



NEWSBREAK

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What's New?

The Center for Educator Compensation Reform Hosts the Third Annual Teacher Incentive Fund Grantee Meeting

The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) hosted the third annual Teacher Incentive Fund Grantee Meeting June 8–9, 2009, in Bethesda, Maryland. The meeting provided opportunities for grantees to meet with CECR staff and other compensation reform experts.

Participants attended the following sessions:

- Financial and Programmatic Sustainability of Performance Pay Programs
- Communication Plans
- Formative Evaluations: Using Educator Reactions
- TIF Challenges in Education Information Systems and Knowledge Management
- Principal Evaluation
- Evaluations of Performance Incentive Programs

Meeting materials are available on the CECR website at <http://cecr.ed.gov/initiatives/meeting2009/>.

CECR Introduces Ask the Expert Feature on Website

CECR now offers a new Ask the Expert feature on the CECR website homepage. Users can access the feature by clicking on the Ask the Expert icon and submitting their questions about educator compensation reform, and CECR staff experts will respond with answers.

Hot Off the Press

Five Schools Chosen for Teacher Pay Pilot Program—*The Salt Lake Tribune*. June 3, 2009. http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci_12505575

Teachers in five elementary schools in Utah will participate in a pilot program that will base additional compensation on the quality of instruction; student achievement; and parent, student, and community satisfaction. The state will provide \$300,000 for the five districts to participate in the two-year pilot.

Columbus Teachers Union Approves Pay, Programs—*The Columbus Dispatch*. June 2, 2009. http://dispatch.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2009/06/02/ccs03.html?sid=101

Teachers in Columbus, Ohio, schools voted to award teachers selected to teach in one of the district's low-performing schools an additional \$4,000 per year. Superintendent Gene Harris will choose which teachers will be placed in the low-performing schools.

State Halts One Merit Pay Plan for Teachers, Keeps Newer Program—*The Dallas Morning News*. May 18, 2009. <http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/latestnews/stories/051809dntexmerit.4530d1d.html>

Texas will stop its \$100-million-per-year investment in the Texas Educator Excellence Grant (TEEG) because of the state's inability to directly tie TEEG participation to student achievement. The state will, however, continue investing in District Awards for Teacher Excellence, another performance-based program offered by the state.

Do Financial Incentives Help Low-Performing Schools Attract and Keep Academically Talented Teachers? Evidence From California—National Bureau of Economic Research, March 2009. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w14780> (Article can be purchased for a minimal fee.)

This research paper analyzes data from the California Governor's Teaching Fellowship initiative that used a \$20,000 incentive to attract teachers into the state's hard-to-staff schools. The study showed that 75 percent of teachers participating in the program stayed for at least four years.

Grantee Spotlight: Promoting Excellence in Philadelphia Schools

In November 2006, the School District of Philadelphia began a new initiative: Promoting Excellence in Philadelphia Schools (PEPS). This program, established through the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF), provides a performance-based staff development and compensation system for teachers and principals. PEPS has been implemented in 11 charter schools through a collaboration with the School District of Philadelphia. The program is designed to increase student achievement by developing and supporting talented teachers for every classroom and is based on the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching's (NIET) Teacher Advancement Program (TAP). PEPS provides performance-based compensation, classroom observations, job-embedded professional development, and school-based career opportunities for high-quality teachers and principals.

Teachers receive bonuses based on a combination of student achievement at the classroom and school levels and a classroom observation process. Principals receive bonuses based on a combination of schoolwide student achievement and their performance on a program review that evaluates how well the principals implemented the TAP model. Teachers and principals are eligible for full or partial bonuses. In addition, teachers who serve as mentor or master teachers receive additional compensation based on added responsibilities. Student achievement is measured by the Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS).

What need is the program trying to address?

Students in Philadelphia face many challenges common to students in high-needs, urban school districts, including low performance on state tests and high teacher turnover. The student population in the 11 pilot schools primarily consists of African-American or Latino students (more than 80 percent). In addition, more than 70 percent of students in this high-poverty district are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Low student achievement continues to be a challenge in the district. During the 2007–08 school year, the percentage of students scoring at proficient levels in mathematics was 49 percent, and the percentage of students proficient in reading was 45 percent. Although these data represent improvement during the past four years, there is still room for more growth. These scores are also well below the state average in mathematics (72 percent proficient or above) and reading (70 percent proficient or above).

