

# Richland Parish Schools Compensation Updates

## Frequently Asked Questions

April 2018

### **1. *What is the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant program?***

The Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) is a federal program used to support the development and implementation of performance-based teacher compensation systems in high-need schools. The goals of the program include:

- Improving student achievement by increasing teacher effectiveness through the recruitment and retention of effective teachers.
- Reforming teacher compensation systems so that teachers are rewarded for student achievement.
- Increasing the number of effective teachers teaching poor, minority, and disadvantaged students.
- Creating sustainable performance-based compensation and career pathway systems.

School districts receiving TIF grant funds will create a new approach that supports educational excellence and our instructional outcomes with students. Richland's grant period runs from October 2016 – September 2021.

### **2. *Are we able to reapply for the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant in five years?***

The Louisiana Department of Education is only able to reapply for the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant if the United States Department of Education decides to offer the grant application again. Historically, it has been offered every five years; however, this is dependent on Congressional funding and appropriations. Unfortunately, we cannot predict what will be available in five years. In the meantime, the Richland design team is planning for short-term and long-term compensation improvement opportunities.

### **3. *How will TIF money be distributed? Are any funds going to be released next year?***

TIF grant money will fund teacher compensation in TIF schools during the years of the grant. Long-term compensation system improvements will need to be developed and piloted to ensure sustainability.

### **4. *Why are we making compensation improvements?***

Revisions to our compensation system will allow us to recruit, reward and retain more effective teachers, providing a link between rigorous standards, accountability for student achievement, and professional growth.

### **5. *Who were the representatives on the Performance Demand-Based Compensation (PDBC) - design team?***

The PDBC – design team was composed of parish representatives at the school and district level, including:

- Shelly Crawford (Title One Supervisor)
- Robyne Crow (Director of Personal)
- Rebecca Freeland (Talent Pipeline Lead)
- Ashley Malmay (MES Teacher)
- Regina Mekus (Business Manager)

# Richland Parish Schools Compensation Updates

## Frequently Asked Questions

April 2018

- Nettie Ranel (RJHS Principal)
- Joan Rhodes (DES Principal)
- Beverly Smart (SES Teacher)
- Connie Williams (MHS/MJH Principal)
- Dr. Samuel Williams (RHS Teacher)

Each of these representatives attended multiple design meetings and worked to develop improvement recommendations specifically tailored for their schools.

**6. *How will student data affect a teacher's reward opportunity?***

Student outcomes account for approximately half of a teacher's final performance evaluation rating. According to Louisiana requirements, a teacher will receive a score of 1 – 4 for their "teacher performance" according to their school's observation rubric. A teacher will then receive a student growth score of "Ineffective", "Effective Emerging", "Effective Proficient", or "Highly Effective" expected growth based on their students' outcomes according to a value-added measure and/or the student learning target (SLT) process. The combination of these two scores will be used to determine a teacher's eligibility for a compensation reward opportunity.

**7. *What is a value-added model (VAM) and how is it used to measure student performance?***

Value-added models are a way to measure how much a teacher contributes to student learning and is one of the best available ways to measure teachers' contributions to student gains. This methodology is the product of nearly three decades of research by leading academics and economists, and has been used by states and school districts since the 1990s. It accounts for factors beyond a teacher's control such as a student's past academic performance. That means teachers get the credit they deserve for helping *all* their students improve – even those who start the year far behind grade-level. While test scores can't tell us everything about a teacher's performance, they provide a useful objective indicator of a teacher's contribution to students' learning.

