **Master Teacher Designation Components at School A**



#### **Master Teacher**

##### **Compensation**

- \$5,000 two-year stipend (i.e., \$5,000 each year for two years). Stipend salary increases are more affordable for the school than permanent increases associated with previous band transitions.
- If possible, removal of study hall or course section to free up additional time.
- Access to professional development that exceeds typical cost limitations (e.g., conferences).

##### **Requirements**

- *Master Teachers* must provide instructional coaching services to other faculty. This requirement allows administrators to expand teaching support without adding additional, expensive staff.
- At the end of the two-year term, *Master Teachers* must complete a final report that summarizes the findings of their observations and feedback.

## Clearly Explain All Components of the Compensation System Except the Salaries and Performance-Ratings of Individual Faculty

Contacts at **School A** report that a main benefit of performance-based compensation systems is that they help faculty members better understand potential career paths and performance expectations. Transparency ensures that this benefit occurs.

Contacts at **School A**, **School C**, **School D**, and **School E** report that their schools strive for full transparency by publishing documents that clearly outline evaluation criteria, band transition processes, and salary ranges associated with bands. However, for privacy reasons, administrators at these schools do not publicize individual faculty salaries or performance evaluations.

Administrators at profiled schools use multiple techniques to educate faculty members about the compensation system.

### Transparency

#### Strategies to Communicate Salary System Components at Profiled Schools

At **School A**, administrators also present on the compensation system at large-group faculty meetings. Administrators do not circulate documents with exact compensation amounts at these meetings.



##### One-On-One Meetings

Rather than circulate documents that reveal the exact compensation levels associated with the compensation system, the head of school at **School A** schedules individual meetings with all faculty members in the spring to walk them through the salary scale, including the salaries associated with both different bands and different levels. The head of school also allows faculty members to schedule additional meetings to discuss where they can expect to be in five to ten years based on current performance.



##### Internal Website

At **School D**, administrators publish all components of the salary system on a secure internal website, which allows faculty to review the system and plan for band transitions at any time.



##### Faculty Development Programs

At **School E**, supervisors work with new faculty over the course of six months to introduce them to the evaluation system criteria. In February, administrators host a meeting during which administrators teach faculty how their evaluation scores will translate to their next year's salary. Administrators also use this meeting to announce the exact compensation increases all faculty can expect to receive based on the number of points they earn through the evaluation process.

## 5) Impact

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### Recruitment and Morale

#### At Most Profiled Schools, Performance-Based Compensation Led to Improved Faculty Recruitment

Though contacts at profiled schools acknowledge that multiple factors influence faculty recruitment, all contacts except those at **School C** report that performance-based compensation improves faculty recruitment. Contacts at School C report no impact on recruitment—positive or negative—from the system. Though contacts at profiled schools did not conduct studies to assess the specific recruitment impact of compensation systems, contacts at **School B** report that new faculty often express enthusiasm about the system to the head of school.

#### Recruitment Benefits of Performance-Based Compensation Systems



##### Facilitates Career Development and Salary Conversations

Administrators at **School A** use the school's salary scale to show potential new hires their exact starting salary and their path to increased compensation, responsibility, and leadership. These early career development conversations demonstrate the school's commitment to faculty development.



##### Elevates Compensation as School Priority

Administrators at **School B** reference the performance-based compensation system to show potential hires that the school is committed to equitable compensation and consistent salary increases.



##### Eliminates Subjectivity and Mystery of Compensation

Contacts at School B report that new faculty are drawn to the performance-based system because it establishes clear and transparent evaluation and compensation criteria, which allows faculty to predict their future earnings.



##### Allows Faculty More Agency with Compensation

Contacts at **School F** report that administrators leverage the compensation system to communicate the agency that faculty members possess to increase their salary. Rather than waiting to accumulate years of experience, faculty can advance rapidly in earnings and responsibility.

#### Performance-Based Compensation Systems Improve Faculty Morale by Clarifying Evaluation Targets

Contacts at **School A** and **School F** report that their performance-based compensation systems help faculty to understand and predict evaluation results, future compensation, and access to leadership roles. Contacts at School A emphasize that this predictability helps retain experienced faculty (i.e., faculty with five to ten years of experience and a master's degree) as they decide whether to spend the remainder of their career at the school.

Administrators can use the system and past faculty evaluations to precisely map out what the future could look like at School A, including increased compensation, increased involvement in school life and instructional coaching, and committee leadership.

At **School C**, contacts report that performance-based compensation systems facilitate effective performance review conversations. With a clear understanding of performance criteria, principals at the school lead more direct meetings that tie performance and growth recommendations to specific evaluation criteria. Contacts report that these direct evaluation meetings improve faculty morale.

To address morale concerns, administrators at **School B** surveyed all faculty to identify pain points in the new system. Based on faculty feedback, administrators revisited evaluation criteria and standardized requirements for performance review evidence.

### To Avoid Morale Disruptions, Implement Performance-Based Compensation Gradually

At **School B**, administrators used a combination of administrator evaluations and faculty self-evaluations to initially place faculty in salary bands. Because the school implemented the system quickly, administrators were unable to address the concerns of faculty whose self-evaluations did not align with administrator evaluations. These faculty then strongly resisted the system, which reduced faculty morale. Contacts recommend that administrators implement new compensation systems over the course of two years to allow administrators time to schedule placement meetings with all faculty members and address individual concerns.

