



**Report of the 2019 Metro Council
Special Committee
on
Employee Compensation and Morale**



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Section 1

Introduction and Summary

Our Charge

In creating this committee, Vice Mayor Shulman posed this question for us to re-search:

“Teachers, firefighters, police, Metro employees. Where do our employees fit on the pay schedule? How do we compare with our peer cities? Do our employees feel valued? What can and should we do about this?”

Our Committee Members

Citizen Members

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Katherine Green

Andrea Lindsey

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Eric Taylor

Mykel Harris

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Robert Nash - District 27, Chair

Bob Mendes - Council Member at Large

Gloria Hausser - District 22

Russ Pulley - District 25

Tom Cash - District 18

On behalf of the Council Members, I wish to extend our gratitude to our citizen members who have shared their time and life experience to assist in this inquiry. A special thanks also goes to our labor representatives. This committee has very limited resources to compile the data that is the foundation of this report. Our labor representatives did the hard work of providing the data contained herein.

Summary

The best summary of the Metropolitan Government's state of employee compensation may have best been stated on an SEIU Local 205 analysis, "Balancing Nashville's chronically underfunded budget has landed on Metro and MNPS employees' backs in recent years as scheduled raises have been cut, wages have stagnated, and sub-living-wage jobs have proliferated." Data provided by SEIU notes that cost of living wages were not funded for MNPS employees in years 2008 thru 2012, 2017 and 2018. They were not funded for General Government employees in 2014 thru 2017, 2019 and 2020. For the first time in the history of the Metropolitan Government, step raises were not paid at the start of the Great Recession of 2008 thru 2014.

This compression of pay steps and failure to maintain a competitive pay schedule have caused the wages of Metro employees to fall significantly behind their cohorts in comparable jurisdictions. Our partnering employee representatives have surveyed a number of comparable jurisdictions and find that Metro's employees' salaries trail those of their average cohorts' anywhere from 5 to 34 percent.

While morale is a difficult item to measure. Metro's failure to maintain a competitive pay plan is causing employees to question if the city does value their dedication and labors. While employees bore much of the financial burden of the Great Recession through pay freezes and stagnant staffing, they have not shared in the renewed prosperity being enjoyed by the city. We live in a city with rising housing costs. Median incomes are rising, causing upward pressure on available housing. Many of our employees find that they must work two and three jobs to maintain a modest standard of living. Additionally, Metro departments have essentially had to leave many positions unfilled. School bus drivers end up having to make additional runs, fire equipment is not staffed at recommended levels, police officers often cannot respond to calls in a timely manner and classrooms go without teachers. In addition to the impact of stagnant pay and staffing, nearly a third of employees find that job assignments and poor management are contributing to undesirable working conditions. Money issues and stress at work are contributing factors to low job satisfaction.

As to what we can and should do there are no easy answers. Fixing the majority of the pay disparities and morale issues involve a commitment to finding the revenue and then funding the pay plans. The Metropolitan Council should urge and support our Mayor in identifying available funding and be ready to raise revenues. There are those who will speak of waste, fraud and abuse. However, the tight budgets of the past decade have eliminated any significant amounts of waste. Metro departments have left many positions unfilled and economized greatly. They have done more with less. We are now arguably at a point where we are doing less with less. Metro accounting rules and procedures are well drawn to prevent fraud and abuse. We did not get into this situation overnight. It will take time to fix it. However, we must begin to get on a sustainable financial path. It must begin with this next budget cycle.

NOTE: Given that the pay plans of some of the jurisdictions used for comparison purposes in this report have been, or are being, updated as this report was being prepared, some of the data are admittedly dated. However, though some of the data may not be current, we feel confident that the inferences implicit in the findings are valid. Indeed, with access to more current data, the pay disparities would arguably be greater. Also, this report does not profess to be an analysis of every employee classification. We assert though that the disparities found in classifications reviewed in this report can generally be inferred to apply across most all Metro employee classifications to varying degrees depending on the particular classification.

Section 2

Metro School Bus Drivers

Metro School Bus Driver Pay & Morale

Introduction

A recent Tennessean new story noted that, “The Nashville public schools district has about 630 buses that make more than 26,000 stops on any given day.” Each school day the school bus drivers employed by Metro Nashville Public Schools transport some 30,000 students. These employees are dedicated to providing our city’s children and future leaders safe and efficient transportation to and from school. In addition to their duties as bus driver’s, these devoted employees often are a source of friendship, guidance and encouragement to their passengers.

Current Pay for MNPS Drivers

Like all MNPS employees, Metro’s school bus drivers have seen their pay remain stagnant in an era of unparalleled growth. In comparing their salaries with other public and private drivers, we find their salaries lag by at least by 15%. The low pay and highly competitive demand for drivers with commercial driver’s licenses have caused MNPS to operate with as many as 143 vacant school bus driver positions. These vacancies require MNPS bus drivers to deal with a number of morale issues that we will discuss. We should also note that

Metro School Bus Drivers Pay Comparisons			
Local Comps	Start Pay	Top Pay	
School Bus Con-	\$ 18.00	\$ 20.00	
Robertson Co.	\$ 17.81		
Williamson	\$ 15.00	\$ 18.00	
Average	\$ 16.94		
State Comps			
Washington	\$ 21.12	\$ 22.94	
New Jersey	\$ 15.25	\$ 21.75	
North Dakota	\$ 16.00	\$ 19.00	
Kentucky	\$ 16.58		
Massachusetts	\$ 18.00	\$ 25.00	
	\$ 17.39		
Average	\$ 17.39		
Other Compa-			
MTA(WeGo)	\$ 17.56	\$ 24.53	
Combined Aver-	\$ 17.25		
Nashville	\$ 14.96	\$ 20.00	
	\$ 2.29		
	15%		

school bus drivers must meet rigorous qualification standards.

What qualifications do bus drivers need?

