



NEWSBREAK

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What's New?

Center for Educator Compensation Reform Launches New Website

The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) recently launched a new, comprehensive website that houses relevant information, timely resources, and useful tools at <http://www.cecr.ed.gov>.

The website offers another avenue for CECR to provide support to the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant program as well as to raise national awareness of alternative strategies for educator compensation reform. In addition, the website features information, resources, and tools exclusively dedicated to educator compensation reform policies and programs.

The website provides a checklist of necessary and relevant information for guiding the design, implementation, and ongoing management of educator compensation reform programs; a searchable database of publications, including scientific and rigorous research studies and policy and issue papers that

provide users with easy access to relevant information; and an online collection of innovative strategies based on practice, which allows users to read about novel implementation approaches.

Current and archived editions of the CECR *Newsbreak*, along with links to relevant resources and organizations engaged in educator compensation reform-related initiatives, are available on the website. Staff will update the website frequently to provide stakeholders with access to additional tools, resources, and relevant information, so users are encouraged to visit it regularly.

Hot Off the Press

U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor Releases Miller-McKeon NCLB Discussion Draft—*U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor* website (retrieved September 24, 2007)

<http://edlabor.house.gov/>

Policymakers include pay-for-performance language in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act reauthorization draft bill. The U.S. House of Representatives has posted both a summary and the draft bill online.

Houston Board OKs Revamped Performance-Pay Plan—*Education Week*, September 19, 2007

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/09/19/04houston.h27.html>

School board approves retooled performance-pay program that will offer teachers up to \$7,300 annually for individual and group success in improving student achievement on state assessments.

St. Lucie County Teachers Receive Bonuses—*Florida's Treasure Coast and Palm Beaches Press-Journal*, September 9, 2007

<http://www.tcpalm.com/news/2007/sep/09/30st-lucie-county-teachers-receive-bonuses/>

More than 800 district teachers received bonuses averaging \$2,100 for high student achievement on state assessments.

Teachers' Pay Plan Revised—*St. Petersburg Times*, September 1, 2007

http://www.sptimes.com/2007/09/01/Pasco/Teachers_pay_plan_re.shtml

District considers a performance pay plan that would give teachers the choice of individual or group performance evaluation.

Legislators Consider Performance Pay for Teachers, School Personnel—*The Norman Transcript*, August 23, 2007

http://www.normantranscript.com/localnews/local_story_235010422.html

Representatives of the University of Arkansas' Department of Education Reform and Oklahoma legislators debate the prospect of a state merit pay program during the Arkansas House Education Committee meeting.

Grantee Spotlight: The Chicago REAL Program

The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Recognizing Excellence in Academic Leadership (REAL) program is a collaborative effort between CPS, the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET), and the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP). The REAL program offers financial incentives to principals and teachers through the TAP model. TAP uses an aligned system of

compensation, performance evaluations, professional development, and opportunities for multiple career paths. The program began at the start of the 2007–08 school year with a 20-school pilot (10 schools are implementing the program this year, while the remaining 10 serve as a control group). The original control group will begin the program in the 2008–09 school year. The grantees will select an additional 20 schools for each of the 2009–10 and 2010–11 school years. At least 75 percent of a school's students must receive free or reduced-price lunch, and at least 75 percent of the faculty must approve the program, in order for the school to be eligible to participate.

What need is the project trying to address?

According to 2004–05 CPS data, approximately 50 percent of elementary students performed in the bottom categories on state assessments. High school students scored in the bottom categories for reading (59 percent) and mathematics (73 percent). CPS also has a growing population of English language learners and students with special needs. The most low-performing schools in CPS have low rates of teacher attraction and retention. In order to increase these rates, REAL offers rewards to high-quality teachers and principals who accept assignments at low-performing schools. The REAL program also is intended to ensure that high-quality teachers and principals are equitably distributed across low-performing schools.

What are the goals of the project?

The primary goal of the REAL program is to improve student achievement by improving teacher and principal effectiveness in low-performing schools. To meet this goal, the REAL program aims to attract, retain, and reward high-quality teachers and principals. The specific goals of the REAL program are to successfully implement TAP in 40 schools, to decrease teacher turnover significantly by the third year of the program, and to demonstrate gains in student achievement using value-added measures.

How much are the incentives?

In order to meet the program goals, REAL uses TAP to offer incentives to teachers for their demonstration of excellent teaching skills, participation in professional development, assumption of additional professional responsibilities, and contribution to student learning. REAL also offers principals incentives based on schoolwide value-added gains in student achievement and the effectiveness of TAP implementation. The model will initially focus on value-added indicators at the school level, using individual student achievement data to measure academic gain over a specific period of time.

Fifty percent of teacher incentives are linked to student performance on state assessments. The other 50 percent is linked to evaluation of teacher performance. Within the student performance-based incentives, 40 percent is dedicated to schoolwide value-added gains, and 60 percent is based on individual classroom value-added gains. For teachers who do not teach tested subjects, the entire amount of their award is based on schoolwide value-added gains. The principal incentives will be based on the schoolwide achievement gains and the quality of program implementation, as measured by principal performance evaluations. In Year 1, 75 percent of

award distribution is based on program implementation and 25 percent is based on schoolwide achievement gains. In Year 2, award distribution is based on an even split between the two—50 percent for program implementation and 50 percent for schoolwide achievement gains. In Year 3, award distribution is based on 25 percent program implementation and 75 percent student achievement gains.

The REAL program also offers incentives to teachers who take leadership positions in their schools. Mentor teachers in REAL schools will receive a bonus of \$7,000 for providing day-to-day coaching and mentoring services. They will also collaborate to construct benchmark lessons, team-teach, and demonstrate instructional skills to the teachers under their supervision. Master teachers will share significant leadership responsibilities with the principal and oversee professional development and support of the career and mentor teachers. Master teachers will receive a bonus of \$15,000 for their additional roles and responsibilities.

What are the strengths of the project?

The REAL program implementation is supported by two strong structures. The Wisconsin Center for Education Research developed REAL's evaluation plan, which includes a value-added model. The evaluation plan relies on the extensive data management capabilities of CPS to provide assessment data for students in Grades 3–8 in math and reading, as well as student background, teacher mobility, and teacher credential information. A strong funding base also benefits the REAL initiative. In addition to federal funding, REAL receives substantial external funding support, including \$2.6 million from the Broad Foundation, \$1.2 million from the Joyce Foundation, and \$400,000 from the Chicago Public Education Fund.

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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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