## Student Learning

### Performance-Based Compensation Systems Encourage Faculty to Align Actions with School Values

Contacts at most profiled schools report that performance-based compensation systems encourage faculty growth and focused professional development. Administrators at **School E** reference compensation system evaluation criteria to communicate the expectation that faculty improve their performance every year. The prospect of increased compensation encourages faculty to identify new pedagogical and communication strategies that improve student learning and classroom management in alignment with evaluation criteria.

### Ways Performance-Based Compensation Promotes Faculty Alignment with School Values at *School E*



#### Improves Teaching Practices

Contacts report that faculty are more likely to implement assessment practices recommended by the school.



#### Encourages Effective Development

Contacts note that faculty are more likely to complete professional development focused on growth areas outlined during the evaluation process.



#### Prioritizes Time and Funding

Contacts suggest that faculty are more likely to dedicate their time and funding to mission-centric tasks and goals.

Contacts at **School A** and **School F** report that performance-based compensation particularly helps to identify and motivate faculty who fall in the middle 50 percent in terms of performance. Performance-based compensation systems move these faculty

out of a complacent mindset and encourage them to more strongly consider their end of year feedback, student survey results, and classroom observations.

At School F, administrators use evaluation criteria to identify specific growth targets for faculty ranked as neither low- nor high-performing. If faculty are unwilling to pursue these targets, administrators suggest that these faculty consider employment elsewhere. Contacts report that the school's compensation system and associated evaluation criteria improve administrators' ability to both identify mid-tier faculty and incentivize those faculty to improve.



### **Performance-Based Compensation Systems Improve Teaching Practice, Which Benefits Student Achievement**

At **School E**, contacts report that because performance-based compensation systems incorporate criteria for student engagement, assessment quality, and feedback strategies, they incentivize faculty to improve teaching practices. Contacts report that this incentive improves student performance.

## 6) Research Methodology

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### Project Challenge

Leadership at a member school approached the Forum with the following questions.

1. How do contact independent schools structure their performance-based compensation systems?
2. On what criteria do contact schools evaluate faculty performance for performance-based compensation systems?
3. What factors do contact schools consider when determining whether a faculty member receives a salary increase?
4. How—if at all—do contact schools identify and reward their strongest faculty?
5. What evidence of practice—if any—do contact schools ask faculty to provide during evaluations/when determining future compensation?
6. To what extent do contact schools prioritize each aspect of the performance review process when deciding future faculty compensation?
7. If contact schools maintain banded faculty compensation systems, how do administrators determine which faculty move from band to band?
8. What aspects of the performance-based compensation process do contact schools make transparent to faculty?
9. Have contact schools noticed any positive impact of performance-based compensation systems on faculty morale and culture?
10. Have contact schools identified any benefits that they attribute to performance-based compensation systems?
11. How do contact schools ensure the financial solvency of their performance-based compensation system?

### Project Sources

The Forum consulted the following sources for this report:

- EAB's internal and online research libraries ([eab.com](http://eab.com))
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (<http://nces.ed.gov/>)
- Private School Review ([privateschoolreview.com](http://privateschoolreview.com))
- School A. "School A Faculty Evaluation." Provided August 14, 2019.
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- School A. "Class Observation Form." Provided August 14, 2019.
- School A. "Contract Banding Scale Chart." Provided August 14, 2019.
- School B. "School B, Faculty Evaluation and Growth Process, History, Process, and Protocols." Provided August 10, 2019.
- School B. "Observation Template." Provided August 22, 2019.
- School C. "School C Compensation Philosophy and Policy." Provided August 20, 2019.
- "Independent Schools' Next Top Model: Changing Perspectives on Faculty Compensation." *Net Assets*. January 6, 2017.  
<https://www.netassets.org/blogs/net-assets/2017/01/04/independent-schools-next-top-model>

- Littleford, John. "Faculty Salary Systems: Rapid and Systematic Changes in Schools Worldwide." *Littleford & Associates*. <https://www.jlittleford.com/faculty-salary-systems-rapid-and-systematic-changes-in-schools-worldwide/>
- School E. "Beginning Teaching Level Rubric." Provided August 15, 2019.
- School E. "Experienced Teaching Rubric." Provided August 15, 2019.
- School E. "Faculty Leader Rubric." Provided August 15, 2019.
- Sprague, Joey. "The Bias in Student Course Evaluations." *Inside Higher Ed*. June 17, 2016. <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2016/06/17/removing-bias-student-evaluations-faculty-members-essay>
- School F. "Faculty Performance." Provided August 27, 2019.

## Research Parameters

The Forum interviewed administrators at independent schools that recently implemented banded, performance-based compensation systems.

### A Guide to Schools Profiled in this Report

| School   | Location     | Approximate Enrollment |
|----------|--------------|------------------------|
| School A | South        | 500                    |
| School B | Pacific West | 500                    |
| School C | Northeast    | 500                    |
| School D | South        | 2,000                  |
| School E | Pacific West | 500                    |
| School F | Pacific West | 1,000                  |