**8. *How will student performance be measured in grades and subjects without value-added data?***

Student learning targets (SLT) will be used to measure student performance in grades and subjects without value-added data. SLTs are set by teachers and their school leaders and are used to measure student's growth in tested grades and subjects over the course of an academic term (e.g. a semester or year). All teachers currently write two SLT's per year, based on grade-level, subject, and student starting points. When the course has concluded, evaluators will review final assessment data, and determine whether students have met the SLT. For teachers who do not receive a value-added score and teach a tested grade and subject, SLT's with a highly effective rating will be used to determine if the teacher is eligible for compensation rewards

**9. *Who defines what an acceptable amount of student "growth" is? How is "growth" defined for each individual student?***

# Richland Parish Schools Compensation Updates

## Frequently Asked Questions

April 2018

- Value-Added (VAM) Process: The teacher's score is determined by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) and is based on their students' outcome scores as compared to those of students of similar backgrounds.
- Student Learning Target (SLT) Process: The teacher and school leader work together to collect baseline student data and set the growth targets for their students, taking into account the students' starting point and past performance. The teacher and the school leader will work together to determine a feasible yet rigorous amount of growth for each student. Targets with a final rating of "Highly Effective" will be turned into the district and scored with a rubric by a committee to determine eligibility for compensation rewards.

**10. How do rewards take into account that many teachers contribute to a student's success?**

Over the course of a school year, several teachers and staff members contribute to a student's success. All teachers are currently evaluated under our system. The objective of the compensation rewards is to give each individual teacher an understanding of their own contributions to student learning. As a result, all of the students in a teacher's class are included in that teacher's student outcomes measure. Teachers' reward opportunities are designed to target the time they spend with specific students in tested grade and subjects.

**11. Who do I reach out to if I have questions regarding compensation reward opportunities?**

If you have more questions regarding compensation reward opportunities, please feel free to reach out to your school principal or a member of the district's design team.

**12. Why are we designing a new compensation system to reward great teachers?**

Our current teacher compensation approach bases teachers' base salaries almost entirely on advanced degree and experience, with little emphasis on classroom results. As a result, teachers who do an exceptional job of ensuring their students succeed receive little financial reward for their work, if any. We wanted to use this opportunity to do a better job of connecting how much teachers earn with how well they do their jobs. Rewarding teachers for strong performance will help us retain our highest-performing teachers.

**13. When will the new compensation rewards be implemented?**

The new compensation rewards opportunities were designed for the 2017-2018 TIF cycle. All 2017-2018 compensation rewards must be expended by September 30, 2018. During SY 2018-2019 we will obtain feedback from staff across schools, incorporating their feedback into system revisions, and planning implementation for 2018-2019 and beyond.

**14. Will these opportunities affect your base salary or your bonuses?**

No, TIF funding for 2017-2018 does not affect your base salary or bi-annual sales tax bonuses.

**15. How will the new system be sustainable?**

# Richland Parish Schools Compensation Updates

## Frequently Asked Questions

April 2018

Creating an approach that is sustainable in the long term is a key goal of our work. We will use our limited compensation dollars wisely by spending them on what matters – a teacher’s performance in the classroom and their results with students. In addition to the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant, we will explore other sustainable revenue sources during 2018-2019 to make recommendations for future improvements, ensuring that we are creating a system that is financially sustainable over the long term. By tying compensation increases directly to results in the classroom, we can make sure that every dollar spent on educator compensation is an investment in student achievement.

**16. Will this change the current pay scale?**

No, short-term 2017-2018 funding does not impact the current pay scale in Richland Parish.

**17. Can we use base salary increases or one-time stipends to reward teachers for effectiveness, demand, and experience under our new compensation plan?**

As long as all three criteria are used to determine the formula for determining compensation, districts have the flexibility to determine when to reward teachers with a raise that provides a permanent increase to base pay and when to reward teachers with a one-time stipend.

**18. Can a teacher’s salary be reduced in a new compensation system under Act 1? Must stipends be maintained each year?**

Under Act 1, teacher salaries cannot be reduced from the previous year. Stipends are one-time payments and do not need to be maintained from year to year.

**19. Are districts required to make Teachers Retirement System of Louisiana contributions on teacher stipends given as part of Act 1?**

Yes, districts are required to make contributions on stipends to the Teachers Retirement System of Louisiana.