

2009 Contemporary Social Issues Seminar Series
Sponsored by the Universities at Shady Grove and the Rockville Institute

Money Matters—Performance-Based Compensation in Education

March 12, 2009

General Overview

Performance-based compensation in education. Who's using this controversial program and is it effective? In recent years, policymakers have been interested in moving beyond the traditional salary schedule to employing models that increase accountability for educators and reforming their compensation accordingly by linking pay to improved student achievement. While several local school districts have been experimenting with compensation reform for decades, Congress and the U.S. Department of Education brought the issue into the national spotlight by funding the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF). TIF is supporting 34 diverse grants serving high-need schools that are implementing a range of differentiated pay strategies. These grants are providing important lessons learned on designing successful performance-based compensation systems.

Presentation Goals

This presentation will examine lessons learned in the bold new experiment of differentiated pay for educators. Using case studies from the federally funded TIF program and other differentiated pay systems across the nation, Dr. Schuermann and Ms. Henderson will explore the challenges and successes from the field including:

- Educator perceptions of incentive programs,
- Early findings on what makes a successful program and what are some of the pitfalls in designing alternative compensation models, and
- How educator effectiveness is measured for performance incentives.

Ms. Houghton will share New Leaders for New Schools' practical experiences in implementing a performance-based compensation as part of the District of Columbia Public Schools' sweeping reform efforts.

Presenters

Allison Henderson is an Associate Director at Westat. She has over 20 years of experience in providing policy support, technical, outreach, and communications services to federal, state and local educational entities. Ms. Henderson has particular expertise in the area of teacher quality. She has supported the U.S. Department of Education in implementing the teacher quality provisions of No Child Left Behind since the inception of the legislation. Ms. Henderson was instrumental in launching the Center for Educator Compensation Reform. The Center was established in 2006 to support 34 TIF programs focused on developing and implementing performance-based teacher and principal compensation systems in high-need schools. Ms. Henderson oversees all monitoring activities for the Center.

Dianne Morse Houghton is part of New Leaders for New Schools' executive team. She oversees the Effective Practices Incentive Community (EPIC) program, partnering with school districts and a consortium of charter schools across the country to identify educators driving student achievement gains and reward these educators for sharing their effective practices with others across the country. Before joining New Leaders, Ms. Houghton spent over 20 years in the management consulting and technology services fields, working with Fortune 100 and Federal Government executives to create and launch strategic initiatives. Most recently she served as CEO of Digital Focus, an information technology services company, where she led a return to profitable year-over-year growth and successful investor exit via acquisition by a leading global private equity firm.

Patrick Schuermann, PhD, is a research assistant professor of educational leadership and public policy at Peabody College, Vanderbilt University. Currently, his principal research agenda focuses on issues associated with alternate models of compensating teachers and principals. Dr. Schuermann is the director of technical assistance for the Center for Educator Compensation Reform, the comprehensive assistance center for the TIF project. In this capacity, Dr. Schuermann works with a team of colleagues from Vanderbilt University and University of Wisconsin–Madison to provide assistance to states, districts, schools, and partnering organizations participating in the federally funded TIF project.