

***Shirley Prince, NCPAPA Executive Director***

## **Legislative Priority - Provide adequate compensation for school principals and assistant principals**

School superintendents know that the degree to which a school is high-performing is in direct correlation to the effectiveness of the school principal. Hiring and retaining strong principals is one of the top priorities of a superintendent. Principals, as the CEOs of their schools, are responsible and accountable for all facets of school performance, most importantly, the selection, evaluation and development of their teachers. With this in mind, superintendents understand that principals not only have to be strong leaders, they must also be strong instructional experts if they are going to lead the teaching and learning process and the professional development of their teachers.

The importance of leadership in any organization, whether in education or business, is widely known and espoused. To be effective, organizations must work continuously to improve leadership succession plans, career development and support, and compensation structures that will drive the creation of a strong leadership system. Teachers are important as well and our superintendents and principals have long been the most vocal advocates for higher teacher pay. The most recently enacted teacher salary schedule was an attempt to create a more competitive teacher compensation system; however, an analysis of the new state salary schedules, shows that there now exists little to no financial incentive for a teacher to choose school leadership as a career path.

When comparing the salary schedules, the vast majority of assistant principals and principals would earn more or very slightly less per month than they would as a teacher at the same experience and education level, even with longevity factored into the monthly salary. This compensation structure does not incentivize strong teachers to go into school leadership. Of course, we all want great teachers in our classrooms, but as superintendents clearly understand, when we find great teachers who also possess the ability, desire, and willingness to lead entire schools to greatness, that is when we can leverage that leader's talent in ways that benefit **all** students and **all** teachers in the school. Today's principals are highly responsible and publicly accountable for improving **every** teacher's performance and assuring **every** student's success.

At a time when strong principals are needed more than ever, the immense pressures associated with the job, especially when weighed against the inequities inherent in the current compensation system, create little to no incentive for choosing to go into or remain in school-based leadership roles. We need a compensation structure for principals and assistant principals that encourages strong instructional leaders to go into or remain in school-based leadership roles. Further, we need a salary structure that adequately compensates these leaders for the rigorous demands and challenges of the job and the level of education and instructional expertise required of them.