

Dear Colleagues,

When the forced-placement and bumping of teachers was ended in 2005, we enabled you to build teams of educators in your schools who can work together with us as a team in activating the schools vision and goals. Three years after this historic change, Mayor Bloomberg and I remain firmly committed to maintaining your right to determine which teachers are best for your schools and your students.

While this commitment is important to us, it does not come without costs. When we eliminated the forced-placement of excessed teachers, we created a large—and growing -- expense. Though the overwhelming majority of excessed teachers find jobs, each year since 2006, some excessed teachers have not found regular teaching positions and have been placed in the Absent Teacher Reserve (ATR) pool at full salary.

Especially because of the difficult fiscal situation we face, we must make sure that we spend every dollar well, and we must look for any savings that will not have a negative impact on our ability to serve our students. That's why we recently worked with the United Federation of Teachers to reach an agreement that provides a number of incentives for principals to consider teachers and others in the ATR pool for regular positions.

I continue to strongly support you in your efforts to build the most effective teams possible, and would never want you to hire anyone for your school who you do not believe will make a positive contribution to student learning. But I am also confident that there are qualified educators in the ATR pool who would be a good match for many of you seeking to fill vacancies. I strongly urge you to, and it is my strong preference, that you consider and interview candidates from the ATR pool for vacancies before considering outside candidates. To facilitate this process, your ISC will give you lists of ATRs and their license areas and contact information.

Here are the details of the agreement:

1. We will provide a substantial subsidy to schools that hire centrally-funded ATRs. Central DOE will initially pay the difference between the ATRs actual salary and a starting teacher's salary, and the difference between actual salary and the following step on the salary scale (e.g. step 2A in the second year) for a period of eight years.
2. Until November 15, 2010, central DOE will pay half the starting teacher's salary that the school would otherwise pay, so that the cost to the school will be approximately \$23,000 per year.
3. These subsidies apply to ATRs hired on November 1 in the calendar year in which they are excessed, or thereafter, and do not apply to ATRs hired by the school from which they were excessed. If a school hires any current centrally funded ATR the school will get the subsidy (except if a Principal hires the ATR provisionally).

4. Principals who fill vacancies during the school year after November 1 can hire ATRs provisionally. If this happens, the principal or the ATR can opt to have the ATR returned to the ATR pool at the end of the school year. This can happen regardless of seniority. (If both the principal and teacher want the teacher to remain in the school beyond the end of that school year, the teacher will become a regularly-appointed teacher in the school with full seniority rights.) The subsidies outlined above will not apply to provisionally hired ATRs. The subsidy would apply, however, if the teacher becomes regularly-appointed teacher the following year.

The subsidies being provided should eliminate any budget-related concerns principals might have when considering hiring veteran ATRs to fill vacancies. And the provisional hiring option provides a way for principals to fill vacancies during the school year with certified teachers while giving principals and ATRs an opportunity to determine if the ATR is a good fit for the school.

If you find and hire good candidates from the ATR pool, you will not only build teaching capacity at your school, you will also help to mitigate the impact of our budget situation on our schools and students.

[Click here](#) to view FAQs on the new incentives for hiring ATRs. If you have questions about the details of this new initiative, please contact your HR partner. As always, I also look forward to hearing from you directly.

Sincerely,

Joel I. Klein