

What's New?

Annual Teacher Incentive Fund Grantee Meeting

Representatives from the three Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) cohorts gathered in Washington, D.C., on August 23–24, 2011. The TIF annual meetings invite representatives from current TIF grants to connect with other TIF programs, content experts, and technical assistance providers. TIF grantees also have an opportunity to meet with U.S. Department of Education staff to discuss technical assistance concerns. Although this year's annual meeting represented the first, and only, meeting of TIF Cohort 1–3 grantees, this also was the final national meeting for Cohorts 1 and 2.

The conference opened with a session on the “Future of the Teacher Incentive Fund Program,” which highlighted ideas for the continued role of the U.S. Department of Education in the performance-based compensation world. The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) and the TIF Technical Assistance Center also provided two days of plenary and concurrent sessions with content area and technical assistance experts. During the two days, grantees explored issues related to the following topic areas:

- Human Capital Management
- Principal Evaluation Systems
- Communicating Your Project to Stakeholders
- Building and Sustaining Union Support
- Teacher Observations: Development and Linkages to Professional Development
- Inter-Rater Reliability
- Redesigning Salary Schedules

The conference closed with topical breakout sessions for the different grantee cohorts. Cohorts 1 and 2 met for a discussion on Policy and Program Studies Service (PPSS) evaluations. Cohort 3 grantees met and discussed setting project targets for performance measurement. Cohort 3 grantees also had extended opportunities to meet with U.S. Department of Education program monitors and technical assistance providers to discuss needs and questions specific to individual programs. CECR staff plan to post the materials online shortly.

For information about the TIF community of practice, visit <https://www.tifcommunity.org/>.

New Design for the CECR Website

The Center for Educator Compensation Reform recently redesigned its website to streamline the display of information and resources for users. Information is displayed in the following four categories:

- **New to Performance-Based Compensation:** Includes information for non-TIF districts and states interested in performance-based compensation, particularly information and resources on first steps toward, as well as alignment with, the six key priority areas identified by the U.S. Department of Education.
- **Development and Implementation:** Includes CECR-developed tools and resources for the six key areas of focus.
- **National Perspective:** Includes resources such as the national map, online library, and an archive of the *CECR NewsBreak*.
- **TIF Grantees:** Includes profiles of the grantees and other information specific to TIF.

For a look at the redesigned CECR website, visit <http://cecr.ed.gov/>.

In This Issue

What's New?	1
Hot Off the Press	2
Grantee Spotlight	3
<i>This month's feature article highlights the Mastery Charter Schools network.</i>	
Contact Us	5

Hot Off the Press

State Teachers Union Sues to Block Merit

Pay—*Orlando Sentinel*. September 14, 2011.

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/features/education/fl-teachers-union-sues-over-merit-pay-20110914,0,1677328.story>

Florida's teachers union filed a lawsuit against the state in opposition to the new performance-based compensation legislation. The legislation calls for a system that links teacher effectiveness to student standardized test scores. The results of teacher evaluations would determine teacher salaries and district hiring decisions, including the elimination of long-term job protection for teachers. The union argues that the law violates public employee rights to collective bargaining.

Teachers Are Put to the Test—*Wall Street*

Journal. September 13, 2011.

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903895904576544523666669018.html?mod=googlenews_wsj

Several states and districts use, or plan to use, value-added scores as a factor in determining teacher effectiveness. Rob Meyer, director of the Value-Added Research Center at the University of Wisconsin, comments on the trends among both Race to the Top and non-Race to the Top states on the use of value-added models to measure teacher effectiveness. Although supporters of the methodology cite teacher accountability for student progress as a key reason to use value-added scores, opponents of value-added measurement cite the poor data available through standardized test scores and doubt the validity of the measurement.

New School Year, New Changes in Twin Falls Schools—*KMTV*. September 6, 2011.

<http://www.kmtv.com/news/local/New-school-year-new-changes-in-Twin-Falls-schools-129344983.html>

A new performance-based compensation program is starting in Twin Falls, Idaho, this school year. Teacher compensation will link to student proficiency and growth data.

