

Merit System: Answers to Questions Submitted Through Forms Survey

Question	Answer
If the Merit System is implemented are the interim positions for classified and managers going to disappear?	No. However, timelines for how long a position can be open before being filled will be enforced.
Will departments lose the ability to hire student workers / adult hourlies in this system?	No.
Will managers still be able to choose candidates to interview?	Managers must choose from the eligibility lists provided to them by the Personnel Commission.
What would adopting the merit system do to the already long hiring process timeline?	The eligibility lists and recruitment are on-going efforts to ensure that positions in which there is high turnover have eligible candidates ready. The eligibility list allows for candidates who passed the test previously and are qualified, to be solicited when there is an opening. This can expedite the process, and someone could be in place as soon as the final interview is conducted and the person is Board approved.
Why is the district willing to go along with this? I am very hesitant about this whole process. The district doesn't give away anything; what are they gaining from this?	The District is opposed to the Merit System. Implementing the Merit System would take control out of their hands and place it into the hands of a neutral Personnel Commission.
Will the "Test" to attain a position serve as a supplemental aid for classified to be used in their favor (good score = acknowledged, bad score = hidden), or will it just become another metric classified would need to meet as a new minimum?	Current classified employees will not need to test for their jobs. Incoming applicants and those seeking to promote would need to test to be placed on eligibility lists. The tests which can vary from written, oral, and/or hands-on, are designed to demonstrate knowledge and skills required for the position. All applicants would have already provided resumes and applications stating that they have these skills. The Personnel Commission is responsible for ensuring that the hiring, promoting, and recruitment processes are fair, transparent and equitable.
I'm not as much concerned with what we are gaining as much as I am concerned with what we are losing. So, simply put I guess is what are we losing?	Classified employees will not lose anything.

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<p>1) Is it true that if this is voted in we will not be able to vote it out for 5 years?</p> <p>2) How will different positions within a classification be identified or will they? Example: Administrative Assistant II working in a Division office vs. supporting a program vs. front desk of an area</p> <p>3) How is this fair and/or equitable when you are removing classified staff's participation in hiring committees?</p> <p>4) What are the cons to this system? We have been provided a list of pros, but the union has yet to let us know what the downsides are.</p> <p>5) Is it true that an applicant will have no say in what campus they work at or what position they are offered other than to accept or turn down a job offer? When applicants apply now it is to a position at a specific campus and in a specific area - will they have that choice?</p> <p>6) A petition was submitted to start this process. Where was this petition circulated? Who signed? I did not sign any petition and most of the classified I've spoken with never signed a petition either.</p> <p>7) What are some specific examples of why we need this system? How will this system correct these issues? And please - be specific - not just the generic answer we've been getting or something verbatim from the merit.org website.</p>	<p>1) Yes. That is true.</p> <p>2) Classifications will remain as they are until the Personnel Commission conducts a classification review.</p> <p>3) Although hiring committees are required to have classified participation now, managers routinely sideline classified members and refuse them full participation. Questions that should be developed by the committee are prepared solely by the manager often with the goal of hiring their preferred candidate. Continued reporting of this by CSEA to Human Resources Department has yielded no change.</p> <p>4) After struggling for many years to have management address abuses of the current hiring system, CSEA does not see a downside. The discipline, evaluation, and reclassification processes would also benefit from the Merit System.</p> <p>5) Applicants on the eligibility list will have the opportunity to waive interviews for positions they do not want. The number of times they can do this will be determined by the Personnel Commission rules with your input as members of the Classified Unit.</p> <p>6) The petition was circulated at all sites. Once the required number of signatures was collected, the petition was forwarded to the Board of Trustees for action.</p> <p>7) The list of specific reasons why we need this system is long, but includes: Hiring practices that exclude classified committee members, managers creating interview questions without classified input, managers giving their preferred candidate a near perfect score while scoring all other candidates very low thus skewing the results, managers allowing their preferred candidate access to the test and interview questions well in advance of the interview, managers agreeing to a set of interview questions and then revealing a different set of questions on the day of the interview, and managers hiring hourly workers for the sole purpose of having them practice to test and interview for a position. Reclassification procedures where a step not included in the CBA is inserted and evaluation procedures that allow managers to include information that is without merit. The discipline</p>
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	<p>process is completely broken. A single person is responsible for the investigation, creation of the charge packet, acting as the neutral Skelly officer. Witnesses for the member are not interviewed. The investigations are not fair and impartial. Upon appeal to the Board, the final decision is made in closed session with the person responsible for the process to this point. CSEA is not present. CSEA has worked for years to get HR to address these issues. They do not see the problem. At the bargaining table, certain topics, including binding arbitration, are non-starters for the District meaning, they have no interest in bargaining it.</p>
<p>Will the system introduce barriers to promotion of the right employees? Statewide, we are moving away from placing students into courses based on assessments because these, while being objective, are not good predictors of student performance and often result in students being held down in the remedial courses. Why do we think that promoting employees (or providing access to jobs) using tests will be good for employees and the colleges? The minority groups were impacted negatively under the matriculation assessment placement using tests. The District is trying to increase diversity of its employees. How do we know that the minority employees will not be negatively affected by the constant testing under the merit system?</p>	<p>The tests are used for a single specific purpose: to demonstrate that an applicant has the skills and abilities they claimed to have on their application and resume. That's it. The tests must be based on the duties of the job. If the job requires that an applicant be able to file, the test might involve sorting words alphabetically. If the job requires working with hazardous chemicals, the test might ask that the applicant be able to identify hazmat symbols. Assessment tests are designed to predict how a person will succeed in learning new things. Merit tests are designed to allow applicants to demonstrate knowledge of tasks they routinely perform. There is no constant testing.</p>
<p>Would the "Test" serve as a substitute to a credential/degree/certificate etc... otherwise required, or just an additional score on top of those min. quals.?</p>	<p>The minimum qualifications of a job would not change unless and until the Personnel Commission conducts a classification study.</p>
<p>I have worked within the merit system at a higher education institute and know for a fact that this "reward" system DOES NOT work. The merit system encourages co-workers and supervisors to vie against each other. Managers use favoritism to provide higher percentage increases to certain employees while those who continue to perform above average work receive nothing. I have seen, first hand, employee morale plummet after the implementation of the merit system. The workplace becomes a hostile environment,</p>	<p>The system you describe is not a Merit System. There is no mechanism for managers to determine raises. This system is common in the private sector but is against the law in public sector employment. CSEA agrees that COLA as provided by the California government is not enough for Orange County.</p>

