

National Charter School Resource Center EPIC - Chapter 1

PEGGIE: Welcome this is Peggie Garcia from the National Charter School Resource Center. Welcome to our March webinar, Identifying and Sharing Best Practices From High Performing Charter Schools. The National Charter School Resource Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and we're pleased for this particular webinar to cohost the webinar with the Center for Educator Compensation Reform. So, I will turn it over Ellen Cushing from the center in a moment. She'll give a brief introduction and then we'll turn over to the EPIC Charter team for our main presentation this afternoon.

So, before I do that let me give everyone a quick orientation to our webinar platform. On the left hand side of the platform there is a chat window. So, please go ahead and enter your questions at any time during the webinar and we'll sort of keep a running list and we'll ask all of the questions during the Q&A at the end of the webinar. You can listen to the audio portion either through your computer or over the phone. For this particular webinar today, we're strongly encouraging people to listen over your computers if you can. If you do have audio problems and you need to join by phone the conference number and the participant code are in the chat. We will be playing two short videos towards the end of the webinar and for those two short videos you'll have to be listening through your

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computer, and please remember to turn your computer volume up so that you'll be able to hear the videos.

Below the chat window is the file share window and there is a PDF there of the PowerPoint slides. So, if you did not get the reminder that I sent this morning you can go ahead and just click on EPIC slides PDF and then the save to my computer button and you can download those on your computer. So, you can print out the PowerPoint if you'd like to take notes right on it. There are a few participant notes underneath the PowerPoint slide. To ask a question again, please enter your question in the chat box to the left at any time during the webinar. You can use the full screen option on the top right to make the file bigger, and this also applies to the videos when we play it later. So, you can always use that full screen option if it's not big enough for you.

If you listen over your computer please note that your bandwidth will affect the quality of the audio. So, to hear the highest quality audio possibly please use a wired connection for your computer as opposed to wireless, close all applications other than Adobe that are running on your computer, and clear your browser's cache and cookies. Finally, the webinar is being recorded and an archive will be available about three business days after the webinar at the website that you see in the bottom

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on your screen.

So, I'd like to welcome everyone. I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Ellen Cushing now. Ellen Cushing is one of my colleagues at the American Institutes for Research. She is a research and policy analyst who assist states and districts as they develop teacher and leader evaluation systems that align to state and federal policies. She's also the lead for The Center for Educator Compensation Reform and I'm going to invite her to share a little bit about that center with you now. Welcome Ellen.

ELLEN CUSHING: Thank you Peggie and first I just want to say thank you to the National Charter School Center for this opportunity to share some information on CECR with all of you and to give an overview of the resources that the Center for Educator Compensation can provide. As Peggie just mentioned, my name is Ellen Cushing and I'm a research and policy analyst at the American Institute for Research, and we're going to start this part of the presentation by just giving a quick overview of the center or as we refer to it as CECR.

CECR is comprised of five organizations of WestEd, AIR, J. Koppich & Associates, the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and Synergy Enterprises. The contract was awarded in 2006 and there are two main objectives of our work. The first is to support

National Charter School Resource Center EPIC - Chapter 1 cohort one and two TIF grantees and the second is to raise national awareness on alternative compensation programs. In terms of how we provide the support for the TIF grantees this includes technical assistance, monitoring the implementation of their grant, and developing additional resources on our CECR website for both grantees and non-grantees to use. In this presentation we'll walk you through some of those free resources that CECR can provide you on our website.

The CECR website is located at www.cecr.ed.gov and this first slide gives you an overview of the homepage of CECR. It's divided into four main topic areas. The first is New to Performance Base Compensation. The second is Development and Implementation. The third is National Perspective and the fourth is TIF grantees and these four [inaudible - sound cuts out 00:05:08] through the implementation of the TIF grant.

In the middle of the page to the right of that picture we also have a section called What's New and this is where we highlight any new papers, presentations, newsletters, tools that CECR has produced. And under the What's New section there are a series of four boxes that correspond to those four sections that I had just mentioned and these boxes provide a quick overview of the information that you'll see in each of the four sections that I've mentioned.

