



## **Texas State-Level Pay-for-Performance Programs: Overview and Discussion**

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### **Introduction**

Pay-for-performance programs are cropping up all over the country, some at the state level and many at the local level. These programs generally intend to improve the overall quality of teaching—including attracting, retaining, motivating, and rewarding teachers—in order to increase student learning and shrink achievement gaps. The design and implementation elements of these programs vary greatly, and much can be learned from the district and state sites about process, including establishing buy-in, creating and sustaining a funding base, communicating aspects of the program, and providing support to schools and districts. Texas is one such example of a state-based initiative to improve student achievement by way of a pay-for-performance program. Texas has an interesting story that other states or districts seeking to develop, implement, and sustain an alternative approach to teacher compensation can reflect upon and employ as a resource.

As part of the charge to raise national awareness of alternative and effective strategies for educator compensation, the Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) has developed this case summary as a model and reference for the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grantees and other education compensation reform stakeholders in order to help guide the development of new programs as well as refine existing ones. This case summary seeks to share the story of alternative teacher pay at the state level in Texas. The information was gathered from background conversations and written publications about teacher pay and teacher quality. A structured protocol was used during background conversations in order to acquire important information about the program site. Background conversations were conducted with key stakeholders in Texas who were available for consultation during data collection.

This case summary has four primary parts:

- Basic demographic information about Texas students and teachers.
- An overview of education reform related to finance, teacher quality, and teacher pay in the state of Texas.
- A more detailed discussion of the three specific programs that comprise the performance-based pay effort in Texas, including information about their design, implementation, and sustainability.
- An analysis of the main themes culled from all of the details surrounding state-level performance-based pay programs in Texas. At this point in the development and implementation of the state-level pay-for-performance programs in Texas, the three primary themes or lessons focus on: (1) technical assistance, (2) data systems and student performance data, and (3) teacher buy-in.

## **Profile of Texas Students and Teachers**

The changing demographics of the Texas student population have placed an emphasis on the need for high-quality teachers. As a result, the state is poised to experiment with teacher quality reform efforts, including teacher compensation reform. Texas has more than 4.5 million students in its public schools, and slightly more than half of them are classified as “economically disadvantaged” (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2007, p. 8). The state also has a very diverse student population: approximately 45 percent Hispanic, 37 percent white, 15 percent African-American, 3 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and less than 1 percent Native American. Of particular importance is the growing population of Hispanic students. Since the 1995–96 school year, white student enrollment has decreased, and black student enrollment has remained stable, but Hispanic enrollment has grown from 37 percent to 45 percent (TEA, 2007). These changes have increased demand for teachers able to serve students with a variety of needs, particularly English language learners (ELLs) and other students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. In terms of general student achievement, the percentage of students meeting the standard for the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), the standardized state test for Texas, increased from the 2005–06 school year to the 2006-07 school year for reading, mathematics, writing, and science (TEA, 2006d).

More than 302,000 teachers teach the 4.5 million students in Texas. A large proportion of these teachers (37 percent) are relatively new to the profession, with less than five years of teaching experience. In 2005–06, the overall teacher turnover rate in Texas was 15 percent and the average number of years a teacher stayed with any given district was 7.6 (TEA, 2006f). Teacher shortages in Texas reflect those prevalent across the nation—the state is in need of many quality teachers in the areas of mathematics, science, special education, and especially English as a second language (ESL).

## Overview of Finance, Teacher Quality, and Teacher Pay Issues in Texas

As in many other states, financing education has been a challenge in Texas. In 2005, the Texas Supreme Court ruled that the existing system for financing education was unconstitutional because of an over-reliance on local property taxes. The court provided the Texas Legislature with a June 1, 2006, deadline for fixing the system, so in May of 2006, the Legislature went into special session. The resulting bill enacted state tax increases as well as other changes intended to boost state responsibility for funding public schools. Just before this finance reform, local-level interviewees in a study by Hansen, Marsh, Ikemoto, and Barney (2007) noted that funding was their greatest barrier to meeting expectations for higher student performance. Despite the 2006 finance-reform changes, many local- and state-level stakeholders still questioned whether or not the new state revenue sources would bring in the kind of funding that was needed to cover the cost of local property tax reductions (Hansen et al., 2007). At the same time, state leaders largely disagreed on how education funds should be spent and many were looking for new ways to use resources that might result in improved student outcomes, including pay-for-performance programs.

