



NEWSBREAK

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What's New?

Center for Educator Compensation Reform Online Library

The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) offers a comprehensive online database of articles (<http://cecr.ed.gov/library/>) that keeps users up to date on the most current research in many aspects of educator compensation reform. The Online Library will be beneficial to states or districts that are currently implementing an alternative compensation program or considering the pros and cons of performance-based pay programs. Users can locate case studies about current programs, evaluations of past implementation, and research articles. For example, if a state or district is

considering the use of value-added models for measuring teacher effectiveness, users can search the library for articles that discuss the merits of that specific form of analysis. Further, if a state or district would like to reform its teacher evaluation tools, the Online Library is a useful tool for locating research articles that examine the effectiveness of such evaluations and for providing examples from programs that use specific evaluation tools.

The articles in the Online Library cover the following topic areas:

- Data Systems and Data Collection
- Measuring Teacher and Principal Performance
- Measuring Student Achievement
- Value-Added Measurement
- Sustainability of Compensation Reform Programs
- Communication and Stakeholder Engagement
- General Issues Related to Educator Pay
- Different Types of Alternative Compensation
 - Differentiated Pay
 - Incentives for Hard-to-Fill Subjects and Hard-to-Staff Schools
 - Performance Pay
 - Knowledge and Skills-Based Pay

The articles in the database are evaluated using standardized criteria (for more information, see <http://cecr.ed.gov/library/categorize.cfm>). The database includes articles published in the past 20 years. The publication types include scientific research; rigorous research; case studies; policy papers; issue papers; information guides; literature reviews; and perspective pieces, which include researcher opinions on compensation policy.

Hot Off the Press

“Merit Pay” for Teachers Garners Praise From Obama and Local Schools—*The Times-Picayune*. March 14, 2009.

http://www.nola.com/news/index.ssf/2009/03/performance_management.html

Teachers and principals in Louisiana welcome President Obama’s support for performance-based compensation. Teachers throughout the state have participated in various performance-based compensation programs for years, and some credit these programs with increasing student achievement.

Schools of Merit: Principals, Staffs at 12 in Memphis System to Cash in on Improved Grades—*Memphis Commercial Appeal*. March 13, 2009.

<http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2009/mar/13/principals-payday/>

All staff in 12 Memphis city schools will receive awards for their schools’ student achievement and student attendance gains. Principals and teachers will receive \$7,500 and \$2,500 respectively.

Merit Pay Proposal Divides Tennessee Educators—*The Tennessean*. March 11, 2009.

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20090311/NEWS04/903110403/-1/RSS05>

In light of President Obama’s recent support for performance-based compensation, educators in Tennessee discuss the pros and cons of implementing a performance-based program in their state.

Extra Pay for Performance in Classroom Could Be in Teachers’ Futures—*WLBT3.com*. March 10, 2009.

<http://www.wlbt.com/Global/story.asp?S=9981411>

State Superintendent of Education Hank Bounds declares that Mississippi’s current education system is in crisis, so the state considers implementing a performance-based program to attract new teachers to the profession and reward effective educators.

Grantee Spotlight: Mare Island Technology (MIT) Academy, New 3Rs: Rigor, Results, and Rewards

Mare Island Technology (MIT) Academy operates two independent charter schools (one middle school and one high school) that serve 780 students in Vallejo, California. The New 3Rs program (Rigor, Results, and Rewards) is linked to previous school reforms. In 2005, MIT Academy was chosen by the International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE) and the Gates Foundation to work throughout the course of five years to become a “national model high school.” Concurrently, the MIT Academy Board established a compensation/incentive task force whose goal was to explore options for implementing an incentive award program for staff during

the 2007–08 school year. The task force recommended an incentive program aligned to ICLE/Gates Foundation program goals. When the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) was announced, MIT Academy further adjusted the program to address TIF goals of increased student achievement and leadership roles for teachers. The New 3Rs program offers incentives to teachers for increasing student achievement, taking on new leadership roles, and retention (for more information, see the incentives section of this profile). Teachers also participate in a professional development program component.