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You click on the first section New to Performance Based Compensation, you'll see this page, and New to Performance Based Compensation provides a general overview of the information a school or district would need to implement a performance-based program. The resources on the right give you general background information and should be reviewed before considering moving ahead. This includes information such as, an implementation checklist, a guide to implementation, emerging issues papers, case summaries, research syntheses, annotated bibliographies, presentations, and harvesting papers. And the classic in the middle represents the six areas of focus, which are data quality and data systems, strategies to support the workforce, communication and stakeholder engagement, value added and other measures, program evaluation and sustainability. And it describes how all of these six areas of focus need to work together to develop and implement a performance based compensation successfully.

If you click on any one of these areas of focus you'll get to the next section, which is Development and Implementation. And again, these are the six areas of focus. So data quality and data systems really provides guidance and support on planning and implementing high quality data systems. Strategies to support the workforce offers information on educator

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evaluation systems, professional development and human
development strategies that can be used to increase student
learning. Communication and stakeholder engagement identifies
resources and supports for effective communication and this
communication is amongst teachers, administrators, unions,
parents, the community, and the media. Value added and other
measures share resources on the definition, design, and review
of value added models and other growth models that can be used.
Program evaluation highlights information on how to use
formative and summative assessments to evaluate and improve
performance based compensation programs. And, sustainability
shares information on the alignment and financial issues that
are often associated with sustaining a performance based
compensation system.

If you click on any one of these areas of focus you get an
overview of the kinds of information that's included under these
subsections. So, for instance in Strategies to Support the
Workforce we provide information called the overview materials,
which really link to those materials that were mentioned on the
new to performance based compensation tab. We also have
presentations that include videos, podcasts, slide presentations
from experts and people in the field that implementing
performance based compensation systems. We also have tools and

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products from other states and districts that might be useful
for someone. And finally, papers include relevant annotated
bibliographies, harvesting papers, and emerging issues reports.

In the third tab that I had mentioned called National
Perspectives it allows users to get a high-level overview of
performance based compensation systems. And the national map is
just one of those resources highlighted in this section. The
map is interactive and links to other profiles of educator
compensation reforms that are underway around the country. The
information provided in this map are not just limited to TIF
grantees, but instead includes all programs. And the states
that are highlighted indicate that we have either a state or a
district profile within that state.

If you click on Texas, for example you will see a list of
all of the profiles that have been developed for Texas or
districts within Texas and the profiles are marked in one of
three ways. The first is with a green circle, a T, or a T3.
And the green circle indicates that this is not a TIF grantee.
The T indicates that it's a TIF grantee that is part of cohort
one or two, and T3 indicates that it's a cohort three grantee.

If you click on just one of the profiles you'll see the
kinds of information that we include for every single one of
those profiles that was in the map. In this example for Aldine

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Independent School District gives you an idea. So, for each of the profiles divided into three main sections, a program overview, program information, and select articles and reports. The program overview synthesizes the program highlighted and gives basic information on how the program operates. The program information also links to any information that is specific to the program. For example, any communication material links to rubrics or overview material that would be useful for the reader to learn more about. And, the final section links to any news articles, evaluation reports, or papers that are related to the program. For TIF grantees we include one more section called Related CECR Resources and this section links profiles to any of the other sections of the website, including the case summaries, TIF profiles, or guides and chapters that are related to the profile.

Another resource available through CECR in the national perspective section is the online library. And this online library holds a collection of papers, reports, research articles on a variety of alternative compensation topics. And the library includes both research and non-research publications and every month CECR researchers read, and vet articles to add into that online library to ensure that the most recent articles are included. Users can search for articles based on the title,

National Charter School Resource Center EPIC - Chapter 1 author, organization, educator compensation issue area, which are all listed in this slide, the publication type, which include case summaries, to rigorous research, perspective pieces. It can also search by publication date and the geographical focus of the article.

And with this, I would just like to say that I've highlighted just a couple of the resources that CECR provides and the website really has a wealth of information for state's districts interested in performance based compensation and we encourage you to look through the website. If you have any questions feel free to email me. My information is provided on the slides, and also on the website we have a contact page that you can submit any questions that you have specific to performance based compensation programs. And with that, I can turn it back to you Peggy.

