

Guilford County Schools Mission Possible



The Guilford County Schools (GCS) Mission Possible (MP) plan was designed to recruit and retain highly qualified administrators and teachers at the most affected schools, increase student achievement, and reward teachers and administrators who work in participating schools that meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) and state goals. The program provides a financial recruitment/retention incentive based on school level and subject matter taught. Performance incentives are awarded based on value-added data.

Needs Assessment Results and General Information

GCS has more than 71,000 students and 10,000 employees in 120 schools, of which only 49 made AYP in 2004-05. GCS qualifies as a high-need local education authority based on the number of children who live in poverty (53 percent receive free/reduced-price lunch (FRPL), and 11,280 children between the ages of 5-17 live in poverty), as well as the percentage of teachers teaching with an emergency or provisional license (average of 4 percent elementary, 5 percent middle, 7 percent high school). The turnover rate was between 23-25 percent at all school levels. Fifty percent of principals have less than 3 years of experience; only 15 percent have more than 10 years. Of the schools participating in the expanded program, only one made AYP in 2004-05; all have FRPL percentages over 60 percent and comprise at least 70 percent minority students.

Background

GCS began using value-added data with William Sanders and the SAS Institute in 2000 and will use these data for the new MP program. Before the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant, GCS approved

and funded the implementation of MP for 20 schools in the 2006-07 school year. GCS currently differentiates the salaries of beginning teachers, special education teachers, and career and technical teachers. North Carolina already awards teachers and principals with bonuses of \$750 if students in their school show 1 year's growth and \$1,500 in excess of that.

Incentives

Incentives include professional development, recruitment and retention bonuses, and performance incentives. They are available to kindergarten through second-grade teachers; third- through eighth-grade teachers of math, language arts, or reading; high school math and English teachers; curriculum facilitators; and principals. Teachers will be eligible to receive a performance incentive based upon their value-added scores. Administrators will be eligible to receive a performance incentive based upon the school meeting AYP and standards established by North Carolina's ABCs of Public Education program. Potential retention/recruitment incentives for teachers and principals range from \$2,500-\$10,000. Performance-based incentives for teachers and principals range from \$2,500-\$5,000.

Location(s)	Guilford County, North Carolina
Award Date	November 2006
Duration	5 years
Partners	University of North Carolina System, Action Greensboro

Evaluation

As noted above, teachers and administrators will receive compensation based on value-added data, AYP, and state ABC standards. To evaluate the program's professional development, staff will participate in 360 degree feedback and skill-based training. GCS will contract with the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro to conduct the program evaluation. It will provide both formative and summative evaluations, measure outcomes, and help streamline the system of staff assessment.

Resources

Funds from TIF will support expanded programs, including incentive pay and professional development, for seven additional schools in 2007-08, stipends for teachers participating in MP professional development, a project director, and an outside evaluator. GCS supports the regular MP program (more than \$1.5 million), as well as significant professional development opportunities. After the grant period, GCS expects its board of education to continue its support of the program.

Data Systems

GCS has an existing database with value-added data calculated by SAS that teachers, principals, and administrators can access to review the value-added scores of individual teachers or schools. Data on individual students, schools, and the district can be accessed on the centralized eScholar database. GCS has completed most of the implementation of this warehouse, which includes student demographics, testing information, and other pertinent data. Detailed teacher information will be added.

Year 3 Activities

Mission Possible has just closed out its third year of recruiting and retaining effective faculty for Guilford County Schools. Mission Possible is retaining teachers in the district's hardest to staff schools. Some of the many program successes for this past school year include:

- Total attrition rate for Mission Possible Schools decreased from 32 percent in 2005-06 to 10 percent in 2009.
- Elementary school attrition rate decreased from 33 percent in 2005-06 to 9 percent in 2009.
- Middle school attrition rate decreased from 43 percent in 2005-06 to 16 percent in 2009.
- High school attrition rate decreased from 22 percent from 2006-07 to 8 percent in 2009.
- 23 percent of all eligible faculty received performance incentives in the 2008-09 school year.
- 51 percent of all eligible Algebra I teachers received performance incentives.
- 43 percent of all eligible Algebra II teachers received performance incentives.
- 38 percent of all eligible Geometry teachers received performance incentives.
- 38 percent of all eligible English I teachers received performance incentives.
- 96 percent of GCS faculty have completed 100 percent of all professional development opportunities.

Outlook for Year 4

Mission Possible faculty now total 639 distributed among 28 schools. Moving into the fourth year of the grant, Guilford County Schools is proud to have over 10,000 applications for teaching positions in the hiring pipeline. GCS has seen an increase in the number of certified and experienced teachers applying for our hardest to staff areas. Guilford County Schools' focus this year will be on working closely with the community to reform teacher compensation long-term. GCS started the year by hosting a forum, Measuring What Matters-Paying for Teacher Quality, which attracted over 125 local officials, teachers, principals, and community members. The forum featured Drs. Laine, Guthrie, and Schuermann, who spoke of teacher quality, effectiveness, and approaches to compensation.

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