

Identifying and Sharing Best Practices From High-Performing Charter Schools

Slides 1 and 2

PEGGIE: Welcome. This is Peggie Garcia from the National Charter School Resource Center. Welcome to our March webinar, *Identifying and Sharing Best Practices From High-Performing Charter Schools*. The National Charter School Resource Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education. We're pleased for this particular webinar to cohost the webinar with the Center for Educator Compensation Reform [CECR]. I will turn it over to Ellen Cushing from the center in a moment. She'll give a brief introduction and then we'll turn it over to the EPIC charter team for our main presentation this afternoon.

Before I do that, let me give everyone a quick orientation to our webinar platform. On the left-hand side of the platform, there is a chat window. Please go ahead and enter your questions at any time during the webinar; we'll keep a running list and ask all the questions during the Q & A at the end of the webinar. You can listen to the audio portion either through your computer or over the phone. For this particular webinar today, we're strongly encouraging people to listen over your computers if you can. If you do have audio problems and you need to join by phone, the conference number and participant code are in the chat. We will be playing two short videos towards the end of the webinar, and for those two short videos, you'll have to be listening through your computer. Please remember to turn your computer volume up so you'll be able to hear the videos. Below the chat window is the file share window, and there is a pdf there of the PowerPoint slides. If you did not get the reminder I sent this morning, you can go ahead and click on the EPIC's slides pdf and then the "save to my computer button." You can download those on your computer, so you can print out the PowerPoint if you'd like to take notes right on it. There are a few participant notes underneath the PowerPoint slide.

To ask a question again, please enter your question in the chat box to the left at any time during the webinar. You can use the full-screen option on the top right to make the file bigger; this also applies to the videos when we play them later. You can always use that full-screen option if it's not big enough for you. If you listen over your computer, please note that your bandwidth will affect the quality of the audio. To hear the highest quality audio possible, please use a wired connection for your computer as opposed to wireless. Close all applications other than Adobe that are running on your computer, and clear your browser's cache and cookies.



Finally, the webinar is being recorded and an archive will be available about three business days after the webinar at the website that you see on the bottom of your screen.

I'd like to welcome everyone. I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Ellen Cushing now. Ellen Cushing is one of my colleagues at American Institutes for Research [AIR]. She is a research and policy analyst who assists states and districts as they develop teacher and leader evaluation systems that align to state and federal policies. She's also the lead for the Center for Educator Compensation Reform, and I'm going to invite her to share a little bit about that center with you now. Welcome, Ellen.

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ELLEN: Thank you, Peggie. First, I want to say thank you to the National Charter School Resource Center for this opportunity to share some information on CECR with all of you and to give an overview of the resources that the Center for Educator Compensation Reform can provide. As Peggie just mentioned, my name is Ellen Cushing and I'm a research and policy analyst at American Institutes for Research. We're going to start this part of the presentation by giving a quick overview of the center, or as we refer to it, CECR. CECR is comprised of five organizations; Westat, AIR, J. Koppich and Associates, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Synergy Enterprises. The contract was awarded in 2006, and there are two main objectives of our work. The first is to support cohort 1 and 2 TIF [Teacher Incentive Fund] grantees, and the second is to raise national awareness on alternative compensation programs. In terms of how we provide the support for the TIF grantees, this includes technical assistance, monitoring the implementation of their grant, and developing additional resources and [AUDIO SKIP] on our CECR website for both grantees and nongrantees to use. In this presentation, we'll walk you through some of those free resources that CECR can provide you on our website.

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The CECR website is located at www.CECR.ed.gov, and this first slide gives you an overview of the home page of CECR. It's divided into four main topic areas:

- The first is New to Performance-Based Compensation.
- The second is Development and Implementation.
- The third is National Perspective.
- The fourth is TIF Grantees.

These four [AUDIO SKIP] through the implementation of the TIF grant. In the middle of the page to the right of that picture, we also have a section called What's New, and this is where we highlight any new papers, presentations, newsletters, and tools that CECR has produced. Under the What's New section, there are a series of four boxes that correspond to those four sections that I have just mentioned. These boxes provide a quick overview of the information you'll see in each of the four sections that I mentioned.

