

## The problems of merit pay for teachers

Mary Ann McGivern | Sep. 12, 2012 NCR Today

Sixty years ago Edward Deming carried to Japan a new idea for manufacturing where quality circles and teamwork changed global industry. One of Deming's ideas was that merit pay undermined efficiency on the factory floor.

Today Chicago teachers [are walking the picket line](#) [1] and teachers around the country are with them in spirit, wanting the authority to develop appropriate curriculum and rejecting merit pay.

Politicians and school boards tend to disregard teachers. State boards impose tests, standards, and, in recent years, the very page every teacher must be on in every classroom. Some say what schools need is a business model. They should be operated efficiently, like factories.

Most troubling, with merit pay, they pit teachers against one another. There's no benefit in mutual problem-solving, shared strategies or cooperation. It's a temptation to cheat. A teacher who can dump problem students elsewhere and teach to the test will reap rewards. But the children will lose.

School reformers should read Edward Demming.

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**Links:**

[1] <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/chi-strike-updates-pickets-up-as-more-talks-scheduled-20120910,0,4173856.story>