EXTENDED YEAR, EXTENDED CONTRACTS
Increasing Teacher Salary Options

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Classrooms across the country are losing many of their best teachers in their first few years of teaching. One of the primary reasons given by teachers for leaving teaching is low salaries. Although teacher pay has increased nearly 20% over the last decade, it still remains lower than for many other professions requiring a similar level of preparation. And, because of shifting demographics and a recession-hit economy, it is not likely to rise dramatically in the near future. One option for raising teachers' salaries within the confines of restricted state and local budgets is an extended contract made possible through year-round school schedules. This study reports on such an experiment, looking at issues of teacher satisfaction and burnout in extended-year contracts.

Every 7 years, nearly half of the teachers in the United States leave teaching (Anthony, 1988; Darling-Hammond, 1984). One of the most often-cited reasons for this high rate of attrition is the attractiveness of higher salaries offered outside of education (Murnane, Singer, Willett, Kemple, & Olsen, 1991). In survey after survey, teachers express their willingness to leave their teaching jobs for salaries as little as $2,000 more than their current earnings (Anthony, 1988). Although teachers note a number of work condition problems that trouble them—large class sizes, insufficient funding for materials and support services, and student discipline, for example—low salaries remain an important source of dissatisfaction among many teachers (Koppich, Gerritz, & Guthrie, 1986; Metropolitan Life, 1989).

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Evidence for the economic stress experienced by many teachers is found in surveys of out-of-school employment. In a study conducted by the National Education Association in 1982, and reported by Anthony (1988), nearly half of all teachers surveyed stated that they held another job in addition to their teaching position; for male teachers the figure was 72%. According to Wisnieswki and Kleine (1984), the majority of teachers' second jobs are in nonprofessional occupations, requiring them to divide their energies and further demean their status as educators.

The need to seriously address the teacher compensation issue becomes more compelling as one dissects the actual impact of salary on teacher performance and retention. Recent studies have shown that teachers are most vulnerable to leaving the profession in their first years of teaching and that opportunities to earn a higher salary are most likely to draw them away during this period (Murnane et al., 1991). Moreover, the teachers who are most apt to exit teaching early in their careers are those with the best academic records (Anthony, 1988). Male teachers and secondary teachers are also more likely to abandon teaching than are either female or elementary school teachers (Freed, 1986).

Teaching, like other professional skills, tends to improve with practice and experience (Goodlad, 1984; Gray & Gray, 1985); hence the best teachers are likely to be those who have been in the profession for several years (Murnane et al., 1991). Moreover, because good teaching is linked to increased student learning (Brophy & Good, 1986), it would appear obvious that to reform and improve education, it is imperative that experienced teachers be retained and that the number of early career defections be reduced.

Of the major education reform reports emanating from the decade of the 1980s, nearly every one touched on the need to recruit the most able students into teaching and provide the proper incentives to retain them. Most of these recommendations coupled salary increases with enhanced accountability and teacher preparation (Jordan, 1988). Apparently, school districts and state legislatures across the country have taken these recommendations to heart, because the majority of the expenditures on school reform have been invested in the area of teacher preparation and compensation

(Jordan, 1988). Moreover, during the decade 1979-80 to 1989-90, teacher salaries rose from a national average of $15,970 to $31,331, slightly less than a 20% increase in real dollars (National Center for Education Statistics, 1991). Nonetheless, teacher salaries still remain substantially below those of other similarly prepared professionals, especially in fields such as mathematics and in some of the sciences (Anthony, 1988; Murnane et al., 1991).

Unfortunately, given demographic realities and the economic recession experienced in the early 1990s, there is little likelihood that teacher salaries will continue to rise substantially in the near future. In California, for example, the school population is augmented annually by more than 200,000 students while at the same time capital expenditures for facilities construction and maintenance continue to fall billions of dollars behind and classrooms bulge with nearly the largest student/teacher ratios in the nation (Policy Analysis for California Education, 1991). To make matters worse, it is estimated that three of four voters do not have children in the public schools and hence are not likely to vote for substantially higher taxes to support education (Gordon, 1991).