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If you click on the first section, New to Performance- Based Compensation, you'll see this page. New to Performance-Based Compensation provides a general overview of the information a school or district would need to implement a performance-based program. The resources on the right give you general background information and should be reviewed before considering moving ahead. This includes information such as an implementation checklist, a guide to implementation, emerging issues papers, case summaries, research syntheses, annotated bibliographies, presentations, and harvesting papers. The graphic in the middle represents the six areas of focus—Data Quality and Data Systems, Strategies to Support the Workforce, Communication and Stakeholder Engagement, Value- Added and Other Measures, Program Evaluation, and Sustainability—and it describes how all of these six areas of focus need to work together to develop and implement performance-based compensation successfully.

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If you click on any one of these areas of focus, you'll get to the next section, which is Development and Implementation.

Again, these are the six areas of focus:

- Data Quality and Data Systems provides guidance and support on planning and implementing high-quality data systems.
- Strategies to Support the Workforce offers information on educator evaluation systems, professional development, and human development strategies that can be used to increase student learning.
- Communication and Stakeholder Engagement identifies resources and supports for effective communication, and this communication is among teachers, administrators, unions, parents, the community, and the media.

- Value-Added and Other Measures shares resources on the definition, design, and review of value-added models and other growth models that can be used.
- Program Evaluation highlights information on how to use formative and summative assessments to evaluate and improve performance-based compensation programs.
- Sustainability shares information on the alignment and financial issues that are often associated with sustaining a performance-based compensation system.

If you click on any one of these areas of focus, you get an overview of the kind of information that's included under these subsections.

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For instance, in Strategies to Support the Workforce, we provide information called overview materials, which link to those materials that were mentioned on the New to Performance-Based Compensation tab. We also have presentations that include videos, podcasts, and slide presentations from experts and people in the field who are implementing performance-based- compensation systems. We also have tools and products from other states and districts that might be useful for someone. Finally, papers include relevant annotated bibliographies, harvesting papers, and emerging issues reports.

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On the third tab that I had mentioned called National Perspectives, it allows users to get a high-level overview of performance-based compensation systems. The national map is just one of those resources highlighted in this section. The map is interactive and links to other profiles of educator compensation reforms that are under way around the country. The information provided in this map is not just limited to TIF grantees, but instead includes all programs. The spaces that are highlighted in green indicate that we have either a state or a district profile within that state.

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If you click on Texas, for example, you will see a list of all of the profiles that have been developed for Texas or districts within Texas. The profiles are marked in one of three ways: the first is with a green circle, a T, or a T3. The green circle indicates that this is not a TIF grantee, the T indicates that it's a TIF grantee that's part of cohort 1 or 2, and T3 indicates that it's a cohort 3 grantee. If you click on just one of the profiles, you'll see the

kinds of information that we include for every single one of the profiles that was in the map.

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This example for Aldine Independent School District gives you an idea, so each of the profiles is divided into three main sections: a program overview, program information, and select articles and reports.

- The program overview synthesizes the program highlighted and gives basic information on how the program operates.
- The program information also links to any information that is specific to the program; for example, any communication material, links to rubrics, or overview materials that would be useful for the reader to learn more about.
- The final section links to any news articles, evaluation reports, or papers that are related to the program.
- For TIF grantees, we include one more section called related CECR resources, and this section links profiles to any of the other sections of the website including the case summaries, TIF profiles, or guide to chapters that are related to the profile.

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Another resource available through CECR in the National Perspective section is the online library. This online library holds a collection of papers, reports, and research articles on a variety of alternative compensation topics, and the library includes both research and nonresearch publications. Every month, CECR researchers read and vet articles to add to the online library to ensure that the most recent articles are included. Users can search for articles based on the title, author, organization, or educator compensation issue area, which are all listed in this slide. The publication type includes case summaries, rigorous research, and perspective pieces. They can also search by publication date and the geographical focus of the article.

