

FIGHT AGAINST MERIT SYSTEM

It Will Begin at Tonight's Session of the School Board.

Resolution Will Be Introduced Increasing the Pay of the Teachers From the Beginning of the Present Term.

At the meeting of the School Board tonight the "merit system," so-called, will come up for consideration and in its stead will be presented a resolution increasing the pay of teachers upon a scale in conformity with the desires of the taxpayers meeting last December, which voted \$30,000 for this purpose.

The resolution, which will be supported by Directors Beach and Fleischer and Mrs. Sifton, the chairman, will provide for the payment of \$10 a month additional from the beginning of the present term to all principals in the department; \$5 a month to each teacher in the High School, and \$5 a month extra for every grade teacher possessing a life certificate who has taught six years or more.

In each case the increase will relate back to the beginning of the term, so that at the end of the year the increase will be reflected by its provisions will share in the division of approximately \$100,000. Director Wittenberg is said to be about the only member of the board who still adheres to the merit plan, although Director Richard Williams has agreed to have a slight leaning toward the merit plan. It is believed, however, that Mr. Williams may be enlisted to the support of the resolution which it is proposed shall put the merit system out of business tomorrow.

It is claimed that upon the basis of the proposed increase the teachers will fare just as well, if not better, than they otherwise would had the idea gone into effect at the opening of the term, as the money will come in unexpected, as they had about given up all hope of receiving anything.

City Superintendent Riger stated yesterday that the committee composed of himself, Professor T. T. Davis, president of the High School and Principals J. Burnham, of Couch and J. T. Gregg, of the Hawthorne School, were prepared to sign a petition for the merit system if called upon. Ever since their appointment on this committee they have been devoting a great deal of time to a proper analysis of the teacher's claims for consideration, so that, in all probability, the data gathered by them will be applied to the new order of things, even if the merit system is abolished entirely.

Director Wittenberg's Statement. "A few disgruntled teachers who work a short time for pin-money are the only ones opposed to it," said Director Wittenberg. "You don't see any of those who intend to make teaching a life profession objecting to its idea, and I understand that at the meeting of the board tomorrow night a petition by the disgruntled teachers in the city schools will be presented in favor of the merit system and asking that it be put into effect. Superintendent Riger will introduce the petition tomorrow night at the meeting of the board, and I will not run away with the idea that the merit system is a dead issue when it can summon to its support such a representative class."

Director Wittenberg, who is believed to be in favor of it, but for reasons of his own puts himself on record as being opposed, and is now beginning to realize his mistake. Director Williams is all right, and while he was on the fence for a while, the petition that was got up by the principals won him over to our side, and I believe Fleischer will follow suit."

Both Mrs. L. W. Sifton, chairman of the School Board, and Director I. N. Fleischer announced in unmistakable terms last night their hostility to the merit system and that they would vote against it at the meeting this evening.

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