



NEWSBREAK

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What's New?

TIF Grantee Summary Tool

Are you interested in learning more about the compensation reform programs funded by the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF)? Would you like to find out which programs have characteristics comparable to yours?

The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) created a searchable database on its website that allows users to find TIF programs that meet certain specifications. The TIF Grantee Summary Tool is available at <http://cecr.ed.gov/initiatives/grantees/granteeSummary.cfm>.

The Grantee Summary Tool is searchable by a variety of descriptors including the following:

- Grantee type
- State
- Locality
- Number of students affected
- Number of teachers eligible
- Student demographics
- Percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch affected
- Number of schools participating

TIF grantees self-reported the information used to create the tool. CECR will update information regularly, based on changes in programs. Staff will complete the first update to the data during the next few months.

Hot Off the Press

Merit Pay for Teachers Will Be in Proposed Alabama Education Budget Next Year, Gov. Riley says—*The Birmingham News*. November 2, 2008

<http://www.al.com/news/birminghamnews/metro.ssf?/base/news/1225617328132400.xml&coll=2>

Alabama Governor Bob Riley will incorporate \$6 million into the education budget for the 2008–09 school year in an attempt to institute a merit pay compensation program for teachers willing to teach in hard-to-staff schools. Teachers must apply through a competitive grant process, and only districts with 50 percent or more of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch will be eligible to participate.

OPS Considers a Pay-for-Performance System—*Omaha World-Herald*. November 1, 2008

http://www.omaha.com/index.php?u_page=2798&u_sid=10474990

Omaha Public Schools is considering the implementation of a pay-for-performance initiative designed to improve student achievement and reward teachers for their contributions. Funds for the program would come from philanthropists and business leaders in Omaha.

66 Pittsburgh Schools Principals Getting Bonuses—*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. October 16, 2008

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08290/920290-298.stm>

Pittsburgh Public Schools awarded bonuses, based on student achievement and other performance measures, to 66 principals in the district. Data collected during the 2007–08 school year served as the basis for the bonuses, which ranged from \$11,170 to \$1,830.

Charters Win \$17.6 Million Grant—*The Times-Picayune*. September 24, 2008

<http://www.nola.com/timespic/stories/index.ssf?/base//library-156/122223367588730.xml&coll=1>

The Algiers Charter Schools Association (ACSA) secured a \$17.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to implement the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) into its schools. The ACSA institution of the TAP program will affect approximately 200 educators who serve more than 5,300 students.

Grantee Spotlight: Cumberland County Schools Teacher Incentive Fund

The Cumberland County Schools Teacher Incentive Fund (CCS TIF) program serves the fourth largest school district in North Carolina. The program provides funding for a five-school, differentiated-compensation pilot program. The CCS TIF grant provides awards to teachers, assistant principals, and principals, based on schoolwide and individual teacher gains on standardized tests, participation in professional learning communities and individual professional development, additional leadership roles and responsibilities, and multiple evaluations each year.

The district has implemented CCS TIF in five schools, selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- The school serves high-poverty populations.
- The school has low rates of academic achievement.
- The school has a high teacher-turnover rate.
- The school has a high number of teachers with emergency or provisional licenses.
- The school principal demonstrated support for the TIF program.
- Opportunities exist for growth in student achievement.
- Significant achievement gaps are apparent at the school.

The CCS TIF program creates professional learning communities at each site. All teachers receive an assignment to serve on a professional learning community team. The teams meet biweekly, and their design comes about through a collaborative process that allows each school to develop a procedure that meets its distinctive needs. In addition, all teachers and principals complete an individualized professional growth plan. An evaluation team will review teachers' plans, and the superintendent will review principals' plans—at least four times each year for both groups. A full-time facilitator at each school coordinates professional learning community team meetings, classroom observations, and other professional development activities. In August 2007, each school hosted an initial awareness session.

The CCS TIF program also provides professional development for teachers, principals, and assistant principals. To kick off the plan, each school held a two-day summer institute in August 2007, during which each teacher participated in 16 hours of training on three topics: review of the TIF accountability criteria, data analysis, and professional learning community training. The TIF professional development plan offers a variety of activities, including the following:

- TIF introduction
- Review of TIF accountability criteria
- Data analysis using DataTrak
- Professional learning communities
- Professional learning community training for facilitators
- Professional learning community online coaching—follow-up visits required
- Professional learning community teams
- Promoting literacy for students in poverty
- Cognitive coaching
- Cross-curricular literacy integration
- Differentiated instruction
- Best practices

- Quality tools for the classroom
- Active engagement in the classroom
- Mentor training
- National Board training

What need is the project trying to address?

Cumberland is the largest county in North Carolina with a high-poverty designation. The median income is more than \$5,000 below the national median and \$1,500 below the state average. The district serves approximately 54,000 students in Grades PK–12. In 2003, officials estimated that 20 percent of these students lived in poverty, 53 percent were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and 62 percent were minority. Local military bases dominate the economy but do not proportionately add to the tax base that funds schools. In addition to the demographic factors, the CCS district did not make adequate yearly progress. The district is in its first year of Title I District Improvement status under the No Child Left Behind Act.

What are the goals of the project?

The CCS TIF program will pursue two main goals to effect change in student achievement. First, the CCS TIF program aims to improve student achievement in high-needs schools by increasing educator effectiveness through the creation of professional learning communities. The communities will increase professional development activities and establish model classrooms to demonstrate effective instructional methods. The CCS district hopes that the professional learning community will increase the number of teachers, principals, and assistant principals establishing and meeting professional growth goals and that teachers will benefit from an increased number of opportunities to learn about best practices.

Second, the CCS TIF program will implement a sustainable differentiated compensation system to recruit and retain high-quality teachers in high-needs schools. Differential compensation will be coupled with increased capacity to conduct comprehensive personnel evaluations. CCS hopes the differentiated compensation structure will increase teachers' understanding and use of data-driven instruction. In addition, the program will increase the capacity of CCS and of the individual schools to conduct comprehensive personnel evaluations multiple times each year.

How much are the incentives?

Teachers are eligible to receive incentives totaling a maximum of \$10,000. The following three levels of rewards are available for teachers:

- Level I payments are based on student performance (\$2,000–\$6,000).
- Level II payments focus on attainment of advanced credentials (\$500–\$2,000).
- Level III payments are designated for Model Classroom leaders (\$2,000).

Principals are eligible to receive a maximum of \$5,000, and two levels of reward are available for them, as follows:

- Level I payments are based on professional growth and leadership activities (\$1,000).
- Level II payments are based on achieving student growth targets (\$2,000 or \$4,000).

What are the recent highlights of the project?

The first year CCS TIF payouts took place on October 31, 2008. Nine principals and 104 teachers received an average payout of \$2,174.

CCS received more than \$3 million for incentive payments based on schoolwide growth, and it disbursed an additional \$300,000 for retention bonuses. The CCS TIF budget decreased reliance on federal TIF funds to meet the required decrease by Year 5. A TIF subcommittee will research and obtain matching funds. Based on current funding, the Disadvantaged Student Supplement Fund will be able to contribute a substantial amount of money.

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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