The biggest share of any state's education expenditures is school personnel, including teacher salaries. Average teacher salaries in Texas have traditionally fallen below the national average. While comparing salaries to the national average does not take into account adjustments for cost of living, it does provide a glimpse into Texas teacher salaries on a national scale (Patterson & Story, 2005). A recent TEA (2006f) report to the Legislature showed that the average salary for all Texas teachers for the 2005–06 school year was \$41,744. When ranked by years of experience, average salaries were as follows:

- Beginning Teachers: \$34,505
- 1–5 Years of Experience: \$36,567
- 6–10 Years of Experience: \$39,008
- 11–20 Years of Experience: \$43,978
- More Than 20 Years of Experience: \$51,998

These below-average salary levels are often reported as the reason that some teachers in Texas, particularly those in shortage areas like mathematics and science, leave the field for higher salaries (Strayhorn, 2004; Texas Center for Educational Research, 2000). In 2006, the idea of raising teacher salaries surfaced in the policymaking forum during the 79th Legislature. The Legislature passed a package of bills that would provide a \$2,000 state-funded pay increase for teachers. In the current Legislature (80th), pay raises surfaced again. In March 2007, House members voted to reallocate incentive program funding to across-the-board pay raises of about \$800 per year for teachers and other school workers. During the actual budget-writing process in May 2007, however, negotiators cut that amount in half to about \$400 per year, per teacher, and increased incentive program funding (Root, 2007). In the end, incentive program funding was reinstated and the across-the-board pay raise for teachers equated to about 1.1 percent of the average teacher salary.

The state of Texas and its districts have been working to address teacher quality issues, such as recruitment and retention, for many years. This focus includes efforts to induce teachers toward specific recruitment and retention goals, such as working in hard-to-staff schools—which Texas refers to as *campuses*—or gaining skills and knowledge. One early plan, available from 1984 to 1993, was the Texas Teacher Career Ladder, which offered bonuses to eligible teachers based on classroom performance (evaluated through the Texas Teacher Appraisal System [TTAS]), professional development participation, and years of teaching experience. The program eventually failed when the Legislature abolished the Career Ladder before any teachers even reached the highest “rung” (Strayhorn, 2004). Reasons for program failure include a lack of funding, a negative atmosphere of competition rather than collaboration, and questions about teacher performance appraisals (Davis, 2004). An evaluation of the TTAS revealed that the process showed little to no variation in teacher performance and subsequently demonstrated no support for keeping the career ladder in place in its current form (TEA, 1991).

More recently, the Legislature, the governor, and a large and vocal business community have championed pay for performance efforts in Texas at both the local and state levels. In addition, recommendations from both the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2002) and the Sid W. Richardson Foundation (2001) called for the implementation of pay-for-performance or differentiated pay programs to address teacher quality issues. According to the Texas Association of School Board’s *Salaries and Benefits in Texas Public Schools 2006–07* survey, 90 Texas districts reported that they had a district-level performance pay plan and some districts had more than one program. These programs vary throughout the state but offer individual and group awards for teachers as well as other school employees, such as administrators.

With mounting support for pay-for-performance plans, particularly from Governor Rick Perry, the House Research Organization of the Texas House of Representatives prepared an analysis of teacher performance incentives in 2004. In 2005, Senator Florence Shapiro attempted to attach a pay-for-performance program to the state’s overall finance package but the school finance bill failed to pass in the second special session (Senate Committee on Education, 2005). Work toward designing and implementing alternative compensation at the state level in Texas did not stop, however, and in June of 2006, Governor Perry and the Legislature created the Governor’s Educator Excellence Award Program, which includes the following:

- Governor’s Educator Excellence Program (GEEG)
- Texas Educator’s Excellence Program (TEEG)
- An unnamed program (documented in House Bill 1 as Subchapter O) that focuses on Texas districts

These programs make up the largest performance-pay system in the United States and are discussed in detail in the next section. A chart-overview of these programs of the Texas teacher incentive programs is available online at <http://www.tcta.org/documents/Incentives102406.pdf>.

