



NEWSBREAK

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What's New?

CECR Unveils Redesigned Website

The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) recently launched its newly redesigned website (<http://cecr.ed.gov/>). The revised website introduces an updated layout and new resources on performance-based pay and alternative compensation implementation. These resources include a national map as well as a Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) Grantee Summary tool.

The national map highlights a variety of past, present, and soon-to-be-implemented performance-based pay initiatives across the United States. The map provides

contact information, program overviews, program information, and select articles and reports for each of the highlighted initiatives. For more information on the map, visit <http://cecr.ed.gov/initiatives/maps/>.

The Grantee Summary tool informs users about the types of programs that TIF grantees are currently implementing and allows users to search for specific program information about TIF grantees. Users can sort by project location, the number of students served by the grant, and a variety of other indicators. Visit <http://cecr.ed.gov/initiatives/grantees/granteeSummary.cfm> to access this tool.

Hot Off the Press

County Considers Teacher Incentives—*Daily Progress*, May 23, 2008

http://www.dailyprogress.com/cdp/news/local/education/article/county_considers_teacher_incentives/22362/

Albemarle County, in Virginia, contemplates performance-based compensation as well as recruitment and retention incentives for educators teaching or willing to teach in hard-to-staff schools.

Idaho Looks at Teaching Standards—*Star Tribune*, May 23, 2008

<http://www.jacksonholestartrib.com/articles/2008/05/23/news/regional/88a2f56d01f76bc68725745100639db8.txt>

The Idaho Department of Education is developing standards to evaluate teacher performance across the state. The lack of statewide standards forced the Idaho Senate to halt funding for a \$21 million pay-for-performance initiative in early 2008.

District Awards Bonus to More Than 1,000—*The State*, May 15, 2008

<http://www.thestate.com/local/story/405415.html>

Richland County School District One in Hopkins and Columbia, South Carolina, reports that more than 1,000 teachers qualified for performance awards. This number exceeded the superintendent's expectations and budget, yet he views the awards increase as a success for the alternative compensation program.

Panel to Flesh Out Merit Pay Plans for Teachers—*Omaha World-Herald*, May 7, 2008

http://www.omaha.com/index.php?u_page=2798&u_sid=10328147

The Omaha Public Schools will work with the local union, businesses, teachers, parents, school board, and others to develop a pay-for-performance salary schedule for teachers in the district. A plan could be negotiated as early as spring 2009.

Grantee Spotlight: South Dakota Incentive Fund

The South Dakota Incentive Fund supports programs at 40 participating schools, which include Title I elementary and secondary schools in 10 districts. The schools, primarily in rural areas, are among the lowest performing schools in the state. The state's accountability system has identified all of these schools as "in need of improvement." Furthermore, the legislature has approved a new teacher compensation program that links performance and teacher pay. The proposed plan is part of South Dakota's 2010 Education Initiative, which provides a vision for the future of education in South Dakota.

What need is the project trying to address?

Overall student performance indicators reflect generally high achievement in the state. In 2006, 87 percent of third- to fifth-grade students tested proficient in reading, 78 percent of students tested proficient in mathematics, and highly qualified teachers taught more than 92 percent of classes. However, even though overall performance is good, significant variation between districts creates a large equity issue within the state, which affects the Native American population in particular. Fifty-seven percent of South Dakota's Native American children live in poverty, compared with the state average of 16 percent. The highest childhood poverty rates in the state occur in counties and schools located on or near reservation lands, where high concentrations of Native American families live.

South Dakota consistently ranks lowest among the states in average teacher pay. At the time of the TIF proposal, South Dakota's teachers ranked 50th—with an average salary of \$33,236, well below the national average of \$46,726. Principals face similar situations, with an average salary

of only \$59,500. The base salary for teachers in TIF schools ranges from \$25,500 to \$31,000, and the base salary for principals is about \$48,000.

What are the goals of the project?

The goal of the South Dakota Incentive Fund program is to develop, implement, and sustain a performance-based compensation system for principals and teachers in high-needs schools. This system will support and reward improvements in teaching and learning that result in increases in student achievement. In order to reach this goal, the state has set the following four performance objectives:

- Use professional development activities to increase teacher and principal effectiveness in improving student achievement.
- Establish a system for performance-based compensation that provides differentiated compensation for 80 percent of participating principals and teachers.
- Improve recruitment and retention of highly effective teachers who serve in participating schools and increase the number of classes taught by highly qualified teachers to 95 percent by the end of the project period.
- Build consensus among stakeholders to ensure policy and funding supports to sustain the South Dakota Incentive Fund.

How much are the incentives?

The \$3 million in incentives that are available through the South Dakota Incentive Fund will be distributed among participating schools and educators through a three-tier approach. The school-based first tier provides awards to all principals and instructional staff in the eligible schools based on student achievement at the school level. The second tier provides awards for principals and teachers based on individual performance—student achievement, effective performance, and leadership. The third tier involves recruitment and retention efforts for teachers in hard-to-fill positions within participating schools. Within the three tiers, principals, instructional staff, and teachers are eligible for five types of compensation. Table 1 shows the eligible party, amount of compensation, and criteria for receiving the award.

Table 1. South Dakota Pay Incentives for Staff in Participating Schools

Award Eligibility	Compensation Amount	Criteria for Receiving Award
School-based performance award: principals, assistant principals, and instructional staff	Principals: \$4,000 Certified instructional staff: \$1,500 Noncertified instructional staff: \$750	School meets adequate yearly progress as defined by state; school demonstrates growth in student achievement
Individual leadership roles and responsibilities: principals and certified instructional staff	Principals: \$1,000 Certified instructional staff: \$750 Paraprofessionals: \$500	Principals: Attendance at leadership academy; principal and peer assessments Instructional staff and paraprofessionals: Participation on school leadership teams or in collaborative work groups
Individual effective performance: principals and classroom teachers	Principals: \$1,000 Classroom teachers: \$1,500	Principals: Effective leadership rubric (under development) Teachers: Participation in the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards “Take-One” teacher evaluation program
Individual/classroom increases in student achievement: classroom teachers	Classroom teachers: \$750 Paraprofessionals assigned to a class: \$350	Demonstrated student gains on South Dakota achievement tests; other achievement tests
Recruitment incentive: new teachers	Up to \$5,000 per teacher	Signed contract and agreement

What are the recent highlights of the project?

During the past year, South Dakota focused on the creation and implementation of the Building Leadership Teams (BLTs). To further solidify the work of the Building Leadership Teams, South Dakota held the SDIF+ Summer Institute June 17–18 in Rapid City. The theme of the event was “Leading and Learning Together.” All ten districts were represented by their Building Leadership Teams, which consisted of both principals and teachers. The goals of the meeting included the following:

- Build collegiality and celebrate accomplishments.
- Learn more about the SDIF+ project and the role of Building Leadership Team members as school-based leaders.
- Learn how to create a professional learning community in the school.
- Plan for professional learning community development in the school.

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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