

What's New?

The Center for Educator Compensation Reform Has a New Website

The December issue of the CECR *Newsbreak* introduced a new look for CECR resources. CECR is pleased to announce that the new website is now live at <http://cecr.ed.gov/>. Along with the new look, CECR redesigned the site to improve functionality. Three major subheadings for the site allow visitors to search for resources by topic area and resource type as well as locate information specific to Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grantees. The homepage also provides a brief glimpse into key resources inside each section.

Planning and Implementation. Resources under this section include the topics of communication and system support, program structure, and perspectives on compensation reform.

Compensation Reform in Action. Visitors can find the monthly newsletter archives, presentations by CECR staff, the National Map, and Online Library here, along with other multimedia information about compensation reform initiatives across the county.

TIF Grantees. This section offers information about each TIF Grantee, including Grantee Profiles and a TIF Program Database. It also provides links to all CECR resources, by resource type, including the *Guide to Implementation*, Emerging Issues papers, Case Summaries, Webinars, Podcasts, and other videos.

CECR will provide more information about new resources available in forthcoming newsletters. Stay tuned!

New TIF Competition

As mentioned during the March 11 webinar, the new TIF competition will include the main TIF competition and an evaluation competition. For more information from the national evaluator about additional requirements that applicants need to meet to be eligible for the proposed evaluation competition, see <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/Education/tifgrantee.asp>.

TIF Coordinator's Corner

As a result of new TIF competition, there is a shortened timeline for funding Year 5 continuations. Annual performance reports (APRs) for Year 4 (2010) are now due on **July 1, 2010**. The U.S. Department of Education will send guidance for submitting APRs to program officials before they are due. TIF Grantees should contact April Lee (april.lee@ed.gov) at the Education Department with any questions.

In This Issue

What's New	1
Hot Off the Press	2
Grantee Spotlight	3
<i>This month, CECR profiles Florence County School District 3—South Carolina Teacher Advancement Program.</i>	
Contact Us	5

Hot Off the Press

Treating Different Teachers Differently—

Center for American Progress. March 10, 2010.

<http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/03/different-teachers.html>

The Center for American Progress has released a report on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the state role in compensation reform. The report examines the policy levers available under the different funding streams and provides recommendations for action.

Effective Teachers Plan Gets Rolling in Pittsburgh School District—

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. March 9, 2010.

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/10068/1041269-298.stm>

Pittsburgh Public Schools and the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers received a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to study and define what makes an effective teacher. The district made a presentation to stakeholders detailing its plan “Empowering Effective Teachers in the Pittsburgh Public Schools,” which includes seven initiatives with the goal of increased teacher effectiveness.

Star Science Teacher Wins \$175K— and More—

Charlotte Observer. March 5, 2010.

<http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2010/03/05/1292343/star-science-teacher-wins-175k.html>

The Burroughs Wellcome Fund provides funding to teachers to encourage retention in hard-to-staff North Carolina classrooms. A science teacher with Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools just received a five-year grant totaling \$175,000.

Merit Pay: An Agreeable Fantasy—

Education Week. March 3, 2010.

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/03/03/23gersen.h29.html?r=1040670331> (Subscription required)

Education Week published a new commentary by a superintendent in New Hampshire on compensation reform. Superintendent Gersen believes that (1) the district already has a system of merit pay in place, one that attracts the best teachers to more affluent districts, (2) the district does not link school funding to performance, and (3) teachers do not want compensation reform.

Teachers Counter Education Reform Ideas on Tests, Pay—

USA Today. March 3, 2010.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2010-03-03-teachersurvey03_st_N.htm

A new survey of teachers indicates that a majority of teachers do not think student performance on standardized tests is an accurate measure of teacher performance. Further, a majority of teachers are skeptical of a principal’s ability to evaluate teacher performance and feel that paying teachers for student performance would have little to no impact on the system.