In order to qualify to drive a school bus in Metro, a person must be at least 25 years old, possess a valid Tennessee Class B Commercial Driver License (CDL) with Passenger (P), school bus driver (S) and air brake endorsements, and must have a safe driving record. In addition, prospective drivers must pass the State Department of Education approved physical examination from a Metro approved physician. The driver must pass the medical exam each year in accordance with State guidelines. Drivers must also complete a comprehensive School Bus Driver Training Program provided by MNPS and must complete First Aid and CPR Training and Annual Recertification programs. Bus driver candidates also undergo a thorough criminal background, motor vehicle report checks and random drug screens. (Source: MNPS website FAQs)

Employee Morale

Due to the low pay and high vacancy rate,

MNPS bus drivers must often double up on routes, sometimes even driving 3 runs, driving routes for a second school before returning to their regular route. Under these working conditions, driver turnover becomes an additional problem with a turnover rate estimated at 43%. 70% of school bus driver's feel forced to work extra jobs to support their families.

Due to the driver shortage and subsequent workload, drivers have little time for personal breaks. Drivers feel pressured because of numerous calls from teachers asking when a driver will be back at a school for 2nd and 3rd runs. Consequently, they often feel they are not getting the support they need from school principals and their own transportation managers.

School bus drivers feel like second class employees. The school calendar has many unpaid days for drivers, while professional staff does get paid. Due to the many unpaid days, drivers often do not get in a full 40-hour week and full paycheck. Many drivers cannot afford to go on a 12-month payment plan and struggle to get by in the summer months. They do not qualify for unemployment benefits.

Many school bus drivers must also deal with bad behavior by students. Often, they have no support staff to break up fight or end other disorderly behavior. This compounds the stress for drivers and endangers them and their passengers.

How To Improve/ What We Need

Metro school bus drivers would advocate for a substantial pay increase. Obviously, such a program would help them deal with the rising cost of living in Nashville. An increase in bus driver pay would enable MNPS to better recruit drivers in this competitive market. It would also greatly reduce employee turnover and help fill vacant bus driver positions. MNPS bus drivers would also like to see fewer non-paid calendar days. They also suggest that signing bonuses and attendance bonuses would be good incentives to add to MNPS's compensation package for drivers.

Drivers want to sense that they are valued employees and that their voices are being heard by the administration. They would like to see individual drivers recognized on a quarterly basis. Metro school bus drivers have the awesome responsibility of transporting Metro's school children, often in stressful traffic situations and inclement weather. They deserve to be treated like valued partners in our school system.

Section 3

Metro Nashville Police Department

Metropolitan Nashville Police Department

Summary

Like all Metro employees, the members of the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department have seen their compensation stagnate and lag since the Great Recession. The lack of cost of living increases and freezing of pay steps, the latter a first in the history of the Metro Government, have caused recruitment, retention and morale problems. Officers' salaries lag between 25% and 34% when compared to the average salaries paid to starting and topped-out officers in 11 similar sized jurisdictions. As the city's budget crisis lingers, over 140 officer positions remain vacant. The staffing issues require more police overtime, and increases job stress and greater workloads. Such workloads often contribute to longer response times to calls for service and requests for backup. These waits have the potential to endanger both our officers and the public they serve. The lack of funding also impacts the MNPDs ability to properly equip its officers with valuable new tools such as body cameras. The Metropolitan Government must begin to make officer pay more competitive and put us on a business-like, sustainable path going forward.

Current Pay

As noted, in a survey of 11 comparable jurisdictions, the officers of the MNPD ranked last. Starting officers' salaries were 34% below the average starting officers of the 11-city survey, topped-out officers were paid 25% less. While median household income and median home prices rise, the pay disparities are multiplied. The average police officer in our survey cities makes 97% of median household income. Starting officers in Nashville make \$41,841. If they were making 97% of Nashville's median household income of \$60,324, they would be paid an annual salary \$58,514. Similarly, the average starting officer in our 11-city survey makes 26% of the median house price. Metro's median house price is \$247,000. If a Metro starting officer were paid an equal percentage as their survey officers, they would be making \$64,220.



Police Salary Comparisons

[illegible]

Police Morale

In April of 2018, the Andrew Jackson Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police, the employee representative group for the MNPd, working with Harpeth Strategies, administered a survey on police morale. Nearly 600 officers replied to the survey. It highlighted a number of issues officers contributing to low morale. Primary among officers' concerns were the law enforcement strategies being utilized and the administration of discipline being implemented by the MNPd Command Staff. Another leading factor was concern over the lack of what officers felt was adequate staffing to provide for quality police service. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being morale at its highest, officers scored morale at a weighted average 4.15. Only 211 officers, or 35.88% of the 588 officers responding, would recommend employment with the MNPd to friend or family member.

When asked if the current strategies to fight crime were working, 71.36% said, "No." When asked why they felt the strategies were not working, 63.51% pointed at the emphasis the MNPd had put on statistics related to random stops. A larger number, 94.31%, blamed the lack of sufficient manpower on each detail. Officers felt the low numbers caused them to be running from call to call and not allowing them enough time to "take ownership" of community/crime problems. It should be noted that in the past year upon the release of the NYU Policing Study, MNPd Command Staff have changed the department's police strategy placing less emphasis on traffic stops. However, the inability to grow the number of officers during a time when Nashville is seeing explosive growth remains a problem.

In 2010, Metro's population was 601,222 and the MNPd has 1340 sworn members, or 1 sworn member for 448 residents. In 2019, the population has risen to 669, 053 and the MNPd has 1396 (as of 01/10/2020) sworn officers, or 1 sworn member for 477 residents. Metro's population has increased 11.28%, but the MNPd's complement of sworn members rose only 4.55%. Adding to this challenge is the increase in Nashville tourism. In 2012, Nashville had some 11.2 million tourists. In 2018, that number rose to a record 15.2 million tourists, and increase of 36%.

The largest part of the MNPd's budget is for personnel. Over the past few years, the MNPd, as well as other departments have been given budgets and then told not to spend their allotment. This requirement is called "targeted savings." The MNPd is approved for 1511 sworn positions, but only 1400 are currently filled. When departments are asked to save \$2 million and \$3 million dollars, they really being told not to fill needed positions.

These kinds of manpower issues affect police morale. Short staffing means officers have difficulty taking leave time. It means response times to calls from our citizens can be long. It means back-up for officers responding to potentially dangerous calls can be slower to respond. As noted, it means officers often don't have the time for preventive patrols or time to address community concerns. Officers often find themselves running from call to call.

These staffing issues also affect our residents. They slow response times. They prevent officers from responding to some minor calls that affect quality of life in our neighborhoods.

