

**TEACHER INCENTIVE FUND PROGRAM MONITORING**  
**DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT PROJECT**  
**PRINCIPAL AND TEACHER INCENTIVE PAY PROGRAM**

March 7, 2008

Fiscal Agent:	Dallas Independent School District (DISD) (S374A060003)
Partner Organizations:	None
Site visit date:	November 7-8, 2007
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This report serves as formal notice and documentation of all activities conducted at the monitoring visit with the DISD, in addition to any compliance issues related to program or fiscal management of the project. Please note any recommended action steps listed as they may require a response.

**Monitoring Activities**

- Personal interviews with grantee and district staff
- Discussions with educators eligible for incentives
- Discussions with union and educator representatives
- Exit conference

**Background**

The DISD Principal and Teacher Incentive Pay Program will complement the district's existing program by concentrating on individual teachers whose students achieve significantly above expectations and on principals who significantly raise the level of teacher effectiveness. The new program will add incentives for professional development and for working in high-needs schools or subjects.

## Section 1: Fiscal Issues

No findings.

## Section 2: Programmatic Findings

**Finding 2.1:** There was a delay in filling staff vacancies due to uncertainties of ongoing funding. At the time of the monitoring visit, one analysis position remained open. Program staff concluded that progress was not hindered by vacancies because year one was devoted to project design.

***Required Action:*** None: Position filled following visit.

**Finding 2.2:** The grantee program design requires awardees to be employed by the district when awards based on prior student achievement gains are distributed.

***Required Action:*** Per program policy, incentives must be paid to all eligible teachers and principals who were employed at the time of the student assessment (or other component of incentive payout), unless otherwise specified in the grantee's approved application proposal. Thus, a grantee may not require retention as a means of determining eligibility.

However, if the district expects problems with the administration of this policy, it must communicate effectively to all teachers and principals that the burden will be placed on the teacher or principal leaving the district to provide a forwarding address or other contact information so the district can provide the incentive compensation. This guidance is based on a "good-faith effort" standard, which means we expect each district to make a good faith effort to communicate this standard effectively and award incentives to all teachers who make a good faith effort to provide a forwarding address or other contact information.

## Section 3: Communications and Stakeholder Engagement

***Commendation:*** The TIF project staff has taken a very proactive approach to working with stakeholder groups, which has clearly established a beneficial level of trust. In particular, the TIF project director was credited by the unions and educator representatives as the reason why they stayed involved in the development of the project following mis-steps that involved last minute changes to previously agreed upon design issues by other district personnel.

**Finding 3.1:** The grantee did not develop a formal communications plan in the first year. The grantee accelerated this process following CECR recommendation.

Communication in the district is complicated by the TIF project's being nested within ongoing district-wide transformation (reorganization) efforts.

**Required Action:** The grantee must develop a written communications plan within 90 days of receiving this report.

**Recommendation:** We recommend that the grantee use its understanding of how the TIF program fits within the district initiative and, specifically, within the district's communication strategy to avoid replicating efforts and to maintain consistency of message. A TIF communication plan should follow from this district-level strategic plan. Currently this does not exist.

Our interviews highlighted, in particular, that a fully developed communications plan needs to: (1) better explain the district's value-added measures and (2) explain performance pay as part of the initiative to improve education and not solely as part of "delayering" [district transformation]. We also understand that the initiative will extend beyond 2010, which is the target date for a potential Broad Foundation Award.

#### **Section 4: Data Quality and Information Technology**

**Finding 4.1:** The grantee has not developed written data quality procedures. The grantee clearly has procedures in place that need to be documented.

**Required Action:** The grantee must develop a written data quality plan that documents the procedures from data input to reporting and payout. A copy of the plan must be submitted to the Department of Education within 90 days of receiving this report.

#### **Conclusion**

Thank you for welcoming us into your school district to monitor activities related to the TIF program. If you would like to respond or make any technical corrections to this report, please submit those within 30 days from the date of this report. In addition, if you need technical assistance on any of these issues, please contact the Center for Educator Compensation Reform at [CECR@westat.com](mailto:CECR@westat.com).

All comments should be submitted to:

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