

## What's New?

### New Online Resource

The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) recently developed a new resource, an Emerging Issues paper titled *Performance-Based Compensation Structures: Considerations for Individual, Group, and Hybrid Programs*. The paper explores state and district approaches to incorporating alternative compensation programs into their education systems.

While focusing on the structure of these programs, the paper discusses three factors that states and districts should consider when developing their alternative compensation program:

- The unit of accountability focuses on whose performance the school or district measures to determine the award. The unit of accountability can be an individual, a group, or an entire school.
- Measures of performance are input and output measures used to evaluate and reward the unit of accountability's performance.
- Incentive eligibility refers to the scope of employees covered by the compensation program and whether programs limit performance awards to a fixed number of educators or offer all educators eligibility to receive awards.

Real-life examples support each major structure consideration to demonstrate different state and district alternative compensation program characteristics. Examples include New York City's schoolwide incentive program, the Texas Governor's Educator Excellence Program, Florida's statewide incentive program, the Portland Professional Learning Based Salary Schedule in Maine, the ProComp initiative in Denver, and the Austin Independent School District REACH program.

The paper also explores the existing research on the strengths and weaknesses and stakeholder attitudes and opinions of the various reward structures. The authors conclude with recommendations for states and districts when developing an alternative compensation program, including the following:

- Consider the school and district culture within which the program will operate.
- Develop a robust data infrastructure to support compensation plans.
- Develop measures for teachers in nontested grades and subjects.

The CECR Emerging Issues paper *Performance-Based Compensation Structures: Considerations for Individual, Group, and Hybrid Programs* is available online at [http://www.cecr.ed.gov/pdfs/CECR\\_EI\\_CompStruct.pdf](http://www.cecr.ed.gov/pdfs/CECR_EI_CompStruct.pdf).

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## Hot Off the Press

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### **For Va.'s Proposed Teacher Merit-Pay Program, Few Hands in the Air—**

*The Washington Post*. June 22, 2011.

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/for-vas-proposed-teacher-merit-pay-program-few-hands-in-the-air/2011/06/22/AGzsZVgH\\_print.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/for-vas-proposed-teacher-merit-pay-program-few-hands-in-the-air/2011/06/22/AGzsZVgH_print.html)

Only 6 percent of eligible schools agreed to participate in Virginia's pilot performance-based compensation system. Virginia has set aside \$3 million in teacher bonuses for hard-to-staff schools in the hopes of recruiting and retaining talent in those classrooms. The system will base evaluations on student progress on standardized tests, professional knowledge, instructional planning, and professionalism. Other schools declined to participate for a variety of reasons including disagreement over the evaluation criteria, disagreement with how the state defined "hard-to-staff" status, and conflict with existing performance-pay initiatives.

### **New Teacher Evaluation Plan Approved in Maryland—**

*The Washington Post*. June 21, 2011.

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/new-teacher-evaluation-plan-approved-in-maryland/2011/06/21/AGazWzeH\\_print.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/new-teacher-evaluation-plan-approved-in-maryland/2011/06/21/AGazWzeH_print.html)

Maryland approved a new model for teacher and principal evaluations and will pilot it in seven districts. The new system, a part of the state's Race to the Top initiative, will tie 50 percent of evaluations to student test scores or other student growth measures. The system will begin statewide in 2012–13, with high-stakes decisions beginning the following year.

### **Douglas County Schools Revamp Teacher Pay, May Ask for Tax Hike—**

*The Denver Post*. June 10, 2011.

[http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci\\_18244140](http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_18244140)

The Douglas County School District is overhauling its teacher performance pay plan for implementation in the 2012–13 school year. The new plan will rate teachers based on teaching skills, student scores on statewide tests, and principal evaluations. In addition, the district will consider ratings by parents and students and how well teachers meet curriculum goals set for the year as part of the evaluation. The draft of this plan includes a tiered ranking system in which the top teachers would receive raises and tenure if rated effective for two years. The district will place the worst-rated teachers on probation and strip them of their tenure if they rate low for two consecutive years.

### **Chicago Public Schools Boss Tying His Pay to Student Achievement—**

*Chicago Sun-Times*. June 2, 2011.

