

National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, Teacher Advancement Program

In partnership with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) and the Algiers Consortium of charter schools incentive program, the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP), focuses on increasing teacher effectiveness, student achievement, and teacher retention and recruitment by providing multiple career paths, ongoing applied professional growth, instructional accountability, and performance-based compensation for teachers and principals. TAP will also implement a performance-based compensation program for administrators that includes professional development.

Needs Assessment Results and General Information

The Algiers charter schools serve one of the most needy student populations in the country. Over 91 percent of the student population is minority, with 86 percent of all students on free or reduced-price lunch. Seven of the nine schools in Algiers were taken over by the Louisiana Department of Education for being “failing” schools for 5 or more years. The teacher turnover rate for schools within the Algiers schools in the 2006-07 school year averaged 31 percent, significantly higher than the national average of 13 percent. And almost half (48 percent) of the teachers in the targeted schools have less than 10 years’ experience. Fewer teachers in Algiers have advanced degrees, compared with Louisiana teachers overall, and 20 percent of teachers at Algiers schools do not meet the NCLB requirement for highly qualified teachers (HQT). This project includes incentives and support to ensure that all teachers at Algiers charter schools are able to significantly improve their teaching skills and their students’ achievement over the 4 years of the grant and beyond.

Background

TAP is a research-based performance pay and accountability system that is combined with professional development and a career path for teachers. The program is included in the fundamental pillars of the Algiers schools’ charters and has been implemented in the district since 2006. TAP is currently being implemented in about 225 schools nationally. The program consists of four main elements: performance-based compensation, instructionally focused accountability, ongoing applied professional growth, and multiple career paths. Multiple career paths are structured to enable instructional leadership to be shared and distributed among the principals and master and mentor teachers. Master and mentor teachers provide evaluation, professional development, and instructional support for career teachers. The Algiers Consortium of charter schools will use TAP to meet the goals of the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) project.

NIET will work with the Algiers Consortium to develop and implement an administrator compensation and evaluation system that will also provide professional development to successfully implement TAP. Under TIF,

LOCATION(S)	New Orleans, LA
GRANT AMOUNT	\$17.6 million
DURATION	4 years (2008–2009 to 2011–2012)
PARTNERS	Consortium of Algiers Charter Schools

TAP will be enhanced in ways to meet the unique needs of Algiers students. To do this, the project will increase teacher salary incentives, develop a new compensation incentive program for administrators, create more powerful data systems for managing teacher recruitment and retention information and teacher evaluations, and provide retention and recruitment incentives to address challenges of attracting and retaining effective educators in Algiers schools.

Incentives

In the incentive system, 50 percent of teacher bonuses are based on growth in student achievement broken into two segments: (1) 20 percent are based on school-wide value-added growth, and (2) 30 percent are based on a teacher's individual classroom value-added gains. In this context, "value-added" refers to predicted student achievement scores based on prior performance. For teachers who do not teach a subject tested by the state or whose classroom does not meet the statistical requirements to receive a value-added score (e.g., student mobility precluded the ability to link enough students to a teacher), the 50 percent is based solely on school-wide gain.

The remaining 50 percent of a teacher's bonus is based on an individual teacher's classroom performance that is measured against research-based instructional rubrics and evaluated by multiple trained and certified evaluators. A minimum of \$3,000 per teacher will be designated annually to create a bonus award pool. This fund will pay bonuses for all eligible teachers, with each teacher's percentage of payouts based on student performance and multiple evaluations.

New award pools for principals (\$10,000) and for assistant principals (\$5,000) will be designated annually to pay bonuses for all eligible administrators based on the formula that will be developed under the TIF grant. An award pool will also be added for paraprofessionals at \$1,000 per person.

Evaluation

The purposes of the evaluation are to: (1) determine the effectiveness of TAP in achieving the specific goals of the grant and (2) examine the implementation of TAP and the new administrator evaluation system as the key components of the TIF grant. A formative evaluation will be conducted throughout each grant year, and a summative evaluation will be conducted at the end of the grant. The formative evaluation results will serve to identify opportunities for improvements, while the summative evaluation results will determine the extent to which the goals and objectives of TAP have been met.

Resources

Over the TIF project period, the Algiers Consortium will use primarily Federal resources to cover an increasing percentage of the cost of differentiated pay until it funds 75 percent in Year 5. In addition, the Consortium schools will be working to secure additional resources.

Data Systems

The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching requires all TAP schools to provide data so that value-added calculations needed for determining performance bonus awards can be made. Consortium schools will collect and electronically submit standardized assessment data to a contracted vendor. After the vendor makes the calculations, the information will be sent to the schools. The Algiers schools already have a system to link individual teachers to individual student achievement, as well as basic student information. Further, a new system will be developed to better track teacher evaluation data and link them to individual and school-wide value-added data. As part of the TIF grant, NIET will create and implement a recruitment and retention tracking system that builds upon the data collected through the current human resources system used in the Algiers schools. The system will be used to collect information on teacher and administrator applicants as well as information on those who leave the system.

Outlook for Year 2

We look forward to working with the Consortium of Algiers Charter Schools to ensure the successful implementation of TAP and the development of several new program activities. In Year 2, NIET will provide the Consortium schools with regular, on-site professional development and training, for its TAP Leadership Teams as well as for administrators specifically. We will work to develop two new data systems for the Consortium to ensure teacher quality. Finally, we will design and implement a communications plan that will ensure the successful implementation and sustainability of TAP in the Algiers schools.