

Audio Podcast Script

Sustainability

James Guthrie and Patrick Schuermann

Interviewer: Welcome to TIF TIPS, the Center for Educator Compensation Reform's informational pod cast series. I'm Courtney Rowland and I'm joined now by Patrick Schuermann from Vanderbilt University. Patrick is the director of Technical Assistance for CECR. Thank you for joining me.

Patrick: Happy to be here, Courtney.

Interviewer: Patrick, the overarching theme of the annual TIF conference is sustainability. Why is this topic so critical for TIF grantees right now?

Patrick: Well Courtney, the topic of sustainability is critical for a few key reasons. First, school resources have always been, and will always be, limited. As such, it is important for districts and schools to thoughtfully engage in dialogue about how to strategically invest existing resources to maximally impact the core goals of the district. A second key factor relates to the evolving economic climate. While in the past, schools and districts have been able to secure external funding for programs such as performance pay, those reservoirs of resources are becoming scarce. This external economic reality will necessarily influence internal district instructional decisions. This makes it imperative for school, district and state education leaders to reconsider how instructional and financial resources are deployed. This will require education leaders to consider changing such longstanding practices as the single salary schedule to a system that more closely links compensation to district goals. Additionally, school systems will need to consider the degree to which all programs are aligned to the core mission and needs of their students.

Interviewer: Tell us more about the idea of sustainability through alignment.

Patrick: Many performance pay programs have been implemented in isolation, and not as a component of the overall district operations. However, performance pay programs have a much greater likelihood of financial sustainability over the long term, when a few key factors are in place:

First, the performance pay is aligned to the most important aspirations of a school and district; second, the compensation program is incorporated as one key element of a strategic human capital development framework; and, third, when the programs' operation becomes incorporated into the core of a district's operations, there is increased likelihood of long-term sustainability.

Interviewer: Patrick, can you explain how a multi-layered approach to project implementation and management can help create a comprehensive performance pay system?

Patrick: School systems need to be clear about their mission and goals. They need to identify and help prioritize the strategies that will help them achieve those goals. And, then they need to align the district and school support structures, the key stakeholder groups, and their outside

organization partnerships. A systemic and strategic approach will address each component individually and collectively to create a comprehensive performance pay system.

Interviewer: What are some of the sustainability challenges that TIF grantees are facing right now?

Patrick: Well Courtney, there are many ways that sustainability is challenging TIF grantees right now. Some of these include such things as:

- How to maximally re-allocate existing resources, such as Title I and II Part A funds
- How to engage key stakeholders in the community (academic, policy, media and legislative) to garner ongoing support for performance pay programs
- How to approach grants and foundations
- How to utilize ARRA (Stimulus funds)
- How to maintain competitive overall compensation system in order to compete for quality teacher and leader candidates with other industries
- How to feasibly go to scale district wide with a pilot performance pay program
- How to collect evaluation data that would provide empirical validation of programs

Interviewer: I've been speaking with Patrick Schuermann, technical assistance director for CECR. More information about paying for and sustaining pay-for-performance programs is available on the CECR website. Please visit cecr.ed.gov to view the *Guide to Implementation* module on *Paying for and Sustaining a Performance-Based Compensation Program*. You can view the slides that Patrick presented in the Events section of the CECR website. This is Courtney Rowland with the Center for Educator Compensation Reform. Thanks for listening.