## Overview of State-Level Educator Compensation Programs in Texas

### Governor's Educator Excellence Grant

The Governor's Educator Excellence Grant (GEEG) was the first of the three state incentive programs in Texas. In November 2005 Governor Perry approved the program in Executive Order RP51, making an "end run-around" the Legislature. This authorized the creation of a performance-based pay, noncompetitive grant program by the state commissioner of education. The program started with a small number of high-poverty, high-achieving/improving schools and provided schools the local control to design their own programs, given a broad set of criteria required by the state. The program is 100 percent federally funded using Title II and Title V funds. GEEG rewards teachers who have had an influence on student achievement and who have collaborated to improve student achievement in the highest poverty campuses *and* either the highest achieving or most improving campuses.

**Campus Eligibility.** The TEA determines campus eligibility. Campuses that fall in the top third of economically disadvantaged schools and are designated "high-achieving" or "high-improving" are eligible for GEEG funding. School eligibility is based on the percent of economically disadvantaged students in a school. The term *high-achieving schools* refers to those that are recognized or exemplary—meaning, the schools met benchmarks for student passage rates on state standardized tests, school completion rates, and school dropout rates (see TEA, 2006e for more information). *High-improving* refers to campuses that are in the top quartile of performance for comparable improvement, which compares the improvement of a campus in mathematics and English language arts relative to the improvement on 40 similar campuses.

**Campus Plans.** Campuses are responsible for developing their own incentive plans and must receive district approval of their plans prior to award distribution. The state provides a set of program design guidelines for campuses. Program guidelines require success in improving student outcomes using some objective, quantifiable measure (such as student scores on TAKS) and teacher collaboration. Some campus plans measure the improvement of student outcomes by using achievement levels (passing rates), while others use measures of student growth, such as value-added scores. Teacher collaboration may be measured by a teacher's participation in campus-based activities, such as professional development sessions, instructional strategy meetings, team teaching and observation, mentoring and coaching, and other evidence of sharing across subjects and grade levels to improve overall student performance at the campus. Two suggested, but not required, criteria for campus plans are as follows: (1) assignment in a hard-to-staff school and (2) teacher initiative (e.g., professional development, attendance, leadership activities).

**Awards.** The program funds only 100 campuses that were locked in for three years—no new campuses will participate in GEEG. Each qualifying campus is eligible for an annual grant award ranging between \$60,000 and \$220,000, depending on the size of the student population at the eligible campus (Table 1). Campuses began receiving funds in August 2006.

**Table 1. Funds Based on Campus Size**

<b>Campus Size (Number of Students)</b>	<b>Annual Grant Award</b>
Less than 450	\$60,000
450–599	\$90,000
600–699	\$100,000
700–999	\$135,000
1000–1,399	\$180,000
1,400–1,799	\$210,000
1,800 and above	\$220,000

The majority of GEEG awards are dedicated to teacher incentives—75 percent of funds are earmarked for teacher awards for the eligible classroom teachers (defined in each campus plan). The other 25 percent are intended for teacher quality improvement measures, including recruitment and retention; professional development opportunities; and incentives for school staff not eligible for classroom teacher incentives, such as teacher aides, counselors, librarians, and nurses.

According to the recently released evaluation report from the National Center on Performance Incentives (2007), campus GEEG plans tend to focus on measures of student performance and teacher collaboration as criteria for distributing awards to teachers—these are the two required criteria for GEEG campus plans. Schools are less prone to use the other two criteria permitted by GEEG guidelines: (1) assignment in a hard-to-staff school and (2) measures of teacher initiative (e.g., professional development, attendance, leadership activities). Furthermore, the evaluation report shows that GEEG award amounts for teachers do not align well with the \$3,000 minimum/\$10,000 maximum designated by the state; most awards are lower than the advised minimum. For the first year, the average minimum award was \$2,897 and the average maximum award was \$3,726. Based on teacher survey data, the report also shows that teachers agree that school staff were involved in the development of GEEG campus plans, with the most involved stakeholders being administrators, teachers, and then noninstructional staff.

### **Texas Educator Excellence Grant (TEEG)**

The momentum created by GEEG helped to generate the Texas Educator Excellence Grant (TEEG), which was authorized in House Bill 1 in 2006 (see Legislature of the State of Texas, 2006). TEEG is sometimes referred to as Subchapter N or the Student Achievement Program. Campuses that participate in GEEG are not eligible to participate in TEEG until after the GEEG program has ended in 2008–09. Funding that is provided by the Legislature (as part of House Bill 1) is much higher for TEEG (\$100,000,000 in 2006–07) than for GEEG.

