

Pay-for-Performance and Career Ladder Pilot Grants

Student Achievement and Educator Quality Program

Iowa Code 284.14

Iowa Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319

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Iowa Department of Education
Interim Report 2009
As Required by Iowa Code 284.14
Pay-for-Performance and Career Ladder Pilot Grants
Student Achievement and Educator Quality Program

Legislation passed during the 2007 Iowa legislative session, provided additional funding for grants for districts to create a plan for an enhanced teacher compensation program including implementing a career ladder or pay-for-performance as part of the Student Achievement and Educator Quality Program, Iowa Code 284. Iowa Code 284 also requires the Iowa Department of Education (DE) to report on school district use of grant funds by January 15, 2009. The report is being made available to the chairpersons and ranking members of the senate and house committees on education, the General Assembly, the Legislative Services Agency, the State Board of Education, the Governor, and school districts.

The DE and the Pay-for-Performance Commission provided an opportunity for school districts to apply to receive funds to study and enhance teacher compensation through a pay-for-performance or a career ladder plan. The purpose of the pilot program is to provide funds to local school districts to research, study, develop, and implement pilots designed to identify promising practices related to enhanced teacher compensation career ladder models or pay-for-performance models. Senate File 277 allotted funding to the DE to initiate a pilot for districts to study, design, and implement a career ladder program. Senate File 277 also allotted funding to the Pay-for-Performance Commission to begin a pilot with districts to study, design, and implement a pay-for-performance plan.

Three districts applied and were accepted into the planning pilot (July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2008) and, subsequently, the implementation pilot (July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2009):

Cedar Rapids
MOC-Floyd Valley
Mt. Pleasant

While the membership of each team was a local decision, administrators and teachers including bargaining unit representatives were included. Each group reported spending many hours reviewing enhanced teacher pay plans from across the nation.

Representatives of the three districts met together on multiple occasions including:

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| December 2007 | Anthony Milanowski, a research scientist from the University of Wisconsin, who has been studying teacher compensation for the past decade, discussed various career ladder and pay-for-performance options. |
| February 2008 | Representatives heard multiple speakers on “Performance Incentives: Their Growing Impact on American K-12 Education” through Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN. |
| March 2008 | Denver Pro-Comp Representative, Jeff Buck, discussed Denver’s program to enhance teacher pay and improve student performance. |
| May 2008 | Rob Meyer, a research scientist from the University of Wisconsin studying value added methods of evaluating schools and teachers, was invited to present, but cancelled at the last moment due to health concerns. His research paper was forwarded to the districts. |

Implementation Plans

The implementation plans of the three districts for the 2008-09 school year vary greatly and are summarized in this section.

Cedar Rapids

Career ladder

The Enrichment Specialist pilot program will develop leaders at the elementary schools and provide systemic change to the already existing programs at the middle and high school. Currently, there is a loosely monitored program of departmental chairs at the high school level and some team leadership roles at some of the middle schools. The programs lack definition and consistency.

At the elementary school level: Elementary schools (24) will be grouped into clusters of four, with the pilot program being able to initially serve only two clusters. Each cluster will hire, from existing staff, four Enrichment Specialists. The cost of the replacement teachers will be borne by the pilot program. The Enrichment Specialists will each receive an annual salary augmentation of \$5,000. The Enrichment Specialist team for each cluster will develop and deliver curriculum at each of the clustered elementary schools on an established schedule that will begin two weeks after the student year begins and end two weeks prior to the end of the student year. When the Enrichment Specialists are delivering curriculum at an elementary school, the regular classroom teachers whose students are being served by the Enrichment Specialists, will be released for professional development and time to work together. The Enrichment

Specialist will develop curriculum that may include program enhancements suggested by the regular classroom teachers, special programs, or extension programs aligned with the District's mission and goals. The intent would be that no additional workload will be created for the regular classroom teachers during the period of time that they are being replaced by the Enrichment Specialists. The job descriptions for Enrichment Specialists will be developed by a subcommittee of the Career Ladder Task Force and posted by the District. Contractual hiring processes will be used to select the Enrichment Specialists and the replacement teachers.

At the middle school level: A job description will be created by a subcommittee of the Career Ladder Task Force for Enrichment Specialists. Enrichment Specialists will each receive a salary augmentation of \$1,000 per school year. The positions for Enrichment Specialists will be posted and contractual hiring processes will be used to select from the applications received (six middle schools/60 Enrichment Specialists).

At the high school level: A job description will be created by a subcommittee of the Career Ladder Task Force for Enrichment Specialists. Enrichment Specialists will each receive a salary augmentation of \$1,000 per school year. The positions for Enrichment Specialists will be posted and contractual hiring processes will be used to select from the applications received (four high schools/40 Enrichment Specialists).

At all levels: The official teacher representative(s), appointed by the exclusive bargaining agent, serving at each building site as the Iowa Code 284 Professional Development Leader, will receive a salary augmentation of \$500 per school year (one representative for each elementary and middle school, one representative for the alternative sites, and two representatives for each high school, 38 representatives total).

