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Merit Pay in Education and How it Helps Us All

People often discuss how poor the education system is in America and that the teachers are not doing their jobs well. Teachers have complained that they do not earn enough in their job and that's why they don't do their job well. Teacher's salaries are mostly based off of credentials, seniority, and teaching experience. These characteristics should not be disregarded as they definitely should be taken into account but one thing that salary isn't based on is their performance in the classroom. If teachers were to be paid based on performance. It would give teachers an incentive to work and to improve. The main idea of merit pay is that there should be a system put in place that evaluated teachers based on their performance as a teacher and paid them accordingly. This would ultimately benefit all as it would create a better educational system. It is common sense that when people want to do something and put in all their effort, that they will do better than they would of if they put less effort and/or did not want to do something.

The obvious benefit of performance-based pay would be that it would give teachers an extrinsic incentive to do their jobs. Of course, some teachers enjoy their work and the enjoyment they get from their line of work is enough to satisfy and the pay does not matter to them. Other teachers, especially over time, feel that sense of

satisfaction deteriorate. So, if a teacher does not feel as if they are being paid fairly and in correlation with the effort they put in, they are more likely than not, to put less effort in. The extrinsic incentive bias, in psychology, is defined as an incentive that gives something not relating to your own motives like a monetary reward. This usually is more of an incentive than an intrinsic incentive like learning new things. An extrinsic incentive is exactly what teachers need, and what the students need as well.

Another benefit of a merit pay system is that it would benefit the students due to them receiving a better education from teachers who would want to do their job. If the student feels more engaged and learns to love learning, they are going to be more likely to succeed and cause economic growth over time. The National Bureau of Economic Research has released statistics and research papers showing a direct correlation between the quality of education and the growth effect it has on the economy. Simple math, a better educated population means more economic success.

Finally, the overall benefit would be a more educated, intelligent, and satisfied nation. The satisfaction of teachers finally being properly respected and acknowledged, and that being reflected in their salary. Having students that want to learn, are more engaged, and dare to go farther in life. This would make us, as a country, a better place to live due to people wanting to go to and work in schools.

People who disagree with the idea of merit pay may state that teachers are not the only influence on children, parents and the environment surrounding the student also have an influence on whether or not a child succeeds in school and life. While that is true, teachers still have a huge influence on a child as they see them everyday and in

systems where merit pay is established, the workers accept being judged for their performance and understand that they will be judged.

To recap, the main idea of merit pay for teachers is that there should be a system put in place that evaluates teachers based on performance and pays them accordingly. This system would overall increase the quality of education and help us as a nation by paying teachers fairly and students by receiving a better education. In this age of information, we are judged by the quality of our education system.

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