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With this, I would like to say that I've highlighted just a couple of the resources that CECR provides. The website really has a wealth of information for states and districts interested in performance-based compensation, and we encourage you to look through the website. If you have any questions, feel free to e-mail me; my information is provided on this slide. Also, on the website, we have a Contact Us page where you

can submit any questions that you have specific to performance-based compensation programs. With that, I can turn it back to you, Peggie.

PEGGIE: Great. Ellen, thank you so much. I also understand that you have an upcoming webinar that will feature a member of the charter school community.

ELLEN: That's true. We have a webinar scheduled for the 29th. We will be featuring [E.L. Haynes Charter School](#) and the work that they've done with developing an aligned performance management system, which includes compensation but also evaluation and professional development.

PEGGIE: Wonderful. Amanda DeFrancisco just put in a link where you can go ahead and look for more information on that webinar, and there's information about how to register. We encourage you to join that webinar as well. Thank you, Ellen; that was very helpful and you provided a wealth of resources for the charter school community.

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Now, I'm going to briefly introduce Allison Jack and David Negrón from the EPIC National Charter School Consortium. Allison Jack is the program director of the consortium at New Leaders. Previously, she worked in Chicago, first at the Charter School Resource Center at Leadership for Quality Education, in the governor's office, and finally in the Office of New Schools at Chicago Public Schools. Allison started her career in education as a Teach for America core member in Compton, California, and then also taught on the South Side of Chicago.

David Negrón is the manager of the National Charter School Consortium at New Leaders. Previously, he worked at REACH: Rewarding Achievement where he co-managed Advanced Placement preparation sessions for approximately 4,000 students from 31 New York City high schools. Welcome, Allison and David. I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to you.

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ALLISON: Great. Thank you, Peggie. Thank you to all of you for being here today. We're really appreciative of the opportunity to tell you about the work that we've been doing for the past five years with our TIF 1 grant. Today, we're going to tell you how we have identified high-gain charter schools and documented their effective practices, and we'll also introduce you to the

EPIC knowledge system where all of these practices are housed. We're going to try to make it as interactive as possible with [AUDIO SKIP] 56 participants, but [AUDIO SKIP] good discussion over the chat and we're interested to hear what you think about what we're doing.

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First, I want to give you a little background on New Leaders. In 2006, our organization New Leaders, which was then called New Leaders for New Schools, applied for three federal TIF grants—one for charters, which is the one we'll talk about today. We also have TIF grants in D.C. and Memphis. For those of you not familiar with New Leaders, our organization started in 2000 and our mission is to create successful schools by training future school leaders as well as collaborating with our partner school systems to ensure the conditions that are necessary for a principal to be successful. Since 2000, we've trained nearly 800 school leaders in 12 urban locations across the country, and we're impacting nearly a quarter of a million students a year. That's who we are.

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New Leaders saw TIF as a way to recognize and reward educators in high-gain schools, but more important for the organization was to learn what these highly effective school leaders were doing to increase student achievement and to inform our core programs, which is training principals. Our five-year TIF grant, which sadly runs out at the end of September, has allowed New Leaders to expand the number of schools from which we could learn, and what we have learned is all on the EPIC knowledge system, which we'll tell you about. The system has been live for almost four years. It is actually password-protected right now; grant partners and New Leaders staff and graduates have access. As we end our grant period, we're talking with many potential partners and funders to continue this important work of documenting best practices. While we wish it could be open source, and maybe at some point hopefully it will be, we're not at that point yet. But we are going to be able to offer everyone on the call one-time access, and we'll have that website at the end of the presentation. We are in conversations, as I said, and we're really not sure what EPIC is going to look like post-TIF, but for those of you who are interested in what you see today, we hope that you'll contact us. We will be figuring out ways for schools to gain access as we figure out what it's going to look like—a lot of uncertainty there.

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I want to talk for a minute about how EPIC fits with New Leaders. New Leaders is a national leader in both research and practice around the principal actions that drive student achievement gains. As I said, EPIC is allowing New Leaders another source for learning about what this looks like. New Leaders also has an extensive RAND evaluation going on with our 11 cohorts of principals in schools right now; we also do a lot of internal evaluation. We've created something called the UEF, the Urban Excellence Framework, which describes the leadership actions that we believe are critical for driving breakthrough student achievement gains. All of this feeds into how we develop our principals, how we develop our leadership development programs, which are programs that we offer for non-new leaders in our partner districts. Also, it determines what recommendations we make to education and policy decision makers.