At the same time that California has been grappling with these challenges to its education system, it has also been experimenting with a wide-scale conversion to year-round schooling. Whereas in 1988, 7.7% of students in the state were enrolled in year-round schools, by mid-1992, 23% were attending such schools, with projections for 70 more districts to convert to year-round operation by the end of the calendar year (T. Payne, personal communication, April 3, 1992). The recent dramatic increase in year-round schooling has been a response, more than anything, to facilities overcrowding. Few schools have implemented the program for pedagogical reasons or for purposes of education reform (Veatch, 1991).

This article, however, reports on an experiment that *did* attempt to link the objective of easing overcrowding with a number of fundamental educational reforms. Importantly, it sought to test whether year-round schooling could be used to educate more students *better*, reduce class sizes, and provide teachers with the option of earning substantially higher salaries in return for a longer work year. This experiment came to be known as the Orchard Plan.

The Orchard Plan experiment, like other multitrack year-round programs,[1] allows schools to increase their student capacity (in this case by about 20%) by dividing students into "tracks," and rotating one of those tracks out of school at any given time. Unlike other year-round programs, however, it also reduces class size by about three students and provides teachers with the opportunity to accept an extended-year contract of between 223 and 225 days, which results in a 20% salary augmentation. Moreover, it accomplishes these things without any additional costs to the state or the school district.

THE STUDY

The Orchard Plan experiment was initiated in 1987 through state legislation that funded three California elementary schools to begin testing the model during the 1988-89 school year. Key to the involvement of the schools was the requirement that not only the district superintendent, school board, and site principal agree to participate, but that the teachers' bargaining unit sign the contract with the state as well. This meant that teachers and their bargaining representatives had to be full and willing partners in the experiment. In 1988-89, the three schools were each given $60,000 planning grants to study, along with their communities, how they might restructure their schools to include the educational reform initiatives that are outlined in Table 1. Implementation of the program began in 1989-90.

Although this article focuses on the implications of the experiment for teacher salaries and job satisfaction, it is also important to note that this study of teacher attitudes toward extended contracts took place in the context of other significant changes in the schools.

The three participating schools, which were selected from vastly different parts of the state with very different student populations, were asked to adopt a 60/15 year-round schedule. This required that students be grouped into five heterogenously composed tracks that would attend school on a staggered basis for 60 days then vacation, or attend intersessions, for 15. This cycle was to repeat itself three times during the school year. Hence, although some students cycled

TABLE 1
Elements of the Orchard Plan Experiment

1. An extended-year calendar in which approximately 223 days are available for instruction.
2. A reorganization of categorical funding (e.g., Chapter One, Economic Impact Aid, Special Education, Gifted and Talented) to shift these funds into intersession enrichment courses, thereby providing extra days of instruction, with emphasis on "at-risk" students.
3. A reduction in class size by at least two to three students per classroom, achieved through a rotation of five tracks of students in which only four tracks are present at any one time. (Teachers have 20% more students on their rolls, but about three students fewer in their class at any time.)
4. The accommodation of 20% more students at the site.
5. The opportunity for teachers to extend the length of their contracts by 20%, resulting in 20% higher salaries.
6. The restructuring of the curriculum into smaller units with built-in review and more careful monitoring of student progress. (Team teaching, small-group learning experiences, and mastery-learning orientation expected to result from this restructuring.)
7. Voluntary participation on the part of schools, teachers, and families with all having a stake in the planning of the program.

out of school at regular intervals, teachers remained in their same classrooms. (This is an important point because most other year-round programs require teachers to change classrooms with each track change. Not surprisingly, this is an element of year-round schools that many teachers do not like.) All students and teachers, however, would share a common summer break of approximately 4 weeks, plus 2 weeks in winter and a 1-week spring vacation.

