

What's New?

New Harvesting Paper on Value-Added Measures

A new paper, *Resolving Some Issues in Using Value-Added Measures of Productivity for School and Teacher Incentives: Ideas from Technical Assistance and TIF Grantee Experience*, from the Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) Harvesting Project, examines the use of value-added measures by Cohorts 1 and 2 of the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF). Researchers found the following breakdown of value-added model use among Cohort 1 and 2 grantees:

- Fourteen grantees proposed the use of school-level value-added measures, and 14 grantees followed through as of the 2009–10 school year.
- Thirteen grantees proposed the use of classroom-level value-added measures, but only 10 grantees followed through as of the 2009–10 school year.

Researchers found various reasons for a grantee choosing not to use value-added modeling, including: the lack of appropriate administrative databases with links between teachers and students, limited grantee capacity to develop and run complex value-added models, low buy-in from stakeholders, schools or districts too small to develop meaningful estimates, perceived lack of compatibility with state adequate yearly progress models, and a lack of comfort with the complexity of technology needed to operate a value-added model.

The remaining sections of the paper discuss the following main barriers to the use of value-added measures that TIF Cohorts 1 and 2 faced, as well as how the grantees addressed the barriers:

- Concerns about the “right” value-added model, which takes into account the inclusion of student demographic characteristics in the model, pretest measurement error, how to account for student mobility, and how to handle midyear testing.
- Uncertainty of value-added estimates for smaller schools and classrooms, which can affect the precision of estimates within the model for comparison.

- Setting appropriate cutoffs for bonus payments, which is an ongoing issue as there is no clear answer.

CECR researchers concluded that the issues involved with value-added measures add a degree of complexity to performance-based compensation systems and that there is still disagreement among experts about the best way to estimate and use value-added measures. In addition, there is now more information about the other student growth measures that states and districts can use to address some of the limitations of value-added models. As many states are moving toward developing statewide systems in response to Race to the Top and other federal incentives, policymakers and implementation teams should consider these issues as illustrated by the experiences of TIF Cohorts 1 and 2.

The full report is available online in the New to Performance-Based Compensation section (<http://www.cecr.ed.gov/compensation/>) of the redesigned website at http://www.cecr.ed.gov/pdfs/CECR_HP_ValueAdded.pdf.

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Hot Off the Press

Teacher Ratings Linked to Tests for First Time—*The News Journal*. October 10, 2011. [http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/delawareonline/results.html?st=basic&QryTxt=Teacher Ratings Linked to Tests](http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/delawareonline/results.html?st=basic&QryTxt=Teacher+Ratings+Linked+to+Tests) (Available for a minimum fee)

The Delaware Department of Education and the state teachers union recently reached an agreement to use student test score data (based on the state student achievement test that measures student growth on a series of examinations during the school year) as one of five components to measure teacher effectiveness. There are still subject and grade levels for which testing is not available, so teachers will not face any consequences for their performance during the 2011–12 school year.

Hernando County Rolls Out New Teacher Evaluation System—*St. Petersburg Times*. October 9, 2011. <http://www.tampabay.com/news/education/k12/hernando-county-rolls-out-teacher-evaluation-system/1195877>

The Hernando County School District began implementation of a two-piece evaluation system that changes how the district evaluates and pays teachers. The first component of the system includes a new observation process. Principals visit teachers' classrooms multiple times throughout the year, with ongoing communication between teachers and principals regarding goals and performance. The second component, planned for fall 2013, includes a student growth measure determined by the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test and end-of-course examinations.

Students Come First Laws Upheld in Idaho District Court—*The Huffington Post*. October 3, 2011. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/03/students-come-first-laws-n_992753.html

A district judge in Idaho recently upheld legislation that localized administrative power, phased out teacher tenure, and eliminated early retirement bonuses. The law also eliminated seniority as criteria for “reduction of force” and included measures for the implementation of performance-based compensation, in which teachers can earn bonuses for working in hard-to-fill positions, taking on leadership roles, or working in a school that meets student growth targets.

The Life of a Teacher: Part 6—9NEWS. September 30, 2011. <http://www.9news.com/news/article/222238/188/The-life-of-a-teacher-Part-6>

This article represents the latest in a series for Colorado 9NEWS in Denver. Throughout this series, the Colorado teacher of the year and the president of the Independence Institute discussed the role of teachers today. The debates included teacher evaluation and compensation as topics.