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Now I'm going to get into EPIC. EPIC, the Effective Practice Incentive Community, does two things; first, we financially reward educators in high-gains schools who share their effective practices with us. Mostly, we have focused on leadership practices since we are New Leaders. What we have captured on video is the context and the steps different schools and school leaders have taken to tackle the challenges around data, coaching, supporting teachers, running meetings, building teams, leading adults—the five million things that a good principal has to be able to do. The goal is not to say that we're providing the silver bullet because, sadly, we all know there isn't one in our business, but really sharing what has worked for one school so that as schools tackle that, as principals tackle that problem, they really have a place to go to see what other schools are [AUDIO SKIP] was that free from bureaucratic rule as a mandate, charters would become laboratories of innovation and share their practices so that all schools could learn from them and improve. While this hasn't happened, depending on who you talk to and to the level it should, we think that EPIC is really a step in a right direction in sharing those practices.

Now, we want to do a quick poll. We'd like to hear from the group. I know that we have some school leaders on and then we have some other charter people, but if you are a school-based person, we'd like to hear from you. How often do you share your school's successful practices with other schools and groups? Is this sharing happening? So, it's sometimes happening. That's good to know. We think ... our hypothesis is one of the reasons it's not happening more is because there's not a vehicle for it. We hope we can be that. We have another poll. This is not about how often

you share out; this is actually asking about how often do you learn from other charter leaders? Again, sometimes. There's some of this going on, that's actually... Look, there's a lot going on.

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EPIC is a little bit of a complex program. I'm just going to tell you the six main steps that we go through in our program.

- First, charter schools apply to be in EPIC by submitting an application and three years of state test score data. Sadly, we're done recruiting schools to EPIC since we recruited our last cohort last summer—and David is going to tell you about our cohort 5 that was just announced on March 8.
- After we get that data, we work with [Mathematica Policy Research](#) to identify the schools with the highest gains, using a value-added model.
- Third, we award financial incentives to educators in these high-gains schools.
- Fourth, we investigate and document their effective practice.
- The fifth thing we do is we're creating case studies and practice profiles that are enabling us to learn from what's working in these schools.
- Then finally, our most recent work—and we'll talk a little more about this—is we're developing leadership and training around this effective practice content.

I'm sure everyone wants to know how schools win EPIC. I wanted to do a poll here, but it's going to be hard. We use a value-added model, which we hear a lot about now. I'd like to know from the group: What's your understanding of a value-added model?

PEGGIE: Allison, I just put it on the screen, so I can narrate for you. Go ahead and click in. How well do you understand value-added assessments? Very little, somewhat, moderately well, or very well? It looks like about half, very little: about a third, somewhat; and about 20 percent, moderately well. The percentages are changing a little bit, but 4 percent, very well.

ALLISON: I'm glad I have my colleague Mary McCarty with us today. She's more of an expert on value-added, and I'm going to go through it a little bit and then we'll take questions at the end. But do you want to have the disclaimer that neither of us are statisticians or econometricians? Just FYI.

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Schools win EPIC awards based on a value-added score on student achievement growth on state reading and math tests. Our value-added model is unique in that we're comparing schools from across states, which we think that we're the only people doing that with charter schools. To compare schools across states, you need to control for the difficulty of the test, so our model needs to do that. We look at, or Mathematica looks at, the statewide NAEP [National Assessment of Educational Progress] scores to look for distributions across states. If you look at this, it is a very basic look at value-added if you were to compare schools based on gains or based on proficiency. If you look at this chart right here, the gray bar is proficiency. In 2008 and 2009, that school had not met proficiency, but in 2010 they have. If you're thinking this is a school I want to learn from—they're not doing that great yet, but their trajectory is in the right direction—that might be a school that you're interested in looking at.

