At-a-Glance

The strategic staffing program in 2011-12 was an initiative in the Dallas ISD designed to attract and retain highly-effective teachers, principals, and associate/assistant principals to some of the highest-need schools. Originally, the program was designed to provide stipends for identified staff, pay for lead teacher salaries, and fund professional development, supplies, and materials for a three-year period using Title II funds.

However, a couple of program changes were made at the Chief’s Meeting regarding federal funds. First, Title II funding was eliminated for professional development, supplies, and materials. Second, the lead teacher position was funded only for the 2011-12 school year. Third, the amounts of stipends for principals and associate/assistant principals were changed, while the amounts for teachers remained the same (principals: from $10,000 to $2,500, assistant principals: from $8,000 to $1,500, and teachers: no change-$6,000). Fourth, the program will not be implemented for the 2012-13 school year.

Selection Criteria and Schools

In 2011-12, the strategic staffing program was implemented at four low performing schools to help increase student achievement. The schools were S.S. Conner Elementary School, Roger Q. Mills Elementary School, Boude Storey Middle School, and Emmett J. Conrad High School. Those schools’ Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) ratings were “Academically Unacceptable” in 2010-11.

Each school had a team of five to nine individuals including a principal, an associate/assistant principal, a non-teaching lead teacher or an academic coordinator, and three or four content teachers. Criteria used to select staff included Classroom Effectiveness Indices (CEI) for teachers, School Effectiveness Indices (SEI) for principals, recommendations, and personal knowledge.

In 2011-12, the program served a total of 27 staff: 16 content teachers, three lead teachers, one academic coordinator, three associate/assistant principals, and four principals. Of the 16 content teachers, 10 had a CEI. The CEI percentiles of those teachers ranged from 43 to 97. The remaining six content teachers did not have a CEI for several reasons. For example, one was a newly hired teacher and two were instructional coaches in 2010-11. Of the seven principals (including associate/assistant principals), six had an SEI. The SEI percentiles ranged from 33 to 97.

Results of the Program

While the new assessment system, the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STARR), began in the 2011-12 school year, student performance standards for the STARR will be set in October 2012. As well, the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) ratings for the 2011-12 school year remained the same as the previous year because there were no ratings in 2011-12.

Given the difficulty of comparing 2010-11 and 2011-12 student assessments systemically for the four identified schools, this At-a-Glance summarized only the stipends paid for identified staff and amounts paid for lead teacher salaries.

Stipends for Identified Staff

Table 1 shows the summary of the stipends paid by job type. The payout was made in June 2012 to the 27 identified staff. A total of $134,500 was distributed based on the schedule: $6,000 for teachers, lead teachers, and academic coordinators; $1,500 for associate/assistant principals; and $2,500 for principals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Type</th>
<th>$ By Job Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Total ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>$96,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead teacher/</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic coordinator</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$134,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows the summary of the stipends paid by school level. Of the total recipients, 12 were in the identified elementary schools, six were in the middle school, and nine were in the high school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Total ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$60,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>$46,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>$134,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Information memo from Interim Division Executive, School Leadership & Administrative Services, October 13, 2011.
Salary for Lead Teachers

In addition to stipends for identified staff, Title II funding was used to hire lead teachers in the identified schools. In 2011-12, a total of $174,328 was distributed to three lead teachers for their salaries.

In sum, a total of $308,828 was used during the 2011-12 school year to run the strategic staffing program in the Dallas ISD. The actual amount paid was much less than the original estimated budget ($935,572). The main reason for this difference was due to the changes in the program in the middle of the school year (e.g., the elimination of funding for professional development, supplies, and materials).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of the program was to recruit and retain effective educators to some of the highest-need schools by providing stipends and funding for professional development, supplies, and materials.

Although the program achieved some degree of its original purpose in that it provided recruitment incentives to those who moved to the highest-need schools, it had some limitations which might hinder the effectiveness of the program.

First, the reduced time period from three years to one year might reduce the long-term impact on the diverse, low socioeconomic status of students served by the district.

Second, the elimination of funding for professional development might not be helpful in the enhancement of the quality and depth of teacher instruction. When the Dallas ISD ran the performance pay programs for five years from 2006-07 to 2010-11, stakeholders discussed the need for incorporating the professional development component into the program several times at the Performance Pay Advisory Council meetings (Kim & Kihneman, 2010, 2011).

Third, other program changes such as reduced incentive amounts for principals (including associate/assistant principals) and elimination of lead teacher positions after they got into the program might influence their interest in the program.

For future implementation of similar incentive programs in the Dallas ISD, the following recommendations should be considered:

- Long-term fiscal sustainability needs to be secured in order to continue the incentive program in the long run, and
- The professional development component needs to be incorporated as an important part of the program because it enhances the quality and depth of teacher instruction.

For more information, contact Program Evaluation at 972-925-6457.

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2 Title II, Part A Project Workscope as of May 16, 2011.