Section 4

Metro Nashville Fire Department

Fire Fighters Pay and Morale

Summary

Metro Nashville Fire Department employees find their salaries falling behind the average of similar employees serving in the 14 comparable cities surveyed by between 13% and 39%, depending on the rank and tenure surveyed. Starting firefighters fall 13% behind their cohorts while topped out firefighters make 20% less than the average of our survey cities. Like the Metro employees already highlighted in this report, Metro's failure to update and fund its pay schedule is causing hiring, retention, staffing and morale issues in the Metro Fire Department.

Current Pay

In a survey of 14 comparable jurisdictions, the starting firefighters in Metro made \$6,717.21 less than the average starting firefighter. For topped-out firefighters, that pay disparity rises to \$12,994.66. The largest pay disparity occurs in the survey is borne by starting Fire Captains. Metro pays starting Fire Captains, \$24,793.02, or 39%, less than the average Fire Captain in our survey. (Metro \$63,649.23 vs. Survey average of \$88,442.25.

	Fire Fighter		Engineer		Captain		District Chief		Years to Max
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	
Anaheim	\$ 72,858.24	\$ 97,639.36	\$ 104,482.56	\$ 115,198.72	\$ 115,082.24	\$ 126,875.84			10
Austin	\$ 77,966.00	\$ 90,257.00	\$ 84,204.00	\$ 97,477.00	\$ 98,215.00	\$ 113,698.00	\$ 107,054.00	\$ 123,931.00	7
Charlotte	\$ 48,909.00	\$ 65,699.00	\$ 55,270.00	\$ 67,342.00	\$ 75,759.00	\$ 87,753.00	\$ 95,421.00	\$ 121,926.00	
Columbus	\$ 55,653.90	\$ 85,305.36	\$ 100,660.32	\$ 100,660.32	\$ 118,779.18	\$ 118,779.18	\$ 140,159.43	\$ 140,159.43	5
Dallas	\$ 61,367.00	\$ 81,983.00	\$ 79,387.00	\$ 89,350.00	\$ 101,092.00	\$ 108,865.00	\$ 111,586.00	\$ 120,166.00	10
Fort Worth	\$ 56,183.00	\$ 78,101.00	\$ 74,691.00	\$ 85,487.00	\$ 94,140.00	\$ 104,586.00	\$ 107,558.00	\$ 119,511.00	11
Indianapolis	\$ 77,981.00	\$ 79,586.00	\$ 80,795.00	\$ 86,297.00	\$ 89,516.00	\$ 93,950.00	\$ 99,290.00	\$ 102,646.00	
Jacksonville	\$ 40,512.00	\$ 61,548.00	\$ 51,888.00	\$ 70,752.00	\$ 84,768.00	\$ 93,612.00			13
Kansas City	\$ 57,996.00	\$ 65,940.00	\$ 64,644.00	\$ 77,556.00	\$ 81,840.00	\$ 86,016.00			13
Las Vegas	\$ 52,179.14	\$ 85,337.20	\$ 57,051.80	\$ 93,470.78	\$ 64,361.18	\$ 105,670.50	\$ 75,303.00	\$ 123,635.00	10
Oklahoma City	\$ 47,856.96	\$ 70,261.20	\$ 73,581.12	\$ 77,047.20	\$ 81,160.56	\$ 87,946.56	\$ 98,804.16	\$ 108,784.80	10
Orlando	\$ 51,370.39	\$ 81,391.10	\$ 65,723.75	\$ 88,497.58	\$ 71,758.38	\$ 97,587.74	\$ 95,745.22	\$ 112,000.00	8
Salt Lake City	\$ 42,016.00	\$ 64,588.16	\$ 44,970.00	\$ 72,654.40	\$ 80,600.00	\$ 88,903.36	\$ 100,817.00	\$ 104,458.00	7
Tampa	\$ 48,896.64	\$ 81,244.80	\$ 62,774.40	\$ 88,408.32	\$ 81,120.00	\$ 103,084.80	\$ 93,475.20	\$ 114,716.16	12
Average	\$ 56,553.23	\$ 77,777.23	\$ 71,437.35	\$ 86,442.74	\$ 88,442.25	\$ 101,237.71	\$ 102,292.09	\$ 117,448.49	9.67
Nashville	\$ 49,836.02	\$ 64,782.57	\$ 55,046.66	\$ 71,559.23	\$ 63,649.23	\$ 82,743.81	\$ 79,826.18	\$ 103,774.76	10
Difference	\$ 6,717.21	\$ 12,994.66	\$ 16,390.69	\$ 14,883.51	\$ 24,793.02	\$ 18,493.90	\$ 22,465.91	\$ 13,673.73	
% Difference	13%	20%	30%	21%	39%	22%	28%	13%	

The population of Nashville is rapidly increasing. The estimated 2018 population is 669,053 people, an 11.3% increase over the 2010 population reported by the latest U.S. Census (601,222 people). The downtown area has experienced significant developments with hundreds of high- rise construction projects completed in the last few years. Downtown housing units have grown from 6,400 in 2017 to 8,256 in 2018 and 8,640 in 2019. The Downtown resident population has also increased from 10,240 in the year 2017, to 11,847 in 2018, and to 12,200 in 2019. The NFD needs to be ready to respond to increasing demand and provide efficient service to a growing population.

Currently, NFD operates 39 fire stations which house 39 engine companies, 28 medic units, four rescue squads, 10 trucks, two tower companies, 10 District Chiefs, and several special operations units. One of the 28

medic units (Medic 41) is housed in a station of the Goodlettsville Fire Department, located in the North part of Davidson County. NFD provides fire suppression, rescue, and advanced life support (ALS) EMS response and transport for the city of Nashville and Davidson County, as well as services aimed to minimize the risks for the community. The newest station, Station 5, was opened in April 2018 and deploys one engine company and one medic unit (Engine 5 and Medic 5). These two units were regularly staffed prior to the move when they were housed in Station 9 along with Engine 9, Truck 9 and Medic 9, which are still housed in Station 9. Seven engines have ALS capabilities, while the other 32 can provide basic life support (BLS). Despite the increasing demand over the years, the NFD reduced the number of engines which can provide ALS response.

