

Rudolph F. Crew, Superintendent of Schools

**SUBJECT: TEACHER PAY AND STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH UNITED
TEACHERS OF DADE**

COMMITTEE: SCHOOL SUPPORT ACCOUNTABILITY

Veteran teachers and educators have concluded that the number of good classroom teachers, and therefore the quality of teaching itself, is in perilous decline and will continue to worsen. Well-prepared, highly qualified teachers are essential if we are to ensure that all students achieve the high standards necessary for them to lead fulfilling lives and become productive citizens. Reformers recognize that teacher compensation is a crucial element in hiring the teachers we need and steering them into the schools where they are needed the most. In today's competitive marketplace, it is increasingly difficult to attract and retain the best teachers; to accomplish this; we must guarantee a salary commensurate with their education, experience and the challenging and complex tasks they perform.

Florida ranked 29th in the nation for its average teacher salary in 2003-04, according to the American Federation of Teachers' (AFT) annual teacher salary survey, released on October 6, 2005. Florida was one of 28 states where the increase in average teacher salary was **lower** than the national rate of inflation. The National Education Association ranked Florida 33rd in the nation in their survey released in the Fall of 2005. As stated in the Statistical Brief published by the Florida Department of Education in June, 2006, "the average salary paid to a public school teacher in the school year 2005-06 was \$42,702. This represents an increase of \$1,124 (2.7 percent) over the average salary of \$41,578 for the 2004-05 school year."

When we compare starting salaries in Miami-Dade County with those of the other 10 largest urban districts, we rank 8th even though we are the fourth largest urban district in the country. Starting teacher salaries in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago are \$43,436, \$43,054, and \$44,158 respectively. (See Figure 1) Even smaller districts, such as Houston and Philadelphia outrank Miami's starting salaries. In the State of Florida, only Palm Beach County has a lower starting salary than Miami-Dade when compared with the largest nine districts. Further, when we compare the maximum salaries in Miami-Dade County with those of the other 10 largest urban districts, we rank 7th in the country. Maximum salaries in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago are \$79,810, \$68,483 and \$71,453 respectively. (See Figure 2) In the State of Florida, Palm Beach, and Broward's maximum salaries rank 3rd and 5th respectively in the country.

Starting salaries comparison in the State of Florida is even more problematic for Miami-Dade in that we rank 8th in the state. (See Figure 3) Our starting salary presents challenges for Miami-Dade as we strive to attract and retain teachers in our district. In 2005-06, Miami-Dade's average salary ranked 3rd in the state primarily resulting from the School Improvement Zone pay differential. (See Figure 4) The starting salary in the

School Improvement Zone is 20% higher than our regular starting salary, therefore very attractive to new teachers.

Academically stronger students tend to shun the teaching profession. Data from the National Association of Colleges and Employers reveal that, when salary offers to graduates of the class of 2006 are examined, teaching seems to be far from the most attractive option-reflecting a long-standing reality about financial compensation for teachers. To support teachers in their careers and to encourage more professionals to enter the field of education, the National Education Association (NEA) is advocating for a minimum beginning salary of \$40,000 for all teachers nationwide. Beginning salaries for other professional careers, such as accounting, nursing and business management, regularly outrank the teaching profession, leaving many teachers struggling with multiple jobs in order to meet their personal financial obligations. (See Figure 5)

Teaching is a revolving door, concluded a blue-ribbon commission led by James Hunt, former governor of North Carolina, in 2003. In this Hunt Commission report, about a third of teachers are in transition into and out of schools every year, entering, leaving transferring, retiring, or simply abandoning the field. Beginning teacher attrition is a chronic problem. (See Figure 6) Fully 14 percent of new teachers leave the field after the first year. Cumulatively, nearly a quarter have left after the second year. At the end of five years, almost half of all new teachers have bid the classroom good-bye. They take with them the public's costly investment in their preparation and their own hard-earned experience in the classroom. Pay-related turnover is especially high for minorities, males, and teachers under the age of 30. And the economic reality of teaching means that many who do stay are working second jobs to meet their families' basic needs.