PEGGIE: Great, well Ellen thank you so much. I also understand that you have an upcoming webinar that will feature a member of the charter school community.

ELLEN CUSHING: That's true, yes. We have a webinar scheduled for the 29 and we will be featuring E. L. Haynes Charter School and the work that they've done with developing an aligned performance management system, which includes compensation, but also evaluation professional development and

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compensation.

PEG: Wonderful so, Amanda DeFrancisco just put in a link where you can go ahead and look for more information on that webinar and there's information about how to register. So, we encourage you to join that webinar as well. So, thank you Ellen. That was really very helpful and you provided a wealth of resources for the charter school community. So, now I'm going to briefly introduce Allison Jack and David Negrón from the EPIC National Charter School Consortium. Allison Jack is the Program Director of the Consortium at New Leaders. Previously, she worked in Chicago first at the Charter School Resource Center at Leadership for Quality Education, then in the Governor's Office, and finally in the Office of New Schools at Chicago Public Schools. Allison started her career in education as a Teach for America core member in Compton, California and then also taught on the South Side of Chicago. David Negrón is the Manager of the National Charter School Consortium at New Leaders. Previously, he worked at Rewarding Achievement, REACH where he co-managed advanced placement preparation sessions for approximately 4,000 students from 31 New York City high schools. Welcome Allison and David. I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to you.

ALLISON JACK: Great, thank you Peggie. Thank you to all

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of you for being here today. We're really appreciative of the opportunity to tell you about the work that we've been doing for the past five years with our TIF one grant. So, today we're going to tell you how we have identified high gain charter schools and documented their effective practices, and we'll also introduce you to the EPIC Knowledge System where all of these practices are housed. We're going to try to make it as interactive as possible with what is it, 60 -- 56 participants, but we'll have some good discussion over the chat and we're interested to hear what you think about what we're doing.

So, first I want to give you a little background on New Leaders. So, in 2006 our organization New Leaders, which was then called New Leaders for New Schools applied for three federal TIF grants, one for charters, which is the one we'll talk about today and we also have a TIF grant in DC and in Memphis. For those of you not familiar with New Leaders, our organization started in 2000 and our mission is to create successful schools by training future school leaders as well as collaborating with our partner school systems to ensure the conditions that are necessary for our principal to be successful. Since 2000 we've created nearly 800 school leaders in 12 urban locations across the country and we're impacting nearly a quarter of a million students a year.

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That's kind of who we are. So, New Leaders saw TIF as a way to recognize and reward educators in high gain schools, but more important for the organization was to really learn what these highly effective school leaders were doing to increase student achievement and really to inform our core programs, which is training principals. So, our five-year TIF grant, which sadly runs out at the end of September, has really allowed New Leaders to expand the number of schools from which we could learn. And, what we have learned is all on the EPIC knowledge system, which we'll tell you about.

So, the system has been live for almost four years. It is actually password protected right now. Grant partners and New Leader staff and graduates have access. As we near this end of our grant period we're talking with many potential partners and funders to continue this important work of documenting best practices. While we wish it could be open source and maybe at some point hopefully it will be, we're not at that point yet, but we are going to be able to offer everyone on the call one-time access and we'll have that password or that website at the end of the presentation. However, we are in conversations, as I said, and we're really not sure what EPIC is going to look like post TIF. But, for those of you who are interested in what you see today, we hope that you'll contact us and we will be

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figuring out ways for schools to gain access, as we figure out what it's going to look like. A lot of uncertainty there.

So, I want to just talk for a minute about how EPIC fits with New Leaders. So, New Leaders is a national leader in both research and in practice around the principal actions that derive student achievement gains. And, as I said, EPIC is really allowing New Leaders another source for learning about what this looks like. New Leaders also has an extensive RAND evaluation going on with our 11 cohorts of principals in schools right now. We also do a lot of internal evaluation and we've also created something called the UEF, the Urban Excellence Framework, which describes the leadership actions that we believe are critical for driving breakthrough student achievement gains. So, all of this feeds into how we develop our principals, how we develop our leadership development programs, which are programs that we offer for non-new leaders in our partner districts, and also it determines what recommendations we make to education policy and decision makers.