MOC-Floyd Valley

Hybrid plan including aspects of career ladder program and a pay-for-performance plan

Mentor Teacher: The 15 teachers selected for participation in the planning phase of the Pay-for-Performance Grant will share their work in the following areas:

- a. Formative Assessments: Rubrics will be developed that guide formative assessments at each grade level.
- b. School Matrix: This is a student information management system that allows us to track individual lessons back through the curriculum and link to the objective-benchmark-standard for a particular unit.

The work will be shared with a collegial group during professional development time during the 2008-2009 school year. Mentors will be paid \$1,000.

Student Achievement Goal: This will be the performance-based pay component of the grant. Each teacher will meet with their respective building principal (as is required now for professional growth plans) to determine a student achievement goal that reflects student progress. The process used will be developed around the use of SMART goals and the District's work with formative assessments. A SMART goal is specific, measurable, attainable, results-based on an agreed upon criteria for student achievement between the teacher and the principal, and time bound.

Other considerations:

- a. A bonus will be awarded to each staff member who successfully attains the SMART goal. This amount will be \$730.
- b. All teachers are eligible to participate in developing student achievement goals.

Consultant Services: Ongoing support will be needed to successfully implement this phase of the Pay-for-Performance Plan. The following consultants were selected based upon their expertise in their field.

- a. Continued support from Lori Nebelsick-Gullett
- b. Continued support from Dr. Mike Berger, Vice-President, VIP Tone (School Matrix)

Tiered Lead Teacher Program: For the summer of 2009, a Tiered Lead Teacher Program is planned. Considerations for *Veteran Teacher Tier*, 15 new teachers, as selected from a formal application process:

- a. 201 day contract
- b. Serve as summer school teacher based on essential learnings or other research and design projects as determined by the Pay-for-Performance Committee
- c. Develop formative assessments based upon the pilot work done during the summer of 2008
- d. Serve as "mentor" to new staff
- e. Stipend of \$2,000 each

Mentor Teacher Tier: Five to eight mentor teachers selected from 15 mentor teachers previously participating. This will be a formal application process:

- a. 211 day contract
- b. Serve as mentor to new staff
- c. Prepare (plan) professional development topics and days
- d. Research and design of best practice, approved by the Pay-for-Performance Committee
- e. Inclusive School Matrix Series assessment process
- f. Receive training specific to teaching area (i.e. Project Lead the Way)

- g. Stipend of \$2,000 each

Administrative Mentor Services: Administrators involved in the Pay-for-Performance program will be compensated \$2,000 for extra duties and days specific to implement the pay-for-performance project.

Mt. Pleasant

Pay-for-Performance

Participating teacher awards (bonus of \$1,000) will be based upon student achievement growth in the core (math, reading, language arts) area(s) the individual directly teaches. The final performance pay decision for a self-contained elementary teacher would include student growth in math, reading, and language arts. The final decision for an elementary special education teacher would be based upon which core areas are in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each student receiving direct services from the special education teacher. Performance-based pay for a middle school teacher will be based on the core subject that they teach. Final bonus calculations will use only students with both a fall and a spring score. Following the fall measurement of academic progress (MAP) testing, students will develop individual and classroom learning goals with the teacher's based upon their fall achievement level. The performance bonus will be awarded if 60 percent or more of the students directly served by that individual teacher meet their targeted growth for the school year using 2008 MAP norms (Minnesota Q-Comp performance pay also uses 60 percent). Targeted growth will be determined individually against the national mean for students at that Rausch unit (RIT) or achievement level. For example:

- A second grade teacher's bonus calculation would be based upon 60 percent of the students growing to or past their targets in math, 60 percent of the students growing to or past their targets in reading, and 60 percent of the students growing to or past their targets in language arts.
- The special education teacher's bonus would be based upon the math and/or reading scores related to individual student IEP's. Sixty percent of the targets would need to be reached in reading, and 60 percent of the targets in math.
- The seventh grade language arts teacher's bonus calculation would be based upon both reading and language arts growth. Sixty percent of the reading targets and 60 percent of the language arts targets must be reached for a bonus.

If less than 60 percent of the students meet their individual targeted student growth in each core area tested, the bonus will not be paid.

External Evaluation

Learning Point Associates was chosen to complete an external evaluation of the three programs. The proposed mixed method study provides data for description of pilot implementation; measurement of cost, effect, and benefit; and explanation of successes/inhibitors to program implementation (feasibility). Specifically, the following research questions will be answered:

- What is the cost-effectiveness and benefit (e.g., teacher motivation, teaching quality, student achievement) of the pilot models?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of each program design?
- How feasible is scaled implementation of the models at other sites?

The research questions were chosen to provide administrators and policymakers data on the cost and effects of enhanced teacher compensation and career ladder innovations at pilot sites and adequate descriptions of pilot implementation so that future adopters (i.e., other districts) have the information that they need to begin the change process.

The project involves coordination for quality assurance, sampling, evaluation tool development, data collection, analysis, and reporting. During the first three months (September 2008–November 2008), the team will focus on cooperative evaluation plan finalization, comparison site selection, protocol development, and data infrastructure development. The second evaluation period (December 2008–September 2009) will be devoted to qualitative and quantitative data collection and progress reporting. The third and final period will consist of data collection, data analysis, and completion of the final summative report. During this final evaluation period, student achievement data will be analyzed.