

Essay Writing

Entry Per School	2
Type of Event	Individual
State Competition	Yes
National Competition	Yes

(Program Standards: 4.0/9.0/11.0/14.0/16.0)

Purpose:

The purpose of the essay contest is to provide students with an opportunity to express their views on a current topic in education. The topic for the essay contest is as follows:

Performance Pay for Teachers

Teacher compensation has long been a hot topic in education. When discussing how to determine teachers' salaries, there are different viewpoints and opinions. Currently, teachers are paid on what is called the single salary schedule. The single salary schedule awards increases in pay based on years of experience and earned college credits. While not a new idea, "performance-based pay" has recently gained increased interest. Instead of awarding the same salary to all teachers within the same district who have the same credentials and numbers of years of service, performance-based pay systems add extra compensation for a variety of criteria, including teaching in hard-to-staff schools and taking on increased responsibilities such as mentoring new teachers. It can even link teacher pay to student test scores.

Do some research on performance-based pay. Start by reading "*Teacher Unions and New Forms of Teacher Compensation*" from Phi Delta Kappan, an education policy magazine published by PDK International, and then seek out some other resources on this topic to further your understanding of this issue.

- Discuss some of the pros and cons of implementing a performance-based pay system for teachers
- What are some of the benefits? Why might it be problematic?
- What criteria should be used to award extra compensation?
- Do you think performance-based pay is a good idea? Why or why not?
- When you begin your teaching career, how do you want to be compensated?

General Information:

- Essays must range from 300 – 500 words (every word is counted). This does not include the title or works cited.
- Essays must be single spaced with a double space between paragraphs.
- Essay must be written in English.
- Contestants must cite all their sources of information using MLA format for the Works Cited page. Examples follow for correct style when listing a book, an article, or an Internet source.

- **Book:**

- Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957.

- **Newspaper Article:**

- Crossette, Barbara. "India Lodges First Charges in Arms Scandal." *New York Times* 23 Jan. 1990, natl.ed: A4.

- **Online Newspaper Article:**

- Goldfarb, Zachary A. "Child Health Dilemma." *Washington Times* 31 Aug. 2003. 4 Sept. 2003 <http://www.washtimes.com/world/20030831-121939-8665r.htm>.

Submission Information:

- Submit Official FEA Competition Entry Form
- Submit essay

Scoring Guidelines:

- Adherence to guidelines
- Essay is on the stated topic (essays not on the stated topic will not be judged)
- Essay has a clear thesis, supporting details, and includes a conclusion that restates the thesis and makes the text memorable
- Ideas expressed are meaningful and important
- Content is clear and convincing
- Essay includes elements of creativity
- Correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure are used

See the scoring rubric for specific scoring items in addition to these scoring guidelines.



Essay Scoring Rubric

SCORING				SCORE
Submitted Materials	GOOD 1 2 3 4	VERY GOOD 5 6 7	EXCELLENT 8 9 10	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some components of guidelines missing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Followed most of guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Followed most of guidelines 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic was not clearly identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic was identified but not outlined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic was identified but not outlined 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No research evident to support topic • Information sources not cited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some research to support topic • Some sources cited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some research to support topic • All Information sources cited 	
Essay Content	GOOD 1 2 3 4	VERY GOOD 5 6 7	EXCELLENT 8 9 10	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas have little meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas are meaningful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas are meaningful & important 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content is vague 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content is clear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content is clear & convincing 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little creativity & originality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some creativity & originality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative & original 	
Topic Organization	GOOD 1 2	VERY GOOD 3 4	EXCELLENT 5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis not clearly identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis clearly identified 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body of essay not on topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On topic but no supporting details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On topic with supporting details 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusion not clearly stated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear conclusion, doesn't restate thesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear conclusion with restated thesis - gives reader something to remember 	
Mechanics/ Grammar	GOOD 1 2	VERY GOOD 3 4	EXCELLENT 5	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure is not accurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure is mainly accurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure is accurate 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punctuation & several spelling errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some punctuation & spelling errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punctuation & spelling is error free 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grammatical errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum grammatical errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No grammatical errors 	
TOTAL SCORE:				
Judge's Comments:				