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Retirement incentives boost Eastchester schools '08 payroll

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EASTCHESTER - Six retiring teachers received payouts last year of more than \$62,000 apiece that were close to the salaries they were already receiving.

The district offered payouts to 22 retirees totaling \$983,539 last year. Deborah Goldman, Janice Nowak and Noel Ruane were given the most, \$62,989 each, according to a review of 2008 district salary data collected by The Journal News under the state Freedom of Information Law.

The look at school salaries in Eastchester is part of a continuing examination of government and school district payrolls across the Lower Hudson Valley.

<http://lohud.com/article/99999999/DATABASE16/90526013/-1/database>"> Database: Eastchester School District's Top 50 earners

The remaining teachers receiving payouts greater than \$62,000 were Elizabeth Barkham and Lee Parker, who took home \$62,505 for retiring; and Lorraine Divincenzo, who was given \$62,403.

Both Parker and Goldman were part-time employees before retiring, and the payouts made their total pay among the top 50 wage earners in the district - \$141,123 and \$135,981, respectively. Parker had been with the district since 1982 and Goldman since 1965.

Superintendent Marilyn Terranova said the payouts were part of a retirement-incentive program implemented in 2007, months before she took her post in August that year. Under the program, retiring teachers, in addition to their contracted salary, would be given 25 percent of their base pay or a flat payout of \$25,000 - whichever was greater.

In addition, they would get 25 percent of the pay they would be getting from unused sick days.

The district implemented another retirement program this year, and Terranova said she expects these payouts to be "not as much, by any means."

Instead of offering a percentage of pay to employees, the district will offer \$20,000 to employees who retire by June and \$15,000 to those who retire by June 2010. Three employees have taken advantage of the June 2009 payout, and the district anticipates about a half-dozen employees will take advantage of the 2010 one.

"The savings here are pretty good," Terranova said. "We're looking at saving about 40-50 thousand dollars the first year but 120-130 thousand dollars the second year." Three employees have filed for retirement this year.

Elsewhere, some educators boosted their pay by thousands of dollars with stipends for extra assignments, including clubs, summer school, tutoring and coaching. John Gibson, a special-education teacher at the high school, received a \$35,077 stipend in 2008 to boost his pay to \$132,893.

"We offer stipends to teachers for all sorts of things, like curriculum development, lunch and recess duty and overseeing sports and clubs," Terranova said. "But these things are very clearly spelled out and require approval on many different levels."

Seventy-nine employees took home overtime pay in 2008, with the highest amount going to Douglas Oliver, the head custodial worker. Oliver made \$25,802 in overtime to boost his total pay to \$94,537.

Like retirement payouts, Terranova said she expects the district to spend less on overtime this year because of new oversight policies. Previously, only the approval of John Condon, director of school facilities, was needed for employee overtime. A policy implemented this school year also requires the approval of Terranova and Mary Ellen Melnyk, assistant superintendent of business.

Terranova was the district's highest earner last year, making \$234,427, followed by her deputy, Christie Simels, who made \$219,880. The only other district employee to make more than \$200,000 last year was Melnyk, at \$208,807.

Next year, the district has implemented a salary freeze for most top officials, including Terranova, Simels and Melnyk.

Of the district's top 50 wage earners last year, 36 were teachers. The highest-paid teacher was Ruane, a business education teacher at the high school who made \$154,459 - which includes his \$62,989 retirement payout.

Additional Facts

Top 10 earners

- 1) Superintendent Marilyn Terranova, \$234,427
- 2) Deputy Superintendent Christie Simels, \$219,880
- 3) Assistant Superintendent of Business Mary Ellen Melnyk, \$208,807
- 4) High school Principal Jeffrey Capuano, \$168,393
- 5) Greenvale Elementary School Principal Theresa Sullivan, \$167,382
- 6) Middle school Principal Walter Moran III, \$164,059
- 7) Anne Hutchinson Elementary School Principal Theresa Cherry, \$156,048
- 8) High school teacher Noel Ruane, \$154,459
- 9) Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Personnel Amy Goodman, \$153,004
- 10) Middle school teacher Janice Nowak, \$144,555

Source: District records

Data analysis by Cathey O'Donnell, The Journal News
