

What's New?

March 2008 Issue Forum

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality hosted its fourth Issue Forum, “From Planning to Action: Effectively Using Your Professional Development Resources,” on March 13–14, 2008, at the Ritz-Carlton–Pentagon City in Arlington, Virginia. The issue forum, held in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Education’s ESEA Title II Conference, addressed a variety of professional development topics, including moving from policy to practice, addressing partnerships and standards, and targeting professional development for new teachers or teachers of students with special needs.

Participants included regional comprehensive centers, state education agencies (SEAs), and other national organizations whose work focuses on educator quality research, policy, and practice. Several keynote speakers known for their influence in professional development as well as policy and practice also attended the event.

A series of concurrent working sessions provided state and local educational agencies the opportunity to focus on the professional development issues they grapple with as they strive to implement the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Staff from regional comprehensive centers and SEAs met in working sessions to tackle their highly qualified teacher plans. Presentation materials and an executive summary will be available shortly at <http://www.tqsource.org>.

Online Resources: Discussion Forum Launches Its First Two Topics



The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality Connection is now available [online](#). This new online resource provides links to research, policy, and practice within the following five special education topics: assessment, classroom management/behavior, inclusive practices, instructional strategies, and reading/literacy. Another feature includes an online discussion forum facilitated by Vanderbilt University. The first month’s topic, “Effective Classroom Management,” was discussed February 4–8, 2008. The second topic, discussed March 3–7, 2008, was a general overview of Response to Intervention (RTI) and was based on the *TQ Source* Tips and

Tools document “[Teacher Quality for Multitiered Interventions](#).” A summary of both discussions is now available [online](#).

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- What are the main issues to be considered when developing a pay-for-performance system? What are some examples of programs currently in place?

Our spring series on RTI continues with the following topics:

- April 7–11: Critical Assessment Skills for RTI

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality is interested in your input to ensure that the discussion board is relevant and useful for your work. Please contact Amy Potemski at amy.potemski@learningpt.org or 202-778-4589 for questions or comments.

New *TQ Source* Tips and Tools: Leadership and Response to Intervention

TQ Tips and Tools: Emerging Strategies to Enhance Educator Quality is designed to help education practitioners tap in to strategies and resources they can use to enhance teacher quality. Two new topic areas, enhancing leadership quality and teacher quality for multitiered interventions, provide additional special education information under the *TQ Source* Tips and Tools section of the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality website.

- Enhancing Leadership Quality
 - Enhancing Teacher Leadership
<http://www.tqsource.org/strategies/leadership/EnhancingTeacherLeadership%20.pdf>
 - Improving the Preparation of School and District Leaders
<http://www.tqsource.org/strategies/leadership/ImprovingLeaderPrep.pdf>
 - Building the Capacity of School Leaders to Support Teachers
<http://www.tqsource.org/strategies/atrisk/leadership.pdf>
- Improving Teacher Quality Through the Implementation of a Multitiered Intervention System:
<http://www.tqsource.org/strategies/multitieredSystems/TQMultitiered.pdf>

Stories From the Field

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality Focuses on Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) Monitoring Visits

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, through a collaborative effort with the Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center and the District of Columbia SEA, worked to determine the largest teacher quality issues that the District of Columbia SEA faces. The District of Columbia SEA monitoring visit by the U.S. Department of Education inspired this direct technical assistance.

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality staff met with the District of Columbia SEA and regional comprehensive center staff in Washington, D.C., to first discuss the types of services and resources that the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality can provide. After review of the District of Columbia SEA's HQT plan, the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality identified and documented challenges where technical assistance is needed. Some areas of concern include HQT requirements, certification requirements, and comparisons with other states. The District of Columbia SEA is determining where it will focus its efforts.

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The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality also held an informational session for states with upcoming monitoring visits by the U.S. Department of Education that are slated for a spring review of their HQT plans. The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality staff, including Elizabeth Witt from the U.S. Department of Education, provided an overview of the monitoring process during the session. As a result, staff members drafted key lessons learned for the states to consider when preparing for their visits during the next few months.

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality offers technical assistance services to any regional comprehensive center and SEA that wants assistance in preparing for its monitoring visit. Technical assistance options include the following:

- Review of a state’s HQT plan to highlight HQT challenges and provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the plan before a state monitoring visit.
- Participation in conference calls with the regional comprehensive center and state representatives to discuss HQT and equitable distribution issues before a state monitoring visit.
- Identification of resources that can assist a state in revising its HQT plan to address HQT issues either before or after a state monitoring visit.

