

## **AFTER ACT 10: A WISCONSIN DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR'S ACCOUNT OF TEACHER COMPENSATION**

By Margaret (Peggy) Frances Larson

The passage of Wisconsin Act 10 in 2011 ended an era. In 1959, the State of Wisconsin was the first to allow local government workers the ability to organize, which allowed employees to negotiate with employers for wages, hours, and conditions. In 1972, the Wisconsin Education Association Council formed. The group became a powerful and influential organization. As power grew, so did teacher salaries and benefits. Politicians became increasingly concerned with the tax impact these benefits caused (Umhoefer, 2016). Several governors took office and attempted to limit collective bargaining, but not until Governor Scott Walker did it go so far as to eliminate collective bargaining.

In 2011, Governor Scott Walker passed the Wisconsin Act 10. This law, recognized as the Budget Repair Bill, was an effort to improve the state's fiscal problems. However, a portion of these efforts entailed limiting state aid to local governments, which resulted in a \$792 billion tax cut to state school districts (Szafir, Flanders, & Hudson, 2016). To compensate for the difference, Governor Walker provided school districts with an alternative means, or tools as he described them, of controlling costs. These alternative means allowed district administrators to change existing policies surrounding teacher compensation, hiring, firing, and best practices without the approval of the teachers' unions.

The purpose of this study was to examine how one district administrator managed teacher compensation since the implementation of the Wisconsin Act 10 in 2011. This study focused on the self-reflection and personal analysis of the author, the district administrator of a school district in Wisconsin, and her personal experiences surrounding policy changes to teacher compensation following the passing of Wisconsin Act 10. Few studies have considered how teacher compensation entails involvement of the district administrators, the associated challenges these professionals must face, and how such challenges are resolved.

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by

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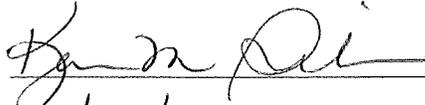
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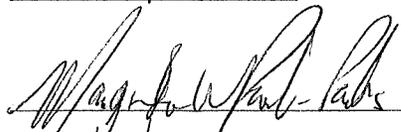
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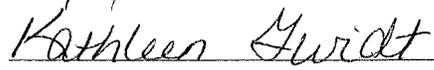
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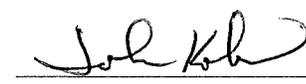
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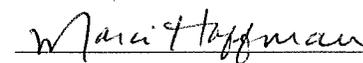
  
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To my husband, Rob, whose constant encouragement, unwavering support, and patience provided me with the willpower to continue my journey. Your confidence in me never faltered. Thanks for making my life complete.

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## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction to Study**

Teacher compensation is a much-discussed issue among educational policymakers worldwide. Interestingly, the majority of studies that explored teacher compensation focused on its possible relationship with student performance (Goodman & Turner, 2013). For example, Fryer, Levitt, List, and Sadoff (2012) found that teacher compensation does not affect the academic performance of students. Aside from the impact on students, few studies explore how teacher compensation impacts other stakeholders. Moreover, few studies consider the district administrations' perceptions related to teacher compensation. Specifically related to the context of this study, there is no information considering how district administrators perceive teacher compensation following the implementation of the 2011 Wisconsin Act 10.

#### **Overview**

The passage of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) ended an era. In 1959, the State of Wisconsin was the first to allow local government workers the ability to organize, which allowed employees the ability to negotiate with employers for wages, hours, and conditions. Umhoefer (2016) noted that teachers did not seek this ability, but were included in the 1959 legislation. In 1972, the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) formed, which became a powerful and influential organization. As WEAC power grew, so did teacher salaries and benefits. In 1985, the average Wisconsin

teacher's salary was 6% over the national average. By 1990, per pupil spending in Wisconsin, which mostly included teachers' salaries and benefits, rose to 12th nationally. Teacher benefits were 50% over the national average. Politicians became increasingly concerned with the tax impact these benefits caused (Umhoefer, 2016).

In 1993, Governor Tommy Thompson put new limits on collective bargaining (Umhoefer, 2016). The law capped the revenue school districts could raise by property taxes. This, in turn, helped to control school districts' costs, which mainly encompassed salary and benefits. Teachers' salaries became smaller, but still tied to years of service and generally considered automatic, regardless of the teacher's performance (Umhoefer, 2016). Additionally, many teachers did not contribute financially to their insurance and many teachers retired in their 50s with paid health insurance until the age of 65 years.

James Doyle was elected Governor of Wisconsin in 2003. Governor Doyle inherited a budget deficit of \$3.2 billion from Governor Scott McCallum, the former lieutenant governor. Governor McCallum had assumed the office of governor in 2001 after Tommy Thompson left to become Secretary of Health and Human Services in the Bush administration. Governor Doyle attempted to fix the state's fiscal problems by increasing taxes using segregated funds and using federal stimulus dollars to fill in the deficits (Wigderson, 2016). Eventually, the private sector revolted, and in 2010, Governor Walker was elected and responded.

In 2011, Governor Scott Walker passed Wisconsin Act 10. This law, recognized as the Budget Repair Bill, was an effort to improve the state's fiscal problems. However, a portion of these efforts entailed limiting state aid to local governments, which resulted

in a \$792 billion tax cut to state school districts (Szafir, Flanders, & Hudson, 2016). To compensate for the difference, Governor Walker provided school districts an alternative means of controlling costs through what he called tools. These alternative means allowed district administrators to change existing policies surrounding teacher compensation, hiring, firing, and best practices without the approval of the teachers' unions.

### **Governor Walker's Impact**

In January 2011, Governor Scott Walker was sworn into office, inheriting a \$3.6 billion state budget deficit. Governor Walker introduced Wisconsin Act 10 in February 2011. Wisconsin Act 10 drew the attention of many across the State of Wisconsin. The attention was not all positive. Protesters gathered at the state capitol in Madison, democratic state senators began leaving Wisconsin in attempts to delay the vote on the bill, and recall elections were in the local and national news reports (Szafir et al., 2016). Wisconsin Act 10 was Governor Walker's attempt to solve the budget crisis. Wisconsin Act 10 limited state aid to local government, which included a \$792 billion tax cut to statewide school districts (Szafir et al., 2016). In exchange for this lack of funding, Governor Walker granted state school districts an alternative means of controlling costs. However, these controls limited the ability of the public sector unions to collectively bargain with their employers and granted exclusive control concerning policy changes to the district administrators, with little influence from the teachers' unions.

A study by the MacIver Institute (2016) determined that the Wisconsin Act 10 allowed statewide taxpayers to save \$5.24 billion; \$3.36 billion of this was from the

state's decision to require "state employees to contribute to their retirement" (p. 1). Moreover, local governments saved an additional \$404.8 million by utilizing feasible options, like exposing employees' health insurance to competitive bidding (MacIver Institute, 2016). While the fiscal successes resulting from Wisconsin Act 10 merited much applause, the policies heavily affected state teachers' compensation. With prior restraints lifted, district administrators of Wisconsin's school districts were allowed to change existing policies surrounding compensation, hiring, firing, and, in general, best teaching practices without approval from the teachers' unions.

Governor Walker said Wisconsin Act 10 freed up public school leaders to "put the best and the brightest in our classrooms" (Umhoefer & Hauer, 2016, para. 12). Umhoefer and Hauer (2016) examined spending and teacher data in Wisconsin's 424 school districts. The authors compared past collective bargaining agreements with new employee handbooks, interviewed educators in 25 districts across the state, and conducted a survey of school superintendents regarding Wisconsin Act 10. Umhoefer and Hauer found that

- 75% of the districts lost teachers due to another district offering a better salary or benefits, while the other 25% reported little change;
- Teachers who were not performing to a district's expectation were more easily removed; and
- 40% of the districts reported they were moving to performance-based pay tying compensation to performance.

Umhoefer and Hauer's findings suggested some districts were able to recruit *the best and the brightest* and pay them higher wages than they previously received, but what about the remaining districts.

These findings have changed the dynamic of a once stable district. Districts now have a revolving door with teachers coming in and out. Teacher vacancies are a year-round dilemma, with fewer individuals entering the profession. Administrators are weeding out the underachievers and slowly moving staff to a performance-based compensation model versus a seniority based system.

### **Local Example**

The implementation of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) was the year the author of this study began serving as district administrator of a school district in Wisconsin. This research, an autoethnographic study, presents the author's direct experiences associated with the role of district administrator following the passing of the Wisconsin Act 10.

This district had been in a 2-year cycle of asking the community to support the school budget. Revenue limits imposed by Governor Thompson did not allow the district to maintain operations and staffing at their current level. Frequently, the district had to ask taxpayers for permission to spend beyond the revenue limit.

With the implementation of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011), the district could make decisions that resulted in property tax relief for taxpayers, which meant no longer having to go to referendum. Employees began contributing 50% toward their State of Wisconsin retirement benefits, which resulted in a \$462,725 one-time savings to the district. The

Board of Education changed the post-employment benefit offered to retirees, replacing the health insurance retirement benefit with a 403(b) contribution retirement benefit. This 403(b) allowed the district to plan for a defined expense rather than an unknown future cost tied to health insurance. Salary increases had been minimal. In 2011-2012, teachers received a 1.2% stipend (not added to the base salary); in 2012-2013, there was a 1% increase; in 2013-2014, teachers received another 1% increase; and in 2014-2015, teachers earned a 1.46% increase. In 2015-2016, the district implemented a new compensation model, basing increases on the work of the teacher, which could result in over a 10% increase over a 3-year cycle. The district made a health insurance change and a plan design change, which resulted in \$777,500 savings during the initial year. Since then, the district has continued to make plan design changes to keep premium increases at a reasonable rate. Plan design changes include higher deductibles, higher co-pays, and implementation of co-insurance.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to examine how one district administrator managed teacher compensation since the implementation of Wisconsin Act 10 in 2011. This autoethnographic study of the author, a district administrator, examined the following questions pertaining to teacher compensation:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): How does one district administrator use the flexibility and freedom Wisconsin Act 10 provided to improve the working conditions of teachers?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): To what extent have changes in compensation impacted the personal and professional teaching culture of the district?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): How has the district administrator responded to the changes in the personal and professional teaching culture of the district?

This study focused on the author's self-reflection, personal analysis, and personal experiences surrounding policy changes to teacher compensation following the passing of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011). The author is the administrator of a school district in Wisconsin. Few studies have considered how teacher compensation entails involvement of the district administrators, the associated challenges these professionals must face, and how such challenges were resolved. This study has the potential to provide an understanding into how district administrators in other districts could handle the issue of teacher compensation, along with how district administrators nationwide grapple with similar issues that affect their educational institutions.

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

One assumption is that district administrators thoroughly understand the requirements of their position and are fully qualified for such position. This research assumed the author was depicting an accurate account of her experience as a district administrator following the implementation of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011). Another assumption is that the researcher does not maintain a bias concerning the law, government personnel, or the institution where she was employed. The researcher was expected to report her account in an honest manner void of bias or intentions to influence

public opinion concerning the implication of Wisconsin Act 10, the school district, or any other surrounding circumstances. This study functions solely as an unbiased and credible information resource.

This research was limited in scope to the viewpoints and experiences of one district administrator. This research was autobiographical in nature and limited to the observations, interpretations, and encounters with colleagues in an educational setting. In addition, due to the relatively new research regarding the impact of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011), this research cites newspaper articles, commentary, and news clips that have not yet been subject to peer review. Some of the references have not been reviewed by experts in the field, but rather by general editors and reporters. Therefore, information provided from these sources was often written based on observations and interviews, which had not yet been approved by experts. Moreover, this research was limited in scope to a single school district in the state of Wisconsin.

This study focused on the process of how one district administrator interacted with various stakeholders concerning teacher compensation since the implementation of Wisconsin Act 10 in 2011. To provide an understanding of the topic, the study provides information about the significance of teacher compensation and the role of the state, as well as the role of the teachers' unions. The study focuses exclusively on the State of Wisconsin, as Wisconsin Act 10 solely affected statewide school districts and did not directly affect nationwide schools. The information presented in this study was derived from the perspective and experiences of the author and does not entail the perspectives of additional district administrators or associated stakeholders.

## **Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this research, the following definitions apply.

*Wisconsin Act 10:* The 2011 Wisconsin Act 10, also known as the Budget Repair Bill, was legislation proposed by Republican Governor Scott Walker and passed by the Wisconsin legislature in 2011 to address a budget deficit.

*Pay-for-performance:* Bonuses paid to teachers based on a formal evaluation tool.

*Autoethnography:* A highly personalized style of writing and research where the researcher uses experiences to describe, explain, and critique a new culture and formulate a greater inference about cultural issues.

*Employee handbook:* A compilation of the policies, procedures, working conditions, and behavioral expectations that guide employees in the school district.

*Journal:* A written diary of events. These accounts are not simply a recap of the events, but involve perceptions that shape and form the culture of one district.

## **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this autoethnographical study was to provide information about the experience of one district administrator of a Wisconsin school district following the implementation of the Wisconsin Act 10 in 2011. This study focused on the self-reflection and personal analysis of the author, the district administrator of a school district in Wisconsin, and her personal experiences surrounding policy changes to teacher compensation following the passing of Wisconsin Act 10. This study may provide greater

insight into the challenges faced by district administrators in the State of Wisconsin following the implementation of Wisconsin Act 10. The study may also provide insight into how district administrators nationwide cope with policy changes and associated challenges due to the passing of laws that impact school budgets.

### **Summary**

Few studies have considered district administrators' involvement in teacher compensation and the associated challenges these professionals must face, which became particularly relevant in the State of Wisconsin following Governor Scott Walker's passing of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011). This research, which is presented as an autoethnographical study, provides direct insight from the author, who serves as the district administrator of a school district in Wisconsin, concerning the experiences surrounding the policy changes that resulted from Wisconsin Act 10.

Through personal analysis and self-reflection, this study provides insight into the challenges faced by the district administrator and how these challenges were resolved. This study has the potential to provide an understanding into how school administrators in other state school districts deal with these issues, along with how district administrators nationwide grapple with similar issues that affect their educational institutions. The primary purpose of this study was to examine how one district administrator interacted with various stakeholders in regards to teacher compensation following the implementation of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011).

## **Chapter II**

### **Literature Review**

The purpose of this study was to examine how one district administrator managed teacher compensation since the implementation of the 2011 Wisconsin Act 10. This chapter examines the educational literature surrounding the history of American education, the evolution of teacher compensation, models of teacher compensation, Wisconsin teachers' salaries, and the impact of change in education. The literature review is organized into three sections. The first section reviews literature surrounding the history of education and the inception of teacher compensation. The second section reviews various models of teacher compensation. The third section includes publications relating to the legislation and effects of Wisconsin Act 10 on public school employees.

#### **The Beginning of Formal Education**

**The Law of 1647.** In the 1640s, Massachusetts was growing in population, with the main settlers the Puritans, a religious group who fled England to avoid persecution. Suddenly, there was an influx of non-Puritans, which worried the Puritans, as they wanted to maintain their "character and rule of law" (McManus, 1993, p. 42). Puritans believed in literacy, and they felt it was important for people to know how to read the Bible and understand the laws. The Puritans also believed that comprehending literature also meant they would be good people (McManus, 1993).

Most Puritan people in early colonial America educated their children at home. Those who could afford tutors, hired them, but most taught their children themselves. Many non-Puritan families, however, did not formally teach their children, because they placed little importance on teaching children to read. In an attempt to ensure children were educated, the Puritan leaders of the Massachusetts Colony passed the Law of 1642, which required parents to provide children with a basic education, including literacy and mathematics. If children were not educated, the government could remove them from the home and place them in a residence where they would get a formal education (McManus, 1993).

**Deluder Satan Act.** The Law of 1642, however, did not automatically result in educated children. The government of Massachusetts began to decipher problems with the law. Although the government could remove children from a home lacking formal instruction, people continued to oppose the Law of 1642 and not educate their children. The government then struggled to find a way to educate children once they were removed from the home. The Deluder Satan Act or the Law of 1647 was established to assist families with educating their children. The Law of 1647 required towns of 50 or more people to hire a schoolmaster to teach the communities' children (Morison, 1955). Education was becoming the responsibility of the community. Communities across Massachusetts had to hire teachers, which meant they also had to find a means to house and compensate the teachers.

Educational compliance continued to be problematic. Some communities complied, but teachers often complained about schoolhouse temperatures and a lack of

general supplies (Morison, 1955). Consistent attendance was also a problem. Children often only attended school during the winter months, as their help was needed on the family farm during the growing season. The educational issues continued for over a century.

Years later, John Adams drafted the Massachusetts Constitution in 1780. The constitution included a guarantee of public education to all citizens. In 1789, Massachusetts was the first state to pass a comprehensive education law, which updated the Law of 1647. The new legislation required all teachers to provide evidence that they had a formal education and were of good moral character (Morison, 1955). Communities in Massachusetts now had to provide an education for all, and they had to hire a qualified teacher to do the instruction. Massachusetts set a standard in public education for the United States. The Law of 1642 was the first American law that required children to be educated. Today, there are many educational laws, including those requiring attendance up to a defined age and truancy laws to keep children from missing an overabundance of school. Many laws still in place today are a result of the Law of 1642 in Massachusetts.

