



Northern Humboldt Union High School District | California

SUMMARY

Northern Humboldt Union High School District (NHUHSD), located in Northern California, is implementing the Together Honoring Rigorous Instruction for Valued Education (THRIVE) program. THRIVE rewards teachers for student growth, implements regular formative (local) assessments in all subjects, provides data-driven professional development in effective teaching practices, and includes regular classroom observations to establish the presence of district-defined general and content-specific effective teaching practices. NHUHSD has five high schools and serves approximately 1,700 students. More than one-half of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Scores on the California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) test show considerable achievement gaps between low-income students and their more advantaged peers, and schoolwide academic performance index scores are lower than those of comparable districts in California. Low average teacher salaries and ongoing budget cuts statewide made it difficult to hire and retain qualified teachers.

PROGRAM GOALS AND EVALUATION

THRIVE's goals are to increase teacher/principal effectiveness and student achievement through a differentiated compensation system that features locally developed, standards-based formative assessments to measure student growth. The program supports teachers with high-quality professional development aligned to student needs. Program staff uses a wide array of quantitative and qualitative measures, such as student achievement data, teacher surveys, and classroom observation data to evaluate progress.

State: California

Location: Humboldt County

Award amount: \$4,644,270

TIF Cohort: 3

STEM Grantee: No

Number of districts participating: 1

Number of schools participating: 6

Number of teachers eligible: 106

Number of principals eligible: 7

Superintendent: Chris Hartley

Key program staff:

Bob Wallace, Project Director

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JoAnn Moore, Assistant Project Director

Jack Bareilles, NHUHSD Grant Evaluator

REWARD STRUCTURE

THRIVE has completed three years of incentive-based payouts to teachers. The reward structure is based on overall effectiveness for classroom teachers, non-classroom certificated student support faculty, and principals (and other school administrators). Effectiveness criteria are established as part of the performance based compensation system (PBCS) and include multiple measures of student growth as well as collegial observation outcomes. Payouts within defined effectiveness bands are affected by grant factors, including completion of pre- and post-assessments, attendance, and teaching assignment. NHUHSD calculates incentive amounts using grant year student outcome data (currently Year 4) and includes payouts in the December pay warrant.

YEARS 1-4 HIGHLIGHTS

- Developed and implemented standards-based local assessments for all courses
- Developed and implemented an observation rubric for teacher evaluation
- Developed and implemented a PBCS for teachers and principals
- Established a data management system with teacher-student linkages
- Greatly expanded data-driven professional development for teachers
- Established THRIVE mentors to serve as curriculum leaders and department liaisons and to provide professional development

YEAR 5 OUTLOOK

In response to both external and internal factors, THRIVE has remained dynamic throughout the years of TIF 3. In Year 5, instructional coaches have become the key personnel for professional development and teacher improvement, with THRIVE mentors serving in a support capacity. STAR test results are no longer available in California, resulting in the implementation

of Teacher Specific Measures of Student Achievement as one of the student growth multiple measures. Common Core Implementation has focused all district disciplines on reading, writing and speaking standards in addition to the new content standards in ELA and math. This has been supported by the development of teacher-specific student learning objectives that use data-driven decision making to target specific student populations for academic growth.

SUSTAINABILITY

NHUHSD has identified seven areas of focus for sustainable practices beyond the completion of TIF3: Common Core implementation, local (benchmark) assessments related to CCSS, collegial observation, teacher-specific goals, effective instructional practices based on THRIVE-identified professional development needs, improved student engagement practices, and technology integration. The goal of THRIVE, to increase student achievement by strengthening the effectiveness of teachers and school administrators, will also be sustained in coordination with state and local initiatives that include: District Local Educational Agency Plan; Local Control and Accountability Plan; the NHUHSD Common Core Implementation Plan, the school site Single Plans for Student Achievement; and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges school site goals.

PERFORMANCE-BASED COMPENSATION

All certificated faculty are eligible to receive TIF 3 PBC. Awards are based on an overall THRIVE Effectiveness Score. Year 4 teacher criteria include student growth on department pre/post assessments and collegial observations. For non-classroom certificated faculty (including principals and other administrators), student growth includes state standardized (CAHSEE) test outcomes for high-needs populations and specific job-related criteria. In December 2014, the overall PBC distributed to eligible certificated faculty was \$298,779.84.