

Keep Teacher Performance Pay

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Children in Texas need and deserve the best and brightest teachers in the classroom. Yet many top college graduates pick other professions over teaching. President Barack Obama, in remarks to the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce on March 10, embraced the use of incentives to end the math and science teacher shortage, encourage experienced teachers to work in low-performing schools, and recognize and reward large gains in student achievement.



Performance pay can make the teaching profession more attractive by recognizing and rewarding talent, improving teacher morale, and preventing excellent teachers from leaving the profession or moving into

administration for financial reasons. Texas has the largest pay-for-performance program in the nation, with funds available for the purposes championed by President Obama.

The Texas Educator Excellence Grant (TEEG) is a campus reward program for teachers in high-poverty, high-performing campuses. This year, roughly 1,000 individual public schools are using TEEG money to reward teachers. The District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE) is a locally designed district compensation plan that rewards teachers for large gains in student learning with bonuses; and incentivizes behavior with teacher stipends, staff incentives, principal incentives and rewarding professional development. Currently, 203 school districts are participating in DATE, representing approximately 2.1 million students or almost half of all public students in Texas.

It is vital that state lawmakers continue to fund those teacher performance pay programs, as they give school boards and superintendents the flexibility to strategically target resources to meet local needs. For example, school officials can use these monies to pay teachers in shortage areas — such as math and science — stipends of \$4,000 a year, or to pay an experienced teacher an extra \$5,000 to work in a low-performing school. This is local control at its best. The results, thus far, are promising. In Houston ISD, where teachers can make up to \$10,000 in bonuses, student learning has increased, teacher morale has improved and fewer teachers have left the classroom.

Sadly, the majority of school districts across the country are hamstrung by antiquated salary structures that reward seniority over effectiveness, and that treat teachers more like factory workers than professionals. When performance is ignored, excellent teachers are underpaid and mediocre teachers are overpaid. Innovative school board members and administrators should consider implementing differential pay and performance pay to strategically target their resources to meet local needs. Changing the teacher compensation structure would send the signal to teachers that pay is tied to improving student learning, not seniority or longevity.

1. In appropriate paragraph form, compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses regarding teacher performance pay. Illustrate a Venn Diagram to organize your thoughts. **(GPS – Grades 6 – 8: MRC a, d)**
2. Local school officials are reconfiguring their certified staff in the best interest of student learning. There are 30 stipends available for teachers in shortage areas and 45 bonuses for teachers who accept employment in low performing schools. They want to arrange the staff so each facility has the same number of performance paid teachers from only one program. What is the greatest number of these teachers that can be in each school? **(GPS - Grade 6: M6N1c; addressed August 4 – August 29, 2008)**
3. An experienced math teacher accepted a position in a low-performing school. Traditionally his monthly net salary would be \$3,146; however, given his annual increase of approximately \$6,300 after taxes, how much more is he taking home a month? **(GPS Grade 7: M7N1c, d; addressed August 4 – August 29, 2008)**
4. This year, roughly 1,000 individual public schools are using TEEG money to reward teachers. Assume for a moment that the rate of public schools who participate in performance pay programs increases 5% annually. What would the slope of the line in a graph of this situation represent? Write the equation in slope intercept form ($y = mx + b$). **(GPS Grade 8: M8A4a; addressed August 4 – October 17, 2008)**
5. Upon completion of this assignment, how far have we progressed through the 2008-09 series of *The Daughtry Times*®? Express your answer interchangeably as a fraction, decimal, percentage, and circle graph. **(GPS – Grade 6: M6N1 f, g; M6D1c; Grade 7: M7D1 f)**
6. Using contextual clues only, define the following italicized words: *innovative*, *mediocre*, *antiquated*, *stipends*, *hamstrung*, and *incentives* obtained from the passage above. Additionally, use each word in a complete sentence to further demonstrate comprehension. **(GPS – Grades 6 –8: MRC a, c, d)**

Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) adapted from georgiastandards.org. Standards specifically addressed in this edition are strategically aligned with the curriculum map and annotated adjacent to the respective grade level inquiry.

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