### **Teacher Compensation**

According to Levin and Pinto (n.d.), most male teachers in the early 1800s were farmers who performed teaching duties during the off-season. Because teaching was not their chosen career, they often had no formal training and no desire to receive training. Men with more education or those with ambitions of moving into other professions chose being a teacher as a means of moving into careers, such as ministers or lawyers. As

teachers, they made connections with families and community leaders, which led them to more desired careers (Levin & Pinto, n.d.). Generally, in the 1800s, teachers' wages were based on the financial needs of the teacher. For male teachers teaching in their off seasons, compensation was small and meant to be supplemental. Other men looking to advance themselves in different careers often received room and board, along with a small stipend (Levin & Pinto, n.d.). This era of compensation was similar to a bartering system, where the teacher and community essentially traded services—men taught school and communities paid them with room and board.

Female teachers began entering the teaching profession in the 1840s (Levin & Pinto, n.d.) and were employed as schoolmasters in the absence of male teachers. The majority of female teachers had no professional training and were generally from communities in which they taught. Similar to male teachers, women were paid room and board, along with a small salary (Levin & Pinto, n.d.).

**Boarding round.** Payment in the form of room and board is referred to as the boarding round (Protsik, 1994). Various families and/or community members provided teacher compensation in the boarding round system. It was common for teachers in the boarding round system to move about, residing in various homes within the community (Protsik, 1994). In this boarding system, the value of good morals and discipline outweighed teacher skill. This system met its demise when male teachers no longer appreciated the living arrangements and were able to find positions with better pay opportunities and when female teachers were no longer able to teach after they married.

These societal changes and outside demands resulted in teacher compensation change (Protsik, 1994).

In the late 1800s, as communities moved away from the boarding round system, differentiated salary schedules appeared (Protsik, 1994). These differentiated salary schedules were based on a teacher's gender, ethnicity, and grade level taught. For example, female elementary school teachers were compensated less than male elementary teachers were compensated, elementary teachers were paid less than secondary level teachers were paid, and Black teachers, regardless of what level they taught, were compensated less than White teachers were compensated (Protsik, 1994). These inequities within the differentiated salary schedules led to resentment and, over time, resulted in the demand for "equal pay for equal work" (Protsik, 1994, p. 8). Ultimately, this demand resulted in teachers organizing as a profession in order for their collective voice to be heard.

**Position-based remuneration.** As the economy started to shift from an agrarian to a manufacturing model, the nature of the instruction also changed (Jinnai, 2016). The nation initially raised the expectations for the educational system. Students began to go to schools for longer and sustained periods due to the introduction of child labor laws (Hilla & Jones, 2016). School instruction became more common for people in the general public, especially those being trained for administrative positions in the new industrial era.

In the 1930s, states started to create education regulations with basic tenets, directions, and necessities for both school accreditation and educator licensure (Briggs,

Turner, Bibilos, & Maul, 2014). One-room rustic buildings were replaced with multi-school districts. “Instruction specialists” in both administrative and teaching positions (Dee & Wyckoff, 2015, p. 268) controlled these districts. Standards for teacher preparation were raised and educator accreditation laws were passed; therefore, more prominent training and aptitude for procuring an instructor permit ensued (Fryer, 2013). Accordingly, time- and money-related expenses increased to prepare people entering the field of education. Typically, these preparations prompted requests for higher wages and a pay framework based on actual dollars and not housing. Subsequently, there was a transformation in instructor pay. At the beginning of this transformative pay process, educators were paid in real money on a set scale. Pay rates were then set for various positions within the educational systems. Diverse pay levels were set for elementary teachers, secondary teachers, and administrators, with women and minorities paid less than others were paid (Goodman & Turner, 2013). This noteworthy disparity was the focus of discussions on compensation (Hilla & Jones, 2016).

Compared to broadly divergent pay in the boarding round system, this new framework offered consistent payment to school districts, including those in rural educational systems (Fryer, 2013). Compensation contrasts were reflected in the different areas a teacher taught. Elementary teaching positions required two years of postsecondary school training, while secondary teaching positions required a full four-year degree. Typically, only White males could earn this four-year degree in the 19th century (Jones, 2013). Likewise, higher pay for administrators mirrored the additional educational preparation for the new type of instructive supervision (Goodman & Turner,

2013). The disparity between the levels of educational preparation for male and female teachers reflected the societal standard of men as the family provider. Additionally, the differential by race also reflected oppression (Leigh, 2013).

**The single compensation schedule.** The inherent differences in the position-based instructor remuneration structure against minorities, women, and elementary educators forced future change (Podgursky, 2011). As disparities were recognized, the position-based instructor pay plan started to change to the single compensation schedule, which paid all educators the same, with little consideration to level of teacher preparation, sex, or race (Rodewald, 2013). In 1921, Denver, Colorado and Des Moines, Iowa were the main urban communities to actualize a solitary pay plan (Marcotte, 2015). By 1950, almost all urban local districts had a solitary pay plan for instructor compensation (Taylor, 2015).

The single compensation plan addressed all obvious segregation from the past compensation models and erased pay separation on the premise of sex, race, and grade level taught (West, 2015). The 1950s pay structure gave increases based on years of experience and level of education. This was politically critical, because the single compensation timetable included motivators for elementary teachers to gain a higher educational degree and gave secondary teachers, who had been required to have a four-year degree, incentive to expand their level of education and their aptitude (Leigh, 2013). Another benefit of the single compensation structure was that teachers were paid more for extra duties within the occupation; for example, mentors earned a pay supplement and advisers of clubs and other co-curricular activities frequently earned a pay increase

(Briggs et al., 2014). A final basic accomplishment of the single compensation timetable was to pay instructors diverse salaries for such things as years of experience, training, and a variety of other objective and quantifiable duties not subject to discrimination (Goodman & Turner, 2013). The single pay timetable wiped out unmistakable pay-related segregation of the past for educators (Jinnai, 2016). Furthermore, the single pay timetable did not pay all instructors the same, but based their pay on tangible items rather than discriminatory factors (Fryer, 2013).

**Unions and teacher compensation.** Formation of teacher unions appeared in the late 1800s (Levin & Pinto, n.d.). Unions created a demand for equity and uniformity, which caused teachers to band together for improved pay, retirement benefits, and tenure (Levin & Pinto, n.d.). Many people believed that teacher salaries raised dramatically as the result of unions. According to Coulson (2010), teachers' unions focused on five key objectives:

1. Raising their members' wages,
2. Growing their membership,
3. Increasing the share of the public school labor force they represent,
4. Precluding pay based on performance or aptitude, and
5. Minimizing competition from non-union shops (p. 9).

The unions' opposition to pay-for-performance models was evident in various National Education Association (NEA) resolutions. One such resolution, NEA Resolution F-8, 2007, "Stipulates that compensation plans for its members should exclude from any form of merit pay except in institutions of higher education where it has been bargained"

(NEA, 2007, p.11). This strong opposition for pay-for-performance models resulted in teacher compensation determined through standard practices, most commonly single lane or multiple lane salary schedules (Levin & Pinto, n.d.).

Over the past 12 years, teacher compensation has received critical attention from analysts, government officials, and the overall population for several reasons. State and federal governments spend extensively on educational programs. During the 2005-2006 school year, government-funded school regions in the United States had an average per student expenditure of \$9,138, of which 60% or more was for teacher benefits and compensations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006a). Likewise, teacher compensation was critical in view of the sheer number of state-funded teachers in the United States. In 2006, there were more than 4.6 million full-time educators, making educators the largest group of state public employees (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006b).

Various researchers have examined the determinants of educator pay rates. Researchers argued that union objectives and union ability to bargain with governmental agencies providing the funding should dictate the level and structure of educator compensation (Cowen, 2009; Koppich, 2010; Lovenheim, 2009). Various compensation models have prompted unions to clarify their objectives (Hirsch, Macpherson, & Winters, 2011), which have frequently contrasted with those of union individuals (Cowen, 2009; Lovenheim, 2009). Union leaders might be worried with the survival and development of the union rather than the personal development of its members (Koppich, 2010).

Researchers' views on teacher compensation differ considerably. Winters (2011) studied teacher compensation and found little impact of unions on teacher compensation

rates. In fact, West and Mykerezi (2011) found an unobtrusive beneficial outcome on salaries. Conversely, at least three studies found that unions impact as much as 20% of teachers' salaries (Cowen, 2009; Koppich, 2010; Podgursky, 2011).

Researchers have shown educator unions with varied influence on the compensation of teachers inside a given school district. Unions influence the normal level of pay, as well as the appropriation of pay rates, within a given district. Brunner and Squires (2013) reported that unions set higher rates of pay for initial membership and training phases inside a school district. In another study, West (2015) reported that aggregate bargaining ability expands the compensation differential between experienced instructors and unpracticed educators. Still others have shown that while unions positively influence and critically affect teacher compensation, unions have little and factually inconsequential impact on the lowest compensation rate in a particular school district (Winters, 2011). Goldhaber, DeArmond, and DeBurgomaster (2011) and Brunner and Squires (2013) proposed the levels of teacher training, experience, and instruction in a school district influenced salaries, as well as involvement in the district and professional development.

Researchers proposed that educators' compensation in a particular school district was influenced by union action in adjacent school districts (Brunner & Squires, 2013; West, 2015; West & Mykerezi, 2011). West (2015) called this influence union *spillover*. Spillover refers to the impact that union movement in an adjacent school district has on educator compensation rates in another school district. Additionally, researchers proposed that the impact of union spillover on teacher compensation was greater than the

immediate impact on compensations of union action in the area (Brunner & Squires, 2013; Cowen, 2009; Koppich, 2010; Podgursky, 2011; West, 2015; West & Mykerezzi, 2011). Spillovers often occurred naturally, as neighboring school districts attempted to maintain some continuity with teacher compensation (West, 2015).

**Models of teacher compensation.** On a pay matrix, steps refer to an additional year of service and lanes refer to additional educational attainment through higher education credits and/or professional development. This model of the single salary schedule was created to address inequities for teachers, with the intent to standardize teacher pay. Administration of a step and lane model is very simple and objective—years of experience and level of education determine compensation. For example, a teacher could have earned a master’s degree in educational technology in 1992, and this advanced degree placed that teacher at a fixed dollar amount on the single salary schedule.

Career ladder systems pay teachers based on their professional status. In this model, beginning teachers receive lower compensation, whereas teachers considered master teachers receive higher compensation. Criteria for these ratings are unclear and are often considered subjective (Hunter, 2010). The question of how a teacher moves from beginning teacher to master teacher is ambiguous. This pay system usually does not include a connection to student academic performance. The ladder system is based solely on teacher status.

Extra duty pay systems create additional compensation for teachers who take on additional responsibilities, such as coaching, advising, supervising, and other non-

academic programs. This pay system is straightforward in that teachers complete an activity and are awarded pay. Just as in the career ladder system, this extra duty system generally has no connection to student performance. The activity is completed by students under the direction of the teacher and the teacher is paid additional compensation (Hunter, 2010), with the system tied solely to completion of the activity.

In January 2009, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced that \$4 billion was available to create more charter schools and performance pay for teachers through the *Race to the Top* initiative (Hunter, 2010). Changing the paradigm on how teachers were compensated in order to receive funding was not without controversy, and districts who received *Race to the Top* funding had to comply with the *Race to the Top* requirements.

Educators have considered paying teachers based on student academic progress controversial. There are a number of arguments both for and against performance pay systems. Proponents believe that linking teacher pay to student achievement will increase teacher motivation and professional performance (Kimball, Henamen, Worth, Arrigone, & Marlin, 2016). In addition, proponents also stress that highly skilled teachers will remain in the classroom due to the opportunity to increase their pay (Rodewald, 2013). Furthermore, proponents believe this means of increasing individual compensation will attract high caliber new teachers into the schools (Hunter, 2010). Opponents of performance pay believe that extrinsic rewards “harm performance, especially when teachers adopt an instrumental orientation toward their work with students. Because of this orientation, intrinsic motivation becomes less important and higher teacher

performance based on more important values is lost” (Hunter, 2010, p. 23). Additionally, opponents of performance pay believe the structure of this system can often cause stress, friction, and discord between administrators and teachers in a relationship that is “top-down or us-against-them” (Jensen, Yamashiro, & Tibbets, 2010, p.12).

Teacher compensation has been continually evolving. Protsik (1994) discussed three phases of compensation history, which included the following major changes in the method of teacher pay: “(a) the rural tradition of paying teachers room and board, (b) the move to a grade-based salary schedule, and (c) the shift to today’s single salary schedule” (p. 3). Odden and Kelley (2002) noted changes in teacher pay and the new professional demands placed on education and educators, questioning, “What is next?” (p. 34). The future of compensation is uncertain; however, there is high public demand to see increased accountability and high standards in public schools for educators to maintain high levels of instructional skills. Odden (2000) questioned how teachers should be compensated,

Until recently, attempts to change the way teachers were paid have floundered.

Despite significant experimentation with career ladders and merit pay plans in the 1980s, it would be difficult to find many examples of changes in teacher pay enacted before the 1990s that survive today. Indeed, the single salary schedule is so resilient that one could argue that the *steps and lanes* of the salary schedule are the DNA of teacher pay. (p. 2)

Conversely and more currently, Odden and Kelley (2012) explained that single salary schedules do not focus on student achievement or provide incentives for educators.

Society has once again shifted and along with this shift comes a change to teacher compensation.

Attempts to change educator pay systems are not contemporary issues.

Throughout the 20th century, there have been intermittent endeavors to change teacher pay, with no one model prevailing over another model. Without a doubt, past changes in educator pay have followed societal demands. Authoritative change, as the following paragraphs depict, had a tendency to take after and reflect change in the more extensive society and economy (Leigh, 2013).

**Impact on teacher compensation since Wisconsin Act 10.** On March 11, 2011, Wisconsin Act 10 went into effect, which prohibited bargaining collectively with respect to any condition of employment except wages, which includes only total base wages and excludes any other compensation, such as overtime, premium pay, merit pay, performance pay, supplemental compensation, pay schedules, and automatic pay progressions. Wisconsin Act 10 eliminated collective bargaining rights for most public employees and specifically for teachers. Without bargaining rights came changes to health care, retirement benefits, and, for some, the formation of pay-for-performance.

Since the passage of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011), many school districts have adopted new models of compensation for teachers and allowed teachers with certification in high demand and low supply to negotiate their own salary. At a 2011 meeting, the Wisconsin Association of School Boards Counsel presented information regarding teacher salary schedules. According to the presenters, “Teacher compensation will be a combination of base wages bargained with teacher unions and other compensation

unilaterally determined by school boards” (Butler & Forbes, 2011). Butler and Forbes (2011) stated that most districts are establishing new compensation plans, with goals centered on attracting and retaining competent teachers, creating incentives, increasing student achievement, and increasing public support of teachers and education. These noble new teacher compensation goals, however, created negative consequences, which included poorly designed models and inequity, causing competent teachers to leave districts. Additionally, this type of system has pitted teachers against one another, causing teachers to become more isolated and fend for themselves versus collaborating and sharing best practices.

Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, one rural school district in central Wisconsin created an Annual Stipend Guide (district undisclosed to retain anonymity). This guide used a single lane career ladder as a basis for salary advancement. In this system, a teacher will pass through five levels over the course of a 20 to 30 year career in the school district. Teachers in this system move from one step to the next step every six years through a promotion process based on peer review. Advancement requires collaboration, professionalism, and evidence of continuous improvement based on personal reflection and ongoing feedback from peers, administrators, students, and parents. Veteran staff, who have passed through all levels, use an evidence-based professional growth model with financial incentives in the form of bonuses. In addition to the increase in salary with each level, annual stipends are provided throughout a teacher’s career for advanced degrees and National Board Certification.

Another rural school district in central Wisconsin uses a value-added model. Teacher evaluations are based on the Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) 6 Effectiveness Project Model. Teachers rated *effective* will receive a standard raise annually. Teachers who wish to pursue additional compensation use their value-added mechanism, a weighted system based on 100 points. This system is above and beyond their evaluation in the Effectiveness Project. The categories that are weighted are as follows:

- **Student Assessment:** Teachers may receive up to 20 points through demonstration of their use of student assessment data. Data that indicates student growth is used to establish the number of points earned in this category.
- **Teacher Evaluations:** Teacher evaluations determine up to 20 points in this category. A teacher earning the label of *distinguished* in five or six of the effectiveness categories will receive the maximum 20 points.
- **Leadership:** Twenty points are available in this category. Leadership points are based on the teacher's participation in various roles in the district.
- **Professional Development:** Implementation and reflection of professional development opportunities will also be ranked on a 20-point scale.
- **Vision 20/20:** Twenty points can be awarded based on how the teacher advances the district's goals.

Teachers who score 87 points or above will receive a \$2,000 salary increase. Those scoring between 75 and 86 points will earn a \$1,000 salary increase. Teachers scoring below these marks are encouraged to reapply the next year.