For questions or more information, please contact Cortney Rowland at cortney.rowland@learningpt.org or 312-288-7620.

Teacher Quality Questions From the Field

Each month, the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality responds to questions and requests for information from the field. The following questions and responses were chosen for their general applicability:

- What steps have states taken to adopt professional development standards?
- What are the main issues to be considered when developing a pay-for-performance system, and what are some examples of programs currently in place?

What steps have states taken to adopt professional development standards?

The Education Commission of the States’s (ECS) [50-state database on teacher professional development](#) is a good place to start researching professional development across the states. This database provides helpful information about professional development requirements for licensure and certification or teacher evaluations, professional development providers, and more.

To answer the questions more specifically, the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality reviewed practices in the following states: California, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Washington. We found that some states specifically cited the [National Staff Development Council \(NSDC\)](#) as a source for their professional development standards; however, these states tailored the [NSDC standards](#) to fit their own model. Some states do not specifically cite the NSDC standards but share key components of them. Information can be found by navigating each state’s department of

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education or professional standards board website, depending on the agency that oversees teacher certification and professional development. The following summarizes the findings for the states:

California: On page 20 of the [California Standards for the Teaching Profession](#), the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and the California Department of Education provide their Standard for Developing as a Professional Educator. Like many states, California does not specifically cite the NSDC standards as a source; nevertheless, it does point toward [California Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment](#) as a key contributor.

Connecticut: The Connecticut State Department of Education website provides its [Overview of Connecticut's Professional Development Guidelines](#). This overview is based on the NSDC standards for professional development and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Professional Development Standards for School Leaders.

Illinois: According to the [Illinois Professional Teaching Standards](#), “the teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates how choices and actions affect students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community and actively seeks opportunities to grow professionally”(p. 2). Specifically, teachers are charged with collaborating with colleagues or other professionals and participating in professional dialogue for problem solving, generating new ideas, and participating in continuous learning.

Maryland: Professional development in Maryland falls under the Division of Certification and Accreditation, which implements the Redesign of Teacher Education and sponsors a statewide professional development network. To learn more, visit [Maryland's professional development schools \(PDS\)](#) website, where you can find an implementation guide and manual, along with PDS standards.

Massachusetts: On the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website, the details of professional development requirements for teachers are provided through the [Massachusetts 2001 State Plan for Professional Development](#). The state has identified four priorities for district and statewide professional development. The plan calls for districts, institutions of higher education, associations, and other professional development providers to focus their staff-development resources, structures, time, and funding on the following priorities: teacher knowledge of the subject matter and school curriculum, teacher familiarity with state learning standards and curriculum frameworks, expansion of teachers' pedagogical knowledge, and the raising of expectations for student achievement.

New Jersey: The New Jersey Department of Education professional development standards web page specifically mentions that its standards are based on NSDC, Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, and ISLLC standards. For more detailed information, see the [Standards for Required Professional Development of Teachers](#), [Professional Standards and Learning unit](#), and [Professional Development for Teachers Initiative](#).

New York: For all general information about professional development, please visit the [Office of Planning and Professional Development](#) website. Also available in multiple formats is [A Framework for Professional Development](#), which details what is expected of teachers and professional development providers. These standards do not specifically cite NSDC standards; however, they appear to be similar.

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Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania's [Act 48](#) requires continuing professional education for its teachers; this continuing professional education is linked to certification standards in the state. Also see [2007 Professional Education Guidelines Questions and Answers](#).

Rhode Island: The [Office of Educator Quality and Certification](#) website offers information on professional development in Rhode Island. The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website also provides a listing of the [Rhode Island Quality Standards for Professional Development](#). Like many states, there is no specific mention of the NSDC standards as an influence; however, the language is similar to that of the NSDC website.

Washington: The [Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#) website offers information on professional development in the state of Washington. Also, the *Washington State Professional Development Planning Guide* located on that page outlines the professional development standards. The guide was developed internally; there is no mention of NSDC standards.

**What are the main issues to be considered when developing a pay-for-performance system?
 What are some examples of programs currently in place?**

Pay-for-performance programs are gaining momentum in recruiting and retaining teachers, particularly in hard-to-staff areas, and improving student achievement to close success gaps. Interest is high: Twenty governors outlined teacher compensation as one of their major education issues in their 2005 *State of the State* addresses.