What need is the project trying to address?

The MIT Academy student body is more than 80 percent minority, and 51.2 percent are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. As such, MIT Academy faces issues similar to other high-poverty and minority schools. Although student scores on the California Standards Tests have been improving annually, a sample of scores from 2006 shows that there is more progress to be made. In more than 60 percent of the subjects tested, MIT Academy students have received scores of less than 15 percent proficient. In addition, student passing rates on the California High School Exit Exam are low; in Grade 10, 71 percent passed English, and 64 percent passed mathematics, with achievement gaps for African-American students, who had passing rates of 63 and 51 percent, respectively. In addition, MIT Academy high school scored 664, and the middle school scored 692 on the State School Academic Performance Indicator, well below the “proficient” score of 800.

MIT Academy also has an inexperienced teaching and administrative staff. Although all of the middle and high schools’ 32 teachers met highly qualified teacher requirements in 2007–08, 31 percent of faculty members are in their first four years of teaching. Furthermore, a majority of them are in their first two years.

What are the goals of the program?

The overarching goals of the MIT Academy program, the New 3Rs, include the following:

- Increase student achievement on both state indicators and local measures.
- Increase retention of successful teachers.
- Increase effective teacher leadership.

How much are the incentives?

MIT Academy offers an average of \$158,725 per year in incentive bonuses. Teachers and principals are eligible for rewards in three areas:

- **Student Achievement.** Fifty-four percent of the funds awarded annually may go to individual teachers or the principal and all teachers at one, or both, MIT Academy schools if students meet performance goals, including subject-specific progressive increases on the California Standards Test and a comparison between MIT Academy and other schools in Vallejo, California.

- **Retention.** Nine percent of the funds awarded annually may go to the retention of successful teachers and principals. MIT Academy uses a graduated scale to award effective teachers incrementally as they remain at the school, starting with the first year of service. The scale culminates with a maximum award, \$2,000, after the fourth year of service and a nominal recognition award after the fifth year.
- **Leadership.** Thirty-seven percent of the funds awarded annually may go to teachers who assume additional responsibilities and leadership roles. These funds can be awarded twice per year.

What are the recent highlights of the program?

During the first year of the TIF grant, MIT Academy revised its program outcomes to reflect a more streamlined approach to performance-based compensation. These revisions resulted in the potential for larger award amounts, though fewer award recipients. Teacher retention and leadership awards were not substantially altered.

In the second year, the MIT Academy formed a TIF Committee to review the award structure. As a result of their review, the student achievement objectives were modified to encompass a greater number of eligible teachers. Specifically, the maximum incentive amounts for achieving target objectives for student achievement have increased, and the teacher retention award structure was revised.

One of the goals for the third year is for the TIF Committee to review the program, use data to drive proposed changes, and evaluate the efficacy of the program. A second goal for the TIF Committee is to more transparently communicate program goals related to teacher leadership roles and student achievement within the school and to the community as a whole. This information will be available on the school's intranet site.

For further information, see the TIF grantee profile online at <http://www.cecr.ed.gov/initiatives/profiles/pdfs/MIT.pdf> and the CECR National Map profile at http://www.cecr.ed.gov/initiatives/maps/pdfs/CECR_CA_Vallejo.pdf.

Contact Us

Center for Educator Compensation Reform

Babette Gutmann, Director

Phone: 888-202-1513 • E-Mail: cecr@westat.com

Website: cecr.ed.gov

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 the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grantees with their implementation efforts through the provision of ongoing technical assistance and the development and dissemination of timely resources. CECR also is charged with raising national awareness of alternative and effective strategies for educator compensation through this newsletter, a Web-based clearinghouse, and other outreach activities. We look forward to an exciting partnership with the TIF grantees as we embark together on blazing a new path for education reform.

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