All the NFD's fire suppression apparatus are staffed with less than four firefighters. Therefore, NFD operates apparatus that is not staffed to provide for effective, efficient, and safe emergency operations, as required by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA®) Standard 1710: *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments* and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) rules and regulations. Staffing apparatus below the minimums set by industry standards results in crews being less efficient in completing critical fireground tasks. The smaller the crew size, the more tasks an individual must complete, which contributes to the delay in initiating fire attack and containing the fire, and contributes to diminished efficiency in stopping fire loss.

Inadequate staffing levels on fire suppression apparatus expose civilians and firefighters to increased risk. It also further drains fire department resources and stresses the emergency response system by requiring additional apparatus to respond from farther distances. This document will discuss the importance of maintaining safe and effective staffing levels and the impact on service when these levels are not met.

Section 5

General Government Employees Represented by SEIU

METRO GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND MNPS SUPPORT STAFF SUMMARY

SEIU Local 205 represents employees in numerous Metro government departments and support staff in Metro Nashville Public Schools. Because of that, we chose to report a holistic view of salary ranges in relation to the cost of living in Nashville. Additionally, we did a cursory morale survey with the limited time available to this committee. With rents and home prices dramatically increasing in recent years, we know it is becoming harder and harder for employees to live in the county. One study by GoBanking claimed it required an income of \$80,000/year to live comfortably in Nashville. For context, 72% of the employees represented by SEIU Local 205 in Metro Government earn less than \$50,000/year. In MNPS, 95% are under \$50,000, and most well below.

The median salary for MNPS support staff is less than \$23,000/year, with 1400 employees earning less than \$15/hour, the new minimum for Metro employees. At Metro, the median is significantly higher at roughly \$44,000, but that means half of those Metro employees are earning well below what it costs to live in the county.

Across all departments, there is a similar theme that stagnant wages and broken promises are creating recruitment and retention problems. This has resulted in staffing shortages which place greater strain on the current employees and a reduced ability to meet the demand of our growing city. The increased strain on existing employees compounds the problem of inadequate wages, creating a vicious cycle that Metro has to break.

Finally, many of Nashville's greatest challenges stem from persistent, systemic poverty. Because the state government constrains local government from many tools it would like to deploy to fight poverty, it is imperative that Metro use its leverage as the 3rd largest employer in the county to create upward pressure on the labor market. By setting an example of what a model employer should be, Metro can lead by example for the private sector to follow, as the State of Tennessee - the 2nd largest employer in the county - has just done so by offering 12 weeks of paid family leave. Public sector jobs have historically provided pathways out of poverty, particularly for minority communities. Metro is in danger of closing that pathway and leaving even more Nashvillians behind.

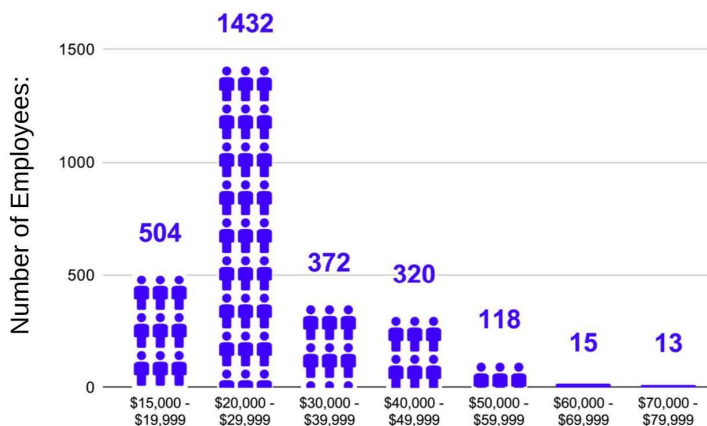
PUBLIC WORKER PAY & BENEFITS



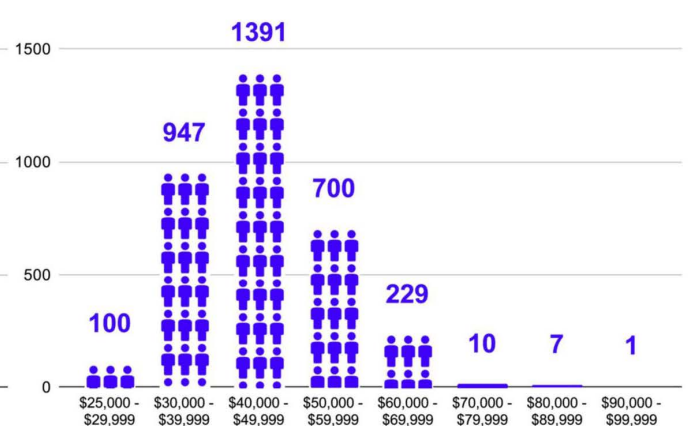
Balancing Nashville's chronically-underfunded budget has landed on Metro & MNPS employees' backs in recent years, as scheduled raises have been cut, wages have stagnated, and sub-living-wage jobs have proliferated.

Public Worker Pay & Benefits	MNPS	Metro
Cost of Living Adjustment Raises Not Funded:	2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2017, 2019	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2019
Increment/Step Raises Not Funded:	2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020	2010, 2011, 2012, 2013
Paid Family Leave:	No	Yes
Number of Part-Time Employees:	118	420*
Median Annual Income (Full-time):	\$22,639.80	\$44,212.28
Median Hourly Income (Full-time, Part-time, and Seasonal):	\$15.30	\$20.28
Employees Earning Under \$15 Per Hour**:	1,406	610
Percent of employees earning under \$50,000/year:	95%	72%

MNPS Employee Salary Distribution:



Metro Employee Salary Distribution:

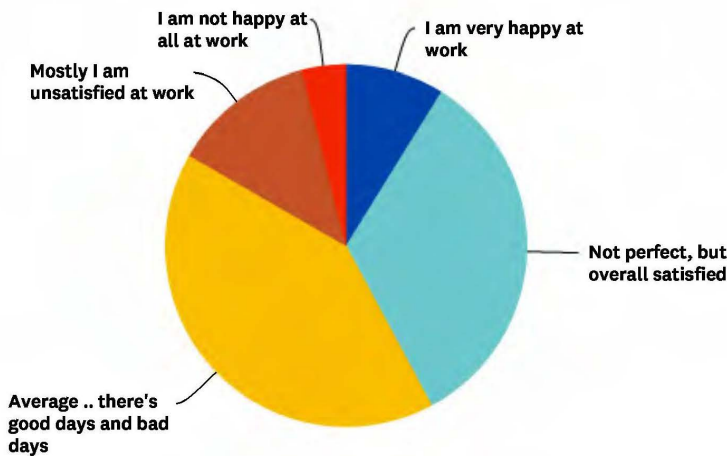


* Majority of part-time positions within Health Dept, Metro Action Commission (Head Start), Parks, Public Library, and Sheriff.