Although five tracks (of approximately seven students each) were assigned to each teacher and all eventually had contact with each other, only four tracks of students were present in the classroom at any one time. This configuration resulted in a three-student reduction in class size. For example, whereas a teacher typically had 31 students in his or her classroom before the experiment, he or she now had 35 on the class roster, but only 28 were in class at any one time ($35/5 = 7$; $7 \times 4 = 28$).

With tracks of students moving in and out of the classroom every 3 weeks, whole group instruction would lose its effectiveness and teachers rapidly concluded that team teaching and cooperative

learning strategies would be the most effective means of instructional delivery. Although the experiment did not specify *how* teachers would teach using this plan, one of the objectives of the study was to encourage teachers to use team-building methods to improve the achievement of students. In other words, the teachers came to the same conclusions that the experimenters had, but they came to these conclusions independent of any outside intervention.

Not surprisingly, the biggest impediment to enticing teachers to participate in the study was the idea that the composition of the classroom would change every 3 weeks. For many teachers this was a horrifying thought! Ironically, however, when teachers were surveyed after only 1 year of the experiment, this was found to be among the most desirable features of the program. I will return to this in the discussion.

THE SAMPLE

The three schools that participated in the study were vastly different in terms of size as well as student composition. *Lark* is a small rural school serving a very economically disadvantaged student population, about half of whom are ethnic minorities, the largest group being Hmong. This school has 7 teachers on staff. *Brady* is a medium-sized urban/suburban school near the California-Mexico border. Its student population is largely lower income and working class; the single largest group of students is Hispanic; however, there is considerable ethnic mix. There are 19 classroom teachers and 3 resource teachers at Brady. *Palm* is a very large K-8 school located in a suburb of Southern California. Its student population is mostly White, with steadily increasing numbers of Hispanics and a small African-American population. There are 32 classroom teachers in this school and 6 resource teachers. Demographic characteristics of the teachers are shown in Table 2.

When the three schools made the decision to engage in the Orchard Plan experiment in 1987, a number of teachers decided to accept positions in other schools, and opportunities became available for new teachers to join the faculties of the experimental schools. At Lark, six of the seven slots became available; however, at the other two schools, only a few positions were open, and each

TABLE 2
Teacher Characteristics

	Lark	*Brady*	*Palm*	*Total*	*Percentage*
Number of teachers in school	7	19	32	58	100
Gender					
Female	5	13	27	45	78
Male	2	6	5	13	22
Age					
Under 30	3	1	13	17	29
30-45	1	10	12	23	43
Over 45	3	8	5	19	33
Average years experience	11	19	7	—	$\bar{X}$ = 12.3
Number with more than 5 years college	4	19	24[a]	47	81

a. This number was extrapolated from 65% of the teachers because of missing data.

had long lists of teachers who were interested in applying. Applicants were disproportionately male. The reader will note a somewhat higher percentage of male teachers (22%) in these schools than in the typical elementary school. It is also notable that the average years of teaching experience for all schools is quite high (mean = 12.3 yrs); at Brady the average was 19 years and all classroom teachers claimed to have completed more than 5 years of college; in fact, many held master's degrees, and two had J.D. or Ph.D. degrees.

Especially at Brady, but also at the other schools, applications for the open positions came disproportionately from teachers with many years of teaching experience. This was explained, in part, by the fact that retirement benefits are computed on the average salary earned during the years immediately preceding retirement. Hence a 20% increase in salary toward the end of one's teaching career would have a particularly beneficial effect on one's postteaching standard of living.

Of course, principals had the discretion to select the best teacher candidates for the positions they had available. Nonetheless, there was some concern about the degree to which some of the teachers'

motivations for participating in the experiment might affect its outcomes. There was special concern about potential burnout of older teachers.

METHODS

Considerable data have been collected and analyzed on the Orchard Plan schools and these analyses are reported elsewhere (Gándara & Fish, 1992). However, data specific to teacher contracts and salaries were collected through group interviews with teachers, anonymous surveys, and district records.