The model for teacher compensation used in this study has two main components: annual salary increases and performance raises. Annually, all educators who earn an overall rating of *distinguished*, *effective*, or *developing* in the CESA 6 Effectiveness Project Model will earn an annual salary increase. Performance raises are determined at the end of a 3-year evaluation cycle. The rating in each of the six categories will determine the teacher's performance raise.

Table 1

*Performance Raise by Teacher Effectiveness*

Performance Raise	Teacher Effectiveness Category		
	Distinguished	Effective	Needs Improvement
\$ 0	-	4	2
\$ 694	-	5	1
\$1,115	-	6*	-
\$1,325	1	5	-
\$1,535	2	4	-
\$1,746	3	3	-
\$1,956	4	2	-
\$2,166	5	1	-
\$2,377	6	-	-

\*Goal for all teachers.

If, in any of the six performance standards categories (performance standards), an educator receives a *needs improvement* rating and a *distinguished* rating in one or more other performance standards, the performance raise will be \$694 (equivalent to someone with five *effective* ratings and one *needs improvement* rating).

Educators who have an overall rating of *needs improvement* will not receive a performance raise; they will be required to complete a plan of improvement. Upon successful completion of a plan of improvement and a subsequent overall *effective* or *distinguished* rating, the educator will be eligible for a performance raise. Educators who have a rating of *unacceptable* will not be eligible for a performance raise and may be non-renewed. At the end of the 3-year evaluation cycle, in addition to the performance raise outlined, educators who receive a *distinguished* rating in one or more categories may be eligible to receive a stipend for the following three years based on Table 2.

Table 2

*Stipend by Teacher Effectiveness*

Stipend (annually for 3 years)	Teacher Effectiveness Category	
	Distinguished	Effective
\$250	In one category	In all other categories
\$500	In two categories	In all other categories
\$1,000	In three or more categories	In all other categories

During the transition to the new compensation plan, an educator's most recent rating will determine whether they receive a stipend starting in 2015-2016. These stipends are not added to an educator's contract salary; they will be in the form of a one-time payment during the school year. Stipends are based on funds available and are at the discretion of the school board.

The three models provided evidence of variance across districts with implementation of one compensation tool associated with Wisconsin Act 10 (2011). Each

district has incorporated a model that works for their community, and there is no one compensation model adopted across the State of Wisconsin.

### **Summary**

This chapter presented a review of literature related to the changes in teacher compensation from the mid-1600s to the present. First, were studies that dealt with teacher compensation from a historical perspective. In the past, teachers were paid based on their needs. Second, various models of teacher compensation were examined and the boarding round system of payment was introduced. In this type of payment, teachers lived within various homes in the community where they taught. Next, were differentiated salary schedules. In these types of payment systems, teachers are paid according to gender, grade level, and ethnicity. Additionally examined was the role of unions in terms of regulating teacher compensation. Previous studies found that unions influenced the salary schedules of teachers in a positive manner. Finally, literature was reviewed related to the legislation, consequences, and effects of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) on public school employees, with specific examples demonstrating how Wisconsin Act 10 allowed districts to customize their teacher compensation and other benefits, such as health care and retirement.

This overview of the literature provided a basis for understanding how districts were once structured and how they have been able to restructure policy, wages, and benefits. In Chapter IV, one district administrator's personal experiences surrounding the

impact of Wisconsin Act 10 and the resulting changes will be examined. This literature review provided groundwork for an understanding of the history behind the changes.

### **Chapter III**

#### **Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to examine how one district administrator managed teacher compensation since the implementation of the Wisconsin Act 10 (2011).

Common methods of qualitative research include case studies, grounded theory, phenomenology, and ethnography. The style of research chosen is according to which style is most suitable for the study at hand.

Case studies are used to study how a real-world issue in a particular circumstance impacts the longitudinal development of an individual, group, or scenario (Aczel, 2015). Case study method is suitable when there are many variables and when the boundaries between the subject matter and the context are unclear (Aczel, 2015). This theory is unsuitable here because this study involves the perspective of one individual and the boundaries between the author and the subject matter are clear.

Grounded theory, on the other hand, encourages theory formation through data analysis (Ruppel & Mey, 2015). Although narrative analysis is used with grounded theory, the objective is to formulate theories based on the observations (Ruppel & Mey, 2015). This particular study does not call for the development of theory, but rather a deeper understanding.

Phenomenology is used to understand human behavior, particularly unusual people or events that call for further study (Saeedinezhad, Firouzkouhi, Abdolghan & Rahnama, 2016). As phenomenology is used to understand human behavior, it has been

used to further research about topics like smoking, medical disorders, and motherhood, for example. Phenomenology is not appropriate for use in this study, because this study is not researching natural human behavior, but rather, the behaviors that result from policy changes.

Ethnography is used to study the behaviors of people, cultures, customs, and habits. The difference between phenomenology and ethnography, however, is that ethnography is used to evaluate and collect data about the material observed, while phenomenology is used to further information about an existing social topic. Ethnography is written from a standpoint of research and does not use a narrative approach. The most suitable method for this research was autoethnography.

### **Research Design**

An autoethnographic study is a form of qualitative research that utilizes the author's personal experiences and self-reflection to merit a deeper understanding of greater cultural issues. Orbe and Boylorn (2014) defined autoethnography as "cultural analysis through personal narrative" (p. 17). An autoethnography presents the combination of many research techniques, including, "a mixture of fieldwork, observation, acknowledgement of extant research and theories, and cultural participation and analysis (ethnography), as well as personal experience, memory and storytelling techniques (autobiography)" (Orbe & Boylorn, 2014, p. 352). The belief is that since autoethnographical studies present a first-person point of view and actual lived experience, the research provides details that are not plausible in conventional research

studies (Witkin, 2014). In other words, it allows for a first-person, real-life experience presented from the lens of the author and the author's associated emotions, thoughts, and understandings as they relate to the experience. According to Witkin (2014), there are two types of autoethnographies: analytic and evocative. Analytic autoethnographies emphasize a deeper understanding of cultural issues, whereas evocative autoethnographies develop this deeper understanding exclusively through the author's personal experiences and the reaction that it evokes in readers (Witkin, 2014). Due to the nature of this study, the study is deemed an evocative autoethnography.

Researchers often write autoethnographies in the form of narratives, incorporating various characters and a central plot (Witkin, 2014). This structure is used to demonstrate the relationship between the author and a specific experience and how this experience may provide insight about greater cultural phenomena (Witkin, 2014). Although the focus of the autoethnography is on the author, the experiences of the author are not isolated circumstances because they "occur within a social and cultural context" (Witkin, 2014, p. 11). Therefore, the author presents the experiences, but the experiences involve other subjects, as well. The author strives to engage the readers in the autoethnographic experience by eliciting reactions and encouraging a myriad of interpretations about the subject matter (Witkin, 2014). According to Orbe and Boylorn (2014), autoethnography allows readers to experience the subject matter viscerally. Readers are open to interpret the experiences of the author as they wish or as they deem fit, because the purpose of autoethnographies is not to present an absolute truth, but provide a deeper understanding

(Witkin, 2014). The author's experiences are not intended to unveil a revelation, but to provide insight about the context that surrounds that experience.

Anderson (2006) posited there are five components of autoethnographic research: "(1) complete member research (CMR) status, (2) analytic reflexivity, (3) narrative visibility of the researcher's self, (4) dialogue with informants beyond the self, and (5) commitment to theoretical analysis" (p. 378). There are two forms of CMR status, which include opportunistic and convert (Anderson, 2006). Opportunistic CMRs are individuals that are directly born into a group, become a member of the group due to explicit circumstances, or maintain a thorough knowledge about the group through "occupational, recreational, or lifestyle participation" (Anderson, 2006, p. 379). On the other hand, convert CMRs initially demonstrate an acute interest in the data portion of the research, but throughout the course of said research, the CMR "converts" to full membership and participation (Anderson, 2006, p. 379). This study consists of an opportunistic CMR, the author.

Analytic reflexivity requires an understanding between the researcher and the researcher's impact on the surrounding social and environmental setting of the research (Anderson, 2006). This is essential, because it requires the researcher to remain cognizant of their actions and communication with other involved subjects or "characters," as this communication establishes a relationship between the researcher and the data (Anderson, 2006, p. 379). Narrative visibility of the researcher's self requires the researcher to be active throughout the research process, whether it be socially or action-based, rather than seen but not heard (Anderson, 2006). The researcher's journal entries are, therefore, vital

to the study because of her close relationship to and interaction with the subject matter and its characters. The researcher is not to act as a bystander, which is partially required to avoid overly critical self-analysis or self-absorption by mandating dialogue with informants beyond the self (Anderson, 2006). Although this study weighs heavily on personal experience, it must also include the experiences of others. Finally, the commitment to an analytic agenda requires the researcher to acknowledge their personal experience and emotions as data to provide insight into larger cultural phenomena (Anderson, 2006). This study is not about the researcher, after all, but about how the subject matter directly affects the involved stakeholders and whether it can offer implications about greater social themes.

This study utilizes an autoethnographical research method. An autoethnographic study is a form of qualitative research that utilizes the author's personal experiences and self-reflection to merit a deeper understanding of greater cultural issues. Orbe and Boylorn (2014) defined autoethnography as "cultural analysis through personal narrative" (p. 17). An autoethnography presents the combination of many research techniques, including, "A mixture of fieldwork, observation, acknowledgement of extant research and theories, and cultural participation and analysis (ethnography), as well as personal experience, memory and storytelling techniques (autobiography)" (Orbe & Boylorn, 2014, p. 352). The belief is that since autoethnographical studies present a first-person point of view and actual lived experience, the research provides details that are not plausible in conventional research studies (Witkin, 2014). In other words, it allows for a first-person, real-life experience presented from the lens of the author and the author's

associated emotions, thoughts, and understandings as they relate to the experience. The ability to recall personal experiences may potentially affect the reader in a way that will allow for their own self-reflection.

Following the implementation of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011), a new chapter began for teachers. This new chapter not only became statewide news, but national news, and suddenly, the State of Wisconsin was in the limelight. The emotions elicited by Wisconsin Act 10 were significant emotions that should be explained and explored. There were many challenges that followed the passing of this new law and not all of them were simple in nature. By conducting a narrative autoethnography, this researcher can explain the story from the beginning with an insider's perspective. The aspiration is that others can identify with and relate to the researcher's experiences and potentially use her experience to gather a deeper understanding about the subject matter.

### **Data Collection**

This study used an autoethnographical research design to present a personal experience of a journey through the research problem that is both meaningful and engaging to readers. The objective was for readers to utilize personal experience and apply the experiences to their situations or assist with their decision making.

For the sake of validity, I believe my writing conveyed my actual experiences in a manner that was both believable and credible. Some of my personal questions concerning the methodology included, Will the reader be able to relate to my experience re-evaluating the teacher compensation model? Is it factual? Does the reader believe that

events actually took place in the manner I describe? It is particularly crucial for the reader to believe the series of events and my personal experiences associated with them presented in this study. Reliability will be determined only if the reader can understand my perspective throughout this process. Did I tell this story in a way the reader found helpful? The objective of this research was for the reader to develop a deeper understanding of the impact of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) and how the legislation impacted teacher compensation in one district through my personal experiences. Hopefully, my experiences will assist the reader to avoid pitfalls I encountered, as well as to find techniques and/or strategies that may be helpful.

These journal entries follow the criteria of an analytic autoethnography. The material presented is a detailed recollection of information from the author (myself), who is a “full member in the research group or setting ... visible as such a member in those contexts ... committed to developing theoretical understanding of social phenomena” (Anderson, 2006, p. 373). In addition to providing a first-person perspective, these journal entries allow the readers to “bypass the representational problem by invoking an epistemology of emotion, moving the reader to feel the feelings of the other” (Anderson, 2006, p. 377). In other words, instead of understanding the subject matter as a topic under research, the reader can understand how the subject matter impacts the individual(s) involved from a first-person perspective. The journal entries are to provide a more detailed, personal account of the topic, rather than studies that closely regard statistics and policies with little to no information about personal details.

### **Study Population**

The narrative included my personal experiences and observations with teachers, board members, and administrators while we re-evaluated our teacher compensation model. The participants included the author (myself) and the self-reflection journal entries and data recorded by the author.

### **Instrumentation**

The data collection consisted of written journal entries. I began writing the journal on June 27, 2016, when I decided to pursue the autoethnography. The journal documented my experiences to date and included a detailed summary of each day. These summaries included information pertaining to the administrative director position, which consisted of interactions, meetings, experiences, phone calls, and emails. The journal entries provided an analysis and reflection about the day's events, which I recorded at the end of the workday or early the next morning. In addition to this information, I recorded my thoughts and feelings associated with the day's affairs in the journal. The journal entry provided a means for me to provide first-person, lived experience about the subject matter, though from a distance.

When beginning the journal entry process, I did not initially know which themes would emerge from the journal, which became a separate process from the initial journal-recording portion of the study. Reading and rereading entries with further introspection and self-analysis helped me to describe the story with greater depth to the reader. Often, my thoughts appeared scattered as I tried to construct meaning from the day's events. To

help organize the content, I coded my journey in order to see what themes emerged. My objectives were for these journal entries to clearly and concisely fall into the created categories systematically to directly reflect themes.

### **Data Analysis**

For data analysis in an autoethnographical study, it is important that instead of the researcher merely describing what happened in her life, she should describe how memories may be placed together to illustrate cultural traits and relationships with others in society (Raab, 2010). In other words, I needed to be conscious of my history, because it helped to understand how past events affected present behaviors and thought patterns. Chang (2008) stated that data collection and analysis are at the heart of autoethnography and claimed, “What you search for in the mass of data is indicators that may explain how your life experiences are culturally, not just personally meaningful and how your experiences can be compared with others’ in society” (p. 137). It was comparing and contrasting these experiences that served as the center of what this research was about. This research provided a chance to shed light on a culture or, in my case, an event that might resonate with the reader and provide a deeper understanding or insight based on my experiences.

In order to extract information from the journal entries, notes, and comments, and to analyze the data, I used the six phases of thematic analysis by Clarke and Braun (2013): (1) familiarization with the data, (2) coding, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) writing up. The researcher

does not need to follow these steps consecutively, but all of them must take place throughout the course of the research.

As I am the district administrator, I am already familiar with the data. Data familiarity is a requirement of all qualitative research, as the researcher must understandably comprehend the data prior to studying and presenting it. A lack of understanding about the topic in general can yield an incomplete research study that is not credible. As noted by Janesick (2000), “The qualitative researcher uses inductive analysis, which means that categories, themes, and patterns come from the data. The categories that emerge from field notes, documents, and interviews are not imposed prior to data collection” (p. 389). This analysis process requires reading and rereading all data and transcripts to determine potential points of analytical interest.

Coding, also a common step in qualitative research studies, allows the researcher to identify themes that emerge from their familiarization with the data. The codes are organized according to significance and relevance to the research question (Clarke & Braun, 2013). The researcher must understand how the themes identify both to logic and to basic thought. The researcher must also use discretion as to when certain themes must be merged, eliminated, or expanded upon. Familiarity with the data and the creation of codes allows the researcher to review and revise themes accordingly. According to Clarke and Braun (2013), “A theme is a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to the research question” (p. 121). The researcher must conceptualize each theme and coherently present these themes to the reader, while organizing the research data that is applicable to each theme (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Each theme requires extensive review,

which entails that the themes adhere to both the codes and the data. This process should present a relationship between the individual themes and the data, as well as the relationship between each theme (Clarke & Braun, 2013). In other words, gathering and analysis of data goes hand-in-hand as themes emerge (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). This process serves to create a thematic map, which both identifies the relationship and organizes the data.

Once the researcher identifies themes, the researcher must define and name each theme. This requires a written analysis of each theme, as well as the refinement of categories (Clarke & Braun, 2013). It was at this point I asked myself, according to Clarke and Braun (2013), How does this theme fit into the overall story about the data? I conducted a final revision of the analysis to ensure of the study's significance in terms of existing theory and research. This entailed formally writing about the data, which is a process of "weaving together the analytic narrative and (vivid) data extracts, so as to tell the story of the author's experiences" (Clarke and Braun, 2013, p. 122). Ellis and Bochner (2000) asserted that the analysis of data in a personal narrative involves a process where the researcher emotionally recalls the events of the past. This process will also allow the author to conceptualize the data in terms of previous topical literature (Clarke and Braun, 2013). The six phases of thematic analysis by Clarke and Braun (2013) will centralize around the following research questions:

RQ1: How does one district administrator use the flexibility and freedom

Wisconsin Act 10 provided to improve the working conditions of teachers?

RQ2: To what extent have changes in compensation impacted the personal and professional teaching culture of the district?

RQ3: How has the district administrator responded to the changes in the personal and professional teaching culture at the district?

I categorized a small sample of my data in order to see how the process allowed for a structured platform to analyze, interpret, and process the information I gathered over time. I started the process by reading and rereading my journals, notes, and memos. I then compared these items with my professional calendar going back to July 2011. This helped me fill in some blanks that I felt were missing from my journal. By doing this comparison, it helped events or situations that were almost lost in my memory to become clearer. With the clarity and memory jog, themes were more readily apparent.

