



NEWSBREAK

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What's New?

How the Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) Can Help: CECR Resources in Action

What if the state legislature passed a bill requiring all district alternative compensation programs to include teacher evaluation measures as 50 percent of a teacher's incentive? What resources offer ideas for restructuring such programs? How have other districts or states addressed this issue?

The following examples illustrate how CECR resources can help districts create and implement a plan:

- CECR Online Library (<http://cecr.ed.gov/library/>)

This resource allows users to search by educator compensation issue area to find articles on

measuring teachers' performance using teacher evaluations. The articles in the library include a research base for using teacher evaluations as part of an alternative compensation program as well as examples of how other districts implement teacher evaluations as a basis for determining financial incentives.

- *Observations of Teachers' Classroom Performance* (<http://cecr.ed.gov/guides/CECRTeacherObservationModel.pdf>)

This document provides a review of the research on applying observation models.

In addition to designing and/or implementing teacher evaluation as a measure of an alternative compensation program, perhaps the district also decides to raise awareness about the different components of educator compensation reform, including teacher evaluations, among education stakeholders in the district (e.g., teachers union, parents, and community members). The following CECR resources include examples and strategies for communicating with education stakeholders about alternative compensation:

- *Stakeholder Engagement and Communication* <http://cecr.ed.gov/guides/CECRStakeholderEngagement.pdf>

This document includes examples of activities to include in a communication plan.

Hot Off the Press

Board Mulls Tying Salaries to Success—*The Augusta Chronicle*, September 28, 2008
http://chronicle.augusta.com/stories/092808/met_477468.shtml

Richmond County is considering implementing a performance-based compensation initiative for teachers and principals. The initiative, which will provide schoolwide incentives, has the support of the Professional Association of Georgia Educators, Georgia's largest group of educators.

Ore. Measure Seeks Merit-Based Pay for Teachers—*KGW.com*, September 28, 2008
<http://www.kgw.com/sharedcontent/APStories/stories/D93FU8RG3.html>

Oregon voters will have another opportunity to vote on a performance-pay plan aimed at rewarding teachers who increase student achievement. Voters rejected a merit-pay program initiative for Oregon educators in 2000.

Pawlenty Revives Effort for Teacher Incentives—*Star Tribune*, September 23, 2008
<http://www.startribune.com/politics/state/29603189.html>

Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty proposes to enhance the current state alternative compensation program by connecting teacher pay to improved student performance. The proposal also includes a recruitment incentive for midcareer professionals who are qualified to teach mathematics, science, or a recently introduced remedial program for eighth-grade students. Opponents of the program claim that there is insufficient funding to implement it.

City to Give \$14.2 Million in Bonuses to Teachers at Schools With Improved Report Cards—*The New York Times*, September 19, 2008
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/19/education/19bonus.html?_r=2&oref=slogin&pagewanted=print&oref=slogin

More than half of New York City's high-poverty schools will receive bonuses based on student performance on the state report card. New York City Chancellor Joel Klein and the city's teachers union successfully brokered the performance-pay program, which will distribute a total of \$14.2 million.

Grantee Spotlight: Edward W. Brooke Charter School Teacher Excellence Incentive Project

The Edward W. Brooke Charter School (EWBCS) is a public charter school in Boston, Massachusetts that serves 360 students in Grades K–2 and 5–8. The school plans to expand and become an inclusive K–8 system in 2009. To ensure student success via the recruitment and retention of quality teachers, EWBCS developed the Teacher Excellence Incentive Project, which does the following:

- Creates a differentiated compensation system for teachers and principals based on student achievement growth

- Provides opportunities for teachers to advance their careers through leadership incentives
- Offers ongoing and comprehensive professional development that encourages teachers to share best practices

The differentiated compensation system measures both schoolwide and individual classroom student achievement to determine teacher incentives. The program determines principal incentives solely by measuring schoolwide student achievement gains. EWBCS uses the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) as a measure of elementary student achievement and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) for students in the middle grades. EWBCS also offers leadership and career-advancement incentives to teachers and principals who commit themselves to growing professionally. Teachers may also earn a bonus for teaching in targeted hard-to-staff subject areas: mathematics, science, and special education.

Besides providing teacher incentives for student achievement, the program offers weekly professional development sessions in an effort to improve teachers' ability to plan and teach specific academic content. The sessions also allow participants to network and learn from lead teachers, literacy and mathematics specialists, and other teachers who have been successful in raising student achievement. The professional development also includes two full-day sessions throughout the year, during which teachers have the opportunity to observe successful classrooms across the state.

What need is the project trying to address?

Many challenges affect the EWBCS students and teaching force. Although the average retention rate for teachers is 85 percent, the school faces significant attrition of mathematics, science, and special education teachers. The school has a high-needs urban population. The students at EWBCS come from Boston's poorest neighborhoods, and 67 percent receive free or reduced-price lunch. In addition, 97 percent are minority students. Furthermore, EWBCS faces challenges in student achievement. Incoming students perform significantly below grade level or low relative to their grade cohort statewide. The average fifth-grade student at the school performs 1.1 years below grade level in mathematics and reading. Students in Kindergarten and Grade 1 perform significantly lower than the national average, in the lowest third in reading and mathematics. Finally, one in five students at EWBCS requires special education services for individualized learning needs.

What are the goals of the project?

The EWBCS Teacher Excellence Incentive Project strives to raise student achievement and bring student performance on par with the highest performing public schools in the state. In addition, the program aims to achieve the following:

- Raise teacher retention rates.
- Recruit additional high-quality teachers.
- Create clear and consistent performance-based guidelines that link incentives to student achievement gains and teacher performance.

How much are the incentives?

Teachers. Elementary and middle school teachers are eligible to receive a bonus of up to \$5,000 from evaluations of the schoolwide student achievement component and the individual classroom achievement component. Middle school teachers are also eligible to receive a bonus for each unused sick or personal day. In addition, all teachers are eligible for a bonus of up to \$3,000 for teaching in a high-needs subject area, defined for EWBCS as mathematics, science, and special education, and for teachers who take on additional leadership roles, such as coordinating and leading professional development sessions.

Principals. The maximum bonus for elementary school principals is \$10,000, and it is based on schoolwide student achievement gains on the DRA. Middle school principals can earn up to \$5,400 for schoolwide student achievement on the MCAS.

What are the recent highlights of the project?

EWBCS has made progress in implementing the professional development component of the TIF grant. The program is centered on weekly sessions every Wednesday afternoon for three hours. While the teachers are in these sessions, students are dismissed early. During the first hour, teachers view a colleague's teaching video and critique the lesson in small discussion groups. The video analysis session is followed by two hour-long sessions focused on interim assessment analysis, unit planning, and lesson study.

The second round of student achievement base incentives was distributed in October. EWBCS students made dramatic achievement gains in 2007–08, thereby boosting the average bonus payout for both the schoolwide student achievement and teacher-specific student achievement components of these bonuses.

- EWBCS elementary students (Grades K–2) made an average of more than 1.4 years of reading progress as measured by the DRA-2, with 94 percent of all students reading at grade level or higher by year-end.
- EWBCS middle school students (Grades 5–8) achieved at a high level on the spring 2008 state-administered MCAS tests, significantly outscoring the district on every test and at every grade level. EWBCS Grade 6 students were the highest ranking cohort in the city of Boston on both the reading and mathematics tests. EWBCS Grade 7 students were the highest ranking cohort among all “non-exam” schools in the city of Boston on the mathematics test and the second ranking school in the city of Boston on the ELA test.

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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