Teachers in each of the schools were convened in groups of varying sizes at least twice during the experimental period to share with the experimenter their impressions of the program and its strengths and weaknesses. Administrative personnel were excluded from these meetings to increase the likelihood that teachers would feel free to comment openly. General questions, such as "What aspects of the program work?" and "What aspects of the program need to be rethought?" were posed to the groups. Teachers appeared to be very outspoken in their criticisms as well as their praise. This provided one level of information about teachers' attitudes toward the program and was very helpful in interpreting some of their comments on the surveys.

In addition to the group "debriefings," teachers were given anonymous surveys and asked to return them directly to the researcher. These were distributed in the spring of the first year of operation (about 9 months into the academic year), during the fall of the second year (about 2 months after returning to school from summer break), and again in the spring of the third year (9 months after commencing the year). Return rates for the surveys are reported in Table 4. They were generally high, ranging, with one exception, between 86% and 100% of teachers at the schools. Survey questions included demographic information on teachers: age, gender, years of teaching experience, years of college education, and number of years at this school. These data are reported in Table 2. Additionally, the surveys included a number of questions about level of satisfaction, reasons for agreeing to participate in the experiment, and assessment of the educational value of the pro-

TABLE 3
Teacher Salaries: National, State, District, and Experimental School Means, 1991-92

	National Mean[a]	*State Mean*[a]	*District Mean*	*School Mean*	*School's Highest Salary*
	$34,413	$41,811	—	—	—
Lark	—	—	$28,000	$42,586	$47,958
Brady	—	—	$41,911	$54,735	$64,883
Palm	—	—	$37,298	$45,058	$67,623

a. From the National Education Association, 1991-92 Estimates of School Statistics.

gram. The final survey, which was distributed at the end of the third year of the extended contracts, asked several questions relating to teacher burnout. These data are reported in Table 5.

Teachers were also invited to recommend ways in which the program could be improved. Considerable opportunity was provided for teachers to comment freely on any aspect of the program they chose. These comments, which were not directly solicited, are interspersed throughout the balance of the article.

Finally, district records were consulted for data on salaries and absenteeism.

FINDINGS

Teacher Salaries

Table 3 shows the average salaries earned by teachers at each of the three experimental schools, compared to the average salaries for their district, the state, and the nation. Also included in the table is the highest salary earned at that school by a regular classroom teacher. In each case the highest salary was earned by teachers with more than 20 years of teaching experience and most held at least a master's degree; a similarly qualified teacher teaching at a traditional school in the same district earned 20% less.

The disparity among district salaries is notable, with the rural district in Northern California paying considerably less than the

urban/suburban districts to the south. Nonetheless, within each of these contexts the opportunities for earning what teachers referred to as a "professional salary" are dramatic. Not surprisingly, teachers express a high degree of satisfaction with their compensation. But they also express a similar level of satisfaction with their jobs.

Teacher Satisfaction

In response to the question, "How satisfied are you with your job?" 98% of the teachers in 1991-92 reported being "moderately satisfied" (19%) or "very satisfied" (79%). As noted in Table 4, the level of satisfaction has increased steadily from an overall of 74% in 1989-90, the first year of implementation, to 92% in the second year, and finally 98% in the third year. The consistent increase in satisfaction is no doubt affected to some extent by the exiting of unhappy teaches. However, over the period, only five teachers have left the schools, and at least half of these would have preferred to have stayed but left because of family relocations or for other non-school-related reasons. Some of the increase in satisfaction may also be due to an artifact in the data because Palm had a relatively low return rate on its teacher surveys in the first year of implementation. Nonetheless, it appears that teacher satisfaction is increasing over time, and evidence for this is found in many teacher comments.