**Campus Eligibility.** Like GEEG, TEEG rewards teachers in economically disadvantaged, high-performing, or high-improving schools and aims to close achievement gaps. Campuses that are in the top half of the highest percentage of economically disadvantaged students and receive a

rating of “high-performing” or “high-improving” are eligible for TEEG grant funds (as opposed to GEEG, which is for campuses in the top third). Unlike GEEG, which is a fixed program (schools identified in the first year are the same schools that will receive the award funding over the course of the program), TEEG is an annual program in which campuses become eligible based on new data each year. Eligibility is based on data from the previous school year because of the year lag in the school rating system.

Many of the schools that participated in the first round of the TEEG (during the 2006–07 school year) are not eligible for the program during the 2007–08 school year because they failed to maintain necessary campus performance ratings (“high-performing” or “high-improving”) as the number of questions required to pass have increased. Other schools will now have a chance to apply for the state grant monies (Stutz, 2007).

**Campus Plans.** Similar to the broad state guidelines stipulated by GEEG, campuses are responsible for developing their own TEEG incentive proposal plans but must receive district approval of their plan prior to making awards. A majority of teachers at each campus must approve the incentive plan before seeking district approval. Campuses also must submit at least three personal letters from teachers that describe their participation in the process of developing their campus incentive plan. In addition, they must submit other documents, including meeting minutes and sign-in sheets, verifying teachers’ participation in the development of the plan. Incentive plans are designed to reward teachers who demonstrate the following:

- Success in improving student performance using objective, quantifiable measures.
- Collaboration with faculty and staff that contributes to improving overall student performance on the campus.

**Awards.** Grant awards range from \$40,000 to \$300,000. Of the award funds, 75 percent must be dedicated to teacher awards, and 25 percent must be allocated for teacher quality improvement measures, such as recruitment and retention activities.

During the first cycle of funding in 2006–07, more than 32 schools rejected the program and grant money, some returning up to \$90,000 to the state (this situation still left a 97 percent participation rate). One reason cited for rejecting the grant funds is the perceived animosity that incentive-pay programs might cause in schools (e.g., pitting teacher against teacher in order to attain bonuses). Other cited reasons include seeing the programs as a distraction from focusing on raising student test scores and excessive paperwork (Hawke, 2006; Stutz, 2006).

## **Subchapter O**

For the third Educator Excellence Program, Subchapter O in House Bill 1, \$147.5 million were appropriated in fiscal year (FY) 09, and no funds were appropriated in FY 08. The delay in funding for this program is likely the result of the \$400 across-the-board teacher pay raise from the 80th Legislature’s legislative cycle. This is a district-based program (as opposed to a campus-based program like GEEG and TEEG). Grants are for districts that want to establish a local incentive program and will be awarded to districts based on student enrollment. While there are no eligibility criteria for the grant, 60 percent of the grant awards must be dedicated to district

teacher awards and 40 percent dedicated to teacher stipends, mentoring, and elements of the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP).

## **Design, Implementation, and Sustainability Across the Texas Pay-for-Performance Programs**

### **Design and Development of the State-Level Programs**

In drafting and passing legislative language for these programs, policymakers and education decision-makers at the state-level took several different steps to acquire information for the design. The design process for the GEEG included conversations with teacher groups, community groups, and several different education associations. Language for House Bill 1 (TEEG and Subchapter O) was informed by a stakeholder group of about 45 people (including teachers of the year, administrators, education associations, and parents) that met twice a month for five months leading up to the special session in 2006 when House Bill 1 was signed. Even after the signing of the bill and during the design of the implementation guidelines from the state, the stakeholder group continued to receive information from others who had experience designing pay-for-performance programs, such as individuals from Denver's ProComp and TAP. The state reviewed multiple pay-for-performance models to identify best practices. Texas also enjoyed the benefits of being able to attract numerous experts to help inform the design, partly because of the size of the state and the potential influence of these incentive programs.

The Texas Federation of Teachers (now known as the Texas AFT [American Federation of Teachers]) conducts teacher surveys each year, and for the August 2005 survey, more than 80 percent of teachers either opposed or strongly opposed incentive pay based on "standardized test scores of teachers' students" (Texas Federation of Teachers, 2005, p. 5). The state, on the other hand, did not conduct a preliminary survey to gauge the level of teacher, administrator, and public support for the new forms of compensation. Some teachers continue to voice concern about the current pay-for-performance programs to their legislators and school boards (L. Bridges, personal communication, May 10, 2007). In some instances, such as in San Antonio and Dallas, teachers association representatives are working with district administrators to design program elements and ensure that they have a say in how the program is designed and implemented.