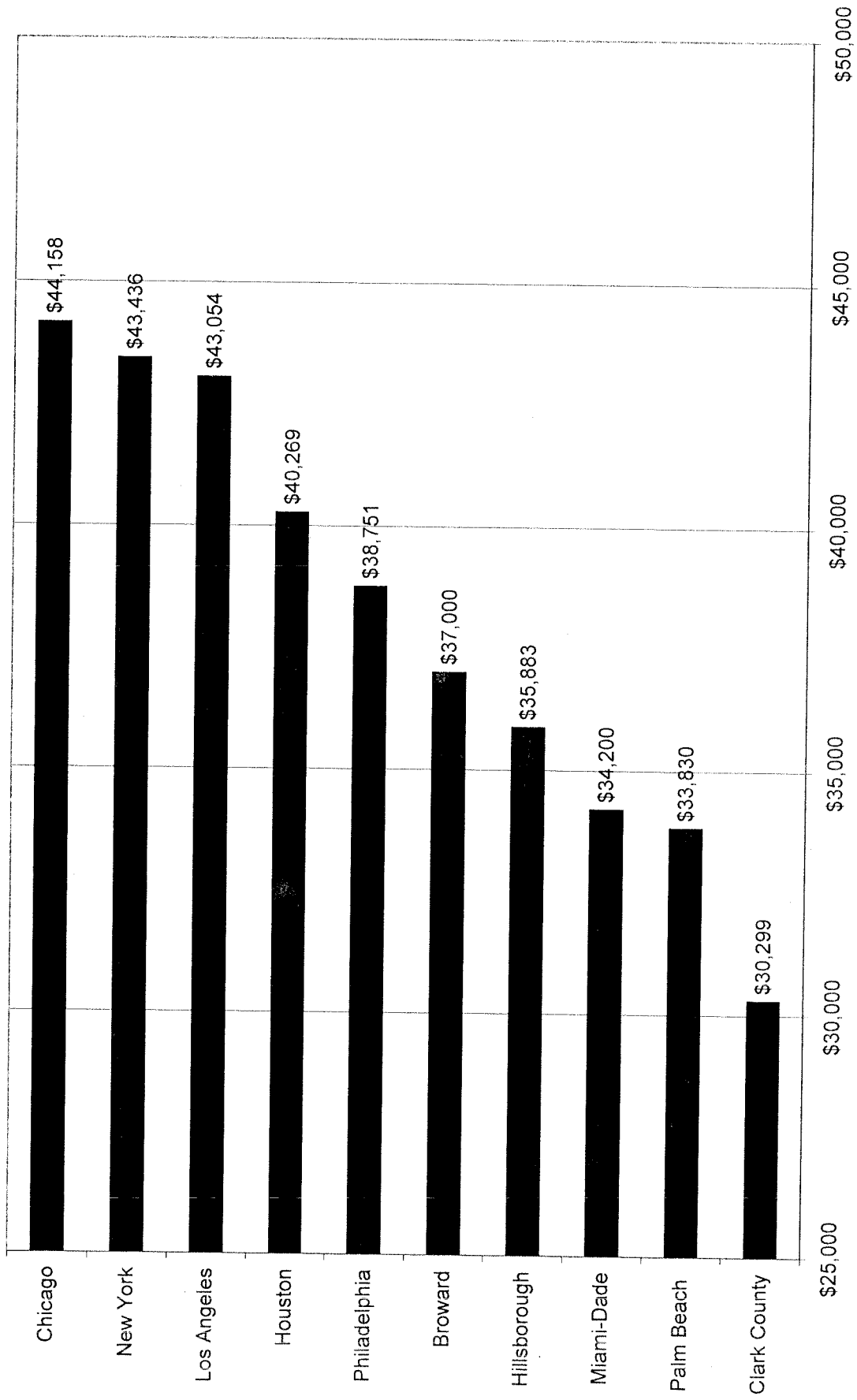
Miami-Dade needs to implement a teacher compensation plan to make this district a leading competitor for professional teaching services. By implementing this teacher compensation plan, not only will the most qualified and experienced applicants consider Miami-Dade first, but the dedicated professionals currently working for the district will not entertain thoughts of moving north to improve their lifetime earnings while providing the same professional services they provide here in Miami.

