



## NEWSBREAK

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### What's New?

#### New CECR Case Summary Online

The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) introduces a new case summary (<http://cecr.ed.gov/guides/summaries.cfm>) about the alternative compensation program in Minneapolis. CECR case summaries tell the stories of alternative compensation programs from conception through implementation. They also provide valuable lessons learned for others who are designing or implementing such programs.

The new case summary, *Pay Reform in Minneapolis Public Schools: Multiple Approaches to Alternative Compensation*, focuses on the evolution of alternative compensation efforts in the Minneapolis Public Schools

(MPS). In 2006, MPS implemented the Alternative Teacher Professional Pay System (ATPPS), which created an umbrella program that brought together the two alternative compensation systems the district was implementing at that time: the Minneapolis Professional Pay System (ProPay), which began in 2002, and the Minneapolis Teacher Advancement Program (MnTAP), which began in 2004. ATPPS is a complex system that includes an alternative salary schedule that teachers can opt in to, as well as a series of one-time bonus payments that teachers can receive in addition to their pay on either the alternative or traditional salary schedule. Furthermore, MnTAP school teachers also may be eligible to receive ATPPS bonus payments in addition to the compensation they receive through the MnTAP program.

The MPS approach to alternative compensation provides the following key lessons learned for school systems currently developing or implementing alternative compensation programs:

- Agree early on program elements.
- Involve union representatives in the decision-making process.
- Offer an aspect of choice to participants.
- Provide effective communication between constituents.

*Pay Reform in Minneapolis Public Schools: Multiple Approaches to Alternative Compensation* is available online at <http://cecr.ed.gov/guides/summaries/MinneapolisCaseSummary.pdf>.

## Hot Off the Press

**Forest Lake Teachers Reject Merit Pay Changes**—*Star Tribune*. April 24, 2009.

[http://www.startribune.com/local/east/43655837.html?elr=KArksLckD8EQDUoaEyqyP4O:DW3ckUiD3aPc:\\_Yyc:aUUT](http://www.startribune.com/local/east/43655837.html?elr=KArksLckD8EQDUoaEyqyP4O:DW3ckUiD3aPc:_Yyc:aUUT)

*Forest Lake teachers voted to withdraw from Minnesota's Q-Comp program after the program payouts awarded to teachers were reduced from \$3,000 to \$1,800 because of higher than expected costs associated with higher student achievement on tests and with professional development.*

**Teachers to Get Cash for Success**—*The Post and Courier*. April 24, 2009.

[http://www.postandcourier.com/news/2009/apr/24/teachers\\_get\\_cash\\_success79875/](http://www.postandcourier.com/news/2009/apr/24/teachers_get_cash_success79875/)

*Charleston County, South Carolina, implemented the Teacher Outstanding Performance (TOP) program to reward teachers who have at least 80 percent of their students meeting growth goals. The program uses the Measuring Academic Progress test.*

**New Legislation Aims to Replace Standardized Tests**—*Cape Gazette*. April 22, 2009.

<http://www.capegazette.com/storiescurrent/200904/statetests211.html>

*A widely supported bill proposed in the Delaware legislature will introduce a new student tracking system that will follow student achievement throughout the school year. Delaware proposes to use this new system to base teacher pay on student achievement.*

**Panel OKs School Finance Act**—*The Colorado Statesman*. April 3, 2009.

<http://www.coloradostatesman.com/content/99921-panel-oks-school-finance-act>

*With an 8 to 0 favorable vote in the Senate Education Committee and support in the House, Colorado will likely approve the School Finance Act. This act would, among other things, base teacher pay on student performance much like the ProComp program in Denver Public Schools.*

## Grantee Spotlight: School of Excellence in Education, Teachers and Principals Awarded for Student Achievement

The School of Excellence in Education (SEE) is a charter Local Education Agency (LEA) in San Antonio, Texas. Accredited by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), SEE opened in 1998 and serves approximately 2,500 students on eight open-enrollment campuses. The schools include one pre-kindergarten, four elementary schools, one middle school, and two high schools. SEE schools with a free or reduced-price lunch participation rate of more than 30 percent are eligible to participate in the Teacher and Principals Awarded for Student Achievement (TAPASA) program.

TAPASA is a performance-based incentive program designed to increase student achievement on a variety of measures. SEE developed an incentive menu that includes multiple measures of teacher and principal performance including student achievement gains, multiple evaluations of

teacher and principal performance, additional duties taken on by teachers, as well as recruitment and retention incentives. Student achievement is measured based on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), which is a series of benchmark tests based on the Texas state curriculum, and end-of-course tests. The TAPASA incentive structure is based on a variety of components broken out into two sets of criteria: the main menu and the secondary menu. TAPASA also provides teachers with additional professional development by adding three workdays to the science and mathematics teachers' contracts for training time on content-specific instructional strategies and for vertical collaboration time across levels.

