



**NEWSBREAK**

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**What’s New?**

**CECR Café**

Happy New Year from the Center for Educator Compensation Reform.

CECR held the second CECR Café in December with two conference calls, one on December 11 and one on December 12. The CECR Café is a discussion forum designed to provide Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grantees with the opportunity to interact with each other and share ideas, tools, and resources.

During the December CECR Café discussions, TIF grantees addressed alternative compensation for principals. The Partnership for Innovation in Compensation for Charter Schools (PICCS), Philadelphia Teacher and Principal Incentive Project,

and Pittsburgh School District Principal Incentive Program presented information on how they assess principals for alternative compensation purposes. Examples of principal assessment methods include the following:

- Evaluation rubrics on principal leadership skills used during multiple evaluations (PICCS, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh)
- Schoolwide student achievement using value-added measurement of student test scores (Pittsburgh)
- Implementation of school improvement plans (PICCS)
- Participation in professional development (Philadelphia)

The presenters mentioned the following resources that were useful in development of their principal assessment rubrics:

- The Danielson Framework for Teaching ([www.danielsongroup.org/theframeteach.htm](http://www.danielsongroup.org/theframeteach.htm))
- Vanderbilt Assessment for Leadership in Education (<http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/x8081.xml>)

In addition, PICCS rubrics and other resources are available online at [www.piccs.org](http://www.piccs.org).

## Hot Off the Press

**Union Prez: Teacher Pay Tied to Performance Works**—*The Associated Press*. November 18, 2008

<http://www3.signonsandiego.com/stories/2008/nov/18/teachers-merit-pay-111808/?zIndex=13725>

*American Federation of Teachers union President Randi Weingarten acknowledges support for performance-based compensation programs in public education.*

**New Grant to Pay \$1 Million-Plus to 800 Educators in 10 S.D. School Districts**—

*ArgusLeader.com*. November 24, 2008

<http://www.argusleader.com/article/20081124/UPDATES/81124037/1001/news>

*South Dakota's school-based performance incentive program will award 800 school staff in 10 school districts bonuses based on student achievement gains.*

**City Schools Look at Teacher Incentive Pay**—*Pittsburgh Post Gazette*. November 24, 2008

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08329/930370-298.stm>

*The success of the principal incentive program in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has pushed the district to consider a similar approach for teachers.*

**Top CPS Teachers Rewarded With Bonuses**—*Chicago Sun Times*. December 11, 2008

[http://m.suntimes.com/suntimes/db\\_9688/contentdetail.htm;jsessionid=665962C336EA78DD5BA72553784C5471?contentguid=3hd2ml8A&storycount=20&detailindex=3&full=true#display](http://m.suntimes.com/suntimes/db_9688/contentdetail.htm;jsessionid=665962C336EA78DD5BA72553784C5471?contentguid=3hd2ml8A&storycount=20&detailindex=3&full=true#display)

*Teachers participating in Chicago Public School's Teacher Advancement Program received their incentive payments for student achievement gains made during the 2007–08 school year.*

**Education Board Votes to Put Teacher Bonuses on Hold**—*KSL TV*. December 17, 2008

<http://www.ksl.com/?nid=148&sid=5104668>

*Officials at the Utah State Office of Education voted to delay distribution of the \$20 million provided by the state legislature for teacher performance pay this year due to state budget problems.*

## Grantee Spotlight: Pittsburgh Public Schools Principal Incentive Program

Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) Principal Incentive Program (PIP) provides incentives to principals based on gains in student achievement and evaluation of their leadership responsibilities. PIP fits into larger reform efforts that PPS has developed during the past few years. It was first introduced in 2007 as a part of the Pittsburgh Urban Leadership System for Excellence (PULSE), the district's accountability system to recruit, train, evaluate, and support principals and hold them accountable for the academic achievement of students. For example, the district addressed capacity issues by closing underutilized schools and developed Excellence for All, a four-year initiative with the goal of raising student achievement and reducing the racial and economic gaps in achievement.

