



Seattle Public Schools | Washington

SUMMARY

Seattle Public Schools (SPS) has an ambitious strategic plan called Excellence for All. Goals include growth in student achievement, narrowing the achievement gap, and graduating students from high school ready for college, careers, and life. The TIF grant makes a key contribution to this plan. Through the TIF grant, SPS is implementing a performance-based compensation program that will improve student learning outcomes through a focus on teacher and principal professional growth. The program adds student growth as a factor in the teacher evaluation process, aligns professional development to assessed needs and evaluation categories, establishes a recognition/reward system, and strengthens recruitment and retention efforts. The grant serves 27 high-need schools, 19 elementary, 3 K-8, 1 middle, and 4 high schools. The student population eligible for free/reduced-price lunch ranges from 52 to 94 percent. These schools are among the lowest performing in the district based on state reading and math tests and attendance and graduation rates. Participating schools have a disproportionate number of teacher vacancies.

PROGRAM GOALS AND EVALUATION

The grant aims to institute a performance-based compensation system that will support teacher and principal professional growth and in the process improve student learning outcomes. Ultimately, SPS expects to see a 15 percent decline in the number of schools performing in the lowest two segments of the district quantitative performance framework. SPS is contracting with an external evaluator to conduct an evaluation of the program. The evaluation revolves around three overarching issues: the impact of the performance-based compensation system on student achievement, principal and teacher attitudes and behaviors and instructional practice, and recruitment and retention of high-quality talent.

State: Washington

Location: Seattle

Award amount: \$9,945,481

TIF Cohort: 3

STEM Grantee: No

Number of districts participating: 1

Number of schools participating: 27

Number of teachers eligible: 800

Number of principals eligible: 27

Superintendent: Larry Nyland

Key program staff:

Clover Codd, Project Director

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REWARD STRUCTURE

Seattle has two different reward structures. One is for teachers and one is for principals. Teachers who are proficient and distinguished on the evaluation framework and meet or exceed student growth and achievement standards are eligible for retention stipends (\$2,000) and may apply to become a career ladder teacher (\$2,500–\$5,000 stipend, depending on the type of position they have).

Principals' student achievement awards are based on a multiple measures scorecard that includes leadership practice, student achievement on state summative assessments, staff perception of leadership practice (survey) and other outcomes (depending on the level of the principal). Principals may earn a student achievement award ranging from \$2,500–\$7,500, based on performance on the scorecard.

High-performing principals may also become mentor principals to colleagues and earn an additional award for this role.

YEARS 1-4 HIGHLIGHTS

- Developed new teacher and principal evaluation systems incorporating multiple measures, including student growth
- Focused on recruiting educators to hard-to-staff subjects and schools
- Revamped teacher/principal induction and mentoring
- Established career ladder opportunities for effective teachers
- Aligned professional development to new evaluation systems
- Designed and implemented first- and second-grade math assessments aligned with Common Core
- Created a comprehensive data management system

YEAR 5 OUTLOOK

As we enter the fifth and final year of the TIF 3 grant, we are focused on sustainability. We have integrated each of the TIF core elements into the rest of the organization. For instance, our assessment department, in collaboration with Curriculum & Instruction is designing the summative assessments in various content areas. We have shifted (or are shifting) all TIF staff to our baseline budget. The biggest project we have underway is to build and implement our online evaluation system that is integrated with Human Resource human capital data systems.

SUSTAINABILITY

SPS has implemented each of the TIF strategies into our collective bargaining agreements for both our teachers and our principals. We have implemented new teacher and principal evaluation systems for all schools and have a career ladder program that incentivizes high-performing teachers to mentor and support colleagues. We also have a principal mentor program in place.

PERFORMANCE-BASED COMPENSATION

- Career Ladder Teachers
- Demonstration Teachers
- Mentor Teachers
- Master Teachers
- Principal Mentors
- Principal Student Achievement Awards
- Retention Stipends in our lowest performing schools