So, now I'm going to get very much into EPIC. So, EPIC, the Effective Practice Incentive Community does two things. We financially reward educators in high gain schools who share their effective practices with us, and mostly we have focused on leadership practices, since we are New Leaders. And, what we

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have captured on video is the context and the steps different schools and school leaders have really taken to tackle the challenges around data, coaching, supporting teachers, running meetings, building teams, leading adults, you know the five million things that a good principal has to be able to do. The goal is not to say that we're providing the silver bullet, because sadly we all know there isn't one in our business, but really sharing what has worked for one school so that as schools tackle that, and other principals tackle that problem they really have a place to go to see what other schools [inaudible - - sound cut out 00:18:42] 1991 [inaudible -- sound cut out 00:18:45] free from bureaucratic rules and mandates charters would become laboratories of innovation and share their practices so that all schools could learn from them and improve. And, while this hasn't happened, I mean depending on who you talk to, to the level it should, we think that EPIC has really stepped in the right direction in sharing those practices.

So, now we want to do a quick poll. We'd like to hear actually from the group. I know that we have some school leaders on and then we also have some other charter people, but if you are a school-based person we'd like to hear from you. How often do you share your school's successful practices with other schools and groups? I mean is the sharing happening? So,

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it's sometimes happening. Well, that's good to know. So, we think that our hypothesis is one of the reasons it's not happening more is really because there's not a vehicle for it, and so we hope that we can be that.

So, on the ground EPIC -- oh, we have another poll. I forgot this one. Okay, so this is not about how often you share out. This is actually asking about how often do you learn from other charter leaders. So, again sometimes so there's some of this going on. So, that's actually -- oh, look there's a lot going on, okay.

So, this is -- EPIC is a little bit of a complex program. I'm just going to tell you kind of the six main steps that we go through in our program. So, first charter schools apply to be in EPIC by submitting an application and three years of state test score data. Sadly we're done recruiting schools to EPIC since we recruited our last cohort last summer, and David's going to tell you about our cohort five that was just announced on March 8. But, after we get that data we work with Mathematica Policy Research to identify the schools with the highest gain using a value added model. Third, we award financial incentive to educators in these high gain schools. Fourth, we investigate and document their effective practice. It looks like we actually just lost our picture.

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DAVID NEGRON: Peggie, this is David. We just lost our connection with Adobe Connect.

PEGGIE: Okay so why don't you go ahead and try to sign back on and if you could do the presentation orally and I can flip the slides for you until you get back on.

ALLISON JACK: Okay great.

DAVID NEGRON: Thank you

ALLISON JACK: So, let me just finish this. So, the fifth thing we do is we're creating case studies and practice profiles, which are enabling us to learn from what's working in these schools. And then finally, our most recent work, and we'll talk a little more about this, is we're developing leadership and training around this effective content, effective practice content.

So, I'm sure everyone wants to know how schools win EPIC. So, I wanted to do a poll here, but this is going to be hard, but I'd like to do [inaudible -- sound cut out 00:21:49]. We use a value added model, which we hear a lot about now, but I'd like to know from the group sort of what's your understanding of a value added model.

PEGGIE: So, Allison I just put it on the screen. So, I'm just going to narrate for you. So, go ahead and click in. How well do you understand value added assessments, very little,

somewhat, moderately well, very well? So, it looks like about a half very little, about a third somewhat, about 20 percent moderately well and the percentages are changing a little bit. You know, four percent very well.

ALLISON JACK: We're back on now, and also I'm glad I have my colleague Mary McCarty with us today. She is more of an expert on value added, but and I'm going to go through it a little bit and then we'll take questions at the end. I do want to have the disclaimer neither one of us are statisticians or econometricians, just FYI. So, schools win EPIC awards based on a value added score on student achievement growth on state reading and math tests. Our value added model is unique in that we're comparing schools from across states, which we think that we're the only people doing that with charter schools. So, to compare schools across states you need to control for the difficulty of the test. So, our model needs to do that and we look at statewide or Mathematica looks at the statewide NAEP scores to look for distributions across state.

