NEWSBREAK

Volume 2, Number 7 **July 2008**

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What's New?

CECR Hosts TIF Grantee Meeting

The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) convened a Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) Grantee Meeting in Bethesda, Maryland, June 5–6, 2008. Grantees from all 34 TIF grants attended and interacted with U.S. Department of Education program officers, CECR staff, alternative compensation experts, and other grantees implementing performance-based compensation initiatives.

Throughout the two-day meeting, grantees attended sessions on a variety of educator compensation reform topics, including measuring the performance of nontested teachers, understanding value-added measurement as well as teacher and principal observation, and paying for and sustaining a performance-based pay system. In addition, TIF grantees participated in focus-group sessions designed to garner feedback on the CECR website and the resources available on the website.

Participants also heard presentations from fellow TIF grantees who shared lessons learned and promising strategies with the audience. TIF grantees that presented include the following: Guilford County, Houston Independent School District, Hillsborough County, Denver Public Schools, South Carolina TAP, and the CMS/CTAC LEAP Initiative.

Richard Rothstein of the Economic Policy Institute and Michael Podgursky, Ph.D., of the University of Missouri–Columbia concluded the meeting with a dual presentation. Both presenters offered their viewpoints on the lessons learned from performance-based pay in other professions. James Guthrie, Ph.D., of Vanderbilt University moderated the session.

Materials from the meeting are available online at http://cecr.ed.gov/initiatives/meeting2008/.

Hot Off the Press

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings Joins Former Governor Jeb Bush for National Summit on Education Reform—U.S. Department of Education Press Release, June 19, 2008
http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2008/06/06192008.html

Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush hosted a national summit where Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, New York City Department of Education Chancellor Joel Klein, and other educational leaders from across the United States discussed improvements in the education system, the need for increased accountability, and performance-pay implementation.

Teacher Bonuses Get Unions' Blessing—*The Washington Post,* June 25, 2008
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/24/AR2008062401404.html?nav=rss_politics

Prince George's County's pay-for-performance initiative gains local union support. The initiative offers bonuses of up to $10,000 to teachers in the 12 pilot schools.

New Kind of School Passes First Test—*The Providence Journal*, June 17, 2008
http://www.projo.com/news/content/MAYORAL_ACADEMIES_06-17-08_AEAHJGH_v47.3e94ee4.html

Rhode Island is considering the development of public mayoral academies. These academies would have a longer school day, a 10-month academic year, and opportunities for teacher merit pay.

Reforming Teacher Pay in Maine—Part 1: How Alternative Teacher Compensation Systems Are Improving Student Outcomes—*The Maine View*, June 9, 2008
http://www.mainepolicy.org/library/resources/87.pdf

In an effort to reform and improve its education system, Maine is discussing removing the single-salary schedule and replacing it with performance-based pay and other forms of alternative compensation.

North Slope Borough School District Raises Annual Teacher Salaries to $50,000—*The Arctic Sounder,* June 5, 2008
http://thearcticsounder.com/news/show/2431

The North Slope Borough School District school board instituted a $5,000 base salary raise and an opportunity for teachers to earn an additional $7,000 in performance-pay awards in an effort to attract teachers to the district.

Waiting to Be Won Over: Teachers Speak on the Profession, Unions, and Reform—
Education Sector, May 2008
http://www.educationsector.org/usr_doc/WaitingToBeWonOver.pdf

This report examines the findings of a survey of more than 1,000 K–12 teachers to assess their opinions on a variety of teacher quality issues, including the teaching profession, evaluations, and performance-based pay.

Grantee Spotlight: Hillsborough County Public Schools Performance Outcomes With Effective Rewards Program

The Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) designed the Performance Outcomes With Effective Rewards (POWER) program to improve student achievement and create a sustainable, performance-based compensation program by reforming the system by which teachers and administrators in high-needs schools are rewarded.