Deciding on how to code the data was challenging, as certain meetings involving people or a person, I ultimately coded under their name. Other data involving a topic, i.e. performance pay, I coded under the topic name. This resulted in many codes: codes with names, codes with topics, codes with symbols, and codes with emotions. As I reviewed my data, it brought back feelings I had when Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) was first introduced in February 2011. These emotions impacted my coding of the data and added to the challenge. The emotions were strong and often varied, as I was dealing with multiple stakeholders. Needless to say, the coding of data was driven by my personal feelings and emotions.

The process also made me realize there was no one way to categorize or code the data. It was a fluid process that varied based on day, time, topic, and my mood. I was able

to identify some of the data collected that did not fit the themes that emerged, as well as identify data that was the impetus for certain themes. I believe this gives more validity to autoethnography, as well as reinforced my story, which was intended to allow others to reflect on their own thinking and actions regarding teacher compensation.

Throughout the course of research, including the journal entries, I have changed the names and proper nouns associated with members of the school district. I am still employed as the district administrator of the school district, and I recognize that my personal descriptions and recollection of events in the district are subjective in nature and, consequently, may not result in the same experiences of my peers and colleagues. The data I gathered formed the basis for my research, which was not a comprehensive assessment, but rather a sampling of what I learned as district administrator.

## **Summary**

This chapter contained the research methodology and outlined information about the participants, methods and protocol, procedures, and data analysis plan. As the researcher, I personally collected the information and wrote the journal entries. The journal entries provided context into larger themes about social phenomena, which I extracted using Clarke and Braun's (2013) six phases of thematic analysis. Chapter IV presents the data analysis and research findings. Chapter V presents the recommendations, interpretations, and conclusions.

## **Chapter IV**

### **My Journey through Wisconsin Act 10**

The purpose of this study was to examine how one district administrator managed teacher compensation since the implementation of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011). This autoethnographic study of the author, a district administrator, examined the following research questions pertaining to teacher compensation:

RQ1: How does one district administrator use the flexibility and freedom Wisconsin Act 10 provided to improve the working conditions of teachers?

RQ2: To what extent have changes in compensation impacted the personal and professional teaching culture of the district?

RQ3: How has the district administrator responded to the changes in the personal and professional teaching culture at the district?

Additionally, this study focused on the self-reflection and personal analysis of the author, the district administrator of a school district in Wisconsin, and her personal experiences surrounding policy changes to teacher compensation following the passing of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011). This study may provide greater insight into the challenges faced by district administrators in the State of Wisconsin following the implementation of Wisconsin Act 10.

### **My Background, the District Administrator**

It was a cold Monday at approximately 11:00 p.m. in January of 2011 when there was a knock on my front door. I had just completed my second interview for the vacant district administrator position in the district I had worked in for the last 16 years.

Although I wanted this new position, I was also satisfied as the middle school principal for the past 13 years. The middle school position was a job that made me laugh, cry, and feel valued and needed every day. Becoming district administrator was something I wanted to do, but if I was not right for the position in our district, I was content continuing as middle school principal. I was prepared for the news that knock may bring.

In the fall of 1993, I received my student teaching placement from my university. I was assigned to student teach under the direction of two experienced physical education teachers in a school district about 10 miles outside of the college campus. I was thrilled that my student teaching placement was in a school district where I had not done any clinical or volunteer work. I was looking forward to something completely new. My student teaching placement began in the fall at the elementary school and finished in January at the high school. My student teaching experience was a positive one. I came to appreciate the district's commitment to its students and the community's support of their schools. I moved on to teach under contract for two years at a different school district in central Wisconsin. Again, it was a good experience, but my heart was in the district where I student taught.

In the spring of 1995, my heart was filled with excitement having secured a physical education teaching position in the district where I student taught and in the

community I loved. I should also mention I married a wonderful man, who was from this community. I taught physical education for two years. I was then offered the Dean of Students position, a newly created position at our high school. At the time, the high school had approximately 450 students. The principal had pressured the Board of Education to provide some sort of assistance in the area of student discipline and attendance. During this year, the community was also building a new high school. This was an exciting time, but unfortunately, the district had not planned appropriately when it came to operating the new high school. The district had to enter into the vicious operational referendum cycle. It was a frustrating time for the administration and for the community. In an effort to slim down the current budget and show the community the district was trying everything possible to ensure the new school would run smoothly, the Dean of Students position was eliminated; I was devastated. This quasi-administrative position was something I enjoyed greatly. My previous physical education position was available for me, but I wanted to pursue an administrative position. Recognizing an administrative position was my career choice, I revised my resume and began applying to other districts.

During the time I was applying for other administrative positions outside the district, the current middle school principal retired, and the district administrator offered me the opportunity to take over the vacant position. I was thrilled, but also uncomfortable, as it felt like I was *given* the job. I learned at some point in my career that as much as I may want something, it is imperative that the majority feels similarly. I asked the district administrator if the school board would consider opening the position

for other applicants. He thought I was crazy, but I felt strongly about not just being given the position without any staff input. Subsequently, I did interview with the staff and earned the position over three other applicants. I loved the staff, the students, and the parents with whom I worked at the middle school. Reflecting on this position, I would say it was a happy time for me. Again, emotions would go all over the spectrum in the course of the day: happy students, mad students, students who wanted to just talk, frustrated students, or students who just needed a hug. It was always a full day that generally ended in satisfaction.

In 2008, our district administrator made the decision to retire, and I decided to apply for the job. In evaluating the *why* behind my application, I simply felt compelled to apply. Leadership was a vocation for me, and I felt called to the position. Well, I was wrong on that calling; 2008 was not my year to become district administrator. I did not earn the job. The Board of Education members met with me to let me know they felt I was not ready for the position. Although at the time I did not know what exactly that meant, I soon realized they were right, and I was grateful!

Since we were still in the vicious referendum cycle, we were continuously attempting to reduce costs. It came to a point where we had to weigh the cost of operating our small neighborhood elementary school that housed 75 students. How can we continue to operate the small school building when we had space and staff for these additional students at our other elementary school? The district tried to be creative. Perhaps we could convert the small elementary school into a kindergarten center; however, the decision often resulted in splitting children in the same family. A kindergarten center was

not palatable. We tried to move our borders, resulting in pushing more students to that satellite building. Moving borders ended up not being practical for families, since some had to travel significantly farther than they had previously. In conclusion, closing the building was the best option. The small school cost just under \$400,000 annually to operate, and the district could reduce two staff members by moving all staff and students to the current elementary school. The members of the small community this school closure impacted the most were upset, angry, frustrated, and not happy. The district administrator was not popular during this turbulent and contentious time. The recommendation to close the small neighborhood school was the *beginning of the end* for the district administrator in our district.

Meanwhile back at the middle school, we kept moving forward. Staff and other teachers often said the middle school was the school where they wanted to be teaching. Staff were content, students were learning at high levels, and parent feedback was positive. Staff told me they were glad I was still their principal and hoped I would remain in the position. I was also happy and felt good about my work.

In fall of 2011, we learned our district administrator would not be returning to our district the ensuing year. Immediately, the word spread that I was the newly appointed district administrator, which was news to me, but I also understood how misinformation seems to seep through the schools. I wanted to apply, not due to any dissatisfaction in my current role, but because I believed I could unite our community again. My commitment to the district, my previous work, and my strong relationships were qualities that could make a difference.

Thirteen years later, on a Monday night after a knock on my front door at 11:00 p.m., my middle school principal career ended. That knock on my door was from the president of the school board offering me the position of district administrator. I gladly, respectfully, and nervously accepted the challenge. It was January 2011, and I had until July 1, 2011 to ponder my decision.

### **The New Era Begins – and Not Just for Me**

I never could have imagined or predicted what was in store for Wisconsin politics in 2011. On February 14, 2011, newly elected Governor Scott Walker unveiled the details of his 2011-2013 state budget. The \$3.6 billion deficit was his focal point, and he was going to solve the deficit by limiting collective bargaining for certain groups of public sector employees in Wisconsin. Governor Walker's effort was called the Wisconsin Budget Repair Bill, known as Wisconsin Act 10 (2011).

Within days of the announcement, Madison, Wisconsin was under siege. Protestors began to fill the marble halls of the capitol. As I attempted to decipher what Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) meant for the staff and district, the teachers remained quiet. The teachers in this school district did not protest this polarizing situation. Teachers neither outwardly expressed themselves with arm bands or other clothing nor did they voice their opinions in public forums like newspapers or rallies. Despite our district teachers' professionalism, it seemed like other districts' teachers were speaking abundantly and loudly on behalf of every educator. There was great controversy about the budget proposal. Opponents said things like, "This is an attack on teachers," while supporters

argued it was an investment for the future as debt could not continue to grow. Teachers were highly criticized for voicing their opinion, regardless of their actions or views.

What did removing collective bargaining really mean? In the business of school, the majority of the budget is spent on staffing. The district was in a vicious cycle of renewing an operational referendum every two years in order to maintain our current services and staff. Could removing collective bargaining allow us to save staff by controlling other costs? I certainly hoped so, because the process of referendum after referendum was taking a toll on our community and on our employees. The district did not know how the community would respond from one vote to the next. School funding was difficult to explain, much less understand, so this referendum process only caused confusion and distrust. I was perplexed with how Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) was actually going to help the district. I watched the district administrator, who was in place until June 30, coast through the turmoil. It seemed since he was soon leaving our district, he was going to allow me the opportunity to explore this new era. I learned quickly the governor's proposal was meant to help the taxpayers, but on the backs of our teachers. I also knew that our taxpayers were sick of referenda and needed a break. A give and take for teachers and taxpayers for the sake of everyone involved was necessary. I was yet to begin my position as district administrator, so I took a great deal of notes, read diligently, and waited to see what exactly would happen with Wisconsin Act 10.

In June 2011, Wisconsin Act 10 became a reality. In July 2011, I moved from the middle school to the elementary school where the district administrator resides. I remember distinctly sitting in my new chair and saying to myself, "Here we go! Let's do

this and do it right!” I started my position knowing changes were necessary with the passage of Wisconsin Act 10. I also recognized changes needed to be made fairly and respectfully. The changes started with modifying the master contract into a handbook. This handbook explained the rules of the job for everyone involved—the Board of Education, administration, and staff—so starting there seemed only fair.

Throughout this time of turmoil, I stayed in contact with our two previous teacher negotiators. The potential changes to the handbook were shared with the negotiators. I asked them if anything was alarming or stood out. Statements were worded carefully to avoid engaging in negotiation or any sort of conversation with the intent of allowing for compromise to move forward. There was very little concern on the negotiators’ part. Nothing presented in the handbook rose to a high level of concern.

It should be noted, the previous master contract of the district was lean. The district did not offer employees huge perks in salary nor was there an expansive amount of personal days, life insurance, or other sorts of benefits. The district’s probable changes did not appear as potentially devastating as did the changes in other districts. One major sticking point that became clear in assessing prospective changes was the district could now seek lower health insurance and pension costs by requiring higher contributions from staffing these two areas. Addressing the increased contribution from employees was a huge hurdle. For as long as I could remember, the district had been with the Wisconsin Education Association’s health plan to insure employees. The Wisconsin Education Association’s plan consisted of a \$200 family deductible and the ability to choose one’s medical professional. For many of the district employees, the thought of moving to a new

plan design, requiring individuals to be better consumers of health care, was beyond difficult. These prospective insurance changes were not issues district employees had to address before.

The Board of Education and I opened our health care to a competitive bidding process. We recognized very early in the process that a broker was necessary to help with the negotiating, and thank goodness, we did! What a political nightmare health insurance was! The amount of bartering and bantering that went on behind the scenes was unbelievable. The broker would tweak the plan design request minimally, and the insurance company would renegotiate the pricing. In the end, the district saved \$775,500 in the first year of change. This change included a 12.6% employee contribution to the new plan, with a new insurance company and plan design. In addition, the district saved \$462,725 by employees contributing 50% of their State of Wisconsin retirement benefits.

The handbook was moving forward slowly. Again, the district was not necessarily benefit heavy, so other changes or modifications were less significant than the health insurance and retirement contribution change. The school board also wanted to be fair to the teachers. The members of our Board truly respected the staff for handling the Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) controversy with dignity. Staff did not call in sick to go protest in Madison nor did they boycott writing student recommendations, but continued to work past the contracted time and still took on duties that were not part of the old union agreement. In an effort to show that our Board of Education appreciated our staff, the Board wanted retirement benefits changed, but not necessarily to penalize the teachers. In the past, the retiree could buy the district's insurance by cashing in unused sick days

based on the number of sick days the retiree had banked. The benefit usually equaled about \$50,000 in health insurance. The retired employee staying on the district's insurance plan was not advantageous to the district. Factoring in the many facets—respect the Board had for the teachers, the necessary change to post-retirement benefits, and the desire to discontinue retirees on our health insurance plan—the Board and I decided that a 403b account of up to \$50,000 was appropriate for all concerned. I was so relieved. My heart was heavy with the health insurance change, but this 403b benefit was extremely generous and fair. The post-retirement benefit was no longer connected to our health insurance or the teachers' sick time. Of course, the retiree could use those dollars for their own insurance, but it was up to them. They could do whatever they wanted with the dollars that were disbursed over five years. Since the 403b was given directly to the retiree to do with as they wanted, the district was seen in favorable light.

### **Unintentional Consequences of Wisconsin Act 10**

The political events of 2011 turned the place called school into a place that many called work. Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) gave a great deal of power to the district administrator and to the Board of Education and limited the amount of influence teachers had on decision making. However, Wisconsin Act 10 also gave a great deal of power back to the local district. How the district administrator could use this newfound power kept creeping into my head. Changes to health care, retirement contributions, and retirement benefits had already been altered. How did I want the teachers to remember my first year as district administrator?

Without a doubt, 2011 left a negative feeling with the people working in each building. I think every school employee felt beat up by the public (including me). I felt like I was punched from every angle—the community, the staff, and even friends. Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) may have accomplished some financial relief for the state, but it also caused a respected profession to be viewed as less than respectable.

As district administrator, I pondered how to help district morale. Teachers were feeling defeated and undervalued. When I thought about potential ways to help teachers feel better about their chosen career, I knew whatever I did needed to be sincere and real. The teachers did not need words like, “But we do value you” (but now you have to pay 50% into your pension); “The community does respect teachers” (but never mind the negative commentary about state employees); “You still have a voice” (but ultimately, the district will do whatever it sees as best). I decided it was best for me to continually role model professionalism, kindness, compassion, and true appreciation. Since this was my first year as district administrator, I wanted to be sure that I was visible in each of the three buildings within the district. As I visited classrooms or as staff stopped me in the hallway, I did my best to follow up with a personal note or another face-to-face conversation. In addition, the Board of Education continued to seek teacher involvement in decisions. The Board’s effort was appreciated, but teachers also knew at times their voices would not be heard, especially when it came to their desire to keep the traditional salary schedule that had been in place for as long as I could remember.

## **New Evaluation Tool**

Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) not only reformed collective bargaining, but it also required a teacher evaluation tool that focused on high-quality instruction. Knowing the evaluation tool needed to measure, as part of the individual teacher evaluation process, student performance and clearly defined student objectives, the district did not want to venture on this high stakes endeavor on its own or without assistance. The state had created their model called Educator Effectiveness. This model was a performance-based system created using the Charlotte Danielson framework.

In 2010, the local CESA 6 began discussing teacher evaluation and what was needed to create an effective tool. I was excited for a local opportunity, as well as an alternative to the Educator Effectiveness, as I was not a proponent of the Danielson model. Under the expert guidance of Dr. James Stronge from William and Mary College, Williamsburg, Virginia, several representatives from my district, other districts, and institutions of higher education were invited to participate in building this new tool based on Stronge's model. The representatives from my district and others built in several components to assure a solid research base and a quality system and design educators could understand. In 2011-2012, CESA 6 completed its teacher evaluation test pilot. The Effectiveness Project, an equivalency model, was aligned with the State of Wisconsin requirements for Educator Effectiveness, which in turn assured compliance with the Department of Public Instruction.

The tool was ready for teachers, educational specialists, and administrators. The Effectiveness Project focused on high-quality instruction, which included effective

practice and student achievement. The newly developed tool was available to interested school districts statewide. Features of the evaluation system included a means to measure the process and product of teaching, evaluator training, professional development, and a technology component to increase efficiency. The district was ready to have all teachers evaluated under the Effectiveness Project in the 2012-2013 school year. During this same year, the district decided to look at teacher compensation. Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) had now been in place for over one year. As district administrator, I felt pressure to look at our current model, since surrounding districts were offering higher compensation for first year and veteran teachers, and these districts were starting to recruit our best teachers.

### **Compensation Conversation**

I began by meeting with the Board of Director's compensation committee. I described why it was necessary to analyze our teacher compensation model. The model did not give any credence to good teaching, but it compensated teachers on years of service and advanced educational degrees. To my surprise, the compensation committee was in favor of analyzing and/or changing our current model. The step and lane schedule had a very negative connotation to this group, who felt a 20-year veteran teacher with a master's degree should not be compensated more than a skilled beginning teacher who has proven their worth based on relationships and student achievement. The work began.

I sent out an email asking for teachers interested in learning more about compensation and eventually creating a new compensation model for our district.

