



Aspire Public Schools | California

SUMMARY

Aspire is a network of California charter schools, 34 of which participate in the TIF 4 program. The grantee considers each Aspire student to be educationally disadvantaged. Aspire has modified its existing teacher evaluation system and offer performance-based compensation by way of effectiveness-based bonuses. Aspire also provides individualized professional development based on educator evaluation results.

PROGRAM GOALS AND EVALUATION

The goal of Aspire TIF is to enhance student achievement so that high-need students graduate from high school fully prepared for college success. To achieve this goal, Aspire aims to improve teacher and principal effectiveness in such a way that will compel measurable results in student achievement, graduation rates, and college readiness. Aspire expects changes from its reform efforts to result in 70-75 percent of its high-minority, high-poverty students scoring at advanced or proficient levels on required state assessments and that the current share of students who enter college fully prepared for college-level work will double.

Aspire partnered with external evaluators to conduct a mixed-methods study with three components: an implementation study, an outcomes/impact study, and a replication and scaling study. The program evaluation focuses on the extent to which Aspire’s educator effectiveness system affects teacher and principal effectiveness, student achievement, graduation, and college readiness. To complete the study, the evaluators will collect data on students and teachers; conduct educator, staff, and stakeholder interviews; and carry out case studies of seven schools.

State: California

Location: Multiple cities, California

Award amount: \$27,851,000

TIF Cohort: 4

STEM Grantee: No

Number of districts participating: 34

Number of schools participating: 34

Number of teachers eligible: 586

Number of principals eligible: 34

Project Director:

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Key program staff:

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YEAR 1 HIGHLIGHTS

- Teachers received a fully interactive Teacher Effectiveness Data (TED) dashboard that provided them with an opportunity to view their effectiveness data.
- Aspire successfully implemented all aspects of its multiple-measure teacher evaluation and development system during the 2012–13 school year.
- Aspire made significant progress on the development of a companion evaluation and development system for its principals.
- Aspire made significant progress in the development of its Aspire Teacher Leadership and Career Path offerings. In spring 2013, Aspire aligned over 20 teacher leadership positions to various effectiveness levels.

YEAR 2 HIGHLIGHTS

- Aspire implemented a new salary schedule that linked teachers' compensation to their demonstrated effectiveness across multiple measures and their years of effective practice. The new salary schedule brought increased stability to teachers' compensation over time and increased equity in compensation across the organization.
- All educators received a TED that included their overall effectiveness rating and the amount of the corresponding teacher effectiveness bonus.
- Aspire developed high-quality, indicator-aligned resources to add to an online teacher development platform, BloomBoard.
- Aspire refined the Aspire Teacher Leadership and Career Path to provide leadership roles for teachers while they remain in the classroom.
- Aspire implemented a new, Common Core-aligned assessment to measure student growth in grades K–2, thereby providing more than 180 early elementary teachers with their own student growth measure for the first time.

YEAR 3 OUTLOOK

- Aspire is piloting a new “Many Mini” observation model wherein teachers receive 6+ shorter observations over the course of the year. A total of 330 teachers are participating in the pilot.
- New, college readiness-aligned assessments (ACT Aspire and ACT) were adopted in grades 6–11 to measure student growth during the transition to SBAC.
- Aspire developed a new Peer Survey to be implemented in the 2014–15 school year. Aligned to Aspire's core values, the new survey will be identical for all Aspire employees and will align core values and feedback across school sites and departments.
- A new, role-specific effectiveness system was implemented for Special Education teachers, including a customized observation rubric.

PERFORMANCE-BASED COMPENSATION

- In 2013–14, Aspire increased performance-based compensation by approximately \$700,000 compared to 2012–13 for teachers who increased their overall effectiveness level (N=312).
- In 2013–14, the average increase in base salary related to performance-based compensation for teachers and principals was \$5,413 (N=312).
- In 2013–14, Aspire provided its teachers with approximately \$260,000 in compensation for serving in performance-based leadership roles.
- In total, more than 380 leadership roles were funded, with the average financial compensation per role being \$675.
- The most heavily subscribed teacher leadership roles were Peer Observer (52), Common Core Driver (51), and Summer Professional Development Facilitator (42).