

Memo

To: David Gibson, Montana University System
From: Merle Farrier, Don Robson
CC: Paul Rowland, Dean, School of Education
Date: June 21, 2005
Re: Teacher Compensation Study

Notice of Interest:

This memo is an expression of our interest (Farrier/Robson) in conducting the above referenced study for the Quality Schools Interim Committee of the State Legislature. As you will no doubt be aware, we are currently involved in conducting the needs assessment and cost analysis study for the Interim Committee and have discussed with them the need for this additional information. Further, it will be necessary to incorporate the data from the compensation study into our overall conclusions and recommendations with the committee. Finally, it may be possible to collect some or all of the data at the same time as we collect other data for the larger study. As we are already working with the staff of the Interim Committee, the support relationships have already been built.

Estimate of Costs:

It is our estimate that data collection and analysis can be done within the time frame already established for the primary study and that the resultant additional "man-hours/days" can be done at a total costs of \$20,000. This cost will include a stipend for Dr.s Robson and Farrier as well as stipends for any UM graduate students or other consultants needed to assist in completion of the study. Modest operating costs include travel, student hourly pay, and miscellaneous costs for mailing, printing, etc.

Explanation of the Work to be Conducted:

A comprehensive professional compensation study must include an analysis of salaries and benefits as well as other elements of compensation for which districts are obligated. Data to be collected would include the teachers' salary schedule (steps and lanes) along with identification of the number of individuals currently at each level for school districts in the state. All other professionals employed by the district (administrators, counselors, instructional support) would also be identified along with the compensation program in force for those categories of employees. In addition, we would hope to collect individual data from teachers and from students preparing to become teachers. Finally, we would propose to collect data from teachers who have left the State (including why they left and what they are doing presently.) Based upon various sets of assumptions, compensation costs would be analyzed in relation to significant variables of interest to the state (i.e., average costs, geographic distribution, socio-economic factors, etc. Similarly, comparisons of Montana's compensation structure will be compared to similarly situated districts and states. Finally, the data from this study would be incorporated into the Interim Committee's more general work

with regard to Montana's system of school finance. Consequently, we can provide preliminary information from an administrative perspective within the established time frame, but the final report on the salary study would more likely have to have an Oct 30 due date in order to assure information from teachers who may not be available during the summer months.

Qualifications of Offerers:

Dr. Merle Farrier, Ed.D. is a member of the faculty in the Department of Educational Leadership & Counseling at The University of Montana. He has taught school finance, statistical methods, and research design there for the past six years. Prior to that time, he was a school superintendent, school psychologist, and classroom teacher in small, rural schools on a Montana's Indian reservation. He has presented statewide, regionally and nationally on Montana's school finance process. Currently, he is co-director (with R.C. Wood) of the consultant team studying Montana's education cost structure for the interim legislative committee.

Dr. Don Robson, Ph.D. is a professor of Educational Leadership and Counseling at The University of Montana where he teaches courses in research design, K-12 leadership and Higher Education leadership. His background includes service as a classroom teacher, special education teacher, director of special education, high school principal, faculty member in higher education (Purdue, Montana State, The University of Montana), Director of the Bureau of Educational Research at Montana State University, department head at Montana State University, Dean of Education at UM and Associate Provost at UM. Currently he is serving on the study team (R.C.Wood & Associates) conducting the school funding study for the Interim Legislative Committee.

The UM team would also make use of research assistants in the form of doctoral student help with data entry and analysis as well as other consultant assistance where required.