> We're still working the bugs out of our program and feel we have a more dynamic program each year. [first-grade teacher]
>
> Initially, the Orchard Plan appeared overwhelming. However, working the Orchard Plan is not as complicated as it sounds. Each year gets easier and better. [second-grade teacher]
>
> Pacing is important and you learn this in your first year. [third-grade teacher]

Motivation to Participate

When asked what the primary reason was for deciding to teach at the experimental school, in the first year of implementation, 35%

TABLE 4

Teacher Satisfaction—Number of Teachers Responding to Each Category, 1989-90 to 1991-92

	Lark			*Brady*			*Palm*		
	1989-90	*1990-91*	*1991-92*	*1989-90*	*1990-91*	*1991-92*	*1989-90*	*1990-91*	*1991-92*
N	6	7	6	19[a]	19	22	17	37	36
Percentage of response	86	100	86	86	86	100	56	100	97
Very satisfied	5	1	3	11	13	20	10	29	26
Satisfied	1	4	2	4	6	2	3	6	10
Neutral[b]	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	2	0
Unsatisfied	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0
Very unsatisfied	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

a. One teacher responded to survey but did not answer this question.

b. The neutral category was removed from the 1991-92 survey to force teachers' responses. "Satisfied" and "unsatisfied" were consequently changed to "moderately satisfied" and "moderately unsatisfied"

of the teachers stated that salary was their most important consideration. At the end of the third year, a similar percentage of teachers, 38%, gave salary as the primary reason. The second-highest-rated response in the third year was that the "program was better for kids" (24%). Other reasons that were given, in order of their importance, were "like this school" and "more autonomy."

Teacher Burnout

One of the chief concerns of the experiment was the issue of teacher burnout. World teachers be able to continue teaching up to 225 days per year over a multiyear period? And what would the effects be on students? This was measured in several ways.

On the survey administered toward the end of the third year of the program, teachers were asked, "Are you getting burned out from working an extended contract?" and "Do you intend to return to this school next year?" We also asked if teachers would like to return to a 9-month contract. Table 5 displays the results for these questions.

Of particular interest are what appear to be discrepancies in the data. For example, 18% of teachers claim to be getting burned out, but only 7% want to return to a 9-month contract. Some teachers commented on this question by saying that although they felt "burned out" (the survey was administered in the 9th month of teaching), they were no more so than they would be on a traditional calendar. Additionally, one of the teachers who reported being burned out was planning to retire at the end of the year. It is tempting to believe that this teacher would have been experiencing psychological burnout regardless of where she was teaching. The remaining teachers who reported being burned out were the same four who also marked that they would like to return to a 9-month calendar. In most cases, these were younger teachers who wanted to start a family; none of these teachers was in the 45+ age range.

Teachers were anxious to comment on the burnout issue, and they had strong opinions on this topic:

> My personal belief is that burnout is more a personality problem of boredom. I've not had that problem. I always find new ideas to try. [first-grade teacher]

TABLE 5
Teacher Burnout, 1991-92

Question	*Lark (N = 6)*		*Brady (N = 19)*		*Palm (N = 32)*		*Total (N = 57)*	
	Number of Yes Responses	*(%)*	*Number of Yes Responses*	*(%)*	*Number of Yes Responses*	*(%)*	*Number*	*(%)*
Burned out?	3	(50)	0	(0)	7	(22)	10	(18)
Like to return to 9-month contract?	0	(0)	0	(0)	4	(13)	4	(7)
Plan to return next year?	5	(83)	19	(30)	30	(94)	54	(95)

TABLE 6
Teacher Absenteeism: Orchard and Control Schools[a]

	1988-89	*1989-90*	*1990-91*	*1989 to 1991 Difference*
Lark	2.0	3.0	3.7	+1.7
Control	7.8	6.1	5.7	–2.1
Brady	7.8	8.1	7.6	–0.2
Control	7.8	7.3	NA[b]	—
Palm	1.2	1.8	2.0	+0.8
Control	2.7	3.2	4.0	+1.3

a. Average number of days absent per teacher, 1988-89 to 1990-91.
b. NA = not available.