We are currently negotiating with United Teachers of Dade. Our goal is to agree on a three-year contract with higher, competitive starting salaries in each year and a gradual reduction of steps. We are also negotiating a number of shared academic interests to improve student achievement. Our ultimate goal is to get teacher starting salaries to \$40,000. This will require significant increases in funding from Tallahassee or alternative local sources of revenue. We will update the Board on these plans in the future.

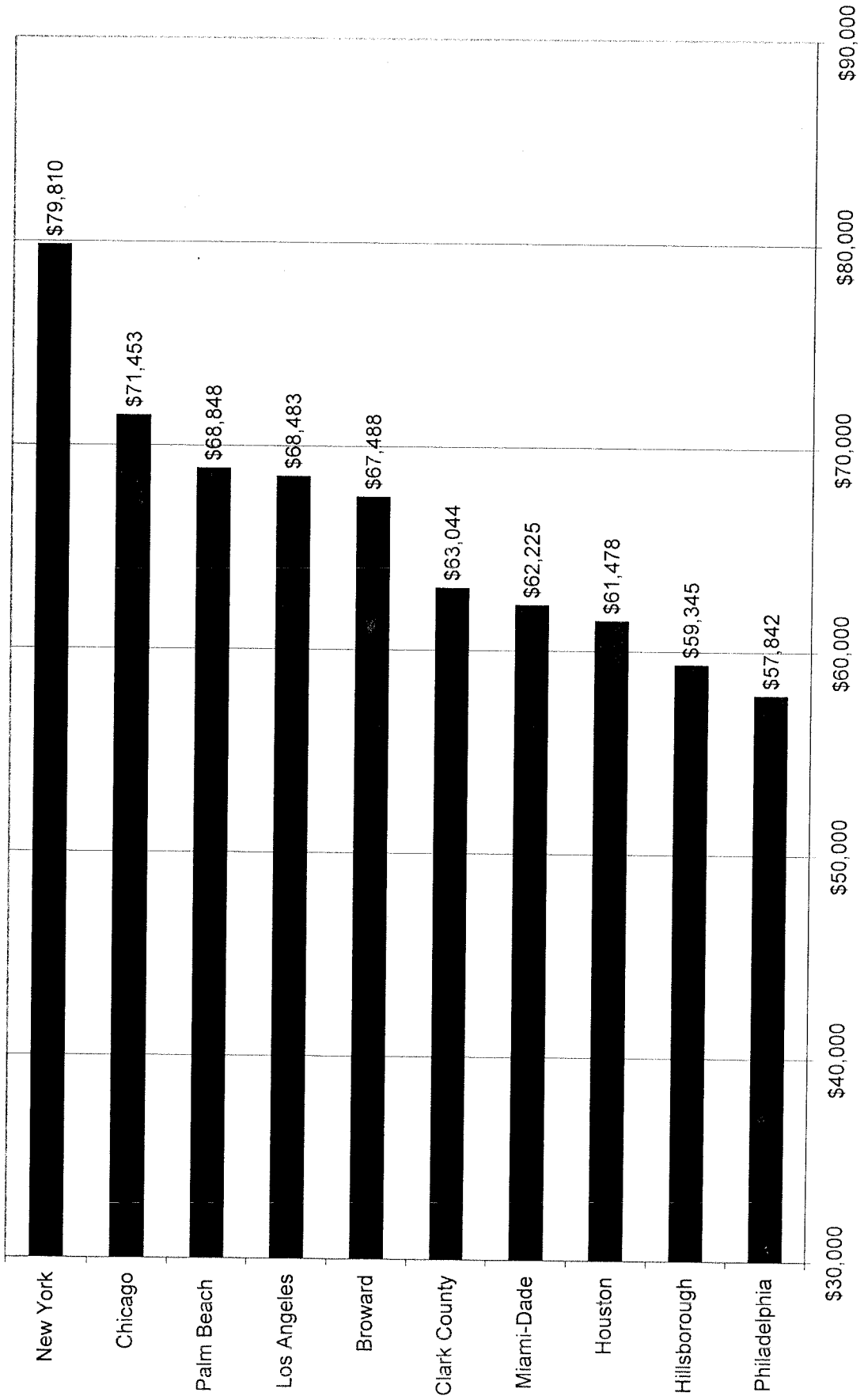
RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, receive this report, Teacher Pay and Status of Negotiations with United Teachers of Dade.