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<p>where managers refuse to commend employees' work in hopes to provide them with a lower percentage increase when the time comes. I have seen managers withhold providing percentage points to obtain higher percentage points for themselves, as merit monies "all come from the same pot". Employees need to receive at least a 3% annual cost of living stipend to survive in Orange County.</p>	
<p>If the "Test" hurt a candidate and potentially removed them from the candidate pool, would that score be erased from their personal record, or would it stay in perpetuity?</p>	<p>Test results do not become a part of an employee's personnel file.</p>
<p>when will it start if voted in?</p>	<p>If passed, NOCCCD would become a Merit District after the Board meeting on July 23rd. We would have 30 days to elect Commissioners.</p>
<p>Would adopting a "Merit System" ethos long-term generate a work-force of employees who are in their positions purely because of a "passed" test of competency in some hyper-specific technology/process, thereby eliminating the ability to hire based on characteristics like positive attitude, history of good work-ethic, knowledgeable expertise in areas not specifically part of the position, but still relatable, etc...?</p>	<p>In short, no. Applicants will be paper screened, tested, and have both an initial interview and a final interview where those characteristics would be assessed.</p>
<p>Was the Merit system brought up by the will or the wish of most of all classified members in NOCCCD? If yes, where is the proof? If not, why should it be done to carry out the wish of the small number of the classified members?</p>	<p>If your question is did every single classified employee express an interest in the Merit System, then the answer is no. All classified will have an opportunity to vote.</p>
<p>Are employees tested only when seeking another district job?</p>	<p>Yes. Employees do not need to test to keep their jobs, only when seeking a promotion. Current employees wanting to lateral to the same job title at another site/department will not need to test.</p>
<p>With the reality of "bad test-takers" do we risk losing out on the "right candidate" by forcing the "Testing" protocol? Follow-up, if testing should become the way forward will it become part of the NOCCCD culture to offer test-practice throughout the year to ready Classified for a new opportunity that you wouldn't otherwise know how to do?</p>	<p>This question is often asked about the current system. Some people do not interview well, and their fate is decided by a single interview on a day when they are already nervous. The testing is designed to allow the applicant to demonstrate skills required for the job, and which the applicant has attested to already possessing.</p>

