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Pay new teachers \$35K, task force recommends four lines pp

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PHOENIX — Arizona schools should pay starting teachers at least \$35,000 a year, with more cash made available for those with more experience, a gubernatorial task force is proposing.

John Haeger, chairman of the Governor's Committee on Teacher Quality and Support, said that's the bare minimum necessary to attract and retain the best people.

Reuben Gonzalez, vice chairman of the panel and owner of an insurance agency, said the figure was chosen because it's close to state's average wage.

How much that would mean to new teachers depends on their school district, since each district determines its own starting salaries. But Haeger, president of Northern Arizona University, said the state average is \$28,000 or less.

At a meeting Monday, committee members also told Gov. Janet Napolitano experienced teachers also should be paid more and have "substantial" opportunities to earn more based on performance.

The proposed package also contains one controversial suggestion: Pay teachers based on market conditions — what it takes to attract people from different disciplines. That would mean higher salaries for those who teach science and math than those who teach English, music and social studies.

But the committee has yet to decide if the state should pay for any of these proposals, or if the Legislature would simply mandate that individual districts find the extra dollars.

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