RFC/OSP:cpi

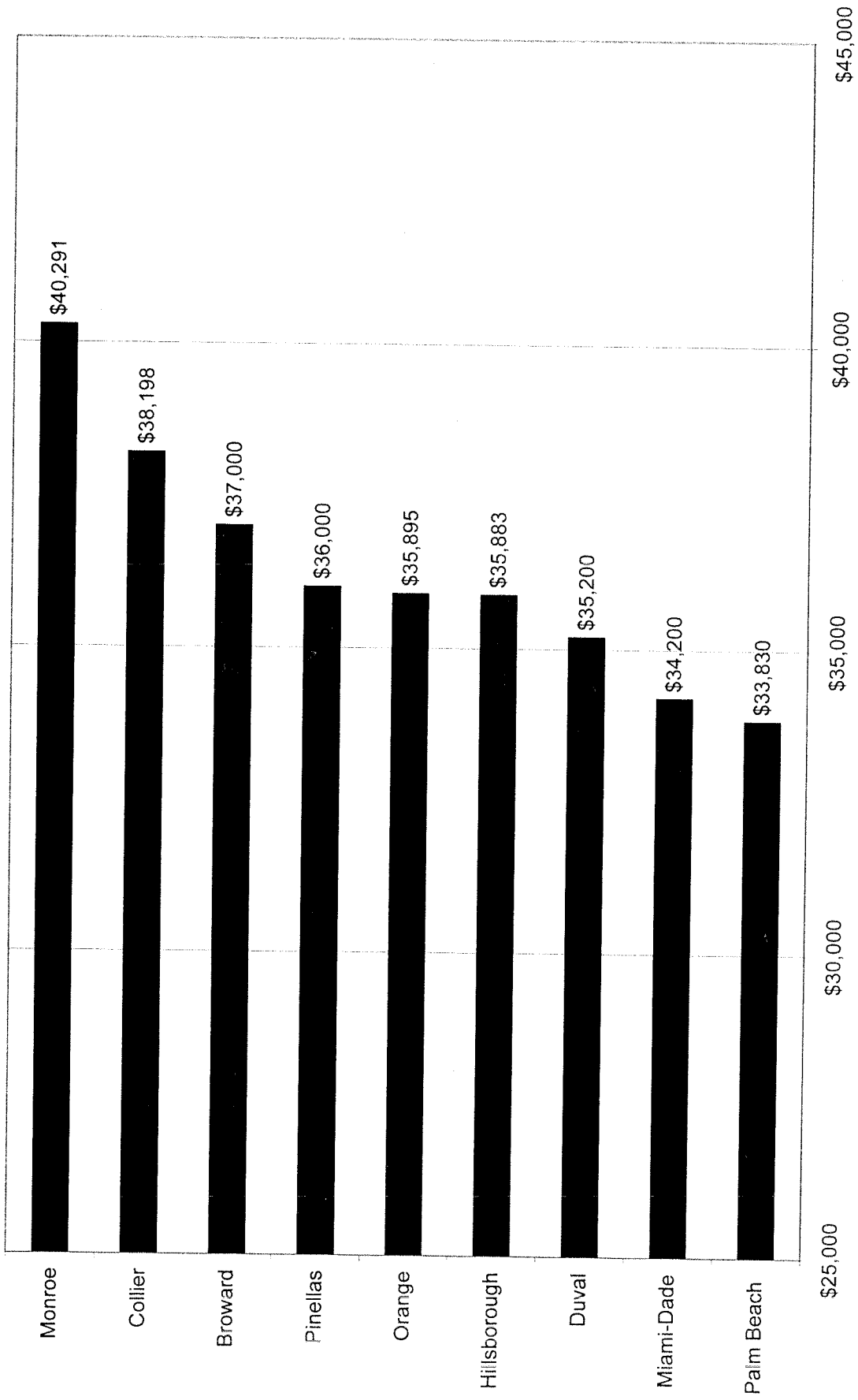
Top 10 School Districts Starting Salaries 2006-07 - Figure 1