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<p>Are all district job openings flown in house first or?</p>	<p>No. Just as current classified employees do not have an automatic right to be interviewed for promotional opportunities now, not all jobs will be flown in house only. For positions requiring specialized knowledge (Instructional Assistant, Electrician, etc.) there may not be a suitable pool of in-house candidates.</p>
<p>Is our current system broken? What's wrong with our current system if only a few community colleges are using the Merit System? If it's working why change and spend more money?</p>	<p>Our current system is beyond broken. Hiring, evaluations, reclassifications, discipline are all misused by management. CSEA has been addressing this for many years.</p>
<p>If an employee does not wish to change jobs is that person subject to testing at any point?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>What evidence is there to suggest that making everyone take a test will yield more qualified applicants and employees? The state just abolished placement tests for students because evidence overwhelmingly showed tests do not equate to ability or merit.</p>	<p>The tests are used for a single specific purpose: to demonstrate that an applicant has the skills and abilities they claimed to have on their application and resume. That's it. The tests must be based on the duties of the job. If the job requires that an applicant be able to file, the test might involve sorting words alphabetically. If the job requires working with hazardous chemicals, the test might ask that the applicant be able to identify hazmat symbols. Assessment tests are designed to predict how a person will succeed in learning new things. Merit tests are designed to allow applicants to demonstrate knowledge of tasks they routinely perform.</p>
<p>Who determines who will be on the board for the merit system?</p>	<p>The Board of Trustees will choose a Commissioner, CSEA members will elect a Commissioner, and those two will choose the third Commissioner.</p>
<p>What expertise will this board have access to when determining job duties?</p>	<p>The Commission will rely on the expertise of classified employees already performing the job, job duties from surrounding Community College Districts, and any other resources necessary.</p>
<p>What entity will design the testing that will be provided to our union members for promotions and hiring. What guarantee we have this test will take into consideration cultural background, and diversity. Much of the testing out there whether it is the CBEST, or a personality test, is usually bias and disadvantageous to minorities. How will the union insure this testing will not be bias?</p>	<p>The tests are designed to demonstrate skills need for the job only. Not all classifications require testing. Tests can be multiple choice or practical. Classified employees are the most diverse group in the District. In some Merit districts, tests are conducted in Spanish with a translator provided for the person conducting the testing. This is not an option under our current system.</p>
<p>Why should Classified Professionals, and not Certificated, only be subjected to the Merit System?</p>	<p>The Merit System is, by Education Code definition, designed for classified including classified managers and confidential employees.</p>

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<p>How will this affect salary and retirement benefits</p>	<p>It will not affect these.</p>
<p>What comments or concerns have been expressed by classified employees at schools already using the Merit system?</p>	<p>The most common downfall is when classified staff do not communicate with the Commissioners. Your direct involvement as a classified employee with the Personnel Commission is critical to the success of the merit system.</p>
<p>If we hire merit system employees, does that money take away from our future cost of living raises?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>1. Who were these people that decided we should go to the merit system? I was certainly not asked if I wanted it. I have also heard from other classified employees, that they were tricked into signing a blank sheet of paper that they were "wanting the merit system". When they just wanted information about it. That was very shady of CSEA to do.</p> <p>2. Why E-board pushing the Merit system down our throats? What is in it for them?</p> <p>3. Why isn't CSEA trying to resolve the problems we have with the system we have now instead of going to this new system?</p> <p>4. If the Merit System so great, why is that the last time it was implemented was in 1978?</p> <p>5. How is the hiring process done through the merit system?</p> <p>6. The Merit system is to ensure the selection and promotion of employees is based solely on qualifications through competitive examination. Just because somebody test well and has the qualifications does not mean that the person will fit in the department or division. What if that person has a negative attitude and bad work ethics? Does management and classified get a vote on who is selected?</p> <p>7. The Personnel Commission will cost the district .5% of the District's General Fund. What is .5% of the general fund? Shouldn't this .5% go towards raises to the classified staff instead. It feels like the merit system will be taking away from</p>	<p>1. No one was tricked into signing a blank piece of paper. The petition that was circulated clearly stated the purpose of the petition. The petition was the first step in entering into the 120-day period when the District could explore the pros and cons of the Merit System. The process is determined by California Education Code and cannot be changed.</p> <p>2. There is nothing to be gained by the Executive Board in implementing the Merit System except better protections for our members.</p> <p>3. CSEA has been working to resolve issues with the hiring, reclassification, evaluation, and discipline process for many years. We have exhausted all avenues open to us. As volunteers, we spend countless hours working to gain better protections for classified. When management refuses to address the problem, we must seek other ways to address the issues.</p> <p>4. This statement, although often repeated by HR, is not true. Many Districts have become Merit Districts since that time, just as some have left. Currently, the Merit System is being considered by Districts countywide.</p> <p>5. This question is addressed elsewhere in this document.</p> <p>6. Classified currently do not have a role in the final selection and are routinely sidelined during the rest of the hiring process. Attitude and work ethic are not something that can be determined during an interview. Reference checks and interviews would still be utilized in the Merit System.</p> <p>7. The .5% estimate includes HR personnel already employed by the District. The money used for the Merit System is not money that would be offered as salary increases.</p>