** Majority of sub-\$15/hr positions within Convention Center Authority, Metro Action Commission (Head Start), Parks, Public Library, and State Fair Board.
All figures exclusively represent compensation data for employees in Nashville Metro and MNPS business units represented by SEIU Local 205.

Q1 How happy/satisfied are you at work?

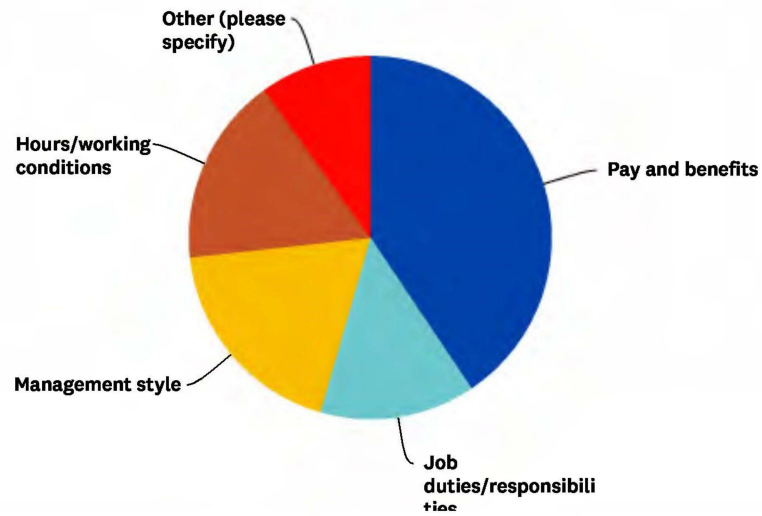
Answered: 102 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I am very happy at work	8.82%	9
Not perfect, but overall satisfied	33.33%	34
Average .. there's good days and bad days	41.18%	42
Mostly I am unsatisfied at work	12.75%	13
I am not happy at all at work	3.92%	4
TOTAL		102

Q2 What impacts your satisfaction with work THE MOST?

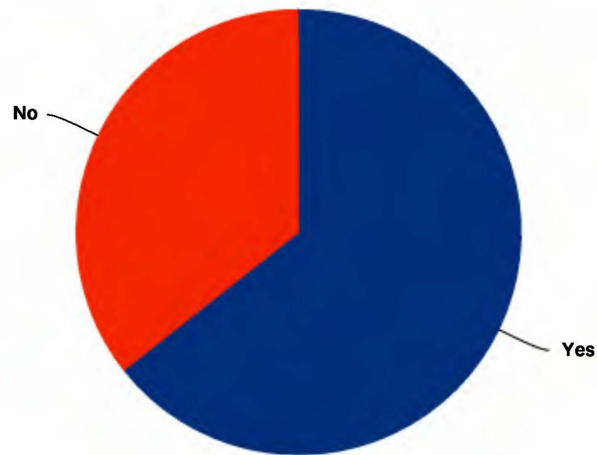
Answered: 101 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Pay and benefits	40.59%	41
Job duties/responsibilities	13.86%	14
Management style	18.81%	19
Hours/working conditions	16.83%	17
Other (please specify)	9.90%	10
TOTAL		101

Q3 Would you refer someone else to work here?

Answered: 101 Skipped: 1

**ANSWER CHOICES**

Yes

No

TOTAL

RESPONSES

64.36%

35.64%

65

36

101

Q5 Which Department Do You Work At?

Metro Schools (support staff)	48
Metro General Govt depts	44
Metro Action Commission	6
Other/DNR	4

Section 6

Metro Nashville Teachers

Introduction

Metro Nashville Public Schools employs about 5768 teachers and has 86,000 students. Nationally, we are seeing an increase in teacher shortages, turnover, and insufficient enrollment in teacher preparation programs. This lack of commitment to public education and teacher pay has hurt morale across the district. One in ten schools have a vacancy they cannot fill and for high poverty schools, that number is one in three. Teacher quality, effectiveness, and morale are vital to move our school system forward and significantly boosting pay to competitive levels is key to success.

Current Pay for MNPS teachers

The average MNPS teacher salary is \$54,055, with a range from \$47,261 to \$62,434. Nashville has seen tremendous economic growth over the last decade and, with that, a higher cost of living. Raises from both state and local sources have significantly trailed this cost-of-living increase. Teachers have had to get second jobs to survive, move out of Davidson County to afford housing, and/or leave MNPS for other counties or other professions. Earlier in the decade, efforts were made by MNPS to boost starting teacher pay, but later steps for mid-career teachers were frozen or even cut.

In terms of additional compensation and benefits,

- Teachers hired by MNPS after 2015 do not have a traditional state pension
- Teachers in MNPS **do not** have paid maternity/ paternity leave
- Teachers **do not** receive overtime pay for the required work outside of the 7.5 workday
- This contrasts with other Metro employees who do have the aforementioned benefits

Nashville Public School teachers are underpaid in comparison to peer cities and wages have stagnated against the cost of living in Nashville. Nashville fits into the national trends of teacher shortages around the country. It is imperative that our city leaders reflect on teacher compensation and morale and work to make Nashville a place that teachers want to work, can afford to work and live, and make Metro Schools a place parents want to send their children.

In 2013-14 there were enough teachers to fill needs across the country. Within 5 years the number of teachers needed is 110,000. Here are the reasons for this crisis: low pay, low respect, and poor teaching conditions (Economic Policy Institute). Nashville fits this narrative. We have over 200 openings half way through the school year. What does this mean? This means there are 1000s of Nashville's children without teachers. Unfilled openings in areas of higher poverty are greater. This means that children of poverty will have a lesser chance at upward mobility. This means our city is failing our children and our democracy is at risk.

