

## Modifications to Experience Factor Criteria

Many school districts are struggling with the transition from a graduated certificated salary allocation model to the new fixed salary allocation of \$65,216. The previous allocation model recognized that professional educator staff are paid on the basis of education and experience. As a result, the allocation model has recognized variable cost factors through staff placement on the state defined LEAP schedule. This new model penalizes school districts that have more experienced teachers by funding less than the previous model.

In the last legislative session, a fix to this issue was enacted beginning in the 2019-20 school year. The remedy provides an experience factor to increase the certificated instructional salary allocation by 4%. The basis for qualifying for the experience factor requires *certificated instructional staff median years of experience that exceed the statewide average certificated instructional staff years of experience and a ratio of certificated instructional staff advanced degrees to bachelor degrees above the statewide ratio*. This methodology leaves a significant number of school districts not eligible for the experience factor that have higher salary costs as a direct result of their experienced staff. The barrier for these districts is the requirement to have ratio of staff with advanced degrees to bachelor degrees above the determined state average. In fact, 7 of the top 10 school districts with the greatest average years of experience didn't qualify for the experience factor.

Nine Mile Falls School District is an example of one of the many school districts in the state that has significantly experienced staff (over 17 years), but doesn't meet the criteria for receiving the experience factor. The table below shows a comparison of data between Nine Mile Falls and Coupeville School Districts. Coupeville has been designated to receive the 4% experience factor. Based on the data in the table below, would you have expected a different designation?

School District	Student FTE	2017-18 Salary Allocation per Teacher unit	2018-19 Salary Allocation per Teacher (Actual)	Est. Levy/LEA Loss	Average Years of Experience	Experience Factor 2019-20
Nine Mile Falls	1,406	\$59,935	\$65,216	-\$1,589,045	17.6	No
Coupeville	983	\$56,789	\$65,216	\$0.00	14.0	Yes

We request your consideration to expand the experience factor eligibility criteria to include school districts that exceed the statewide average for years of experience by 15%. We estimate that this would increase the number of school districts who would be eligible by 56 school districts, with an estimated cost of \$16 million. The 4% experience factor for these school

districts will not resolve the overall financial challenges they are facing, but would be significant in reducing the impacts of transitioning to the new funding formula.

Proposed Language:

### **Staff Mix Hold Harmless?**

**Sec. 203.** RCW 28A.150.412 and 2017 3rd sp.s. c 13 s 104 are each amended to read as follows:

(2)(c) In addition to the regionalization factors specified in this subsection, for school districts that have certificated instructional staff median years of experience that exceed the statewide average certificated instructional staff years of experience and a ratio of certificated instructional staff advanced degrees to bachelor degrees above the statewide ratio **or have certificated instructional staff median years of experience that exceed the statewide average certificated instructional staff years of experience by fifteen percent**, an experience factor of four percentage points is added to the regionalization factor, beginning in the 2019-20 school year.