Fourteen teachers were interested in participating. The compensation committee and I decided all 14 teachers would be perfect to help guide us through this opportunity.

**Teacher compensation meeting one.** Our first meeting took place on September 25, 2013. The compensation committee, 13 of the 14 teachers who had volunteered to serve on the committee, Director of Business Services, and I began the compensation conversation. The agenda consisted of a welcome message, short introduction, group norm setting, base wage discussion including negotiable items, general thoughts and ideas about compensation, sharing of other models, and setting of future meeting dates.

**Group norms.** After a brief welcome and introductions, the work began. I could feel some tension in the group, possibly because participants did not know what to expect. Teachers seemed afraid to interact with Board members and Board members were unsure how the teachers actually felt about them. The introduction of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) was a turbulent time. One Board member must have felt some tension also, because all of a sudden, he chimed in with a “thank you” to our teachers. The Board member expressed his gratitude for their professionalism and for not bringing the protests into the classroom. This compassionate thank you truly broke the ice. The norms or expectations for behavior of this newly formed group suddenly began to flow. They were as follows:

- Share responsibility for taking notes using Google docs, so each member had immediate access to the notes.
- Participate on the committee in manner of member choice. Teachers outside of this group may not directly participate, but committee members could bring

ideas and concerns from other teachers to the compensation group. All staff were made aware of who was participating in the compensation conversation, and we committed to doing our best to encourage a two-way conversation.

- Be respectful of differing opinions and the timeframes set for our meetings.
- Listen attentively to whoever was speaking. Avoid eye rolling or making facial expressions that may be construed as unappreciative of what that person is saying. Keep device usage, such as cell phones and laptops, to a minimum. Ask for clarification of ideas, suggestions, and comments that members may not understand.
- Act as building representatives and disseminate information in order to assist in two-way communication. Share documents, examples, and general conversations upon request, but do not divulge specific comments connected to individual ideas.
- Make decisions as a team—not administration and board versus teachers. Eventually, present a recommendation to the full Board of Education. The full Board makes the final decision.
- Proceed with the meeting and decision making when 10 to 14 members are present.
- Use unanimous decision making among the people present at the meetings. Members felt that unanimous decision making produced a stronger result and less miscommunication to other teachers. The group realized unanimous

decision making would be difficult and likely delay some decisions; however, the group felt unanimous decision making was critical to the overall process.

- Provide everyone an opportunity to express ideas, feelings, and anxieties.

Advocate for all teachers and be mindful of our taxpayers and fiscal constraints.

- Compensate current staff and attract high-quality new staff.
- Create teacher millionaires through this new model.

The Board member who expressed his gratitude in the beginning of the meeting set a new tone of comfort and ease. This comfort was evident in the last norm to be established—teachers should become millionaires. It was almost like a new feeling of mutual respect was developed between two groups who were not necessarily adversarial within our district, but on the broader level, these groups were clashing due to the impact of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011). Knowing a sense of humor was part of this important process gave me assurance that this committee was going to work as a team. This team understood the importance of high-quality teachers, as well as the ensuing financial implications to our community.

***Total base wage.*** Collective bargaining in Wisconsin was essentially dead. Under Wisconsin Act 10 (2011), districts no longer had to negotiate for any conditions of employment, other than total base wages. But, what did that mean? Since the law did not define total base wage, there were many opinions regarding what total base wage meant. Knowing we were waiting to learn more from Wisconsin Employment Relations, the group decided to move forward with the understanding that total base wage meant the

salary of a teacher at this point in time, excluding education beyond what was required. For example, a teacher with 10 years of experience in the school district and a master's degree was paid an annual salary of \$45,000 during the 2012-2013 school year, based on placement within the previously negotiated salary schedule. Without the master's degree, based on the negotiated salary schedule, the teacher would have been paid only \$35,000. We agreed the annual base wage to be identified as \$35,000, instead of the \$45,000 annual salary the teacher earned during the 2013-2014 school year. This concept was difficult for everyone to digest, but I assured the group we would revisit as we learned more.

*Ideas about compensation.* The items on the agenda became more personal. I wanted to know what teachers feared, hoped for, liked, and disliked about other models. The themes generated from this discussion were fair and respectful treatment of teachers, and in turn, better collegiality and student achievement. Conversation centered on topics about increases in salary, and while not all teachers may be considered the best of the best, we hoped an average dedicated teacher would still see an increase to their salary. We wished the model created would retain our high-quality staff. We assumed our evaluator was fair and would not incorporate any bias in the evaluations. We were hopeful a new compensation model would account for the skills of all of our teachers, which included special education, art, physical education, music, and all other specialties.

The conversation was insightful, but not necessarily surprising. Of course, we all wanted to be treated fairly and respectfully, but now we needed to design a model that actually accomplished these goals. I knew most of the items could easily be addressed,

but there were others that would take time to address, especially those concerning the evaluator and apprehensions. Ultimately, several goals resulted from our first compensation meeting.

- This team would create a compensation model that rewards quality contributions to the district and, most importantly, to our students.
- This team would create a model where no one experienced a pay cut during the transition.
- This team would create a survey in order to learn more about each teacher's ideas.
- This team would like to have a model in place for the 2014-2015 school year.

The second goal was perplexing to me, as it would be something I would never consider doing. I believe this concern came from a result of a neighboring district's compensation model. In their model, there was potential for a teacher to lose salary based on their evaluation. I could appreciate the concern. The next meeting was set for October 16, 2013.

**Teacher compensation meeting two.** Much of our second meeting focused on our teacher survey and appropriate, direct questions. Each member of the committee agreed that more direct questions would be the best. We also did not want more than 10 questions, as more than that would become cumbersome to complete and to analyze. Surprisingly, we were able to develop our questions, presented below, within an hour:

Question 1. Other than education level and years of experience, what other factors should be considered when determining teacher compensation?

Question 2. What are your apprehensions when moving toward a teacher compensation model not solely based on education and years of experience?

Question 3. What do you believe are the benefits of moving to a compensation model not solely based on education and years of experience?

Question 4. What factors do you believe should not be included in a compensation model?

Question 5. Do you know any other compensation models we should consider or avoid?

Question 6. Any other comments or input?

I was anxious about the survey. In my administrative career, I learned with surveys, the surveyor must be prepared to read opinions that are not always easy to read. At the same time, I have also believed in order to create this new compensation model, we had to hear all voices and opinions.

With 30 minutes left in our meeting, two people shared some ideas they were pondering about a new compensation model. They shared ideas that centered on a teacher's overall effectiveness rating, which was determined through the CESA 6 Effectiveness Project. The model they were suggesting allowed for additional compensation for a *distinguished* rating versus an *effective* rating. If a teacher was in *need of improvement*, that teacher received a salary increase, but at a much lower level than that of an *effective* or *distinguished* teacher. The teacher who was rated *ineffective* did not earn any increase and was put on a plan of improvement. I was intrigued with their creative thinking, but their model still was in need of work. In addition, we needed to

learn more from the survey given to all teachers. Regardless, I was delighted to hear their idea, which proved to me this group of teachers believed in the credibility of the evaluation tool. If they were willing to tie additional pay to the model, they certainly believed the model was a valid tool.

*Survey results.* The teacher compensation committee asked our 108 teachers to complete a survey consisting of six questions. It was difficult to determine the exact number of teachers that completed the survey, since it was anonymous and many questions allowed for multiple answers.

Question 1. Other than education level and years of experience, what other factors should be considered when determining teacher compensation? Multiple ideas resulted from this question. However, the overriding themes were as follows:

- Teacher evaluations should be considered in teacher compensation.
- Compensation should be connected with the responsibilities a teacher takes on outside the workday.
- The courses a teacher teaches should be considered in compensation.
- Professional growth and evidence of continued learning should account for a portion of a teacher's compensation.
- Student achievement and teacher compensation should be connected.

Comments included, "We should be paid based on teacher effectiveness in the classroom." "Positive teacher evaluations should result in a pay increase." "I believe we all have different responsibilities and should be compensated for the value of everything we do to improve student learning."

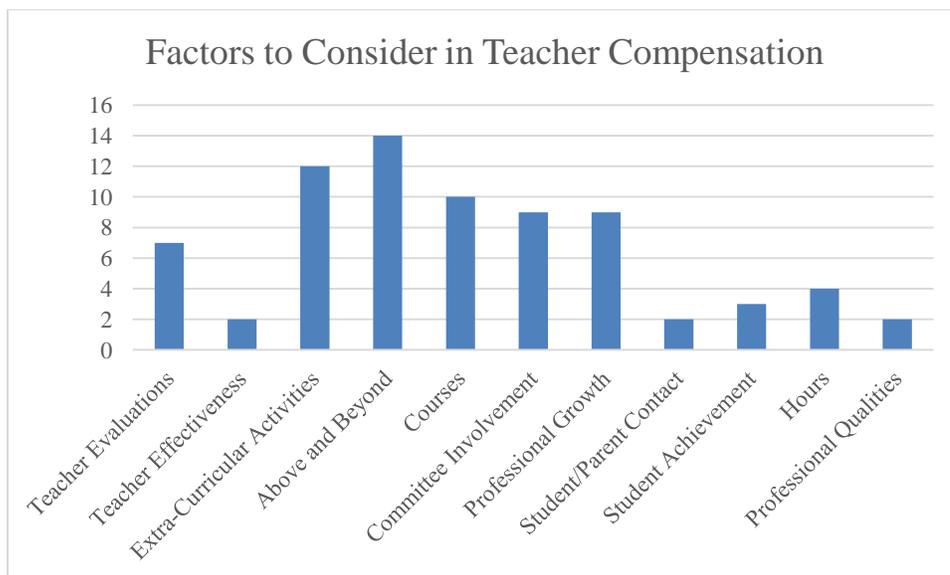


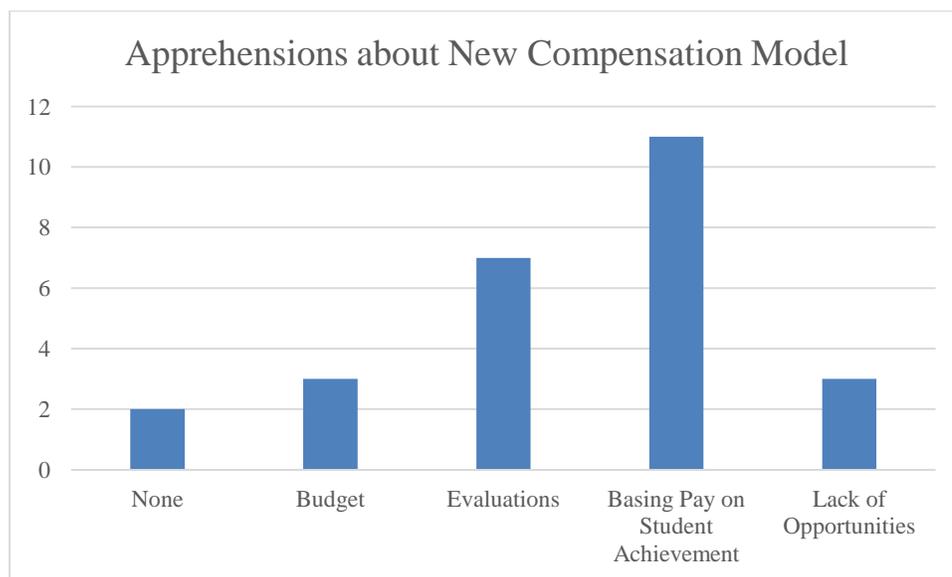
Figure 1. Factors to consider in teacher compensation.

Question 2. What are your apprehensions when moving toward a teacher compensation model not solely based on education and years of experience? This question did not have as much diversity as Question 1. The major themes that came from this question were:

- No apprehensions about a new model of compensation.
- The budget not being able to sustain the model.
- Effectiveness Project is subjective.
- Basing pay on student achievement.
- Lack of opportunities.

Comments included, “Evaluations are not based on enough information.” “Some may be really good at the *dog and pony show*, but may not be the best teacher.” “Teachers with advanced students will earn more pay.” “This is not the same as the business world, each student’s brain is different.” “What happens if there is not enough money to compensate

everyone according to the new model?” “It is not fair if an experienced teacher does not get an increase. They have committed themselves to the district.”

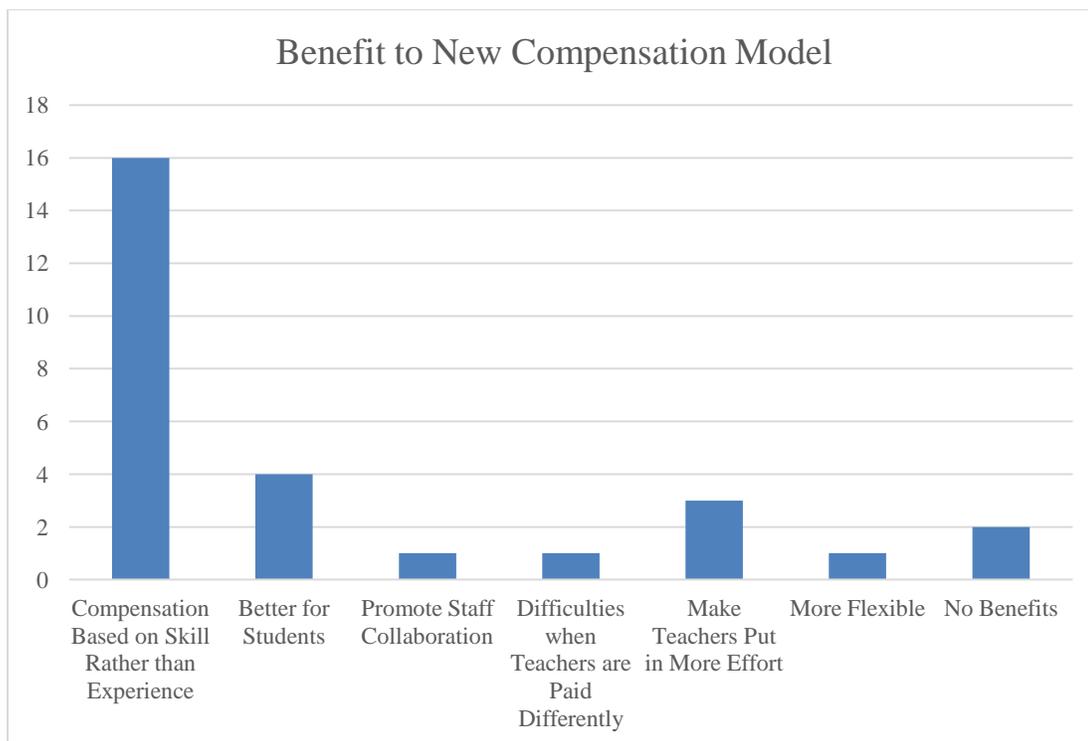


*Figure 2.* Apprehensions about new compensation model.

Question 3. What do you believe are the benefits of moving to a compensation model not solely based on education and years of experience? This question had three themes emerge:

- Compensation is based on skill rather than years of experience.
- It is better for students.
- It requires teachers to demonstrate their skills/put in extra effort.

Comments included, “I will be compensated based on my worth and not my age.” “Good teachers will be rewarded for what they do.” “Undoubtedly, motivation towards compensation will increase teacher-student performance.” “Rewards more than experience.”



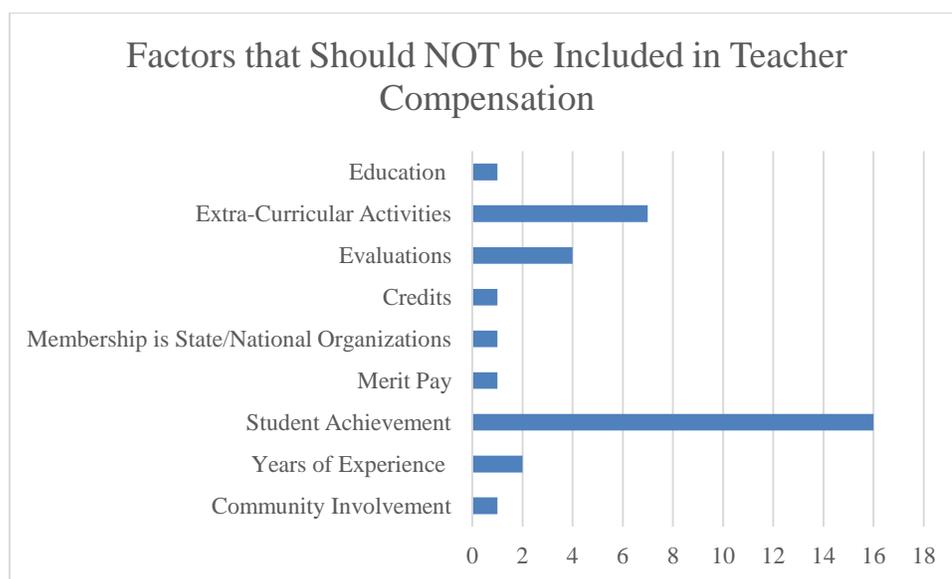
*Figure 3.* Benefit to new compensation model.