Like other high-needs, urban districts, Philadelphia faces challenges with teacher turnover and recruiting highly qualified teachers and other instructional staff. During the 2004–05 school year, 14 percent of teachers were not highly qualified, and 9 percent were teaching with emergency certification. Each year, approximately 12 percent of classrooms are staffed by new teachers, and one out of five classrooms is staffed by teachers with fewer than three years of experience.

What are the goals of the program?

The overall purpose of the program is to pilot a performance-based staff development and compensation system that provides teachers and principals with incentives tied directly to student achievement growth and classroom evaluations. Some intended outcomes include the following:

- Improved overall student achievement growth at pilot schools, measured using valid and reliable standards-based assessments.
- Increased rates of attendance and retention among teachers at the pilot schools.
- Annual increases in the number and percentage of teachers at the pilot charter schools who have a record of effectiveness as documented by student achievement growth and classroom evaluation results.

How much are the incentives?

Teachers are eligible to receive incentives of up to \$2,300 per year based on the following:

- Improved student achievement growth at the classroom level (25 percent).

- Improved student achievement growth schoolwide (25 percent).
- Demonstrated excellent instruction performance through classroom observation (50 percent).

In addition to teacher performance incentives, master and mentor teachers receive salary augmentation as follows:

- \$9,000 per year for master teachers for being fully released to coach teachers, field-test strategies, plan and implement clusters, model and teach strategies in clusters, and coordinate the observation process.
- \$4,500 per year for being partially released to coach teachers, plan and implement clusters, and model and teach strategies in cluster meetings.

Principals are eligible to receive incentives of up to \$8,000 per year based on the following:

- Improved student achievement growth schoolwide (50 percent).
- High performance scores on program review of TAP model implementation (50 percent).

Instructional paraprofessionals are eligible to receive incentives of up to \$750 per year based on the following:

- Improved student achievement growth schoolwide (100 percent).

What are the recent highlights of the program?

During the first year of the grant, the program accomplished the following:

- Adopted core elements of the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) as a means to finalize program details.
- Selected four Philadelphia Charter Schools, representing approximately 175 teachers and 2,500 students to participate in the TIF program.
- Provided TAP training to school leadership teams and established infrastructure to provide ongoing support and training to participating schools.
- Partnered with the SAS Institute to establish classroom-level, value-added (PVAAS) measures.
- Recruited and selected an additional eight schools to begin TIF implementation for the 2008–09 school year, representing 376 teachers and 5,337 students.
- Held first annual PEPS Summer Institute for Leadership Teams.

During the second year of the grant, the program accomplished the following:

- Resulted in a significant increase in mathematics and reading scores. Three of the four schools showed gains representing considerably more than expected academic growth.
- Distributed bonuses to teachers, principals, and instructional support staff based on student academic growth and classroom observation scores.
- Provided intensive, ongoing support to participating schools in order to implement essential TAP elements.

- Expanded to 11 city charter schools.
- Held the second annual PEPS Summer Institute partnering with the Philadelphia Zoo.

Goals for the third year include the following:

- Continue to provide ongoing support to participating schools in order to implement essential elements of TAP.
- Collaborate with pilot charter schools to develop sustainability plans to ensure the continuation of the program.
- Expand the scope of professional development offered from leadership teams to all career teachers in participating schools.

Useful Links About the Program

- The Teacher and Principal Incentive Fund Project presented during the December 2008 CECR Café about developing its principal evaluation system. More information is available in the December 2008 *CECR Newsbreak* (<http://cecr.ed.gov/news/newsletters/CECRNewsbreakDec2008.pdf>).
- CECR provides more information about the project in the following resources:
 - *Pennsylvania Map Profile* (http://cecr.ed.gov/initiatives/maps/pdfs/CECR_PA_Philadelphia.pdf)
 - *Philadelphia Teacher and Principal Incentive Fund Project* (<http://cecr.ed.gov/initiatives/profiles/pdfs/Philadelphia.pdf>)
- For more information, visit the PVAAS webpage on the Pennsylvania Department of Education website (http://www.pde.state.pa.us/a_and_t/cwp/view.asp?A=108&Q=108916).

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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