Safford Unified School District: Effective Teachers and Principals Program (ETAPP)

The Safford Unified School District (SUSD) Effective Teachers and Principals Program (ETAPP) builds on the current performance-based compensation system in place, the state-initiated Career Ladder program. While maintaining the current focus on student achievement, higher level leadership responsibilities, performance evaluation, analysis of student assessment data, collaboration with peers, and professional growth, ETAPP will help recruit and retain effective teachers and principals in high-need schools and improve teacher and principal effectiveness through a focus on professional growth, student achievement, and greater leadership responsibilities.

Primary Components of the Program

ETAPP provides performance-based bonuses for teachers by using student achievement goals at the individual, schoolwide, and peer-group levels; performance bonuses for principals based on personal goals and school achievement; and sign-on bonuses for highly qualified, effective teachers. ETAPP also provides stipends for teachers and principals who assume higher level leadership responsibilities such as peer coaches, mentors, staff development trainers, or action researchers.

Performance bonuses for teachers consist of three tiers:

- Tier 1: Observation-based teacher evaluation and individual classroom-level student achievement data (30 percent)
- Tier 2: Goals that peer groups (made up of grade-level peers, content-area peers, or a team of peers) set and work toward (20 percent)
- Tier 3: Schoolwide student achievement data (50 percent)

Performance bonuses for principals consist of two tiers:

- Tier 1: Personal goals based on student achievement (50 percent)
- Tier 2: Schoolwide student achievement data (50 percent)

SUSD uses Galileo from Assessment Technology Incorporated to create valid and reliable benchmarks, administered quarterly, that assess essential standards. SUSD uses Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS), Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards Alternate (AIMS-A), and the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) to validate and measure student growth.

SUSD has a staff development committee to coordinate and disseminate staff development information to each school site. The committee uses a needs assessment survey completed by teachers and principals and student achievement data from AIMS and Stanford 10 to determine staff development needs and then generates a plan to address areas of concern. ETAPP improves on the current process by adding the Puget Sound Peer Coaching model, which provides resources to teachers on the use of technology-rich learning activities for students. ETAPP also builds on the Career Ladder model, providing bonuses for teachers and principals who assume higher level leadership responsibilities such as peer coaches, mentors, staff development trainers, or action researchers.

Program Goals

ETAPP's goals are to increase student achievement in core content areas, improve upon the existing performance-based compensation system, recruit and retain effective teachers and principals in high-need schools, and develop a more comprehensive staff development approach that focuses on individual student achievement data.

System Incentives

ETAPP follows a differentiated compensation payment scale for both teachers and principals, based on their tiers (as defined previously) and for taking on additional leadership roles in the school. Teachers and principals are eligible for incentives up to \$10,000, as shown in Tables 1 and 2:

Table 1. Teacher Incentives

Tier	Incentive	Growth Measure
Tier 1	Up to \$2,500	Based on the percentage of students who improve on district assessments, including: benchmark, AIMS, AIMS-A, DIBELS, and performance based.
Tier 2	Up to \$1,400	Based on the percentage of Student Peer Goals achieved.
Tier 3	Up to \$3,500	Based on the state-issued AZ Learns Achievement Profile: maintaining the school performance level, improving the school performance level, or receiving an excellent school performance status.
Leadership Roles	\$3,000	Serving as one or more of the following: peer coach, mentor, staff development trainer, or action researcher.

Table 2. Principal Incentives

Tier	Incentive	Growth Measure
Tier 1	Up to \$4,500	Based on the percentage of students who improve on district assessments, including: benchmark, AIMS, AIMS-A, DIBELS, and performance based.
Tier 2	Up to \$3,500	Based on the state-issued AZ Learns Achievement Profile: maintaining the school performance level, improving the school performance level, or receiving an excellent school performance status.
Leadership Roles	\$2,000	Serving as one of the following: mentor, staff development trainer, or action researcher.

SUSD also provides a sign-on bonus for teachers new to the district. The district offers a \$500 stipend to highly qualified and effective teachers, as determined by the district hiring committee, from within the state and a \$1,000 stipend to out-of-state teachers.

Recent Highlights of the Program

SUSD established a plan for financial sustainability through the use of Maintenance and Operation Override funds, voted on in 2008, that it can use to attract and retain teachers and staff in the district. SUSD also plans to use Title I, Title IIA, and Title IID funds for recruitment and retention stipends and professional development.

Additionally, SUSD plans to make the first set of incentive payouts, for Tier 3 incentives, by the end of October, 2011. For more information about ETAPP, visit the district website at http://www.saffordusd.k12.az.us/exec/eHome.asp?set_site_to=RAC&division=RAC:%20Curriculum%20Office&group_is=78.

For more information about the Arizona Career Ladder Program, see the CECR Case Summary at http://cecr.ed.gov/pdfs/summaries/CECR_CS_Arizona.pdf.

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, an affiliate of American Institutes for Research; 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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