### **Implementation**

Implementation of pay-for-performance programs relies on a host of factors, including issues concerning data systems and student performance data as well as program support in the way of technical assistance.

**Texas' Data System and Student Performance Data.** The Texas state data system, called the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), has been in place since 1984 and is still on a mainframe system. The data system does not have the ability to link teacher and student data directly, an arguably essential element for a comprehensive, fair pay-for-performance program that awards individual teachers. In light of this, House Bill 1 requires the Commissioner of Education to determine a method for measuring annual improvement in student achievement.

Recently, the state Legislature attempted to pass a bill that would replace PEIMS with the Texas Education Data System (TEDS) by September 2011. TEDS was to include public education, higher education, and educator certification data, but the bill died in conference committee.

The student performance data housed in the PEIMS system, TAKS, is the most frequently used student performance measure in locally designed pay-for-performance programs even though the state recommends that campuses look at local measures. One potential challenge to using TAKS for pay-for-performance plans is that of measuring student growth (TEA, 2006a; TEA, 2006b). The TAKS data that are sent to the districts from the state are not in a format suitable to compare a student's scores from one year to the next. A technical assistance document on the TEA website about how to create a high-quality educator excellence plan states the following:

You may use measures of student growth on assessments, but please note that in order to properly measure individual students' growth on assessments from one year to the next, the scores must be equated. This means that they are determined using a common scale. The TAKS data you receive from TEA is not equated, so those scores will need to be statistically converted before you can compare a student's scores from one year to the next. We will hopefully be able to provide you with some further guidance on this in the future, but for now you should consult with experts in statistical measurement. (TEA, 2006b)

As a result, schools and districts (particularly those that are small) have a difficult time measuring improvement from one grade level to the next for a single cohort of students, which is the basis for teacher incentives. On the other hand, some of the larger districts have the necessary data and the systems in place to inform their performance measures.

**Program Support/Technical Assistance.** The state needs to support and implement the design and development of Texas' pay-for-performance programs with constant and far-reaching technical assistance. For example, grant applications from schools and districts to the TEA tend to require a great deal of negotiation between the two parties in order to meet guidelines before they can be finalized. Funding for the state-level performance-based pay programs in Texas does not include technical assistance. The state of Texas does have a website aimed at the Texas Educator Excellence Award programs, but staff resources at the state level working on TEEG and GEEG (which includes over 1,200 grantees) are slim. Creating capacity and expertise within a state, including regional education service centers, to manage large pay-for-performance programs is a challenge that still needs to be met in Texas.

### **Sustainability**

The sustainability of the state-level pay-for-performance programs in Texas is uncertain. On the one hand, the program is well funded and continues to grow. As previously mentioned, however, there are some concerns about the amount of technical assistance available to campuses and districts for assistance in developing and implementing a meaningful program that has teacher buy-in and is effective. Politically speaking, pay-for-performance funding has been volatile as evidenced in recent attempts by some legislators to reallocate pay-for-performance funding for across-the-board teacher pay raises. Texas has a history of deserting alternative compensation programs for teachers, which certainly inhibits teacher buy-in for current and future efforts. For

example, when the Legislature repealed the Texas Teacher Career Ladder before any teacher reached the highest level, many teachers felt disappointed because they had followed the rules outlined by the Career Ladder and no longer had a chance to increase their pay.

Buy-in and long-term support are also compromised when other programs go awry. For example, Houston Independent School District (ISD) recently experienced troubles with its pay-for-performance program when bonus recipients' names were published in the city newspaper and on a major television station's website, creating a stir among school staff about fairness. One way to address this is to share examples of programs that are experiencing success. San Antonio has materials on the TEA website describing how different program efforts (e.g., dedicating personnel and time resources, being frank about funding, creating an environment of trust and open dialogue, and honoring differences) are facilitating the success of incentive pay programs in that district (see San Antonio Independent School District, 2006).