Grantee Spotlight

Florence County School District 3— South Carolina Teacher Advancement Program

The Florence County School District 3 implements the South Carolina Teacher Advancement Program (SCTAP+) in three local districts: Florence County School District 1, Florence County School District 3, and Laurens County School District. SCTAP+ and the school districts, in conjunction with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, implement the program to address local capacity building to improve both student achievement through a focus on teacher knowledge and skills and teacher recruitment and retention using differentiated compensation.

The primary components of the TAP System include the following:

- **Multiple Career Paths** that provide opportunities for instructional leadership through master and mentor teacher positions.
- **Ongoing and Applied Professional Growth** that focuses on individual teacher and administrator needs, as identified through performance evaluations. Furthermore, professional development activities occur during the school day.
- **Instructionally Focused Accountability** that measures teacher and administrator progress toward meeting the TAP Teaching Skills, Knowledge, and Responsibility Standards.
- **Performance-Based Compensation** that rewards teachers and administrators for student performance on standardized tests and performance on educator evaluations. Performance-based compensation also provides additional incentives for teachers in hard-to-staff subjects and schools and administrators who develop complex data systems.

The student populations of the SCTAP+ implementation sites primarily consist of minority students. Further, approximately 78 percent of students in the area are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and 47 percent are minority students. At the time of the grant application, schools in participating districts faced a teacher turnover rate of approximately 15 percent, higher than the state average of 10 percent. Further, the high school faced a consistently low graduation rate of 58.7 percent and never met adequate yearly progress requirements. The elementary schools in Florence County also faced a significant achievement gap between minority and nonminority students.

What is the goal of the program?

The goal of SCTAP+ in the participating districts is to improve student achievement through increasing the effectiveness of the teacher workforce. To meet this goal, Florence County aims to raise teacher salaries to a competitive level with other districts across the state and to address the recruitment and retention of effective teachers and principals.

How much are the incentives?

The bonus structure for administrative teams and teachers ranges from \$500 to \$10,000 and follows the traditional TAP System model. The district bases 60 percent of the teacher bonuses on value-added measures, broken down into 20 percent for schoolwide growth and 40 percent for individual classroom growth. The remaining 40 percent includes other student achievement measures from the classroom evaluations. The district determines principal bonuses based on schoolwide value-added gains, making adequate yearly progress, and TAP leadership scores.

What are the recent highlights of the program?

During the second year of the grant, Florence County schools met with leadership teams to monitor the consistent use of the TAP System rubric with classroom teachers. Further, teacher surveys in the district indicated that the program

should have two payout events: one in September, based on teacher observations, and one in March, based on growth in student achievement.

During the third year, SCTAP+ member districts met in October 2009 to facilitate program and budget communication. The district holds monthly TAP System meetings and always invites partner schools in other districts. As described previously, SCTAP+ split the teacher incentive payouts for the 2008–09 school year into two separate events. The delay to March of paying incentives based on the student achievement component is a result of the transition year for South Carolina to revamp its standardized testing program.

For more information, visit the following sites:

- South Carolina TAP+: <http://www.scteachers.org/tadvance/advance.cfm>
- The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching's TAP System: <http://www.tapsystem.org/>
- CECR TIF Grantee Profile: <http://cecr.ed.gov/pdfs/profiles/FlorenceCounty.pdf>
- CECR National Map Profile: http://www.cecr.ed.gov/initiatives/maps/pdfs/CECR_SC_FlorenceCounty.pdf

Contact Us



Center for
Educator Compensation
Reform

Allison Henderson, Director
Phone: 888-202-1513
E-mail: cecr@westat.com

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 Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grantees in their implementation efforts through provision of sustained technical assistance and development and dissemination of timely resources. CECR also is charged with raising national awareness of alternative and effective strategies for educator compensation through a newsletter, a Web-based clearinghouse, and other outreach activities.

This work was originally produced in whole or in part by the Center for Educator Compensation Reform (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.