So, if you look at this, this is a very basic look at value added, if you were to compare schools based on gains or based on proficiency. So, if you look at this chart right here the gray bar is proficiency. In 2008 and 2009 that school has not met proficiency, but in 2010 they have. So, if you're just thinking

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is this a school I want to learn from, well they're not doing that great yet, but their trajectory is in the right direction so that might be a school that you're interested in looking at.

As we go to the next slide this is a little more of a complicated slide, but if you look at graph one you see that shows comparing school A and school B on their standardized tests. So, very much school A has higher test scores. But, if you're looking at their reading score gains you see that the reading score gains for school B are really more impressive. And the way that we do that is, what a value added model is it looks at test score gains from pervious grades to predict the growth students are likely to have in a given year. So, the model predicts based on lots of things, like the things that you see in this table, enrollment, free reduced priced lunch, growth. We look at their NAEP, the difficulty of the test and what is the prediction, based on what those kids have done before what kind of growth should they be having. And, the schools that win EPIC are the schools who make much more gain than their predicted gain. So, we think that this is a really important model to use, especially when you're looking at schools from very different places, different sizes, different demographics, different tests and so this really puts schools on an equal playing field. So, that's why we use the value added

National Charter School Resource Center EPIC - Chapter 1 model. Okay now I'm going to turn it over to David and he's going to talk about our winners, our most recent winners.

DAVID NEGRON: Thank you Allison. As Allison mentioned earlier we are excited that we recently announced the cohort five award winning schools for the EPIC National Charter School Consortium. Based on the EPIC value added model that Allison just discussed we awarded 14 charter schools for driving the highest student achievement gains. If you look at the slide right now, the three marks in gold those are the three highest ranked schools among the 179 schools in cohort five. And, if you look at the silver gain schools those are the next 11 highest rating schools among the 179 schools.

This year EPIC award winning principals, the assistant principals, teachers, and instructional aides will be given a financial award total in estimate \$1.1 million dollars in exchange for sharing the effective practice that contributed to those student achievement gains. This is a TIF mandate the EPIC awards are given directly to educators and not schools.

And then moving onto the next slide I just want to go over some of the significant EPIC charter school numbers. Over the five years of the charter grant we are proud to say that 384 charter schools participated in 29 states. If you look at the slide you can see how many charter school in each state

National Charter School Resource Center EPIC - Chapter 1 participated in at least one of our five cohorts. The biggest charter school state, California as you can see has 78 charter schools participate over the five EPIC cohorts. We also had sizable groups from Texas, Florida, DC, Ohio, Michigan, New York, and Illinois. Massachusetts schools were over represented among the EPIC award winners with 26 of the 97 EPIC award winners from Massachusetts. In fact, we're happy to say that MATCH and Community Day Charter schools in Massachusetts won all five cohorts.

This shows that schools can consistently drive student achievement gains among their students. One final fact is that we do have a significant number of independent award winning schools with 61 of the 97 charter awards going to independent schools. Now that you have a good understanding of how EPIC identifies award winning schools and who have won EPIC awards I'll turn it back over to Allison to talk about the EPIC investigation and analysis process.

ALLISON JACK: So, now we come to probably what's the hardest part of what we do, which is trying to figure out what it is in these schools driving these dramatic gains. And we do this all looking at it through the lens of our Urban Excellence Framework, which has categories for principal actions. And so, this is really challenging work and we really work very closely

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with our school leadership teams to do this. One thing that we have found that was a very positive finding for us is that this practice, this investigation and analysis has really been a great experience for the schools. They have found that taking the time to reflect and codify what they're doing is really a worthwhile process and it's really a nice contrast to what so many principals spend their time doing, which is focusing on the negative. So, it's really been a great experience.

So, if we can just take a minute for you to read this quote from our friend Claudette Yarborough in San Antonio, Texas. Okay so we actually think this quote is kind of funny because our whole premise behind EPIC is that we're paying educators to share and here's Claudette saying we would have paid for this process. So, that was a very positive finding for us.

I'm going to get a little more into the detail of our investigation and analysis process. We worked for the first three years with School Works. Some of you might be familiar with this well respected school evaluation firm. A lot of what they do is renewals. They work with authorizer around renewals. So, with us it really helped us to how are we going to pinpoint this practice that we want to profile that's really working for this school. So, the first thing we do is we start with an orientation for the school to let them know how the process is

going to work. And then, we ask them to identify and reflect on two practices that they believe are driving gain. We ask for them to fill out a practice profile. We then either schedule a visit or a call to go deeper into the practice and then we begin to ask for supporting documents.