Texas is not a collective bargaining state (Texas State Code, Chapter 617), which also has the potential to affect the sustainability of teacher quality reforms. In other words, in Texas, administrators do not negotiate a contract with educators on the conditions of their employment and educators have the right to work without being required to join any particular organization. Several organizations, however, represent the interests of Texas educators at the local and state levels. These include the Association of Texas Professional Educators, a nonunion professional organization with more than 100,000 members; the Texas AFT, an AFT affiliate with 46,000 members; the Texas State Teachers Association, an affiliate of the National Education Association; and the Texas Classroom Teachers Association (Wright & Gundersen, 2004). Some in Texas perceive the continued success of pay-for-performance programs like Denver ProComp as partly the result of the program being designed in collaboration with teachers unions and as part of collective bargaining negotiations (L. Bridges, personal communication, May 10, 2007). Large districts in Texas, such as Dallas and San Antonio have a sizeable teachers association membership base because of the sheer number of teachers working in those districts. These districts and others employ "meet-and-confer" policies for school boards and educators. Thus, the district and teachers association are in a better position to collaborate on the development of pay-for-performance programs in some of the larger districts in Texas.

Systematic evaluations may also contribute to program sustainability as a result of a continual process of reviewing, revising, and improving the program. The state has hired Vanderbilt University to determine whether or not the pay-for-performance programs improve teacher effectiveness and student success. The evaluation is beginning with the first 100 campuses that are part of the GEEG program.

## **Conclusion**

The state-level performance-pay programs in Texas are well funded with monies coming from state and federal sources. For example, the state funded the TEEG program at approximately \$100 million in 2006–07. The primary goal of these programs is to provide awards to educators who have an impact on student achievement (Office of the Governor of Texas, 2005; Texas Education Agency, 2006c). Specific goals and objectives as well as mechanisms for evaluating those goals and objectives are vital for the success and sustainability of pay-for-performance

programs. As previously mentioned, Vanderbilt University recently released the first of several evaluation reports on Texas pay-for-performance programs, and it is too early to estimate effectiveness.

As previously mentioned, the three primary themes or lessons emerging from the pay-for-performance program in Texas are as follows:

- **Technical Assistance.** Even with a healthy amount of funding for this large overall state endeavor, the capacity to offer broad-based, quality technical assistance is lacking. There are only a few state-level staff available for this role, and they are stretched across several projects. The challenge for this small group of state-level staff is to support many campuses and districts in designing their own programs. Furthermore, the state is still working to build capacity specifically related to designing and implementing pay-for-performance programs among those in technical assistance roles, such as regional education service centers.
- **Data Systems and Student Performance Data.** Most of the campus plans for compensating teachers and other staff as a part of these programs are largely based on student standardized test scores on TAKS, which as previously mentioned, has weaknesses and points of contention among many in Texas. For example, the state's data system is not equipped to show student growth (how much impact one teacher had on a particular student over time) with TAKS (TEA, 2006a; TEA, 2006b). Some districts, such as Dallas, however, have the data system capacity at the district level to measure value added (i.e., student growth). Schools and districts without this capability may need assistance not only in designing an awards system that fairly uses data but also in communicating honestly and effectively to teachers and staff. State performance-pay program criteria allow for the use of other local-level assessments and only encourage campuses and districts to apply those in their pay-for-performance plans. It appears that campuses (and soon districts with Subchapter O) may need more and better access to simple, digestible examples of how some schools or districts use local assessments in their local-level pay plans.
- **Teacher Buy-In.** Efforts to establish and maintain teacher support and buy-in for Texas Educator Excellence Programs are hampered by several issues: the state's record with teacher pay reform efforts; concerns with district-level programs that have encountered problems or that have not received support, such as those experienced in Houston; and most recently, schools that have become ineligible for an award because they no longer meet eligibility criteria. Sustainability and success hinges on teachers seeing and believing that pay for performance can work. Although Texas does not have collective bargaining, including representatives from teachers associations (as do Dallas and San Antonio) can ultimately help to secure a fair design and effective communication to stakeholders in order to facilitate buy-in.

Overall, Texas has been and will continue to be an interesting program site to look to for examples of how a large state implements a state-level framework for locally driven pay-for-performance programs.

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The primary purpose of CECR is to support the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grantees with their implementation efforts through the provision of ongoing technical assistance and the development and dissemination of timely resources. CECR also is charged with raising national awareness of alternative and effective strategies for educator compensation through a newsletter, a Web-based clearinghouse, and other outreach activities. We look forward to an exciting partnership with the TIF grantees as we embark together on blazing a new path for education reform.

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