Douglas County School Board Sends Building, Pay Plans to Voters—*Denver Post*.

September 1, 2011.

http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_18793555

The Douglas County School Board voted to put two education measures on the ballot in November, one of which would fund performance-based compensation in Douglas County schools. An increase in a mill levy to fund performance-based compensation would raise \$20 million for implementation of the program and performance awards.

Grantee Spotlight

Mastery Charter Schools

The Mastery Charter Schools (MCS) network currently pays all teachers and administrators using a performance-based compensation system (PBCS). The MCS Teacher Incentive Fund grant expands the current system from four schools to 15 new schools for a net total of 19 charter schools by fall 2014. The charter school network operates in newly formed charter schools as well as in former failing schools in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Camden, New Jersey. Under PBCS, MCS uses multiple measures to evaluate teacher and administrator performance.

Primary Components of the Program

MCS determines teacher compensation using multiple measures of effectiveness, including the following:

- Student achievement (45 percent)
- Mastery Values (standards for teachers in MCS schools), leadership contributions, and responsibilities (15 percent)
- Classroom observations (40 percent)

The MCS network established the Mastery Value-Added System (MVAS) to enable the use of student growth data in 100 percent of evaluations. Teachers receive compensation based on classroom student growth levels. Trained evaluators observe teachers between 10–11 times per year, including midyear and end-of-year formal evaluations. All observations include 360-degree feedback sessions with the teachers after observations are completed.

MCS evaluates administrators using the following measures:

- Management standards (40 percent)
- Mastery Values (standards for leaders in MCS schools) and contributions (15 percent)
- Student outcomes (45 percent)

Administrators receive compensation based on schoolwide student growth as well as overall student achievement on statewide assessments, benchmarks, and other factors.

Professional development in MCS aligns with instructional standards, which also align with student achievement results. In addition to the 130 hours of content-based professional development that teachers receive, MCS provides professional development to ensure that teachers understand how to use MVAS to improve instructional practice. MCS plans to link a school's instructional needs to the data available through the teacher observation and feedback system.

Program Goals

The MCS program objectives are as follows:

- Raise student achievement.
- Increase teacher and principal retention and promotion.
- Improve related data systems.

In addition, MCS established specific student achievement benchmarks. Each year, the MCS network expects schools to lessen achievement gaps in reading and mathematics by 25 percent. MCS administration expects schools to show a 10 percent gain in effectiveness each year as well as 90 percent annual retention of teachers and leaders.

System Incentives

All teachers and administrators in MCS schools receive performance-based compensation. MCS teachers fall into one of four teacher categories. Teachers in each category receive a salary within a specific range, based on their performance against the measures of effectiveness detailed previously.

Teacher Category	Salary Range
Associate	\$44,750 to \$52,250
Senior Associate	\$52,500 to \$60,500
Advanced	\$60,750 to \$67,000
Master	\$67,250 to \$74,500

The MCS network provides the following four possible PBCS outcomes each year:

- Promotion to the next teacher category with incentive differential
- Incentive raise within existing teacher category
- Cost-of-living adjustment
- Nonrenewal of contract

A teacher with outstanding performance can earn up to four times the salary of colleagues with mediocre results or up to 14 percent more than teachers within the same status level.

Recent Highlights of the Program

To implement the TIF grant, MCS provides teachers and other staff with access to the following resources:

- Meetings between faculty representatives and central office staff to discuss PBCS
- Instructional coaches and master teachers who support teachers in improving practice and assist with observations
- Training on evaluations and how a teacher's instructional behavior determines pay
- MVAS, which enables the school to evaluate the pace of student's learning and allows teachers to track students' real growth over time
- A twice-yearly anonymous, online survey to obtain teacher input and feedback

For more information about the MCS network, visit <http://www.masterycharter.org>.

Contact Us



Center for
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The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) was awarded to Westat — in partnership with Learning Point Associates, an affiliate of American Institutes for Research; 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.

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