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As we go to the next slide, this is a little more of a complicated slide. If you look at graph one, you see that shows comparing school A and school B on their standardized tests, so school A has higher test scores. If you're looking at their reading score gains, you see that the reading score gains for school B are really more impressive. The way that we do that is ... What a value-added model does is it looks at test score gains from previous grades to predict the growth students are likely to have in a given year. The model predicts based on lots of things like the things that you see in this table: enrollment, free and reduced-price lunch, growth. We look at their NAEP, the difficulty of the test, and what is the prediction, based on what those kids have done before? What kind of growth should they be having? The schools that win EPIC are the schools that make much more gain than the predicted gain. We think this is a really important model to use, especially when you're looking at schools from very different places, different sizes, different demographics, and different tests. This puts schools on an equal playing field. That's why we use the value-added model. Now, I'm going to turn it over to David and he's going to talk about our winners, our most recent winners.

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DAVID: Thank you, Allison. As Allison mentioned earlier, we are excited that we recently announced the cohort 5 award-winning schools for the EPIC National Charter School Consortium. Based on the EPIC value-added model that Allison just discussed, we awarded 14 charter schools for

driving the highest student achievement gains. If you look at the slide right now, the three marked in gold—those are the three highest ranked schools among the 179 schools in cohort 5. If you look at the silver gain schools, those are the next 11 highest ranking schools among the 179 schools. This year, EPIC award-winning principals, assistant principals, teachers, and instructional aides will be given financial awards totaling an estimated \$1.1 million in exchange for sharing the effective practices that contributed to those student achievement gains. This is a TIF mandate that EPIC awards are given directly to educators and not schools.

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Moving on to the next slide, I want to go over some of the significant EPIC charter school numbers. Over the five years of the charter grant, we are proud to say that 384 charter schools participated in 29 states. If you look at the slide, you can see how many charter schools from each state participated in at least one of our five programs. The biggest charter school state, California, as you can see, had 78 charter schools participate over five EPIC cohorts. We also had charter schools from Texas, Florida, D.C., Ohio, Michigan, New York, and Illinois. Massachusetts schools were overrepresented among the EPIC award winners, with 26 of the 97 EPIC award winners from Massachusetts. In fact, we're happy to say that Match and Community Day charter schools in Massachusetts won all five cohorts. This shows that schools can consistently drive student achievement gains among their students. One final fact is that we do have a significant number of independent award-winning schools, with 61 of the 97 charter awards going to independent schools. Now that you have a good understanding of how EPIC identifies award-winning schools and who has won EPIC awards, I'll turn it back over to Allison to talk about the EPIC investigation and analysis process.

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ALLISON: Now we come to probably what's the hardest part of what we do, which is trying to figure out what it is in these schools driving these dramatic gains. We do this all by looking at it through the lens of our Urban Excellence Framework, which has categories for principal actions. This is really challenging work and we work very closely with our school leadership teams to do this. One thing that we have found that was a very positive finding for us is that this practice, this investigation and analysis, has really been a great experience for the schools. They have found that taking the time to reflect and codify what they're doing is a worthwhile process and a nice contrast to what so many principals spend their time doing, which is focusing on the negative. So, it's really been a great experience. If we can

just take a minute for you to read this quote from our friend Claudette Yarborough in San Antonio, Texas: “ The Effective Practice [process] pushed us to ask ourselves a lot of questions as a leadership team that we have never asked ourselves before. The process was so good we would have paid for it.” We actually think this quote is funny because our whole premise behind EPIC is that we’re paying educators to share, and here’s Claudette saying we would have paid for this process. That was a very positive finding for us.