Pay-for-performance programs yield the following benefits:

- Connect teacher compensation to progress in student achievement.
- Provide incentives for engaging in professional development specifically related to school or district goals.
- Attract and retain effective teachers in areas with low-income families, other hard-to-staff schools, or high-needs subject areas such as mathematics and science.

The federally funded [Teacher Incentive Fund](#) offered competitive grants to SEAs, local education agencies, and nonprofit organizations for the design and implementation of performance-based compensation systems. These grants help districts develop effective models for improving teacher compensation systems.

Many issues need to be considered in designing and implementing a pay-for-performance program. The following issues are categorized by general, district-level, and state-level examples.

General Examples

Measures of Teacher Performance. How teacher performance is measured for performance-based pay varies by program. Performance-based programs should always include school and individual student growth as performance measures. Issues include how school and individual student growth are measured as well as the extent to which states and districts have the data systems in place to fairly and adequately produce such measures. Programs also should include measures pertaining to teacher evaluation or career advancement. One

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example would be in-class observation of a teacher by an evaluation team. This team should consist of more than one individual, and all evaluators should be well trained in the evaluation method and use a common rubric to rate the teacher's performance.

Types of Additional Compensation. Many performance-based compensation programs include both salary advances and one-time bonuses. Salary advances typically are based on a teacher's performance through student achievement or growth and other evaluation measures, as previously outlined. Additional salary also may be offered for teaching in a high-needs subject such as mathematics or science. One-time bonuses tend to be offered for context-specific needs such as teaching in an at-risk school. The advantage of offering additional compensation as a bonus, in this circumstance, is that a teacher who decides not to continue teaching in a high-needs school will not retain additional monetary reward by being higher on a salary scale. If the goal of a particular pay-for-performance program is to recruit teachers for shortage areas (e.g., mathematics and science) or to teach in at-risk schools, these additional methods of compensation may be considered.

Funding. Funding for performance-pay programs can come from a variety of sources. For example, one of the performance-pay programs in Texas is federally funded using Title II and Title V funds, whereas another performance-pay program in Texas is entirely funded by the state. Comprehensive and sustained funding is vital for the success of the program.

Teacher Buy-In. Performance-based pay programs will have the most success when they are designed and implemented in collaboration with teachers. Involving teachers associations and teachers unions will help to ensure program success in communication, buy-in, and long-term impact.

Outcomes/Impact/Effectiveness. Few, if any, performance-based pay programs have solid results to share in program impact or effectiveness. Implementing an ongoing and systematic evaluation mechanism is important for monitoring pay-for-performance programs. Furthermore, the evaluation must correspond to the program's goals. For example, common goals include increased student achievement and increased teacher retention, which would require different data for evaluation.

Select District-Level Examples

Denver Public Schools (ProComp). ProComp was designed as a partnership between the Denver Classroom Teachers Association and the Denver Public Schools. Teachers are eligible to receive awards based on knowledge and skills, professional evaluation, market incentives, and student growth. Teachers set their objectives at the beginning of the year in consultation with the principal. At the end of the year, a rubric helps the teacher and principal fairly assess performance against objectives. The program is funded by a levy approved by Denver voters in 2005. For more information, visit the [ProComp](#) Web page.

Guilford County's Mission Possible. Mission Possible combines multiple components to recruit and retain highly effective teachers and administrators for the ultimate goal of increasing student achievement in schools with critical needs in North Carolina. An algebra teacher who successfully raises student achievement in one of 20 eligible high-poverty schools can earn as much as \$14,000 in additional pay. Principals in target schools can also receive performance awards if their schools meet adequate yearly progress requirements. Teachers and administrators at selected schools receive ongoing specialized training, extensive collaborative support, and

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recruitment incentives; have reduced class sizes; and become eligible for performance incentives. The program is funded by a combination of local and federal dollars. For more information, visit the Guilford County Schools [Mission Possible](#) Web page.

Houston Independent School District. In January 2006, Houston became the nation’s largest school district to offer teacher performance pay. The plan includes three different strands, each worth a maximum of \$1,000 for core-subject teachers and \$500 for noncore-subject teachers (e.g., teachers of electives, counselors, and librarians) if their students demonstrate strong progress on state and national achievement tests compared with students in other similar classrooms and schools. Teachers can earn additional 10 percent bonuses for perfect attendance or 5 percent bonuses if they miss no more than two days of school. Funding for this program was approved by the district board of education.