> Even on an extended contract I work less than the general public and I don't feel the "whole" general public is burned out. [third-grade teacher]
>
> The way we team in 5th grade has eliminated problems of burnout. We teach a track for no longer than 12 weeks at a time.
>
> In our district all the discussion/concern over burnout on the 5 track has come from *outside* the building! I wish people would just ask us first if there even is cause for concern. [fourth-grade teacher]

Ultimately, teachers may vote with their feet. Inasmuch as the experiment is totally voluntary, teachers may opt to change schools at any time. Given this option, only three teachers planned to leave their schools at the end of the year: one because of retirement, one because of a spousal move, and the third because of "stress" (this was also the only teacher in the three schools who did not rate herself as being satisfied with the program in 1992).

Another measure of teacher burnout or stress is increased absenteeism (Farber, 1991; Hammen & DeMayo, 1982). Teacher absenteeism was charted for the baseline year (1988-89) and the two subsequent years of program implementation for both the experimental schools and a closely matched control school in each district. Table 6 displays these results.

It would appear from the data in Table 6 that teachers were not experiencing significantly increased stress, at least not at levels that would lead to high rates of illness or absenteeism. Although absences rose by a small amount at two of the schools (Lark and

Palm), this increase was over an extremely low base and represented rates considerably lower than at the control schools where teachers were working a shorter year. Moreover, in the case of Palm, the increase was only slightly more than would be expected as a percentage of the increased number of days worked. At Brady, where the initial rate of absenteeism was higher than at the other two schools, teacher absences actually declined slightly over the 2-year period.

One could hypothesize that a fourth measure of teacher burnout or stress would be student achievement. Although data are scant on this point, it has been suggested that "the impact of teacher stress and burnout may be greatest in terms of its potentially devastating effects on pupil education, particularly of those in lower socioeconomic groups" (Farber, 1991, p. 85). The logical link between student achievement and teacher attitude can be viewed from the perspective of studies on teacher expectation effects.

Teachers' expectations *can* affect student achievement (Brophy & Good, 1986), and a "don't care" attitude about the individual needs of students is one of the hallmarks of burned-out teachers (Farber, 1991). Hence, if teachers are truly feeling burned out, one *might* expect to see the effects in a decline in student achievement. This has not occurred at any of the Orchard Plan schools. On standardized measures of student achievement for the period 1988-89 to 1990-91, students at all three schools have shown significant gains when compared to control schools in their own districts.[2]

In sum, there appears to be little evidence of increased stress or burnout for the great majority of teachers working the extended year. After 3 years, 95% of teachers plan to return to the extended contract and 93% say they do not want to return to a 9-month teaching schedule. Significantly, of those four teachers who did want to return to 9-month schedules, all were in the under-45 age category. Moreover, from the teachers' written comments, it is evident that the older, more experienced teachers were among the most enthusiastic promoters of the extended year contract.

> Because of the 3-week periods I am better organized and this automatically makes me feel less stressed. I am able to fit in more units that appeal specifically to me which makes it more interesting. [female, 27 years experience]

> I have adjusted my teaching and other activities to conform to an extended year contract. I love it! *Never* would I return to a 9-month contract if I had the choice. [male, 40 years experience]
>
> I'm excited about teaching. I would encourage others to try this program. [female, 16 years experience]
>
> The best teaching experience I've had in 30 years of teaching! [female]

These comments are consistent with other studies that suggest that burnout is not so much a function of the amount of time worked as the attitudes one has about one's job and its compensations (Farber, 1991).

DISCUSSION

Overall, across the schools, teacher satisfaction with the Orchard Plan experiment has been extremely high. Of the teachers who signed on during the planning year, before the experiment began, fewer than 10% have left. This represents a figure considerably lower than average attrition as reported in the literature. It is important to remember, however, that this is a self-selected group of teachers and that a number of the reforms and changes in the schools are clearly contributing to the general sense of satisfaction with their jobs. Reduced class sizes, the breaking down of teacher isolation through team teaching, and opportunities to reconceptualize the delivery of instruction in their schools are all features of the experiment that have been demonstrated in other studies to produce greater job satisfaction.