For our video case studies we go with a team to the school and meet with all the stakeholders and observe practices throughout the school for what we call the practice analysis phase. And this is where the team goes in for two days and they meet with as many stakeholders that they can parents, teachers, students, the leadership team. They do interviews, they observe and then they sort of pool all their data and triangulate and try to figure out what is that leadership theme running through the school that really other schools could learn from. And so, once the practice is distilled and the critical content for the video is determined, and then a videographer goes back and films, and then of course the editing process begins.

So, an EPIC case study is sort of like a traditional case study in that it has four parts. How did they plan? How did they implement? What are their reflections and how will they continue to adapt and improve the practice? This is actually examples from Aspires Monarch Academy in Oakland, California and the featured practice is on building structures to support data

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talks. So, you can see in the beginning it's identifying the need, building the structures, getting the staff in place. It's implementing. It's codifying the structure. What are the protocols around the data talk? In the reflection chapter she talks about how she had some big turnover so she needs to think about why did I have this turnover. How can I make this process so it works better for teacher and their work/life balance? And then adapting and improving in that chapter she talks about how they start to use video to train people on the data talk protocol. So, it's really going through that whole process with the school.

Here at New Leader's we're really using EPIC resources in a lot of different ways. We now have over 250 case studies and practice profiles on the knowledge system. First, we're using it in our Emerging Leader's Program. So, this is a new program at New Leader's, which is our pipeline. So, it's the year before principals would go into, or individuals go into our principal training program. They're in the Emerging Leader's Program and that program is really based around EPIC leadership trainings that we do with sitting assistant principals and principals in some of our partner districts. We also have been doing a lot of webinars using these videos and our newest initiative is something called a Master Class and we hope that

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anyone this sounds interesting to will definitely contact us to get on the email list for this. It's in a webinar format, but it's very conversational in tone and they tend to be pretty small, and they're led by an EPIC winning charter school leader. Our first two sessions were on coaching and they were run by Eileen Callahan from Boston Collegiate, and again, this is a pilot program that we're doing. We're trying to figure out how do we make these resources more accessible and how do we increase access to some of these high performing principals for more schools. We also use it in coaching and on demand personal learning so principals can go and say I need to find -- so I'm doing a professional development on meetings tomorrow with my leadership team and here's some good examples. So, it can be used like that too.

So, this is what the EPIC knowledge system looks like. I referenced our UEF earlier, our Urban Excellence Framework and so this, all of the content on the knowledge system is put into these six categories. Participants in the EPIC National Charter School Consortium have access to all of these videos. They're on topics ranging from data driven instruction, midyear evaluations, co-teaching, difficult conversation, teaching kids to analyze their own data, all sorts of things. One of the things that we think is really powerful about our resources is

that it really shows principals in their varying states of development. So, we have newer principals talking about going into a new school and some of the challenges they face. And then, we have more veteran principals who've talked about the wisdom they've gained over many years and it's also schools at different levels of achievement. So, schools that are sort of on the lower end of proficiency, but gaining quickly, and then you have schools like Roxbury Prep, MATCH, Boston Collegiate, so schools that are consistently in the 90th percentile, but still showing gain. And then, we also integrate school artifacts so every practice is accompanied by the documents that the school used to implement the practice, and that really is to help school leaders not have to continue to reinvent the wheel.

So, now I think we're going to show two of these videos. We want to make sure that your computer's volume is turned up, as Peggy said earlier, because the sound will come out of your computer. These two videos are both on the topic of teacher observation. Before we do this actually, we're really interested in as we're going into cohort five and doing our last set of effective practice analysis, and we're really interested in what are the topics that principals want to see. What do they want to learn more about? So, these are kind of some really common ones and we'd just be really interested to see

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where the group falls out.

PEGGIE: And you can actually click more than one topic.

ALLISON JACK: Okay and it looks like common core. Wow common core in a landslide. That's the winner. That's good to know. So, that was a little bit of our hypothesis too actually.

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