Question 4. What factors do you believe should not be included in a compensation model? Three main messages resulted from this question:

- Student achievement should not be included in teacher compensation.
- Involvement in extracurricular activities should not be part of compensation.
- Evaluations should not be included in teacher compensation.

Comments included, “Extracurricular involvement should continue to be a separate contract.” “Not all subject areas have a state test score.” “Results on a teacher created assessment should not be included, as it is too easy to make the results say what you want.” “Simply stated, if the administrator has ‘issues’ with said instructor, there is bias.”

“It is not fair if some students are struggling learners, and the teacher is paid based on student achievement.”



*Figure 4.* Factors that should NOT be included in teacher compensation.

Question 5. Do you know any other compensation models we should consider or avoid? Although themes did not result from this question, information offered was helpful. For example, it was mentioned that a neighboring district had some teachers who may face a pay decrease in their new model. There was also a statement expressed to do away with any sort of pay increase based on level of experience or education.

Question 6. Any other comments or input? The overriding theme for this question was simple. It was thank you for asking and allowing all teachers to have input.

When I looked at all six questions individually, it was clear what teachers wanted in compensation based on that one specific question. However, when I looked at all six questions in the summary of what teachers wanted, this was difficult; contradictions abounded. For example, I could not definitively say teachers in the district wanted their

compensation based on their evaluation. I could not conclude that teachers wanted student achievement to influence their pay. Confusion caused me to wonder how much influence past union practice played into their answers. It seemed when answering certain questions, teachers wanted to be perceived as individuals and recognized for their work with students; yet in other questions, teachers expressed concern for their entire group. This was interesting, since studies have shown varied levels of influence on teacher compensation. Bruner and Squires (2013) reported unions set both rate of pay for initial membership and training phases within the district. It seems as if some teachers view their compensation as a rite of passage. In other words, the teacher needs to be teaching in the district for a pre-determined amount of years in order to earn compensation that is remotely close to a more experienced teacher. It could be possible that some of the voices on the survey are union leaders of the past. According to Cowen (2009) and Lovenheim (2009), typically, union leader objectives have contrasted with union individuals. Although our union leadership and teachers did not demonstrate or protest Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) publicly, the voice to keep the status quo or not embrace a new model could be their attempt to maintain a model that only encompasses years of experience and education.

**Teacher compensation meeting three.** The results of the teacher survey did not provide clear direction, but the discrepancies made me believe there was opportunity. Teachers were not adamantly opposed to a pay-for-performance model nor were they strongly in favor of a pay-for-performance model. The teacher compensation committee knew we would not please everyone, but also believed if we could continue to

communicate and share what our committee was working on, it would prove better for any model the Board of Education might approve. It was only November, but we also knew the holidays were quickly approaching, and then it seems that spring is upon us, and we quickly finish the year. The committee wanted to present a model to the full Board in March 2014.

Two members of the compensation committee presented their revised, more complete proposal. They explained their updated proposal using a grid. The rows represented years of experience and the columns represented the teacher's effectiveness rating. Every three years, the teacher has the opportunity to move to the right one or two levels, depending on the effectiveness rating. Each level represented \$1,500. During the two off years, teachers would earn a \$1,000 increase as a means to account for a cost of living raise. If a teacher were to be deemed *ineffective* by their supervisor, they would not advance in any salary or move to the right.

My initial reaction was that this new model looked similar to our current step and lane model. It made me anxious, because it did not represent a great deal of change. Almost all teachers would advance in salary by \$1,000 simply because they completed another year of service. During the evaluation year, a teacher could earn an additional \$4,000. I thought my reaction of anxiety was potentially an overreaction, but it was nothing compared to the reaction of the Board of Directors compensation committee, who wanted to know how it was different from the current model. The amount of potential compensation was not going to positively impact our overall budget. The Board

questioned how it fit with the Consumer Price Index. Despite some negativity, the Board members and I decided to move the proposal to the full Board to get their reaction.

**The big mistake.** When the compensation committee walked into the boardroom, a hush fell over the entire room. I was wondering what the other Board members already knew about the compensation model that was to be presented. Why the hush? Then, for a quick moment, I felt encouragement looking at the faces who committed to developing a model for the Board. Everyone involved was committed to the district, and it was reassuring to realize that although I was anxious about the proposal being brought forward, I knew each of these people were the people that make our district great. I had grown to trust, respect, and care for each of them more as their administrator and colleague through our discussions about teacher compensation. I knew what they valued and how much they cared about our students.

I was not sure of the range of emotions I would experience at this Board of Education meeting. I was starting to become distressed as the Board members seemed to become quieter and quieter, and the teacher members of the committee joined them in the silence. The agenda began as usual. After consent items were discussed and approved, the compensation committee stood and presented the proposal. The Board members remained quiet. After the presentation, the Board of Education continued with the silence for what seemed to be an eternity, until one Board member, who also served on the compensation committee, voiced that he could not support the plan. Shock, anger, and the feeling of stupidity all became a huge cloud hanging over me. How could this happen? Why would he say he did not support the model when it was decided by consensus that

the proposal should come before the Board? Once he chimed in, other Board members jumped on all the reasons why they could not support the proposal. I looked out into the teacher group. I saw anger, confusion, and blank stares. How would I possibly restore the sense of togetherness we created through our compensation committee process? I felt the feelings of distrust, frustration, and resentment that others experienced in other districts when Governor Walker announced his intentions with Wisconsin Act 10 (2011). My teachers did not protest; they did not bring politics into their classrooms; but now, their well-intended efforts to work together as a team with administrators and board members was all for naught. These negative emotions were now very present in the district. In addition to not accepting or even asking for revisions to the model, the Board directed the business manager and me to create a model that would in no way, shape, or form resemble a step and lane type of model. I was speechless. I felt betrayed by the Board, and I felt I was betraying the work of the committee. However, I also understood my role. I was the face of the district. I was responsible for the successes in the district, but I was also responsible for the failures. This was an epic fail.

**Glimmers of hope.** As I pondered what to do next, I could not figure out how to explain what had happened or how to proceed in a positive manner. I was concerned with the appearance of negativity or being unsupportive of the Board of Education. I was struggling. The next teacher compensation meeting was a few days away. I was hoping this meeting would be a celebration of our hard work being validated by the Board and the creation of a communication strategy for the remaining staff. As I reflected, I remembered the struggles we experienced when Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) was unveiled.

During this tumultuous time, I made the conscious decision to role model professionalism, kindness, compassion, and true appreciation. I would role model again during this uneasy time. Even with this recent rejection from our Board, I knew we would pull through—we had to.

I had no idea what to expect as I was preparing for the meeting. I was unsure about the range of emotions I would experience. Just prior to the meeting, I continually told myself not to cry. I was not sure if I was afraid to cry simply because I did not want to show my disappointment or if I thought crying would be a sign of lack of leadership. I knew if I cried, it may allow others to feel a sense of recovery and potentially take some responsibility off my shoulders, but I also knew that a pity party for myself would not be the best decision of the district. I was distressed for two reasons. I did not know what emotions I would display and I wanted to represent the Board in a positive light. However, I also wanted the teachers to know I supported them, valued their input, and truly cared about their feelings on the topic. This was a difficult situation for me, especially since I was a fairly new district administrator.

All eyes were aimed directly at me. I knew rumors were running rampant about the district with respect to the Board meeting and what I was going to do next. Thankfully, our Director of Business Services offered to open the meeting by asking how the committee members were feeling. As she led this conversation, I was in deep concentration, staring at each of the teachers. I remember learning in high school if you were experiencing anxiety while you are doing a speech, a good strategy was to look at the hairline of the audience, so you do not have to make direct eye contact. I knew if I

made eye contact with any of the teachers, my eyes would well up with tears. I think my lack of eye contact was a way to circumvent a crying episode from me. I knew I had to speak in a matter of minutes, and I just felt sick.

I remained stronger than I ever thought I could. I first thanked everyone for all of their efforts and assured them we were going to come up with a compensation model that everyone felt was fair. Suddenly, I felt my demeanor change. I was attempting to stare at hairlines, but found my eyes looking right at each of the teachers. At this point, I lost control of my emotions and tears flowed. I was overcome and barely able to utter any words. I believe this emotion was the result of the strong relationships I had formed over the years. All I saw was frustration and disappointment on their faces. I regained my composure when I could see their body language change. Teachers were now showing signs of empathy and encouragement. I could feel my posture, breathing, and tone of voice change. I was able to continue.

I attempted to explain that by taking parts of the compensation model that worked for the Board and for the teachers, we could build a new model. The Director of Business Services and I had some ideas, so I was confident that the Board charging us with creating a new model was doable.

Through these tears and acknowledgement of failure, I was certain there were teachers who were unmoved. I am also certain that many teachers appreciated my passion and knew we would find a new path to move forward. I realize now the power of groups. Our teacher compensation group, along with three Board members, worked through the challenging task of creating a new teacher compensation model. We created norms about

how we would treat each other. We acknowledged each other's position on the topic. We knew there were differences of opinion, but we always kept things professional. Although our group was feeling deflated, now was the time to realign and shine. I was eager to get working, because there was not much time left if we wanted to implement a new model at the start of the next school year.

**Keep things simple.** We got to work. The Director of Business Services and I explained how we would keep the compensation committee in the loop and get feedback from them as we made progress. Direction from the Board was clear—we needed to remove any sort of reference to a step and lane model. The Board believed teachers should be paid based on what they bring to our students, their profession, and our community. Direction from teachers was also clear. They believed in an annual salary increase, along with the ability to earn additional pay based on their work with students. We were confident we could meet each of these challenges.

We wanted to keep it simple. We looked at many models of compensation to study what other districts were doing. Other districts required teachers to establish portfolios, conduct peer reviews, report to a committee, or attend conferences. We simply felt these extra responsibilities were not necessary, since we were already using the CESA 6 Effectiveness Project. We decided to request input from the committee before moving any further with our idea.

We presented our idea to use the CESA 6 Effectiveness Project as a basis for a new model of compensation. The tool has six categories in which teachers are rated. The rating in each of the six categories would determine the teacher's performance raise for

the following year. In other words, we would use our current model of teacher evaluation and tie it to compensation. By using this proposed model, no additional work was required of the teachers. The proposed model satisfied the Board request to remove automatic pay increases, and it satisfied the teachers because they could earn additional pay based on their work. We were given the green light to move forward with our proposal. Now, we needed to work on details.

### **Compensation Model Established**

We worked diligently to get our plan in order. We knew the needs and wants of the Board and of the teachers, so the reality was simply putting the compensation plan in writing. We decided compensation would be on a 3-year cycle tied to the teacher effectiveness cycles and performance levels. Performance levels, as determined by teacher effectiveness, were *distinguished*, *effective*, *needs improvement/developing* for the initial educator, and *unacceptable*. There were two components of the plan, an annual salary increase and a performance raise. The annual salary increase was set at \$568 for teachers who had an overall rating of *distinguished*, *effective*, or *developing*. Teachers who had an overall rating of *needs improvement* or *unacceptable* would not be eligible for an annual salary increase. Performance raises were determined at the end of a 3-year evaluation cycle. The rating in each of the six categories would determine a teacher's performance raise for the following year. The performance raises ranged from \$694 to \$2,377. For example, a teacher with five *effective* ratings and one *needs improvement*

rating would earn a performance raise of \$694. A teacher with six *distinguished* ratings would earn a performance raise of \$2,377.

Placement of teachers on this proposed compensation model was difficult, but we needed to start somewhere. We currently had a 3-year evaluation cycle, so we decided current staff would remain in their current cycle. If a teacher were to be formally evaluated the following year, they would be placed on cycle three or the formal evaluation year in the new model. Teachers who were up for evaluation the following year would be placed on cycle two, and a teacher who was three years out from a formal evaluation would be placed on cycle one. Placement of incoming educators would be at my discretion. Factors in the placement included, but were not limited to, years of experience, certifications held by the teacher, number of applicants for the position, credentials, and other additional qualifications and/or skills.

Putting a plan like this in writing was difficult, as we needed to be very clear. We knew exactly what we wanted to say, but actually putting it into a document was rather tedious. At this time, we decided to present to the teacher compensation committee, which included the three Board members. We set up the meeting date and time, but did not include our document with the invitation, as we felt we should walk through it step by step with the group to ensure our writing was clear and there were no misconceptions.

Of course, the anxiety prior to the meeting appeared again, but this time it was not just me, it was also our Director of Business Services. We practiced our talking points and ensured we were on the same page. We developed a list of questions we assumed might be asked. We were ready. By meeting time, the anxiety lessened, because we knew

we had a plan that incorporated the Board's wishes and the teachers' wishes. We went into the meeting with the motto, "It is what it is." We knew we would make modifications based on the Board's input. At the meeting, the faces in front of us were quite stoic. I could not read any emotions other than apathy. I so hoped I was reading their expressions incorrectly, as I was excited about this new plan. As our presentation went on, the audience became much more engaged in what we had to say. I could now feel some positive vibes being sent our way, either from head nods or general body language. This was good, and it got even better.

When we completed our presentation, we asked for input and/or questions. One Board member on the committee said he would like to add a component to the plan. He wanted something extra for *distinguished* work. He proposed at the end of the 3-year evaluation cycle, in addition to the performance raise, teachers who earned a *distinguished* rating in one or more of the categories would be eligible to receive an annual stipend for the next three years. He suggested one *distinguished* rating could be valued at \$250 annually, two *distinguished* ratings could be valued at \$500 annually, and three or more *distinguished* ratings could be valued at \$1,000 annually. I was floored! Was this an attempt to apologize? Was this a way to make amends? Regardless, I was astonished, and the teachers in the room appeared to be amazed. How could we go from deflated to elated? I am not sure, but we did. The next step was to take the proposed model to the full Board of Education, which we did, and it passed with ease. Amen! We had a new compensation plan for the 2014-2015 school year (see Appendix A for complete model).

**Communication strategy.** I knew from past experience, there could not be enough communication about our new model of compensation and there would never be enough forms of media to ensure that every teacher truly understood the plan. I also knew it was highly likely there would be teachers who did not appreciate the plan and would balk at every aspect of it. However, despite all of this potential mayhem, the Director of Business Services and I held small group meetings, all-school meetings, all-district meetings, and one-on-one meetings. We also created two different videos and developed a *Frequently Asked Questions* document. We wanted to do our best to ensure every teacher had every opportunity to learn about the new compensation model. Overall, the response was favorable, but until implementation the following year, we knew we would have our naysayers.

**Would the first year be our last?** The 2014-2015 school began like any other year. There were open houses, meeting and greeting new staff, and a multitude of other tasks. A new, additional meeting centered on the Effectiveness Project tool and teacher compensation. Despite the many introductions to the new system the previous school year, it seemed many teachers had the summer to mull things over and make the determination that they despised the system already. I could sense the tension and feel morale going down the tubes already. I heard comments like, “The plan is subjective.” “It is terrible to tie pay to this.” “Competition among teachers is wrong.” “This creates a poor climate.” The administrative team and I committed to a 3-year process in order for all teachers to be able to earn performance pay. We all believed in our model and felt it was a spectacular way to reward teachers for distinguished work.

As a group, we decided to hold additional listening sessions in order to understand where the frustration originated. We attempted to start a dialogue, but teachers seemed to not want to talk with us, but rather to talk with their peers. Although this was frustrating, I recognized Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) had compromised trust. Why would teachers potentially want to share their negative feelings with the people who implemented the changes required of Wisconsin Act 10? I understood, but it did not make this lack of communication acceptable. The district had a clear path to success, but this divide between administration and teachers would only result in a roadblock to success. We decided to create a District Leadership Team (DLT) for the 2014-2015 school year, comprised of teachers willing to ensure our communication and the district plan was successfully moving forward. Teachers needed to apply to be part of the group. The team consisted of three elementary teachers, two middle school teachers, three high school teachers, one special education teacher, principals, Director of Learning, Director of Pupil Services, and me.

**District leadership team.** A great deal of time and resources were invested into our district's Learning Path for Success. This path consisted of the Effectiveness Project, districtwide literacy, grading and reporting, and response to intervention. Keeping the momentum moving in a common direction is always a major task, which requires the work of more than one or two people. One structure to secure sustainable implementation of the learning path was the creation of our DLT.

The purpose of the DLT was to support the district's learning path through faculty meetings, general conversations, modeling of expectations surrounding the initiatives,

and listening to the needs of our staff and students. The DLT worked to ensure staff expectations were reasonable and realistic. The DLT also ensured appropriate staff development was provided and all perspectives were taken into account when making decisions. The DLT was going to be the pulse for a positive working climate. Some of the areas of focus for the group were professional development, early release days, school calendar, the Learning Path for Success, morale, climate, and staff in-service days prior to the start of the school year.

Teachers submitted applications to be part of this leadership team. The administrative team made the selections. Our first meeting was prior to the start of the 2014-2015 school year. The DLT wanted immediately to make a positive difference. The group decided that during our first and fourth early release of students, the teachers from the DLT would host roundtable discussions. The discussions were a venue for staff to discuss how to improve the climate, culture, and education for our students. Equally important to the DLT was how they could improve the climate, culture, and work conditions for teachers. The DLT teachers met in small groups with staff they worked closely with. For example, the high school DLT members met with other high school teachers. The first topics for discussion were fairly simple: What is good about the district? What stinks about the district? The DLT members were instructed to hold everything individuals said in confidence. Responses would be shared via a google doc with no names attached.