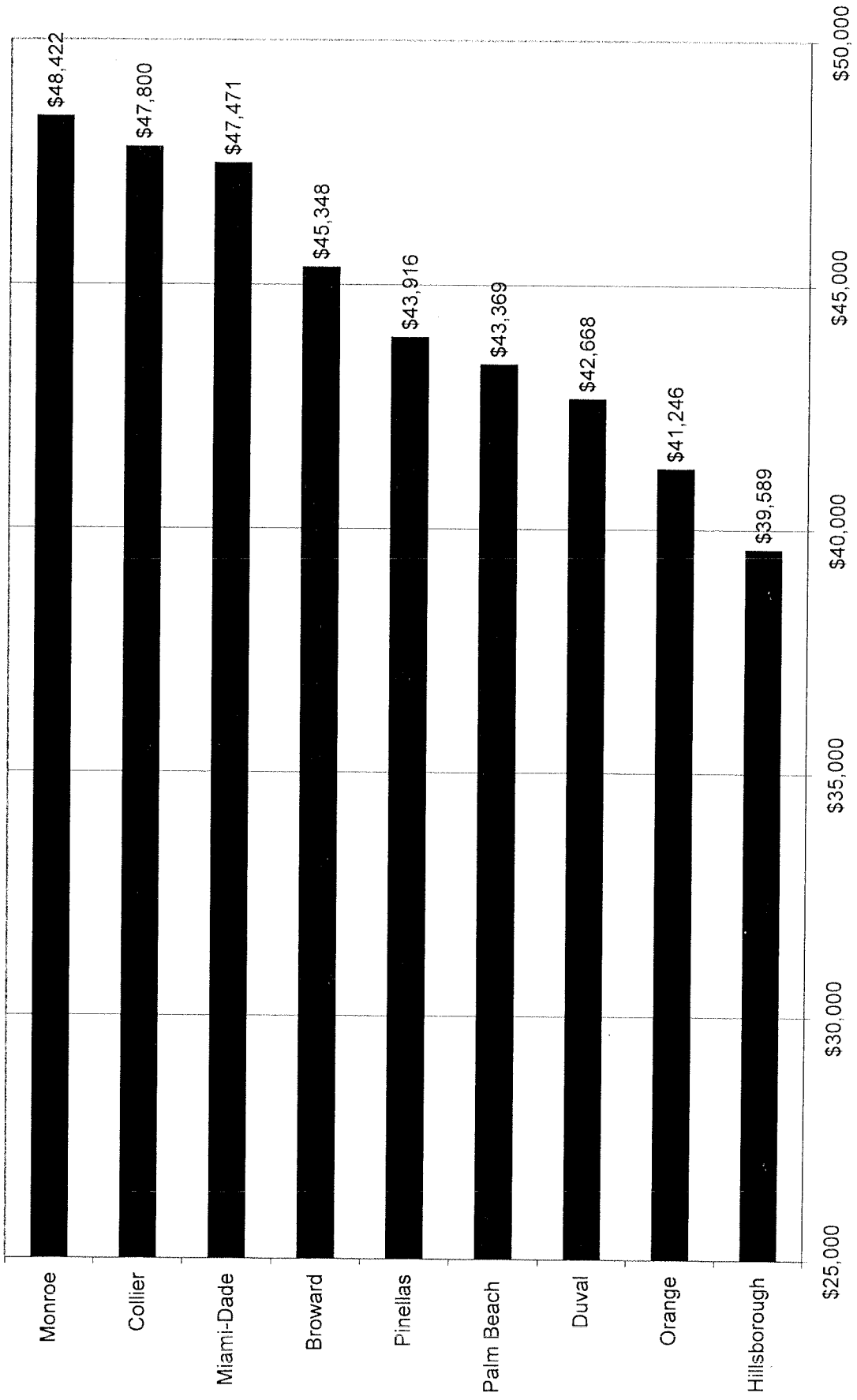
Top 10 Districts Maximum Salaries 2006-07 - Figure 2