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I’m going to get a little more into the detail of our investigation and analysis process. We worked for the first three years with School Works—some of you might be familiar with this well-respected school evaluation firm. A lot of what they do is renewals; they work with authorizers around renewals. With us, they helped us with how are we going to pinpoint this practice that we want to profile that’s working for this school? The first thing we do is we start with an orientation for the schools to let them know how the process is going to work, then we ask them to identify and reflect on two practices that they believe are driving gain, and we ask for them to fill out a practice profile. We then either schedule a visit or a call to go deeper into the practice, and we begin to ask for supporting documents. For our video case studies, we go with a team to the school and meet with all of the stakeholders and observe practices throughout the school for what we call the “practice analysis phase.” This is where the team goes in for two days and they meet with as many stakeholders as they can—parents, teachers, students, the leadership team. They do interviews, they observe, and then they pool all of their data and triangulate to try to figure out what is that leadership theme running through the school that other schools could learn from? Once the practice is distilled and the critical content for the video is determined, a videographer goes back and films, then the editing process begins.

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An EPIC case study is like a traditional case study in that it has four parts:

- How did they plan?
- How did they implement?
- What are their reflections?
- How will they continue to adapt and improve the practice?

This is an example from Aspires Monarch Academy in Oakland, California, and the featured practice is on building structures to support data talks.

You can see in the beginning it's identifying the need, building the structures, getting the staff in place, implementing, codifying the structure—what are the protocols around the data talk? In the reflection chapter, she talks about how she has some big turnover, so she needs to think about why did I have this turnover? How can I make this process so it works better for teachers and their work/life balance? Then, adapting and improving, and in that chapter, she talks about how they start to use video to train people on the data talk protocol, so it's going through that whole process with the school.

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Here at New Leaders, we're using EPIC resources in a lot of different ways. We now have over 250 case studies and practice profiles in the knowledge system. First, we're using it in our Emerging Leaders Program—this is a new program at New Leaders—which is our pipeline. The year before individuals go into our principal training program, they're in the Emerging Leaders Program, and that program is based around EPIC [AUDIO SKIP] leadership trainings that we do with sitting assistant principals and principals in some of our partner districts. We also have been doing a lot of webinars using these videos. Our newest initiative is something called a master class, and we're hoping that anyone who this sounds interesting to will definitely contact us to get on the e-mail list for this. It's in a webinar format, but it's very conversational in tone and they tend to be pretty small. They're led by an EPIC-winning charter school leader. Our first two sessions were on coaching and they were run by Eileen Callahan from Boston Collegiate. Again, this is the pilot program where we're trying to figure out how do we make these resources more accessible and how do we increase access to some of these high-performing principals for more schools? We also use it in coaching and in on-demand personal learning. Principals can say, "I need to find .." "I'm doing a professional development on meetings tomorrow with my leadership team," and here are some good examples. It can be used like that too.

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This is what the EPIC knowledge system looks like. I referenced our UEF earlier, our Urban Excellence Framework. All of the content on the knowledge system is put into these six categories. Participants in the EPIC National Charter School Consortium have access to all of these videos. They're on topics ranging from data-driven instruction, midyear evaluations, coteaching, difficult conversations, teaching kids to analyze their own data—all sorts of things. One of the things that we think is really powerful about our resource is that it shows principals in their varying

states of development. We have newer principals talking about going into a new school and some of the challenges they face, and then we have more veteran principals who've talked about the wisdom they've gained over many years. It's also schools at different levels of achievement, so schools that are on the lower end of proficiency, but gaining quickly, and schools like Roxbury Prep, Match, and Boston Collegiate that are consistently in the 90th percentile, but still showing gains. We also integrate school artifacts, so every practice is accompanied by the documents that the schools used to implement the practice. That really is to help school leaders not have to continue to reinvent the wheel.

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Now, I think we're going to show two of these videos. You want to make sure your computer volume is turned up, as Peggie said earlier, because the sound will come out of your computer. These two videos are both on the topic of teacher observation. Before we do this, we're really interested in—as we're going into cohort 5 and doing our last set of effective practice analysis—what are the topics that principals want to see? What do they want to learn more about? These are some common ones, and we'd be really interested to see where the group falls out.

PEGGIE: You can actually click more than one topic.

ALLISON: It looks like Common Core, Common Core in a landslide.

PEGGIE: That's the winner.