In the *what stinks* category, several teachers noted the workload had increased, but prep time had been reduced. Along similar lines, concern was expressed that we were

pursuing too many new topics and not getting good at a few topics. Two teachers noted *communication needs improvement*. Their comments centered around being in multiple buildings and hearing varying messages on the same topic. Lastly, four teachers noted they needed more positive specific feedback not just a mass *good job everyone*. There is a more complete list of comments; however, these were comments from more than one person. As painful as it was to read these beliefs, I knew it would make us better. In order to fix something, I needed to know the problems.

Along with the negatives, there were positives. Multiple elementary teachers noted the benefits to the newly created Dean of Students position in their building. They noted that having the Dean of Students allowed more access to the principal, which in turn has helped in their classroom instruction. Districtwide, teachers expressed appreciation for many of improvements to the district (for example, Track, Archway, and 4K) and the possibility of a renovated technology education area and new auditorium. The high school English department appreciated that they had been involved in decisions regarding their curriculum and department. “District Administrator does a great job of communicating with staff. We are kept informed of stuff; nothing seems hidden under the table” was a comment made by Team Six from the middle school. Other smaller items, but noted by more than one person, included:

- Director of Learning meetings regarding evaluations have been helpful.
- Five days of in-service prior to school starting were great.
- PBIS going well in the elementary building (focusing on the positives, consistent across the building).

- Strong community, family support, dedicated teachers, and a wonderful PTA were recognized.
- Jeans week without paying was enjoyed.

The DLT continued to work by listening to teachers' concerns, assisting with Effectiveness Project questions, and providing staff with information about the district. Often misunderstandings resulted from lack of communication. The DLT created *Did You Know* monthly emails. The emails contained information about retirement benefits, the 403b, teacher compensation, and mental health. These were awesome! Teachers do not have time to understand much of the behind the scenes information, so this was a great way to highlight information, and the teachers actually read it because it was from the DLT versus the administration.

The second roundtable discussion focused on climate versus culture, updates on changes as a result of the previous roundtable discussion, calendar input, and any other issue that teachers wanted to address. I was very interested in ideas around climate and culture, which are often used interchangeably, but are actually very different. I see climate as subjective experiences at school and culture as the bones of the school—how you really feel about the school. I also believed the strongest influence on how students treat each other as the culture of the school. Teachers' perceptions of climate and culture would, hopefully, cause a need to look into the mirror and not just reflect, but jump in and look out. Now what do you see? What can you now see from another perspective? The comments regarding climate and culture were interesting.

- I do not know how many districts would sit around and talk about climate versus culture—this is a good thing.
- I believe that my students view me as a caring teacher. A teacher who will do whatever it takes to ensure learning.
- I hope my students know I care about them. I guess I never really said anything like that.
- I need to recognize good work better. Maybe I should have student work hanging in my classroom.
- I need to celebrate differences.

Based on comments like these, I knew the work was not complete, but I realized we were headed in the right direction because individuals recognized a need for change.

**Keep calm and believe.** We completed year one with the new compensation model in place and everyone learned a great deal. Teachers understood the compensation model better in year two thanks to the DLT. There was limited apprehension, since one-third of our staff had completed the 3-year cycle and earned their performance raise. We only had one teacher identified as *needs improvement*, which meant almost every teacher earned an annual salary increase or performance pay, and many teachers earned a stipend on their December paycheck. Our teachers were buying-in to the compensation model. During year three, we needed to re-evaluate our plan, as the Board committed to a 3-year trial. I anticipated this process would take us the entire 2016-2017 school year.

The DLT, along with three Board of Education members, began meeting in September of 2016. We discussed what we liked about the model and what we would do

if we started over. We also bantered about what we would do if we had \$160,000 to disseminate. Surprisingly, the likes outweighed the dislikes. The group was charged with looking at our starting pay for new teachers, updating the annual salary increase, and getting input from other teachers. At our second meeting, DLT members shared the input from other teachers regarding ideas on a new base wage and annual salary increase. The Board listened to the DLT and then shared their idea on a new base wage. Again surprisingly, everyone came to agreement on our new base wage and annual salary increase during our second meeting, and no other changes to the model were recommended. Amazing!

The real struggle was the new base wage for beginning teachers. Essentially, we had first and second year teachers who were paid less than the new recommended wage. We knew we had to modify salaries to get the first and second year teachers up to the new wage. However, explaining they would be paid the same amount as a new teacher was the difficult part. The DLT understood the complexities regarding the new wage. We decided that together we would explain this to the affected teachers through individual meetings. The explanation consisted of two points: (1) the second and third year teachers were eligible for performance pay sooner than the new teachers, which resulted in an increase in base salary; and (2) to avoid a ripple effect through the entire pay scale, we decided increasing our base pay and increasing the base pay of teachers who were not at that level was the most efficient and practical solution.

Now our updated proposal needed to go before the full Board of Education. Although I had flashbacks to 2013, I was also confident, since the DLT, three Board

members, and administration supported the minor changes to the plan. The updated model passed with unanimous support (see Appendix B). The feeling of accomplishment was overwhelming. The sense of relief assured me we were continuing on our Learning Path to Success.

### **Summary**

The district administrator's and the teachers' professional lives in this Wisconsin school district changed dramatically with the implementation of Wisconsin Act 10 in 2011. Prior to 2011, teachers and their union had a great deal of influence over compensation; however, after 2011, this responsibility fell to the Board of Education and the district administrator. How we managed this shift was critical in ensuring harmony in the school district. This chapter outlined how one district administrator allowed input into decision making without creating a negotiation-like atmosphere, which I accomplished through the creation of various leadership teams made up of teachers and administrators. Their involvement was also to include being the voice for their colleagues. The leadership team held roundtable discussions with their peers in order to learn their thoughts and ideas about changes that were occurring in the district. Although the process was not always smooth, an important result was a new compensation model for our teachers.

## **Chapter V**

### **Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to examine how one district administrator managed teacher compensation since the implementation of Wisconsin Act 10 in 2011. This autoethnographic study of the author, a district administrator, examined the following questions pertaining to teacher compensation:

RQ1: How does one district administrator use the flexibility and freedom Wisconsin Act 10 provided to improve the working conditions of teachers?

RQ2: To what extent have changes in compensation impacted the personal and professional teaching culture of the district?

RQ3: How has the district administrator responded to the changes in the personal and professional teaching culture at the district?

This study focused on the self-reflection and personal analysis of the author, the district administrator of a school district in Wisconsin, and her personal experiences surrounding policy changes to teacher compensation following the passage of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011). Few studies have considered how teacher compensation entails involvement of the district administrators, the associated challenges these professionals face, and how such challenges were resolved. This study has the potential to provide an understanding into how the issue of teacher compensation may be handled in other Wisconsin school districts, along with how district administrators nationwide grapple with similar issues that affect their educational institutions.

I gleaned meaning from various artifacts for this self-study. I kept a journal documenting my feelings and thoughts. Meeting agendas, memos, personal calendars, and the analysis of each served as the data collection tools. Chapter V reviews the research questions that guided the study, as well as the researcher's self-reflections. Readers of this research might find their own story through my experience.

### **Overview**

As my own reflections developed and I looked deeper into the analysis of my story, the initial perceptions from 2011 did not change dramatically with this closer analysis. The meanings that surfaced from my personal reflections validated what I believed and experienced. Originally, I believed open communication and trust were two components of why the district and I survived the negative aspects of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011). After I dove deeper into my own story, I realized that communication and trust are truly the basis for creating a district with a sense of collective efficacy.

From 2011 to 2015, when Wisconsin Act 10 was introduced, to the approval of our first compensation model by the Board of Education, was a time of turbulence and multifaceted demands required of the district administrator. My personal journal entries from February 2011 through April 2011 had themes of fear mentioned 11 times, anger expressed nine times, and the words *sick to my stomach* written in the journal three times. I was clearly lacking confidence and any guidance during those years. Despite these negative themes expressed in the journal, the timeframe was critical for me and the development of my own character, as well as in shaping the school district. The years

2015 to 2017 proved to be validating. Our model of compensation was only slightly revised and approved within months.

### **Stakeholders and Teacher Compensation**

The first research question was: How does one district administrator use the flexibility and freedom Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) provided to improve the working conditions of teachers? The first challenge was personal. How did I feel about Wisconsin Act 10? I was perplexed about my feelings. One month after Governor Walker took office, he laid out this plan to improve the state's fiscal situation. This entailed limiting state aid to local governments, which resulted in a \$792 billion tax cut to school districts (Szafiret al., 2016). In order to compensate for this cut, Governor Walker provided districts with alternate means of controlling costs, or what he called tools. These tools allowed school boards and district administrators the opportunity to change existing policies surrounding hiring, firing, and best practices. While I appreciated the tools and the necessity to improve the financial status of the state, I could not understand how the plan was so abruptly introduced. It was not a campaign promise nor was it something I was aware of until February of 2011. This abruptness caused frustration and anger for me. I felt like it was a secret hidden agenda item.

I was not necessarily upset with the contents or intent of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011), I was upset with how it came about. It just seemed *shady* to me. Once I came to terms with the fact I could not change how the bill was introduced, I was able to focus on the potential of Wisconsin Act 10. On a post-it note in my bulging binder containing my

notes, journals, agendas, and thoughts during this uncertain time, I found a quote from John Wooden in my handwriting, “Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out.” As I dug deeper into this portion of the binder and compiled my thoughts, the theme of perseverance was beginning to emerge, as words like move forward, focus, and stay positive were written in my notes nine times. Reflecting and rereading these notes showing perseverance, I recalled this timeframe vividly. The district was unstable, but I knew as the leader I needed to lead and guide. I recalled not having an understanding of how to do this and hoped some other district administrator would guide me along. In my notes, there were notations of other district leaders’ names and contact information; however, I did not reach out to any of them. Every district was in a different spot, with a different Board of Education, and each district had a unique reaction to the change.

After coming to terms with the onset of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011), the second challenge was interacting with teachers and board members. I needed to work through the rumors, the *what ifs*, and focus on the reality of the law and what the law specifically meant to the district. I felt as if I was on a teeter-totter and needed to stay in the middle in order to balance and maintain stability for the district. The impact of this law on the district from a fiscal standpoint was tremendous. Undoubtedly, the tools of Wisconsin Act 10 allowed the district to get out of our operational referendum cycle. In addition, the district would save almost \$800,000 in health insurance. The focus needed to be on the benefits and positive aspects of the law and not on my belief that the governor was not being upfront during his campaign.

Prior to Wisconsin Act 10 (2011), the district union leadership acted as a middle man of sorts between teachers and the district administrator. The only voice heard by the district administrator was that of union leadership. Teachers did not go directly to administration with a concern regarding working conditions, but went to their union representative. This was how the chain of command worked. However, when talking with teachers in my role as principal, teachers thought their union did not represent them. Why they continued to follow this chain of command was intriguing, but it was the culture. The union leaders negotiated their priorities and not those of all teachers. When Wisconsin Act 10 was implemented, many teachers feared the newfound power of the Board of Education and district administrator would lead to an abuse of the power, which would result in less than desirable working conditions. Keeping this in mind, the district needed to acknowledge the emotions and concerns of Wisconsin Act 10, but equally as clear, I believed, Wisconsin Act 10 could be used to improve the working relationship between the teachers and school board.

Improving working conditions started with allowing union leaders to provide feedback on the handbook. The results from this process was the creation of additional personal days, which allowed teachers flexibility during the school year; the dress code was revisited, which established that teachers needed parameters in order to maintain a professional appearance; an extra emergency day was added to allow for three days of unexpected life events; an additional day of bereavement leave was established to attend a funeral of someone who had a direct impact on the teacher; retirement benefits were altered, but not decreased; and teachers were no longer able to purchase district

sponsored health insurance with accumulated sick time, but rather received a tax-sheltered annuity valued up to \$50,000 that the teacher could use to purchase health insurance or whatever they desired.

A second element was creating the teacher compensation team, which allowed teachers to work directly with the Board of Education to create a model of compensation that was acceptable for each party. This relationship was not always easy, as at one point, a model was introduced and then shot down dramatically by the full Board of Education. However, the team regrouped and together created a model that pleased the Board and allowed teachers the potential to earn more than they were able to earn with the old step and lane system.

Lastly, establishing the DLT gave a voice to teachers. With so much change so quickly due to Wisconsin Act 10 (2011), I knew the morale was not as strong as it could be. Establishing the DLT gave everyone a voice. I no longer had to guess what was causing stress and concern, as open dialogue was created. The DLT conducted roundtable discussions in order to get feedback. As I reflected on this group and the benefit it has brought to the district, I cannot help but be thankful. In reviewing my journal, I discovered an email message from a high school teacher dated September 23, 2016. This email warmed my heart and summed up the good work of the DLT and the positive working conditions that have resulted:

Hello Everyone,

I just wanted to thank you for a great day! Never before have I been in a district that has treated their teachers as you have today. The baby shower

luncheon celebration was something I have never experienced at any school I have ever worked at. To be with colleagues and be treated as people first and teachers second was unbelievable.

Second, the compensation review the DLT held was awesome. I think we were all shocked that the district would take the time to actually ask for our input. I appreciate it more than you know. I think everyone was almost "giddy"--especially newer teachers to the district. We have never been given the pleasure of having our input taken seriously. Wow!!

We all felt a part of this school family and that the district cared about us as people and as teachers. That goes a long way at a time when education in the State of Wisconsin is not exactly flourishing; but you are doing it right! Thank you.

Have a great weekend.

Listening to past union leaders, creating a teacher compensation group, and forming the DLT all resulted in stronger communication between teachers and administration. This, in turn, resulted in improved working conditions for everyone.

### **Changes to Teaching Culture**

The second research question was: To what extent have changes in compensation impacted the personal and professional teaching culture of the district? The initial changes did not come without anxiety. As reported from the DLT's first roundtable discussion, the new compensation earned low marks. Some comments were as follows:

- Evaluations are subjective, and are now tied to my pay.
- Terrible to tie our pay to evaluation. It causes tension and competition between teachers.
- New model creates animosity.

I could understand these feelings, as the model was new and completely different from the traditional step and lane model. Despite attempts to communicate the new model in every form of media we had available to us, *new* seemed to lead to confusion regardless of efforts to eliminate misinformation. Not surprisingly, when there is misinformation and lack of clarity, frustration is usually the result. Teacher morale was low. My journal had comments from teachers expressing distrust in their evaluator and the Effectiveness Project. For example, my journal had notes from a teacher conversation where she believed the evaluator was not paying attention to her lesson, since the administrator was on his computer throughout the lesson. She explained that he noted items in the evaluation that were not true to the lesson. She felt betrayed and misrepresented.

Additionally, my journal indicated teachers were questioning how the categories in the Effectiveness Project were developed. I read statements like, “Who was part of the effectiveness team?” “Why do we need to follow a plan developed as an alternative to the state model?” “Why is assessment included if we are not being evaluated on state test scores?” I also had notes and questions asking why administrators were supposedly conducting pre- and post-conferences in a manner that did not allow the teacher to ask questions or probe more deeply as to why the administrator rated them in the way they

did. I found one comment in my journal I had written especially disturbing. It was after a meeting with a specific grade level team and stated, “Yikes! X school is hurting. Z principal is cutting and pasting statements into evaluations.” This needed to be addressed and addressed quickly. The teachers involved no longer trusted their administrator. The culture was suffering and not just at that particular school. There was work to do, but identifying what was needed to be done was a good start.

Change is never easy. I needed to stay the course, knowing the DLT was in place to help eliminate the confusion and misinformation. In addition, I also knew the old model of steps and lanes rewarded longevity, regardless of talent, student outcomes, or professionalism. This old system did not do enough to encourage teachers to improve their skills or reward those teachers who were making exceptional gains academically and socially with their students. It lacked incentive. It was important to remain focused and to keep moving forward. I knew this model promoted teacher and student growth. The DLT and I continued to listen. We developed programs to assist with understanding the Effectiveness Project. We created *Did You Know* monthly emails and continued to address questions, and I continued to offer meetings to address any questions or concerns the teachers had.

By year three of the compensation model’s implementation, there was much less confusion. Every veteran teacher had gone through the complete 3-year cycle. Teachers were seeing the benefits of their hard work not only through test scores and state report cards, but also through their compensation. Our middle school is an exceptional learning center, where student achievement is one of the highest in our state. Their 2016-2017

State Report Card score was 93.5 points out of 100 points, which is a rating of *significantly exceeds expectations*. The teaching staff is exceptional and extremely dedicated. There are 12 teachers in the middle school who have earned an overall *distinguished* rating, and rightfully so. This *distinguished* rating is not directly related to student achievement, but rather to the six categories in the Effectiveness Project: professional knowledge, instructional planning, instructional delivery, assessment for and of learning, learning environment, and professionalism. Although student achievement is not a category in and of itself, when teachers master the six listed categories, student achievement follows. In speaking with these teachers, it is amazing how humble they are when they say things like, “I am just doing my job” or “I love what I do.” The positive learning culture was coming back around.

