

# Cumberland County Schools Teacher Incentive Fund Program

*The Cumberland County Schools TIF (CCS TIF) aims to serve the fourth largest district in North Carolina. The CCS TIF will pilot in five schools (280 teachers, 5 principals, 9 assistant principals, and about 3,300 students). The pilot schools were selected because they have low overall academic achievement, serve high-poverty populations, have high teacher turnover, have large numbers of teachers with emergency/provisional licenses, and have principals who have demonstrated support of TIF. The CCS TIF intervenes using differentiated compensation to reward educators for raising student achievement. Professional learning communities will be created in each school to help educators meet the criteria for reward.*

## Needs Assessment Results and General Information

The CCS is the largest county in North Carolina designated as low wealth. Further, the median income is more than \$5,000 below the national median and is \$1,500 below the state average. The district serves about 54,000 students (pre-K 12). In 2003, it was estimated that 20 percent of these students lived in poverty; 53 percent were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and 62 percent were minority. Local military bases dominate the economy but do not proportionately add to the tax base that funds schools. The CCS district did not make AYP (it met 65 of 78 performance targets).

## Background

The CCS TIF will pursue two main goals to effect change in student achievement: (1) The CCS TIF will improve achievement in high-need schools by increasing educator effectiveness through the creation of professional learning communities. The communities will increase professional development activities and establish model

classrooms to demonstrate effective instructional methods. (2) The CCS TIF will implement a sustainable differentiated compensation system to recruit and retain high-quality teachers in high-need schools. Differential compensation will be coupled with increased capacity to conduct comprehensive personnel evaluations.

## Incentives

The incentive plan will be developed and implemented during the 2007-08 school year, under the following guidelines: teachers will be eligible to receive incentives totaling a maximum of \$10,000 and principals will be eligible to receive a maximum of \$5,000. There are three levels of reward for teachers – Level I payments are based on student performance; Level II payments focus on attainment of advanced credentials; and Level III payments are designated for Model Classroom leaders. There are two levels of reward for principals – Level I payments are based on professional growth and leadership activities, and Level II payments are based on achieving student growth targets.

<b>LOCATION(S)</b>	Cumberland County, North Carolina
<b>GRANT AMOUNT</b>	Year 1: \$1,174,176    5-year total: \$4,827,198
<b>DURATION</b>	5 years
<b>AWARD DATE</b>	June 2007
<b>PARTNERS</b>	None

## **Evaluation**

The CCS has well-established evaluation processes in place for educators but does not adequately address continual monitoring and support of educators. Under the TIF, schools will establish evaluation teams to fill this void.

## **Resources**

The CCS received more than \$3 million for incentive payments based on school-wide growth. An additional \$300,000 was disbursed for retention bonuses. The CCS TIF budget decreased reliance on Federal TIF funds to meet the required decrease by year 5. A TIF subcommittee will research and obtain matching funds. Based on current funding, the Disadvantaged Student Supplement Fund will be able to contribute substantial monies.

## **Data Systems**

The North Carolina education system has a well-developed web-based data warehousing system to capture, assess, and report student information. The CCS TIF will contract with faculty of the University of North Carolina to develop and implement the TIF incentive formula for differentiated compensation.

## **Year 1 Activities**

In TIF Year 1, a differentiated compensation system was successfully developed. Professional Learning Communities were successfully implemented in all pilot schools, considerably ahead of the proposed Year 2 timeline. The introduction of Professional Learning Communities resulted in four of the five pilot schools achieving whole-school-growth goals. Based on preliminary student achievement data, Cumberland County Schools will award nearly \$450,000 in TIF rewards for Year 1 based on improved student achievement and leadership roles.

## **Outlook for Year 2**

For TIF Year 2, Cumberland County Schools will continue to provide incentives based on leadership roles, advanced credentials, and improved student achievement. Eighteen Model Classroom teachers were designated at the end of TIF Year 1. The Model Classrooms will provide a real-time observation lab for 125 teachers across the district to observe best practices and, ultimately, improve instructional strategies.