Select State-Level Examples

Florida’s Merit Award Program. Florida’s state-level Merit Award Program, originally known as Special Teachers Are Rewarded (STAR), was opposed by many in Florida, including teachers unions. Awards for the Merit Award Program are determined by individual or instructional team performance and are based on student performance and teacher evaluation. Districts must submit plans to participate in the Merit Award Program. The program is state funded. For more information, visit the Florida Department of Education [Merit Award Program](#) Web page.

Minnesota’s Quality Compensation (Q Comp). Quality Compensation for Teachers, or Q Comp, was proposed by Governor Tim Pawlenty and was enacted by the legislature in July 2005. Q Comp is based on the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) and has five components:

- Career ladders for teachers
- Job-embedded professional development
- Instructional observations and standards-based assessments
- Measures to determine student growth
- Alternative teacher compensation or performance pay

Districts, schools, and charter schools must apply to participate in Q Comp. For more information, visit the Minnesota Department of Education [Q Comp](#) Web page.

Texas Educator Excellence Awards Program. The Texas Educator Excellence Awards Program is made of three programs: Governor’s Educator Excellence Grant (GEEG); Texas Educators Excellence Program (TEEG), and an unnamed program (documented in HB 1 as Subchapter O) that will focus on Texas districts. The GEEG is federally funded and targets high-poverty, high-achieving schools. The TEEG is funded by the state and also targets economically disadvantaged, high-performing schools. The third program, known now as Subchapter O, is a district-level program that is funded by the state and will begin in FY 09. For more information, visit the Texas Education Agency [Educator’s Excellence Award Program](#) Web page.

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Resources

This list of resources is divided into four sections: selected resources from the Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) online library, publications that focus on alternative teacher pay in general, publications that concentrate on specific issues within the alternative teacher pay reform effort, and helpful websites. These references are supplemental to the references included in the [CECR online library](#).

Selected Resources From the CECR Online Library

Azordegan, J., Byrnett, P., Campbell, K., Greenman, J., & Coulter, T. (2005). *Diversifying teacher compensation*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States. Retrieved March 10, 2008, from <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/65/83/6583.pdf> (This publication is listed in annotated bibliography in CECR online library.)

Wyman, W., & Allen, M. (2001). *Pay-for-performance: Key questions and lessons from five current models*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States. Retrieved March 10, 2008, from <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/28/30/2830.htm> (This publication is listed in annotated bibliography in CECR online library.)

General Publications

Farkas, S., Johnson, J., & Duffett, A. (with Moye, L., & Vine, J.). (2003). *Stand by me: What teachers really think about unions, merit pay and other professional matters*. New York: Public Agenda. Retrieved March 10, 2008, from http://www.publicagenda.org/research/pdfs/stand_by_me.pdf

Goldhaber, D. (2006). *Teacher pay reforms: The political implications of recent research*. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress. Retrieved March 10, 2008, from http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2006/12/pdf/teacher_pay_report.pdf

Heneman, H., III, Milanowski, A., & Kimball, S. (2007). *Teacher performance pay: Synthesis of plans, research, and guidelines for practice*. Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education. Retrieved March 10, 2008, from <http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/cpre/publications/RB-46%20FINAL%20FOR%20PRINT.pdf>

National Institute for Excellence in Teaching. (2007). *Creating a successful performance compensation system for educators*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved March 10, 2008, from http://www.talentedteachers.org/pubs/successful_performance_pay_july_2007.pdf

Issue Papers

Baber, A. (2007). *Teacher evaluation in diversified teacher compensation systems*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States and Joyce Foundation. Retrieved March 10, 2008, from <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/74/78/7478.pdf>

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Kaufmann, J. (2007). *Student performance assessment in diversified teacher compensation systems*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States and Joyce Foundation. Retrieved March 10, 2008, from <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/74/76/7476.pdf>

Martin, A. (2007). *The use of diversified teacher compensation systems to address equitable teacher distribution*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States and Joyce Foundation. Retrieved March 10, 2008, from <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/74/77/7477.pdf>

Palumbo, C. (2007). *Funding diversified teacher compensation systems*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States and Joyce Foundation. Retrieved March 10, 2008, from <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/74/75/7475.pdf>

Helpful Websites

- [Center for Educator Compensation Reform \(CECR\)](#)
- [Consortium for Policy Research in Education \(CPRE\)](#)
- [Education Commission of the States \(ECS\)](#)
- [National Center on Performance Incentives](#)
- [National Institute for Excellence in Teaching Teacher Advancement Program \(TAP\)](#)

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