

## PROJECT EXCELL!



Tucson, Arizona



Professional Development



Leadership



Student Achievement

### **Inclusion of Special Education Teachers in Project EXCELL!**

All special education teachers in target schools are eligible for participation in Project EXCELL!. Their student achievement awards are based on their classroom assessment, standardized assessment results of their students (if the students are required to take these tests) and whole school results. Teachers whose students do not take standardized measures are given an award based on whole school results and their classroom assessment. A value-added method is used for analysis of student achievement data. In addition, each teacher must participate in the Leadership and Professional Development components of the project. Some special education teachers in hard to fill positions receive an additional retention stipend over and above these awards.

### **Performance Awards for Special Education Teachers**

Awards for special education teachers are the same as regular education teachers. The total potential award per year is \$10,000 without a retention stipend (Student Achievement: \$5000, Leadership: \$2500, Professional Development: \$2500).

### **Inclusion of Other Professional Staff**

Speech and language teachers, occupational therapists and physical therapists are eligible for awards. The awards are the same because they address learning objectives, on IEPs, like other teachers.

### **Classroom Assessment and Special Education Teachers**

A classroom assessment is a required component for a student achievement award. This assessment is selected by the teacher and can be commercially produced, produced by the grade level or department, or teacher created. The assessment is evaluated against quality indicators by trained readers.

### **Support and Training for Special Education Teachers**

Support for writing classroom assessments is provided by Instructional Coaches and Instructional Support Leaders. The Student Services Department provides regular training on setting appropriate, measurable goals for student achievement for special education students. Special education teachers also attend training on assessment with regular education teachers.

### **Mid-Course Adjustments**

Use of IEP goals as a portion of the award determination is currently under investigation. All data from standardized measures is scrutinized for any inconsistencies prior to making the awards for student achievement based on that assessment.

### **Lessons Learned**

All teachers were included from the beginning of our project which was a key ingredient to success. We included special education teachers and administrators in the initial discussions of the design of the project so that their perspective was taken into account.

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