- This is exacerbated in high poverty schools: 1/10 schools are unable to fill at least one vacancy and 1/3 in high poverty areas. Why? Low Relative Pay. Again Nashville fits this narrative. (Economic Policy Institute).
- Trend in Teacher Pay: 21.4% decrease in pay relative to what a teacher would be making with degree & experience level (Economic Policy Institute).
- 6/10 teachers are moonlighting with at least one other job (Economic Policy Institute). This also fits the narrative of Nashville teachers.

- The monetary price tag of teacher turnover is high. Over a billion dollars nationwide. It would behoove Nashville to figure out the actual price tag teacher turnover is costing our city. It would be more cost effective to pay teachers a relative salary to peers with similar degrees and experience levels.

We are in a crisis. We need to focus on what is below the surface of this crisis. Relative Low Pay, Low Respect, & Poor Working Conditions. The systems in place are to blame for this. Teachers and students are not the problem.

Comparison to Peer Cities

Nashville is well below many peer cities, especially with the growth of cost of living as it has seen substantial economic growth. Atlanta and Denver were chosen as peer cities with a good comparison due to similar rapid growth patterns, immigration, gentrification, and school system size.

Over a 28-year career in **MNPS** a teacher with a bachelor's degree will see a small increase in pay 11 times over the course of her career. A teacher at full retirement, 30 years in the district, will receive **no** increase in compensation for 64% of her career.

Over a 28-year career in **APS** a teacher with a bachelor's degree will see a small increase in pay each year she is employed with the district. A teacher will see a stagnated compensation for less than 1% of her career.

A recent study conducted by Gobankrates found to live comfortably in Nashville, Tennessee one needs to make \$80,548/ year. This same study found to live comfortably in Atlanta, Georgia one needs to make \$76,049/ year.

District Compensation Comparison: **Teacher with a Bachelor's Degree**

Atlanta Public Schools (APS) and
Metro Nashville Public Schools
(MNPS)

District Compensation Comparison: **Teacher with a Bachelor's Degree**

Atlanta Public Schools (APS), Denver
Public Schools, and Metro Nashville
Public Schools (MNPS)

**Highlighted steps are those
that are stagnant.**

Step	Metro Nash- ville Public Schools	Atlanta Public Schools	Denver Public Schools (their scale has more lanes. A teacher has more opportunity for increased pay through Professional Dev and teaching in hard to serve schools and positions)
0	\$44,663	\$48,086	NO STEP 0
1	\$44,663	\$48,087	45,800
2	\$44,663	\$49,539	\$46,869
3	\$45,088	\$50,282	\$48,434
4	\$46,149	\$51,037	\$49,998
5	\$46,149	\$51,803	\$51,563
6	\$46,149	\$52,709	\$53,127
7	\$47,475	\$53,632	\$54,692
8	\$47,475	\$54,570	\$56,256
9	\$47,475	\$55,525	\$57,820
10	\$47,475	\$56,497	\$58,385
11	\$47,475	\$57,485	\$60,949
12	\$49,862	\$58,923	\$62,514
13	\$49,862	\$60,395	\$64,078
14	\$50,286	\$61,905	\$65,642
15	\$51,771	\$63,453	\$67,207
16	\$53,257	\$65,039	\$68,771
17	\$54,636	\$66,665	\$70,336
18	\$56,121	\$67,332	\$71,900
19	\$57,606	\$68,006	\$73,465
20	\$58,773	\$68,686	\$75,029
21	\$59,410	\$69,372	
22	\$59,410	\$70,065	
23	\$59,410	\$70,766	
24	\$59,410	\$71,474	
25	\$59,410	\$72,189	
26	\$59,410	\$72,911	
27	\$60,471	\$73,640	

District Compensation Comparison: **Teacher with a Masters Degree**
Atlanta Public Schools (APS) and Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS)

Step	Metro Nashville Public Schools	Atlanta Public Schools	Denver Public Schools (This lane is BA+36/ MA)
0	\$45,629	\$51,106	NO STEP 0
1	\$45,629	\$51,973	\$50,343
2	\$45,629	\$52,651	\$52,081
3	\$46,149	\$53,440	\$53,694
4	\$47,210	\$54,242	\$55,369
5	\$47,210	\$55,056	\$57,044
6	\$47,210	\$56,019	\$58,720
7	\$48,270	\$56,999	\$60,395
8	\$48,270	\$57,997	\$62,070
9	\$48,270	\$59,012	\$63,746
10	\$48,801	\$60,045	\$65,421
11	\$50,286	\$61,095	\$67,096
12	\$51,984	\$62,623	\$68,771
13	\$53,257	\$64,188	\$70,447
14	\$54,636	\$65,793	\$72,122
15	\$56,121	\$67,438	\$73,797
16	\$57,606	\$69,124	\$75,473
17	\$59,092	\$70,852	\$77,148
18	\$60,577	\$71,560	\$78,823
19	\$62,092	\$72,276	\$80,499
20	\$63,547	\$72,999	\$82,174
21	\$64,768	\$73,729	
22	\$64,874	\$74,466	
23	\$64,874	\$75,211	
24	\$64,874	\$75,963	
25	\$64,874	\$76,723	
26	\$64,874	\$77,490	
27	\$66,412	\$78,265	

Additional Information:

- Teachers hired by MNPS after 2015 do not have a traditional state pension
- Teachers in MNPS **do not** have paid maternity/ paternity leave
- Teachers **do not** receive overtime pay for the required work outside of the 7.5 workday.
- This is in contrast to police and fire who do have the aforementioned benefits