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<p>classified instead of helping classified.</p> <p>8. Will it be easy to get out of the Merit system? What are the terms?</p>	<p>8. The Merit System must be voted out.</p>
<p>With many classified staff taking summer vacations is there an absentee ballot for people to send in their vote? If not, why not?</p>	<p>When the Board of Trustees decided on the voting process a provision for absentee ballots was not included.</p>
<p>Why the quick push to vote after only one hearing session, I thought this was an exploratory process?</p>	<p>The process has been ongoing since the petition was given to the Board of Trustees. Information has been emailed, posted online, and on bulletin boards. Questions have been asked and answered, and representatives have made themselves available to discuss the topic on a weekly basis.</p>
<p>Why isn't CSEA talking about the pros and cons of the District push to change Heath Insurance? Our Health Insurance is HUGE, and it seems like it's getting pushed under the rug.</p>	<p>The Insurance and Benefits Committee voted to recommend that NOCCCD remain in CalPERS.</p>
<p>If the Merit System hasn't been a part of a school/college campus since the 1970's why would anyone consider this as good idea/move in 2019? Times have drastically changed since the 1970's.</p>	<p>Times have changed. The District used this as a main talking point during their opposition to the Merit System. But in our District, the changes, the shift in attitudes, have not been for the better. Looking at the citations given by opponents as reasons the Merit System is not needed are concerning. The Civil Rights Act addressed racial inequality, so no further action needed – correct? Fair Employment and Housing Act ending housing discrimination, so we are all good there. EERA in place, so all classified employees are treated fairly, equitably, respectfully. These laws are only as good as those who enforce them. And so, it is with our contract. Your collective Bargaining Agreement is good. Every protection you have in that document was fought for, sometimes against overwhelming opposition from the people who are now called upon to abide by and enforce the language.</p>
<p>The Merit System sounds like it will eliminate diversity by only taking the best/top scoring numbers to move forward to be interviewed. How do you ensure people with disabilities, test anxiety and other test limitations have the same access to positions within the district?</p>	<p>The Merit System requires that all accommodation needs be honored. Currently, applicants who do not interview well are counted out before being allowed to demonstrate that they have the skills necessary to perform the duties. CSEA is committed to Diversity. The Merit System is designed to level the playing field so that all applicants can be considered on their merit alone.</p>

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<p>How does a Personnel Commissioner get removed for not doing their job, or an agreement cannot be made? Seems like a lot of power going to only 3 people which doesn't sound like it would be a diverse representation of the district.</p>	<p>Just as members of the Board of Trustees are elected for term, so are Personnel Commissioners. The process for removal is through the legal system. Commissioners who are not performing are not reappointed.</p>
<p>What other idea like the Merit System has been considered, analyzed, and/or reviewed?</p>	<p>California Education Code does not allow for other systems.</p>
<p>Why is the CSEA president encouraging a yes vote on this proposed change?</p>	<p>Having heard from far too many members that they are not allowed full participation on hiring committees and having seen time and again the broken discipline system, the protection of management by HR, and the unwillingness of management to address issues faced by classified employees, we believe the Merit System will impose a neutral body to oversee issues related to classified staff.</p>
<p>Will Merit System prevent the hiring favoritism?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Will Merit System enforce the Equal Opportunity act to be hired?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Will Merit System prevent MANAGERS from creating hostility, favoritism and discrimination among the employees?</p>	<p>No. CSEA often must tell members "managers have the absolute right to manage badly". The Merit System will however provide a neutral body, the Personnel Commission, to hear directly from classified staff, without bias, about what is happening in their department. The Commission will also handle final appeals for discipline.</p>
<p>"Non-NOCCCD subject matter experts then conduct an initial interview. Viable candidates in the top three ranks are then sent to the NOCCCD hiring authority for second interviews." - Will this "hiring authority" have a different committee for each position/department? If hiring for a very specific department - how will we know if the committee can choose the best fit for the office - will it include a person from that office to provide input on what the flow of the office is, and skills needed to perform the duties?</p>	<p>Input from classified employees will be sought at the beginning of the process. There is no point in flying a position that does not reflect the needs of the department.</p>
<p>"The Ed Code does not provide for oversight, evaluation, or removal of a Personnel Commissioner. Once appointed, a Commissioner will serve out their three-year term." - So, if this person is doing a terrible job at hiring, basically they will continue to do a terrible job without oversight for three years. - How does it work if the person they hire is not a good fit for the position? What is the process of letting that new hire go and refilling the position? How long is this</p>	<p>Personnel Commissioners are not paid employees. They can receive a stipend of \$50.00 per meeting if this is approved by the Board of Trustees. They serve rotating three-year terms with one Commissioner's term expiring every year. The Personnel Director is a paid position and can be let go if they are not doing the job.</p>