HCPS identified 116 high-needs schools as measured by the population of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in which to implement the POWER program. The program expands the district implementation of the Florida Merit Award Program (MAP) by extending differentiated compensation to teachers and administrators at high-needs schools deemed effective using MAP criteria. The first year of the program was a pilot, with implementation in 21 schools. HCPS will use data from the 21 schools to refine the program for implementation in all 116 schools during the next year of the grant.

POWER creates a differentiated compensation model through performance evaluations, incentives for additional responsibilities, and student achievement gains at the school and classroom levels. To determine teacher and administrator eligibility, HCPS uses a formula based 40 percent on performance ratings, measured through teacher and administrator evaluations and taking on additional responsibilities, and 60 percent on effectiveness ratings, measured by student achievement.

POWER plans to establish a partnership with the University of South Florida to provide training for site-based administrators of the program. The program consists of a summer institute and a year-long series of workshops and provides the principals with networking opportunities to collaborate on new and innovative ideas to implement in their schools. In addition, HCPS has implemented the Teacher Ambassador program to identify teachers to serve as advocates for the recruitment and retention of effective teachers. Through this process, the teachers speak with both teacher applicants and district personnel regarding teaching opportunities in Hillsborough County.

What need is the project trying to address?

Hillsborough County's population is increasingly economically and ethnically diverse. The county is home to more than 1 million people, and the annual population growth has exceeded both national and state rates for the past six years. HCPS is the eighth largest school district in

the United States and serves more than 190,200 students in 206 schools in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

HCPS faces gaps in teacher attrition rates, teacher experience, and teacher certification. The gap in attrition rate between the state as a whole (24.2 percent in 2004–05) and the POWER schools (34.6 percent) is significant. In addition, teachers in POWER schools are more likely than teachers in other schools in the state to have five or fewer years of experience. There is also a higher percentage of teachers with temporary certificates in POWER schools than in the rest of the state. The same patterns exist for administrators.

Student achievement gaps also persist in HCPS schools. In HCPS schools, students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch are less likely to score at or above grade level on reading and mathematics tests than students who are not part of the free or reduced-price lunch program. In addition, students in POWER schools are less likely to score at or above grade level in reading and mathematics than students in other schools in the district and state.

What are the goals of the project?

The POWER program has three overarching goals:

- To accomplish systemic reform.
- To increase student achievement.
- To create a model for a sustainable, performance-based compensation program.

HCPS has indicated under each goal a set of measurable objectives, including the following:

- Design and implement an integrated data management system.
- Use market-based incentives to recruit and retain teachers at high-needs schools.
- Use valid and reliable measures of student achievement for teacher and principal effectiveness.
- Create a fair, rigorous, and objective process for teacher evaluation.

How much are the incentives?

The TIF grant provides additional incentive pay to teachers and administrators who qualify for MAP incentive pay. HCPS awards up to 5 percent of their salary in incentives from the MAP and up to an additional 5 percent from POWER. The amount to be paid out in bonuses under the POWER program depends on the number of teachers and administrators eligible each year under MAP.

What are the recent highlights of the project?

This year, 15 principals participated in the Leadership Institute, the HCPS partnership with the University of South Florida. In addition, 348 HCPS teachers and administrators participated in POWER training to help them understand the program.

As their first activity for the Teacher Ambassador program, the six new teacher ambassadors participated in teacher interview days. At these events, the teachers spoke with both teacher applicants and district personnel conducting the interviews to understand the recruitment process. Teachers in the ambassador program continue to participate in other training and staff-development activities throughout the year.

To streamline implementation of the POWER program, HCPS continues to work with a consulting group to develop and maintain a database for the district to house all of the necessary information for the POWER program. Teachers have been involved in this process by reviewing the data reports to better understand how the data are used.

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.

This work was originally produced in whole or in part by CECR with funds from the U.S. Department of Education under contract number ED-06-CO-0110. The content does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of CECR or the Department of Education, nor does mention or visual representation of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by CECR or the federal government.

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