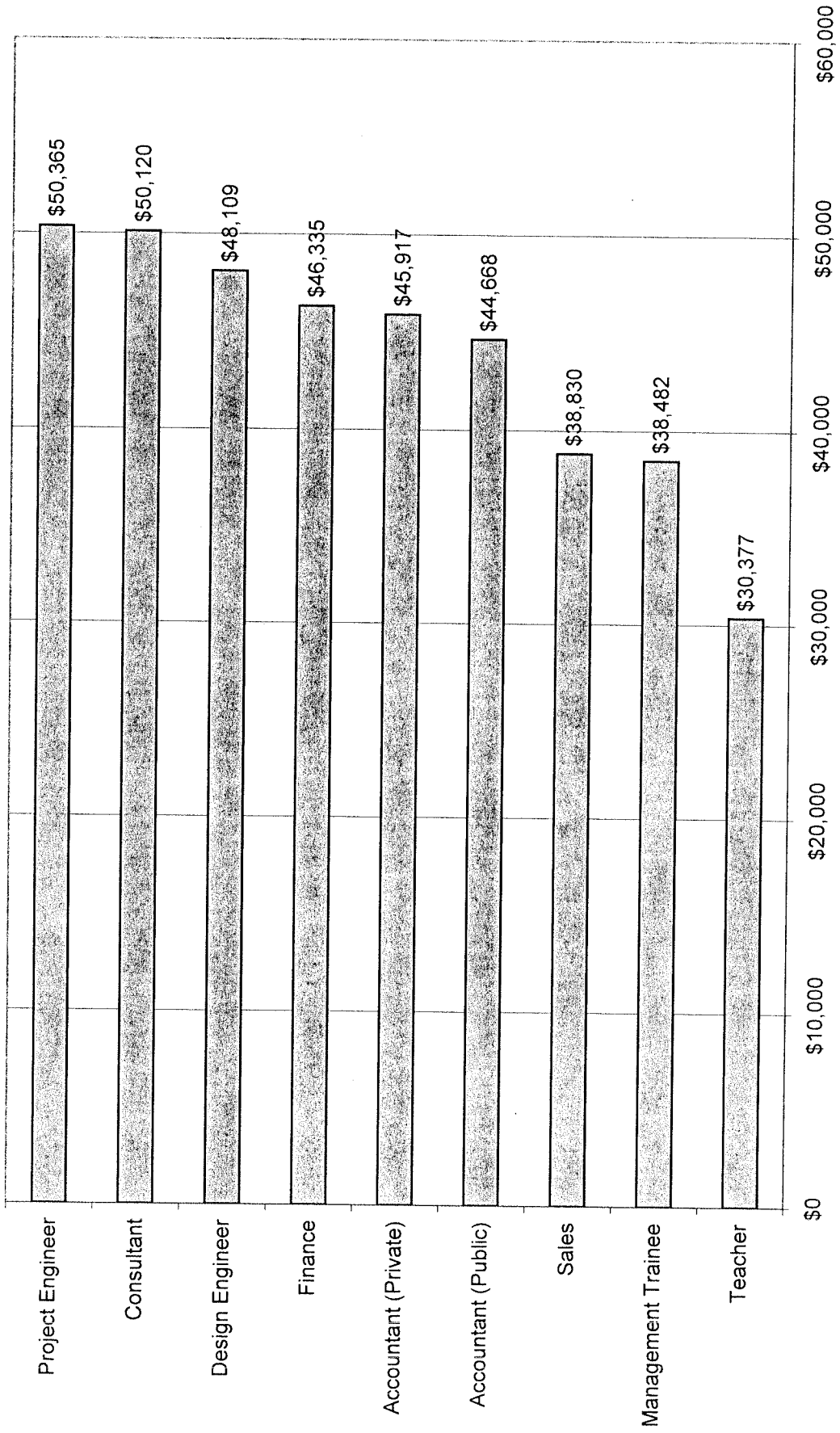
Florida Starting Salaries 2006-07 - Figure 3



Florida Districts' Average Salaries 2005-06- Figure 4



Spring 2006 Salary Offers to College Graduates - Figure 5



Source: National Association of College & Employers, Spring 2006 Salary Survey

Beginning Teacher Attrition a Chronic Problem- Figure 6