All principals in the district are eligible for the incentives under the PPS PIP, including principals from Accelerated Learning Academies (ALAs) who are already serving under performance-based contracts. Principals earn a yearly bonus based on the school achievement gains and school configuration-based targets, which are tied to the district's Excellence for All goals and objectives. Principals also participate in high-quality professional development, based on Interstate School Leaders Licensure (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders. They are eligible to receive a bonus based on evaluation on their progress toward meeting the ISLLC standards.

The Excellence for All initiative includes leadership training for principals and teachers, accountability for both principals and teachers based on student results, and financial incentives for principals to raise student achievement. As part of the reform efforts, eight schools were converted to ALAs, which have an extended school day and a focus on core academic subjects. Principals of ALAs are on performance-based contracts and are eligible for up to \$10,000 in performance incentives. As part of the reform effort, the Board of Education established the Leadership Academy, an instructional leadership program for principals and assistant principals to train them to meet Excellence for All objectives.

### **What need is the project trying to address?**

PPS is the second largest urban school district in Pennsylvania. The district serves more than 29,000 students in 65 schools. PPS has a high percentage of at-risk students. Sixty percent of the students are African American; 37 percent are white; 2 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander; and less than 2 percent are Hispanic or Native American. In addition, 60 percent of the district's students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Student achievement in PPS is connected to race and economic status. Based on 2005–06 testing data, 71 percent of white students achieved or exceeded proficiency on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) compared with only 41 percent of African-American students and only 47 percent of economically disadvantaged students. In reading, 69 percent of white students achieved or exceeded proficiency compared with 40 percent of African-American students and 42 percent of economically disadvantaged students. PPS graduation and attendance rates are below those of the average for the state; PPS has a 64 percent graduation rate compared to 74 percent for the state.

However, some schools with high numbers of disadvantaged students performed well on the PSSA. Of 18 PPS schools reporting PSSA results only for African-American students because of low enrollment by students of other races, two exceeded state targets in both mathematics and reading, and eight more exceeded state targets in mathematics. This indicates that achievement differences within PPS cannot be adequately explained by racial and economic factors alone. The TIF program is designed to address the fact that administrator and teacher performance plays a major role in ensuring a school's high achievement.

### **What are the goals of the project?**

There are three overarching goals of the PPS PIP:

- Improve student achievement in all PPS schools by increasing principal effectiveness.
- Develop and implement a sustainable principal compensation system that rewards principals for increases in student achievement.
- Increase the number of effective principals leading schools with high percentages of poor, minority, and disadvantaged students.

### **How much are the incentives?**

All of the PPS principals have the opportunity to participate in the PIP. The incentive structure for the program consists of two parts:

- Student achievement bonus of up to \$10,000 annually based on student achievement gains in the principals' schools
- Professional increment for mastery of the ISLLC standards and additional responsibilities of up to \$2,000 annually based on mastery of best practice as identified in the ISLLC standards and evidence that leadership responsibilities have been fulfilled

Principals of the ALAs, who are already eligible for one incentive, are also eligible for participation in the PIP, which could provide them with an additional incentive, based on the above structure.

### **What are the recent highlights of the project?**

During each year of the grant, the district allocates funds from its general operating budget to cover an increasing share of the funds for principal performance incentives. The goal is for the district to cover 75 percent of the cost of the incentives by the fifth year of the project.

During the first year, PPS made progress implementing the professional development opportunities for principals. Additional progress has been made in the development of a comprehensive evaluation tool to measure evidence of principals' leadership practices and their impact on student achievement. As a result, PPS is able to use the information to assist in making first-year performance payouts.

The district discovered challenges in measuring student achievement gains for students not served in traditional school settings, which prevented administrators in six schools from participating in the portion of the incentive plan that is based on student achievement. PPS utilized the CECR technical assistance team to identify solutions to this challenge.

Goals for Year 2 include the implementation of strategies to measure achievement gains among special student populations. In addition, another goal for the second year of implementation is to improve communications between the district and local education stakeholders. The district has developed talking points for principals and other district administrators to respond to community inquiries related to the incentive payments.

## Contact Us

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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 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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