Average Salary Comparison with Other Peer Cities

City	Avg salary	Avg. salary vs Nash (+ is more)	Low salary	High salary	Population	Cost of living overall vs Nash	Cost of Housing vs Nash (+ is more)
Nashville, TN	\$54,055.00	N/A	\$47,261.00	\$62,434.00	669,053	N/A	N/A
Knoxville, TN	\$53,890.00	-\$165.00	\$47,116.00	\$62,242.00	187,500	-15.7%	-33.8%
Memphis, TN	\$54,018.00	-\$37.00	\$47,228.00	\$62,390.00	650,618	-25.0%	-67.3%
Louisville, KY	\$54,968.00	\$913.00	\$48,059.00	\$63,288.00	620,118	-12.8%	-38.6%
Virginia Beach, VA	\$55,726.00	\$1,671.00	\$50,658.00	\$64,363.00	450,189	4.1%	2.4%
Indianapolis, IN	\$56,942.00	\$2,887.00	\$49,784.00	\$65,768.00	867,125	-17.7%	-45.4%
Charlotte, NC	\$57,100.00	\$3,045.00	\$49,923.00	\$65,951.00	872,498	-2.5%	-12.6%
Kansas City, MO	\$57,224.00	\$3,169.00	\$50,031.00	\$66,093.00	491,918	-15.0%	-44.1%
Austin, TX	\$57,329.00	\$3,274.00	\$50,123.00	\$66,215.00	964,254	17.7%	40.9%
Columbus, OH	\$57,539.00	\$3,484.00	\$49,400.00	\$65,325.00	892,533	-15.7%	-39.8%
Denver, CO	\$58,939.00	\$4,884.00	\$51,539.00	\$68,086.00	716,492	26.9%	62.7%
Portland, OR	\$60,925.00	\$6,870.00	\$53,267.00	\$70,329.00	653,115	29.0%	60.2%

Resources	
Salaries	salary.com
Population	Census Bureau
Cost of living	bestplaces.net

One concern is inequity in step raises as a teacher moves through her/his career. While starting salaries got a 16% increase in 2013-14, salary steps at higher levels of experience only saw small increases, and in subsequent years, actually a decline. Boosting these steps to compensate and retain teachers later in their career should be a part of any compensation plan.

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MNPS **Bachelors** Salary Schedule Comparison 2003-2019 Steps 0/ 13/ 25

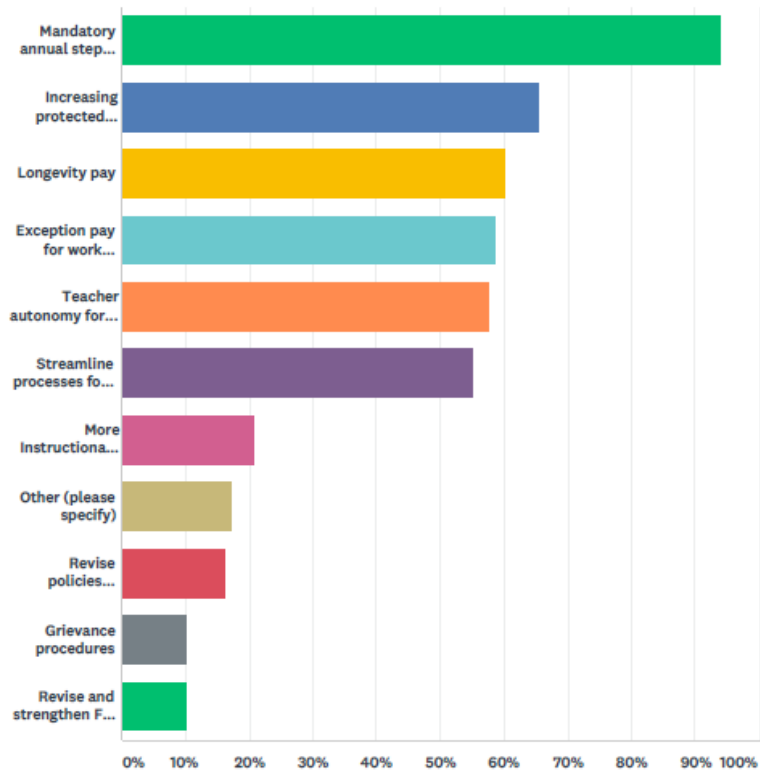
School Year	Salary Step 0	% + or % - from previous year	Salary Step 13	% + or % - from previous year	Salary Step 25	% + or % - from previous year	
03-04	30,011.00		44,723.00		47,150.00		
04-05	30,968.44	+3.17	46,147.00	+3.18	48,652.00	+3.19	
05-06	31,122.84	+49	46,377.74	+44	48,895.26	+5	
06-07	33,067.00	+6.25	47,035.00	+1.42	49,873.00	+2	
07-08	34,059.43	+3.0	48,725.03	+3.6	51,369.64	+3	
08-09	34,059.43	+0	48,725.03	+0	51,369.64	+0	
09-10	34,059.43	+0	48,725.03	+0	51,369.64	+0	
10-11	No Info						
11-12	34,474.00		49,319.00		51,995.00		
12-13	40,000.00	+16.03	50,270.00	+1.93	52,999.00	+1.93	
13-14	40,448.00	+1.01	49,498.00	-1.54	53,592.00	+1.12	
14-15	41,256.96	+2.0	49,121.09	-76	54,664.27	+2	
15-16	42,082.10	+3.0	48,711.74	-83	54,800.71	+25	
16-17	42,100.00	+004	48,800.00	+18	56,000.00	+2.19	
17-18	43,363.00	+3.0	50,264.00	+3	57,680.00	+3	
18-19	43,363.00	+0	48,822.00	-2.91	57,680.00	+0	
19-20	44,663.89	+3	50,286.66	+3	59,410.00	3%	Proposed 3% COLA
19-20	51,081.61	+17.8	57,512.32	+17.8	67,957.04	17.8%	Red4Ed Proposed 17.8%

Morale

Increasing morale, professional treatment, and working conditions is of key interest to teachers. A recent survey that asked “What items should be a part of collaborative conferencing?” resulted in the responses below and include pay issues, protection of planning time, and more autonomy.

Q1 Please choose your top five (5) priorities for changes for the MOU

Answered: 116 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Mandatory annual step raises	93.97%	109
Increasing protected planning time	65.52%	76
Longevity pay	60.34%	70
Exception pay for work outside the 7.5 hour work day	58.62%	68
Teacher autonomy for planning and instruction	57.76%	67
Streamline processes for student discipline and support	55.17%	64
More Instructional resources	20.69%	24
Other (please specify)	17.24%	20
Revise policies regarding in lieu of sub pay	16.38%	19
Grievance procedures	10.34%	12

How To Improve/What We Need

Significant salary increases are necessary to remain competitive in recruiting and retaining the best teachers for our students as well as make sure they can afford to live comfortably in Nashville Davidson County. Not only do we need to improve salaries across the board, we need to revamp and reinstate regular step increases so teachers can keep up with the rising cost of living. We need to increase salaries and the salary schedule by 17.8%.