<http://www.suntimes.com/5738162-417/chicago-public-schools-boss-tying-his-pay-to-student-achievement.html>

The newly appointed Chicago Public Schools (CPS) CEO Jean-Claude Brizard is negotiating a performance contract in which the district would tie his compensation to student achievement. CPS could base his salary on factors such as student test scores, graduation and drop-out rates, and parent participation. This contract supports the efforts of Mayor Rahm Emmanuel to illustrate that CPS is not singling out teachers and that the district will hold all levels of public education accountable.

## Grantee Spotlight

# Kansas City, Missouri School District: PIONEER Program Project

The Kansas City, Missouri School District (KCMSD) PIONEER Program (Pay Incentives based On Need for Excellent Education Reform) is a performance-based compensation program that awards eligible teachers and principals with annual bonuses based on a combination of measurable outputs, primarily measures of student learning and observations of teacher and principal performance. KCMSD will pilot the program in 10 schools chosen to participate by the district. The district will consider several factors when determining which 10 schools will participate, including student eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch, school enrollment, Missouri Assessment scores, and the numbers of English learners ranked the highest in the elementary or secondary school category. If 75 percent of the faculty in the highest ranked school agrees to participate, that school will be part of the project. If a school declines, the faculty at the next highest ranked school will receive an invitation to participate, and so on until 10 schools have agreed.

### Primary Components of the Program

The PIONEER Program plans to use three measures of teacher and principal performance to determine effectiveness:

- **Measurable student performance outcomes**, which aim to capture student learning attributable to a teacher or school and derived from scores on the Missouri Assessment Program (state testing program) as well as other assessments used to determine significant gains in student performance. These assessments may include ACT, ACURITY, and end-of-course examinations.
- **Participation in professional growth activities**, which may include assuming additional responsibilities, working effectively in hard-to-staff schools, and participation in job-embedded professional development opportunities.
- **Formal observations** and other measures of teacher or principal performance, including performance measured by attendance (teacher and student), student discipline, parental involvement, and student health and safety.

The PIONEER Program will include an ongoing, integrated, results-driven, job-embedded professional development component. Teacher compensation must be one component of a comprehensive system that supports teacher development and best practice. To improve student achievement, teachers will need the tools and the time to learn and implement the skills that foster higher levels of performance.

KCMSD will restructure school schedules to develop collaborative learning communities in which teachers have time to work with each other and create improved learning opportunities for students. The professional development program will focus on the instructional needs of individual students and teachers. Teacher leadership teams will develop and direct ongoing coaching and individual professional development activities to help teachers improve their instructional skills and knowledge. This component will provide teachers the opportunity to observe accomplished classroom practitioners, collectively analyze student work, reflect with peers on their own practice, and use individual school and central office data to determine areas that may need improvement.

## Program Goals

The PIONEER Program established the following goals:

- Increase student achievement.
- Attract, foster, and retain highly qualified and highly effective teachers and leaders.
- Implement an ongoing, job-embedded professional development program to support the effectiveness of teachers and principals.
- Design and implement a performance management tool that links directly to professional development and student achievement.

## Program Incentives

Each participating teacher and principal will earn up to \$10,000 annually based on his or her success in the three measures previously described.

The PIONEER Program also offers two types of additional bonuses:

- Recruitment incentives, including retention bonuses, for teachers and principals who produce above-average results in low-performing, low-income schools.
- Additional awards for the top three schools with the highest school-based performance.

## Recent Highlights of the Program

In upcoming months, KCMSD plans to:

- Develop a website and an intradistrict portal to provide participants with resources.
- Make data available on data dashboards.
- Use an electronic walkthrough tool to communicate progress to teachers.
- Achieve financial sustainability through the allocation of funds from other funding sources.

For more information about KCMSD and the PIONEER Program, visit <http://www2.kcmsd.net/Pages/default.aspx>.

## *Contact Us*



Center for  
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Reform

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The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) was awarded to Westat — in partnership with Learning Point Associates, Synergy Enterprises Inc., Vanderbilt University, and the University of Wisconsin — by the U.S. Department of Education in October 2006.

The primary purpose of CECR is to support Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grantees in their implementation efforts through provision of sustained technical assistance and development and dissemination of timely resources. CECR also is charged with raising national awareness of alternative and effective strategies for educator compensation through a newsletter, a Web-based clearinghouse, and other outreach activities.

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