### **Responding to Changes**

The third research question was: How has the district administrator responded to the changes in the personal and professional teaching culture of the district? Michael Fullan (2008), a recognized authority on organizational change, said, “Leaders have to provide direction, create the conditions for effective peer interaction, and intervene along the way when things are not working as well as they could” (p. 49). The various teacher groups established since the implementation of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) most certainly allowed me a more real opportunity to understand the consequences of the legislation from the teacher perspective. Without the creation of the teacher compensation team, I likely would not have received accurate feedback regarding their concerns. Without the

DLT, the roundtable discussions would not have occurred. Without the epic failure of our first compensation model, we would not have gone through the range of emotions necessary for us to regroup and refocus. Therefore, when push came to shove, the new ideas from Wisconsin Act 10 were accepted.

Change can be positive or negative. My job was to eliminate as much dysfunction as possible. My first response to this change in professional culture was to model the behaviors I valued—professionalism, kindness, compassion, and sincere appreciation for good work. In other words, I had to *walk the walk* and *talk the talk*. At district meetings, building-level meetings, and staff interactions in the hallways, I had to be a listener. I was the person who heard the fears and anxieties Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) delivered to the staff, along with reassuring them that the Board of Education appreciated their work and professionalism. I also needed to convince teachers that, although Wisconsin Act 10 brought new power to the Board and administration, there was no desire to abuse the power or take advantage of the situation. Yes, changes resulted due to Wisconsin Act 10, but many changes had minimal impact on individuals, or if changes were dramatic, they were in the favor of the teacher (i.e., compensation). This was difficult at times, since any change seems to bring resistance. My journal had three situations with teachers where I used words to describe their behavior as unprofessional, immature, or obscene. I even labeled one person as an “ass.” I committed to staying positive and optimistic. There were times when I wanted to call out individuals who were acting less than professional or sharing mistruths, but I knew identifying and focusing on these negative comments would not move the district forward.

The administration understood the new model of compensation was a dramatic change. The communication strategy needed to be fully developed and completely implemented. We also knew that forming strong relationships between administration and teachers was necessary in order to create the trust necessary in the new model of compensation. The Director of Business Services and I conducted group meetings, all-school meetings, all-district meetings, one-on-one meetings; created videos; and developed a frequently asked questions document. Establishing collegial relationships, where people felt confident to share questions, concerns, and comments, was a means to more trusting relationships. Building this relationship was time consuming, but trust had to be established on a mutual level for administration and teachers. Care was taken to ensure all voices were heard. Again, this was time consuming, but the dividends were well worth the time. When the district administrators took the time to hear all the voices, clarity, confidence, and understanding of the new system was the result. When compensation was not the only topic for our DLT to ponder, it allowed all of us to focus on instruction and student learning.

### **Self-reflection**

The demands of a district administrator are complex. Balancing the needs of the Board of Education, teachers, students, and community have always been relevant, but Wisconsin Act 10 in 2011 brought in a new dynamic. This dynamic changed from the rigid union-run school district to a district that has the ability to make financial decisions that most certainly saved taxpayer dollars and, at the time, changed how we compensated

teachers. How is this done? How does the district administrator facilitate this change?

One way to learn how this is accomplished is to look through the eyes of the district administrator, hence, why I chose to use autoethnography for this research. Providing this form of research gives an opportunity for others to reflect on their own personal experience and ask, “What would I have done?”

Upon reflection, I realized my experiences enhanced my own understanding of the district. I was fortunate to have kept a journal, notes, and other forms of information dating back to 2011. I did not resurrect the data until 2016. This lapse in time allowed me to look at very personal and sensitive information in a more objective manner. In turn, I am hopeful I have assisted others in their own understanding of their school district and, more specifically, teacher compensation.

### **Recommendations**

I would be intrigued to learn more about the impact of Wisconsin Act 10 (2011) and teacher compensation from other perspectives. I would also love to talk with Governor Walker and ask him if he could re-introduce the bill all over again, would he change anything. Throughout this research, I wondered if Governor Walker would have worked with union leadership and educators to explain the bill and attempt to explain the whys and actually try to see the impact through the educator lens if the protesting and negativity could have been lessened.

I recently met Dr. Jenni Donohoo. Dr. Donohoo’s work on collective teacher efficacy has intrigued me. Establishing collective efficacy among teachers is critical in

order to foster positive change. These efficacious beliefs are powerful, because they guide teachers' actions and behaviors, according to Dr. Donohoo. I wonder if Governor Walker could have applied this notion of collective efficacy if things could have been less contentious. It seems as if Governor Walker went too quickly from problem to solution and did not involve the people most impacted by his solution. Governor Walker did not seem to listen, which in turn resulted in great resistance.

I would also be intrigued to look further at autoethnographical work in the area of education. What other topics might educators be able to learn from each other by telling their personal story? This research has not only provided a deeper understanding of my own experience for myself, but I hope it enhances this form of qualitative research. As Wolcott (2003) described almost 40 years ago in his description of ethnography, "Researchers want to have to look around at what people in some other group are doing, or what people in their own group are doing, and sometimes even at what the researchers themselves are doing and feeling" (p. vii). I hope my work allows others the opportunity to take time to look around and to reflect on what they are doing and feeling and then relive their experiences through writing to support their own growth and, hopefully, to help others.

APPENDIX A

Teacher Compensation Model

## Teacher Compensation Plan – Effective Fall of 2014

### **I. Placement**

- a. All current educators will initially be placed at their present salary and will remain on their existing evaluation cycle.
- b. Placement of incoming educators will be at the discretion of the District Administrator. Factors in the placement may include, but are not limited to: years of experience, certifications held by the educator, the number of applicants for the open position, credentials and other additional qualities/skills.
- c. Labor market factors may arise where modifications for individual employees are considered. This would require the District Administrator to bring a recommendation to the Board. Any modifications will be at the discretion of the Board.

### **II. Guidelines for Compensation and Promotion (effective 2015-2016)**

- a. **Teacher Effectiveness** – Compensation will be on a three year cycle that is tied to the teacher effectiveness cycles and performance levels. Performance levels as determined by teacher effectiveness are: Distinguished, Effective, Developing, Needs Improvement, and Unacceptable.
- b. **Components of Compensation Plan** – There are two components to the compensation plan – annual salary increases and performance raises. Both are at the discretion of the Board and will be determined every three years. Amounts as outlined below are guaranteed for the next 3 years (2015/2016, 2016/2017, 2017/2018). At the end of the three year cycle, the components and rates will be evaluated by the board, with rates set for the next three years.
- c. **Annual Salary Increases** – Annually, educators who have an overall rating of Distinguished, Effective, or Developing will be eligible for an annual salary increase of \$627 (Effective July 1, 2017). Educators who have an overall rating of Needs Improvement or Unacceptable will not be eligible for an annual salary increase.
- d. **Performance Raise** – This is determined at the end of a three year evaluation cycle. The rating in each of the six categories (performance standards) will determine an educator's performance raise for the following year based on the table below:

<b>Rating in Each Teacher Effectiveness Category</b>	<b>Performance Raise</b>
<b>GOAL for ALL TEACHERS →6 Effective</b>	\$1,115
<b>1 Distinguished, 5 Effective</b>	\$1,325
<b>2 Distinguished, 4 Effective</b>	\$1,535
<b>3 Distinguished, 3 Effective</b>	\$1,746
<b>4 Distinguished, 2 Effective</b>	\$1,956
<b>5 Distinguished, 1 Effective</b>	\$2,166
<b>6 Distinguished</b>	\$2,377
<b>5 Effective, 1 Needs Improvement</b>	\$ 694
<b>4 Effective, 2 Needs Improvement</b>	\$ 0

If in any of the six categories (performance standards), an educator receives a Needs Improvement rating *and* a Distinguished rating in one or more other performance standards, the performance raise will be deemed to be \$694 (equivalent to someone with 5 Effective ratings and 1 Needs Improvement rating).

Educators who have an overall rating of Needs Improvement will *not* receive a performance raise; they will be required to complete a plan of improvement. Upon successful completion of a plan of improvement and a subsequent overall rating of at least Effective, the educator will be eligible for a performance raise. Educators who have a rating of Unacceptable will not be eligible for a performance raise and may be non-renewed.

- e. Educators New to the District** – Educators that are new to the district are immediately placed on the new teacher evaluation cycle. Provided they are rated either effective or distinguished in year one, they will move to cycle II in year two. New teachers will be eligible for performance pay based on their overall rating in cycle III.

### **III. Stipends/Incentives to be Distinguished (effective 2015-2016)**

At the end of the three year evaluation cycle, in addition to the performance raise outlined above, educators who receive a Distinguished rating in one or more categories may be eligible to receive a stipend for the following three years based on the table below.

Rating in Each Teacher Effectiveness Category	Stipend
<b>Distinguished in 1 category, Effective in other categories</b>	\$250 annually for 3 years
<b>Distinguished in 2 categories, Effective in other categories</b>	\$500 annually for 3 years
<b>Distinguished in 3 or more categories, Effective in other categories</b>	\$1,000 annually for 3 years

During the transition to the new compensation plan, an educator's most recent rating will determine whether or not they receive a stipend starting in 2015-2016.

These stipends are *not* added to an educator's contract salary; they will be in the form of a one-time payment during the school year. Stipends are based on funds available and are at the discretion of the Board.

**Examples – Please note that in all of these examples, year 2018-2019 is for illustrative purposes only. The board will be evaluating the model after the first 3 years and may change any or all parts of the compensation plan (including the annual salary increase, the performance raise and the stipend).**

***Example 1.*** Educator X is in year 2 of the teacher effectiveness evaluation cycle and is making \$44,800. Educator X's previous overall rating (from 2 years ago) is Effective (1 Distinguished, 5 Effective). In 2015-2016, Educator X will receive an annual salary increase of \$568 (due to the overall rating of effective). Educator X's total salary for 2015-2016 will be \$45,368. Educator X is eligible for a \$250 stipend in 2015-2016 as well. The stipend is not added to Educator X's base salary. At the end of 2015-2016, Educator X (who is in year 3 of the teacher effectiveness evaluation cycle), is rated overall effective (2 categories distinguished and 4 categories effective). In 2016-2017, Educator X will receive an annual salary increase and a performance raise for a total salary of \$47,471. Due to his/her new rating, Educator X is eligible to receive a \$500 stipend in 2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019.

Year	Effectiveness Cycle	Annual Salary Increase	Performance Raise	Salary	Stipend	Notes
2014-2015	Year 2			\$44,800	n/a	
2015-2016	Year 3	\$568	\$0	\$45,368	\$250	2 categories distinguished, 4 effective
2016-2017	Year 1	\$568	\$1,535	\$47,471	\$500	
2017-2018	Year 2	\$627	\$0	\$48,039	\$500	
2018-2019	Year 3	\$627	\$0	\$48,607	\$500	

**Example 2.** Educator Y is in year 3 of the teacher effectiveness evaluation cycle and is making \$39,900. At the end of 2014-2015, Educator Y receives an overall Needs Improvement rating. For 2015-2016, Educator Y is *not* eligible for an annual salary increase or performance raise. Educator Y will be placed on a plan of improvement and will be in year 3 of the teacher effectiveness evaluation cycle again. At the end of 2015-2016, Educator Y has improved and is rated overall Effective (5 Effective, 1 Needs Improvement). In 2016-2017, Educator Y will receive an annual salary increase and a performance raise for a total salary of \$41,162. Due to his/her rating, Educator Y is not eligible to receive an annual stipend.

Year	Effectiveness Cycle	Annual Salary Increase	Performance Raise	Salary	Stipend	Notes
2014-2015	Year 3			\$39,900	n/a	Needs Improvement
2015-2016	Year 3	\$0	\$0	\$39,900	\$0	5 Effective, 1 Needs Improvement
2016-2017	Year 1	\$568	\$694	\$41,162	\$0	
2017-2018	Year 2	\$627	\$0	\$41,730	\$0	
2018-2019	Year 3	\$627	\$0	\$42,298	\$0	

**Example 3.** Educator Z is new to the district (he/she came from another district with many years of experience). Educator Z is placed on the new teacher effectiveness evaluation cycle and is making \$51,000. At the end of 2015-2016, Educator Z is rated overall distinguished (with 3 categories Distinguished and 3 Effective). In 2016-2017, Educator Z is moved to year 2 of the evaluation cycle. Educator Z will receive an annual salary increase, but is not eligible for a performance raise (due to being new to the district). Educator Z's total salary for 2016-2017 will be \$51,568 and Educator Z will also receive a \$1000 stipend for his/her Distinguished rating. The following year, Educator Z will receive an annual salary increase and a stipend. In 2017-2018, Educator Z is in year 3 of the evaluation cycle and at the end of the year, again receives an overall distinguished rating (3 Distinguished and 3 Effective). In 2018-2019, Educator Z is eligible to receive an annual salary increase and for the first time, is eligible to receive a performance raise.

Year	Effectiveness Cycle	Annual Salary Increase	Performance Raise	Salary	Stipend	Notes
2015-2016	New Teacher			\$51,000	n/a	3 categories Distinguished,3 Effective
2016-2017	Year 2	\$568	\$0	\$51,568	\$1,000	
2017-2018	Year 3	\$627	\$0	\$52,136	\$1,000	3 categories Distinguished,3 Effective
2018-2019	Year 1	\$627	\$1,746	\$54,450	\$1,000	

APPENDIX B

Teacher Compensation Model 2017

## Teacher Compensation Plan – Effective 2017 – 2020

### **I. Placement**

Placement of incoming educators will be at the discretion of the District Administrator. Factors in the placement may include, but are not limited to: years of experience, certifications held by the educator, the number of applicants for the open position, credentials and other additional qualities/skills.

Labor market factors may arise where modifications for individual employees are considered. This would require the District Administrator to bring a recommendation to the Board. Any modifications will be at the discretion of the Board.

### **II. Guidelines for Compensation and Promotion**

- A. **Teacher Effectiveness** – Compensation will be on a three year cycle that is tied to the teacher effectiveness cycles and performance levels. Performance levels as determined by teacher effectiveness are: Distinguished, Effective, Developing, Needs Improvement, and Unacceptable.
- B. **Components of Compensation Plan** – There are two components to the compensation plan – annual salary increases and performance raises. Both are at the discretion of the Board and will be determined every three years. Amounts as outlined below are guaranteed for the next 3 years (2017/2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020). At the end of the three year cycle, the components and rates will be evaluated by the board, with rates set for the next three years.
- C. **Annual Salary Increases** – Annually, educators who have an overall rating of Distinguished, Effective, or Developing will be eligible for an annual salary increase of \$627. Educators who have an overall rating of Needs Improvement or Unacceptable will not be eligible for an annual salary increase.
- D. **Performance Raise** – This is determined at the end of a three year evaluation cycle. The rating in each of the six categories (performance standards) will determine an educator's performance raise for the following year based on the table below:

Rating in Each Teacher Effectiveness Category	Performance Raise
<b>GOAL for ALL TEACHERS →6 Effective</b>	\$1,115
<b>1 Distinguished, 5 Effective</b>	\$1,325
<b>2 Distinguished, 4 Effective</b>	\$1,535
<b>3 Distinguished, 3 Effective</b>	\$1,746
<b>4 Distinguished, 2 Effective</b>	\$1,956
<b>5 Distinguished, 1 Effective</b>	\$2,166
<b>6 Distinguished</b>	\$2,377
<b>5 Effective, 1 Needs Improvement</b>	\$ 694
<b>4 Effective, 2 Needs Improvement</b>	\$ 0

If in any of the six categories (performance standards), an educator receives a Needs Improvement rating *and* a Distinguished rating in one or more other performance standards, the performance raise will be deemed to be \$694 (equivalent to someone with 5 Effective ratings and 1 Needs Improvement rating).

Educators who have an overall rating of Needs Improvement will *not* receive a performance raise; they will be required to complete a plan of improvement. Upon successful completion of a plan of improvement and a subsequent overall rating of at least Effective, the educator will be eligible for a performance raise. Educators who have a rating of Unacceptable will not be eligible for a performance raise and may be non-renewed.

- E. Educators New to the District** – Educators that are new to the district are immediately placed on the new teacher evaluation cycle. Provided they are rated either effective or distinguished in year one, they will move to cycle II in year two. New teachers will be eligible for performance pay based on their overall rating in cycle III.

### **III. Stipends/Incentives to be Distinguished**

At the end of the three year evaluation cycle, in addition to the performance raise outlined above, educators who receive a Distinguished rating in one or more categories may be eligible to receive a stipend for the following three years based on the table below.

<b>Rating in Each Teacher Effectiveness Category</b>	<b>Stipend</b>
<b>Distinguished in 1 category, Effective in other categories</b>	\$250 annually for 3 years
<b>Distinguished in 2 categories, Effective in other categories</b>	\$500 annually for 3 years
<b>Distinguished in 3 or more categories, Effective in other categories</b>	\$1,000 annually for 3 years

A teacher new to the district is also eligible for the stipend based on their formal evaluation.

These stipends are *not* added to an educator's contract salary; they will be in the form of a one-time payment during the school year. Stipends are based on funds available and are at the discretion of the Board.

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