

# Community Training and Assistance Center and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Leadership for Educator's Advanced Performance

*Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) is the 21st largest school district in the country. It has more than 9,000 teachers who serve almost 130,000 pre-K through 12th-grade students. The district serves a diverse population of students in its 162 schools. Due to high growth in the region, CMS expects a surge of 50,000 students, which will drive a demand for more than 16,000 new teachers in the next 10 years. Almost 70 percent of CMS' schools have been identified as high need, and 65 percent are struggling to reach academic targets for adequate yearly progress (AYP). These challenges motivated CMS to implement the Leadership for Educator's Advanced Performance (LEAP) initiative to create an alternative compensation system that links teachers' and principals' earnings to student achievement. The LEAP initiative will focus on instructional improvements, with recruitment and retention support for teachers in hard-to-staff subjects in high-needs schools coupled with financial incentives for teachers and principal to have the maximum positive impact on student achievement.*

## Needs Assessment Results and General Information

The CMS student population—42 percent black, 36 percent white, 14 percent Hispanic, 4 percent Asian, and 4 percent Native American/multi-racial—is divided among 167 schools; 110 of these schools are identified as high need. Free or reduced-price lunch rates at these high-need schools ranged from 30 percent to 99 percent in 2005-06. Teacher turnover averages 14 to 18 percent.

In total, 16 high-need schools will be participating in LEAP, beginning with six of the neediest schools in year 1 (one elementary school, one middle school, four high schools). By year 5, nearly 14,000 students and 1,300 teachers and principals will participate in the program. These first six schools are part of the district's Achievement Zone, which is made up of 10 schools with the highest needs and lowest performance that

have been identified as low performing or priority schools by the state. The remaining four Achievement Zone schools will participate in LEAP in year 2.

All participating schools failed to meet their No Child Left Behind AYP targets for 2005-06, and the four participating high schools failed to meet the 60 percent passing threshold for the North Carolina End-of-Course Assessments. Teacher and principal turnover is worse at the targeted schools than is the state average. Teacher turnover was as high as 24 percent, and 75 percent of principals have fewer than 3 years of experience.

## Background

The LEAP initiative has four specific goals: (1) create a differentiated compensation model for teachers and principals that is based on increased student achievement and multiple classroom observations and other

<b>LOCATION(S)</b>	Charlotte, North Carolina
<b>GRANT AMOUNT</b>	Year 1: \$1,987,589    5-year total: \$11,880,267
<b>DURATION</b>	5 years
<b>PARTNERS</b>	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Community Training and Assistance Center

evaluations, (2) improve and support recruitment and retention efforts in hard-to-staff schools and subject areas, (3) align school support systems to build teacher and principal capacity for increasing student achievement, and (4) develop district capabilities to sustain and grow the performance-based compensation system.

CMS has already implemented some alternative compensation models, including school-based and classroom-based performance pay, signing bonuses, master teacher bonuses, and administrator merit pay. From these experiences, CMS has built a performance-based incentive system that uses the most successful features from previous programs coupled with the expertise and guidance of the Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC) to create a comprehensive compensation system that results in higher student achievement and school performance.

### **Incentives**

Eligible teachers and principals can earn a merit-based salary supplement of up to 10 percent annually for reaching the student academic achievement goals. They can also earn a bonus or stipend for attending professional development or assuming additional leadership responsibilities. The additional financial incentives include a \$10,000 signing bonus for teachers and principals who accept positions in hard-to-staff, high-need schools; signing bonuses of \$8,000 for teachers who agree to teach in hard-to-staff subjects (math, science, special needs, high school subjects with end-of-course exams); and incentive stipend pay of \$115/day, including benefits for attending approved professional development or assuming leadership roles and extra duties that are related to improving student achievement.

### **Evaluation**

Stipends will be based largely on existing state student achievement assessments that are in place for many subject and grade levels. Student achievement data will be collected from the North Carolina End-of-Grade

(EOG) tests for grades 3 through 8 and the End-of-Course (EOC) tests for grades 9 through 12. Teachers who teach a class that does not use a state end-of-year/course exam in year 1 will be eligible for the salary supplement based on school-wide performance. Alternate measures of student achievement will be proposed for years 2 through 5.

LEAP uses two forms of teacher evaluation: the Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument-Revised (TPAI-R) and the Downey 3-minute Walk-Through Model. The TPAI-R model requires at least three reviews per year on management of instructional time and student behavior; instructional presentation, monitoring, and feedback; and facilitating instruction, communication within the education environment, and performing non-instructional duties. The Downey model will be used to monitor and guide teaching practices.

CMS and its partner CTAC will implement a revised professional development strategy for the LEAP initiative schools that will be evaluated annually. CMS currently is performing an evaluation of its professional development programs in relation to state/district goals against the U.S. Department of Education's Model Professional Development Programs criteria.

### **Resources**

CMS will reallocate funds from three existing pay-for-performance programs and has committed more than \$8.6 million over the 5-year period. By year 5, 75 percent of the differentiated compensation will be funded with local dollars.

### **Data Systems**

Data management systems for student background and achievement data and for human resources information were recently updated at CMS; however the district has identified a need to improve data management systems and capacity to maximize efficiency and effectiveness of the LEAP system.