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

SEE is a high-need urban LEA and faces many of the same challenges as other urban districts. Although the numbers vary at each school, on average, 86 percent of SEE students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch programs. Furthermore, the district largely consists of minority students: 53 percent of the students are Hispanic; 40 percent are African American; less than 1 percent are Native American or Asian; and 4 percent are white (non-Hispanic). While academic achievement in SEE schools is fairly stable—during the 2005–06 school year all of the SEE campuses met TEA requirements and had an “Academically Acceptable” rating—there is still more room for improvement. Recruitment and retention of teachers is also a challenge for SEE schools. Teacher salaries in SEE schools are lower than in neighboring districts. This leads to difficulty in attracting new teachers to SEE schools as well as a high rate of attrition among teachers who obtain certification while working in the district. Fifty percent of these teachers transfer to another district for a 32 percent salary increase. Through the TAPASA program, successful teachers are able to increase their salaries by as much as 35 percent.

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

The TAPASA program strives to increase student achievement through a performance-based system that rewards teachers for their effectiveness in the classroom and principals for leadership success. The four main objectives of the project are to:

- Establish a system that provides teachers and principals serving high-need schools with differentiated levels of compensation, based primarily on student achievement gains at the school and classroom level.
- Develop strategies to have 100 percent of math and science classes instructed by highly qualified teachers, 100 percent of English as a Second Language and special education teaching positions instructed by fully certified teachers, and to have a voluntary teacher turnover rate of less than 95 percent by the end of the TIF grant.
- Provide teachers with continuous support and feedback through classroom observations and walkthroughs, both formal and informal, that occur at least three times in a nine-week grading period, as well as four formative and one summative evaluation at the end of the academic year.
- Create a student-teacher/adult mentoring program for all students who are deficient in at least one subject area and teacher-teacher mentor program for all new teachers.

- Increase the number of teachers, principals, vice-principals, and assistant principals whose students reach a “Recognized” or “Exemplary” level of performance based on student assessment or faculty evaluation results.

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

Teachers and principals are eligible for incentives between \$500 and \$9,000 on the main menu:

- All school personnel, based on schoolwide student achievement gains
- Teachers, based on classroom student achievement gains
- Teachers, based on student achievement gains for targeted subgroups of students
- Recruitment and retention of highly qualified mathematics and science teachers

The secondary menu provides teachers and principals the following opportunities to earn up to \$11,000 in additional incentives for:

#### *Teachers*

- Mentor teacher who leads other teachers in creating a supportive environment for student achievement.
- Mentor teacher who works with students to foster a positive and nurturing environment for student success.
- Provide enrichment activities for students, such as special projects, tutoring, and University Interscholastic League competitions.
- Receive high marks on principal and team evaluations.

#### *Principals*

- Students meet campus achievement goals.
- Follow evaluation schedule created by the assistant superintendent for academics to complete teacher observations and evaluations.
- Receive high scores on Baldrige criteria from outside evaluators.
- Earn high ratings from teachers and parents.

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

- Teachers earned an average of \$2,070 in incentives during the first year of the grant. Further, the maximum amount earned was \$10,150.
- The TAPASA oversight committee has provided school-based guidance on a regular basis to each SEE campus.
- 100 percent of teachers and principals participated in professional development to understand the TAPASA program during the first and second year of the grant.

- During the past year, 92 percent of students in need received mentoring services, a significantly higher rate than the previous year.
- 100 percent of new teachers had a mentoring during the first and second year of the grant.
- In Spring 2008, SEE was awarded the District Awards for Teaching Excellence (DATE) from the TEA and the AP grant from the Department of Education. Both awards have increased the amount of incentives that successful teachers can earn under TAPASA. In addition, SEE was awarded the Beginning Teacher Inductions and Mentoring Program grant through the TEA to implement a new teacher mentoring program. The additional funding has provided a foundation for SEE to reach new levels of achievement.

For more information, please see the following resources:

- The TAPASA website at [http://www.excellence-sa.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=60418&type=d&rn=3380967](http://www.excellence-sa.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=60418&type=d&rn=3380967)
- CECR National Map profile at [http://cecr.ed.gov/initiatives/maps/pdfs/CECR\\_TX\\_SanAntonio.pdf](http://cecr.ed.gov/initiatives/maps/pdfs/CECR_TX_SanAntonio.pdf)
- The TIF grantee profile on the CECR website at [http://cecr.ed.gov/initiatives/profiles/pdfs/School\\_of\\_Excellence.pdf](http://cecr.ed.gov/initiatives/profiles/pdfs/School_of_Excellence.pdf).

## 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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