We need to both move salaries significantly upward soon as well as have a long-term plan to keep salaries competitive with comparable cities and surrounding counties and stem the tide of the teacher shortage in our community.

Teachers want to be treated with respect, as collaborators, as significant stakeholders, and the professionals they were trained to be and continue to be in our schools every day.

Section 7

Additional Items of Interest

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Scope of This Project

We acknowledge that this is not a total compensation study of Metro employees. We focused on salaries. A full compensation study would also include contributions to retirement benefits, healthcare coverage, paid leave and the like. In regard to Metro's pension plan, Metro provides a non-contributory plan for its employees. This was the result of an agreement between Metro and employee representative groups in the mid 1980's. In exchange for no longer contributing to the pension plan, Metro employees gave up a 3% increase in salaries. This arrangement also saves the city a modest sum in that they do not have to make an actuarial contribution to pay refunds to employees that leave the system before becoming vested.

Metro's Pension

Also important to note, is that Metro's pension system was designed to integrate with Social Security. A number of the cities Metro uses for comparison purposes in determining compensation do not participate in Social Security. Jurisdictions that opted out of Social Security save the employer's 6.2% of payroll contribution. Their employees also save that contribution. Federal law no longer allows entities to opt out of Social Security. Metro and their employees both pay 6.2% of payroll toward employee retirement income. Metro employees do contribute to their retirement income.

Metro's pension benefit is not considered a rich plan. However, when employees become eligible for Social Security the combined funds provide sound salary replacement for retirees. Metro employee representatives also acknowledge that the plan has been well managed and is well funded. Metro employees can feel confident that their Metro pension will be there for them when they retire.

Metro's Healthcare Plans

Metropolitan Government provides competitive healthcare plans for employees. The city provides 75% of the cost, the employee contributes the other 25%. Metro also allows retirees to continue to participate in its healthcare programs. This is not the case in every jurisdiction. This is a benefit that Metro has been funded on a pay-as-you-go basis. Governmental accounting rules document this post employment benefit as a significant unfunded liability. There are currently ongoing discussions about how to best address the funding of retiree health benefits.

Metro Compensation Studies and Pay Plan Compression

During our discussions on pay plans and compensation studies, it was noted that when implementing new compensation plans, Metro often adds to the problem of pay plan compression. For example, a topped-out firefighter in step 10 currently makes \$64,782. If Metro were to adopt a compensation study and set the salary for step 10 at \$77,182, ideally that is where the step 10 firefighter would be placed and paid. However, Metro often fails to fully fund the recommend compensation. Instead, they set an arbitrary maximum increase for our example, say 10%. That would mean the topped out firefighter would be placed in a lower step paying something close to \$71,620, instead of being paid the \$77,182 recommended by the plan. That previously topped-out firefighter will then have to wait another 3 or more years/steps before reaching step 10 again.

This pay compression is compounded by the number of Metro employees who did not receive step raises while they were frozen in the wake of the Great Recession. As noted earlier in this report, the freezing of pay steps was a first in the history of Metro government.

Section 8

Conclusion

Conclusion

Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County has struggled with its budget and its growth since the Great Recession of 2008. Personnel costs, being the largest budget item for Metro, became the prime target for savings and reductions. Salaries have remained stagnant and needed positions have been left vacant. Almost every Metro Department has found themselves struggling to provide prompt and efficient service. Over the past decade they have been continuously asked to do more, with less. We now find ourselves at a point of diminishing returns.

Stagnating salaries are making it difficult for Metro departments to hire and retain the quantity and quality of employees they need. This means larger class sizes for our school children. The children's school buses aren't always as timely as they should be. Metro's vacant positions result in slower response times for our emergency responders, fewer than recommended personnel on fire equipment, longer waits for codes inspections, longer waits for fixing storm water issues. The list goes on.

These hiring issues don't just affect the delivery of services. They have also become a hidden cost financially. We have employees that Metro hires and trains. After that significant investment in time and money, Metro loses employees to other jurisdictions where the compensation programs are more competitive. Metro schools has on the order of a 30% turnover rate for instance.

These personnel and compensation issues have impacted employee morale. Our Metro employees are dedicated workers. They value their employment and our city. However, in so many cases they are feeling stretched to the limit and underappreciated.

Employees understood and were willing to sacrifice when Metro faced the economic downturn. Employees around the country, public and private, were facing cuts and layoffs. Metro employees shared the discomfort of the downturn. However, they largely have not shared in the benefits of Nashville's growth and economic resurgence. Morale issues are not only about money. Metro's financial issues have led to many of the staffing and workload issue that also weigh on employee morale. Getting Metro on a sustainable and competitive budget that properly funds employee salaries and staffing, is key to solving the majority of our employee issues.

This special committee has no magic formula for getting Nashville's finances back in good order. Our city has put off dealing with the issue for several years, using one-time moneys from property sales to fund our ongoing obligations is one example. Metro must begin to think long-term in its budgeting process. The Metro Council and Mayor's Office must be willing to generate the revenues needed to fund our services and the employees that provide them. That may well require a property tax increase. Metro was not able to capture much of the value of its growth after the last reappraisal process. We also welcome and encourage the Mayor's Office to continue their analysis/search of other alternative funding sources.

Across the board raises are needed to help our employees get caught up with the cost of living in our city. However, there are classifications in Metro that need to be significantly adjusted to make the Metro pay plan competitive. For instance, with all of the construction occurring in Nashville, Public Works is finding it difficult to recruit engineers. Metro's salaries are not competitive with the private sector. Therefore, we encourage the administration to begin to perform reclassification studies to correct this problem.

We feel this report clearly demonstrates grave concerns that the Metropolitan Government has fallen behind in compensating many of its employees in a competitive manner. This failing is causing hiring and staffing problems that detrimentally affect the efficiency of city services and the morale of our employees. If the Metropolitan Government is serious about addressing these issues in a meaningful way, we must begin providing the necessary funding that will be required. We look forward to working with our city administration to identify appropriate on-going sources of revenue for this funding.