The one element of the experiment about which teachers report being very satisfied, and that came as somewhat of a surprise, is the changing dynamic of the classrooms. Early in the experiment teachers began to report that there was a difference in their classrooms: fewer disruptive behaviors, more active involvement on the part of students, and a new burst of enthusiasm every 3 weeks at track changes occurred. According to one teacher, "With each track change, the group dynamics change, and it gives me a real lift."

Another commented, "It's wonderful to see the leadership and group dynamics change as the tracks rotate in and out."

Nonetheless, increased salary was the key to job satisfaction for the largest portion of the teachers. But the reasons for this are important to understand. For many teachers it is the feeling of being true professionals. As one teacher notes, "Now we are being paid what teachers really deserve. In addition, our schedule is now comparable to other professionals." But for many others the extended contract simply made their lives easier. As one male teacher put it, "[For the] first time in years I've had a full time job. Now I'm employed in a position where I don't have to seek employment when the children are on break." Others were equally candid about the stresses that the extended-year contract relieved for them:

> I enjoy the 4-week break in the summer, 2 weeks at Christmas, and a week in spring. As a single parent I would have to work in the summer anyhow. [female, eighth-grade teacher]

> I no longer have to find a summer job to support my household. [female, third-grade teacher]

At the same time, extended-year contracts are clearly not for everyone. Some people enter into teaching *because* of the substantial time off, and many people with young families find that teaching offers a career option that meshes well with their personal lives. However, as the data show, many teachers are also struggling to make ends meet, finding part-time and summer work to augment their teaching salaries. For these teachers, as well as for the others who, after years of experience in the classroom, are looking for new challenges and welcome the opportunity to continue teaching when others are on break, extended-year contracts may be a preferable option.

The notion of providing *options* for teachers is critical. In 1987, when the proposal to conduct the Orchard experiment was still being discussed in the California Legislature, the teachers' statewide organizations were reluctant to support, and even opposed, the idea of extended contracts. Some of this was due to legitimate concerns about eroding hard-won protections against unfair teaching burdens. However, this also opens up a Pandora's box, of sorts,

in comparing extended-year contract salaries with other professional salaries. Teachers in the Orchard Plan schools are earning salaries that are *very* competitive in the profession job market—and they are working a similar work year.

Extended-year contracts are a potential option in any multitrack, year-round school and they represent zero cost to the district. (In fact, for every five teachers on this plan who opt for an extended contract, the district saves the cost of employee benefits for a teacher who does not have to be hired.) They have not, however, become widely available, perhaps in part, because of the reluctance of teachers' unions to engage in the discourse on this issue.

On the other hand, teachers in year-round schools are typically given opportunities to work extra days for extra pay. In many schools, "off-track" teachers are seen as a ready pool of substitutes. They are familiar with the routines of the school, know the teachers for whom they are substituting, and are usually available at a moment's notice. They are also often happy to have the opportunity to earn the extra money. The arrangement works out reasonably well for both parties—except that it works out better for the school district. Off-track teachers are paid at substitute wages, rather than the higher salaried wage. Also, because this pay is not salary, it does not count in the calculation of retirement benefits.

With the dramatic increase in year-round schooling, the growth in demand for new teachers, and the continuing shortages of particular kinds of teachers (e.g., math, science, bilingual), it behooves both teachers and administrators to take a second look at the issue of extended-year contracts. Although such contracts should always be optional, they can provide the opportunity for teachers who choose them to be compensated at a level that more accurately reflects their real value to society.

NOTES

1. Neither the literature nor common parlance distinguishes systematically between schools that truly operate year-round without any break and those with extended-year calendars. Hence this article follows that tradition in not making a distinction between the two.

2. For more detailed discussion of achievement scores for the three schools, please see Gándara and Fish (1992).

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