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<p>hiring process expected to take? (Currently it takes like half a year from the point of posting the position to starting - is this process expected to be faster?)</p>	
<p>"The Commission will look for a similar job title and that will become the test" - this is difficult for certain departments. For example, in financial aid, our college has "financial aid technicians" that process files and then we have work study students who help at the front counter. Other colleges use different titles, for example another college has "financial aid specialists" that process files and their "financial aid technicians" are just students that help at the front counter. How can we know the tests are testing for the right position?</p>	<p>The test will be based on the duties of the position. If the current job description does not match the duties required for the position, the Commission can address that.</p>
<p>When a position becomes available in an office - how does the position get posted/listed? Does the department director provide the job description and list of duties expected to the commission to ensure that the position is properly filled? Or does the commission just go solely off the very vague job descriptions that are currently listed within the classified position lists?</p>	<p>The manager will ask that the job be advertised - just as they do now.</p>
<p>How long is this merit hiring system expected to take to fill a vacant position?</p>	<p>That depends on if an eligibility list already exists, and how quickly the manager requests that the position be advertised. If no eligibility list exists, the position will be advertised for fifteen (15) business days and then applicants will be contacted for testing and interviews.</p>
<p>NOCCCD is currently has about a 35-38% promotion rate, what is the average internal promotion rate in Merit?</p>	<p>The internal promotion rate varies by District. Please remember that the NOCCCD "promotion rate" includes all positions that are flown externally where internal applicants apply, compete against outside candidates, and are chosen when the process is complete.</p>
<p>How will these tests ensure a candidate is a quality employee and not that they can test well?</p>	<p>The tests are based on the duties of the job. Some people do not interview well or test well under our current system. The Merit System ensures that the testing is based on job duties and is not designed for a specific candidate.</p>
<p>If one wanted to gain a promotion; one would have to retake the stipulated test every year until they are selected for the role. If one takes the test several times, they will become accustomed to</p>	<p>Merit System tests are designed to allow the applicant to demonstrate that they have the skills necessary to perform the duties of the job. If you know how to do the job, this would not change</p>

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<p>the test. This seems to have unfair advantage to internal repeat candidates. How will we combat this?</p>	<p>regardless of taking the test once or several times. Tests can also be changed by the Personnel Commission to prevent unfair advantages.</p>
<p>Will Merit System prevent the Fullerton College president to allow the M & O management to have a union worker calling himself "THE PRESIDENT BEST FRIEND" to spy at the workers creating harassment and a hostile environment among the workers?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>How does the commissioner choose which type of "test" to use for each job listing?</p>	<p>Testing is designed solely to allow the applicant to demonstrate that they have the skills necessary to perform the duties required. These are skills the applicant has already listed on their application and resume. The test must fit the job. It might be hands-on, or multiple choice.</p>
<p>Why is this expected to cost over \$600,000 annually? Does this not seem like a major waste of funding that could be utilized where really needed?</p>	<p>The figures quoted assume that none of our current HR staff are qualified to do Personnel Commission staff work. This is not true. The work they do now would transfer as would their salaries.</p>
<p>How would the Merit system affect current hourly and the way they are hired?</p>	<p>The Merit System would not affect hourly hiring practices.</p>
<p>In the Merit System, of those who are permitted to be interviewed by the District, does the Personnel Commission/Personnel Director prevent the Hiring Committee Chair from overriding/ignoring the majority vote candidate selections of the hiring committee?</p>	<p>Any Hiring Committee Member would have the opportunity to address any concerns regarding the process directly to the Personnel Commission.</p>