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ALLISON: Good to know. That was a little bit of our hypothesis too actually. Thank you for that information. We're going to try to have a discussion. We're going to watch this video from Boston Collegiate. I've talked a lot about Boston Collegiate today. It is a four-time EPIC-winning school, and this is from a case study observation and feedback practices to support new teachers in instructional rigor. This is a seventh-grade writing teacher in her first year with Boston Collegiate. She's a strong teacher, but she's really working on trying to increase the rigor of her instruction. I want to see if we can have a quick conversation via chat after we watch this video to talk about what would you, if you were to give this teacher some advice, what do you think that feedback you might want to give to this teacher would be? Let's watch the video.

VIDEO PLAYING

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ALLISON: I'm trying to look on chat and see what people are thinking about it.

PEGGIE: Allison, could you repeat your question one more time?

ALLISON: The question is what feedback would you give this teacher? And do you have any feedback for the administrator? It's hard to do this on chat, but I see people are typing, so that's great.

PEGGIE: We'll have a slightly awkward pause—wait time.

ALLISON: When we watch the next video, we'll want to think about use cases and when people would use it, but I think for this one if you have coaches at your school who you're trying to coach to coach teachers, this is a good start. So those are ... So, Heather, encouraging her to consider ways to have each student respond; she is calling on one student at a time—how can she work on that? What are the benefits of having students affirm or argue the answers to the question? That's a great question that you would want to ask her. Getting her to probe further. This is a little bit ... One thing that we're actually changing about our videos is we're having longer, uninterrupted instruction as opposed to... You can see this one was pretty heavily edited.. We think we've found from our users that they would prefer a longer stretch of teaching so that they can talk about it in the group and have a little more information about that teacher. That's one video; most of the case studies have between four and seven videos.

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This is Monarch; this is the one I referenced earlier. This is from Monarch Academy in California, a two-time EPIC-winning school. This is an elementary school. The video shows the principal Tatiana Epanchin sharing her practice for conducting observations as part of getting teachers to follow through on actions that they talked about in their data talks. After we watch this video, I want to ask the group something else; I really want you to think about how could you use this? Who would be the audience for it? What would be the most helpful to educators—what parts of it? What are the subjects in it that you think are most compelling, and how could it be used in your school? That's what I would like you to think about as we watch this one.

VIDEO PLAYING

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ALLISON: What do you all think? Where could this be used? Could you use it in your school, and how would you use it? Actually, if you go on the knowledge system, you can see Tatiana's observation form and there's actually a blank one. On the back she talks about the Bloom's Taxonomy verbs, and you can see the one that she used with this actual teacher, which is kind of interesting. If you're working with your coaches, if you have coaches to observe teachers, then you can say... you can compare what a teacher's finding of this teacher might be with Tatiana. What's Lakeesha saying? Helping with planning. We think there are a lot of uses for these videos and we're still trying to figure out the best ways. They're always evolving right now, actually. We are going also to a video profile model where we're just doing one video about one thing instead of the case study—so a lot of different formats.

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I want to make sure we have enough time for questions; this is just a last EPIC overview. We like to throw around that 8 million number. After we give out these awards in the spring, we will have awarded \$8 million [AUDIO SKIP] educators—pretty exciting—and an overview of what's on the knowledge system. I do want to highlight just one thing, which are the professional development session lesson plans. This is actually the professional development lesson plan that our facilitators are using when they use our videos in a professional development session, so we're really cutting down on the work for people who are planning professional development. That's one of our most popular resources on the knowledge system. Also—I thought Ellen might say this—but I think that TIF 4 is going to be out soon. I think it's in the comment period right now, so for those of you who want to apply for your own TIF grant, they go mostly to states and districts. But we're a nonprofit and we got one, and I know there's a charter school in Massachusetts that got one, and there are a couple of CMOs [charter management organizations] that have them. Just a little plug for that.

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I'll leave you with our contact information. Feel free to reach out to us with any questions or feedback. We'd also love to hear from you, if you want to get on our mailing list, about future access to the knowledge system and if you'd like to be a part of our master classes. We thank you for the time today, and when you open up the pdf that Peggie sent, this is the link to the one-time access to the knowledge system so you can check out all those resources yourself.

PEGGIE: Thank you, David and Allison. This was really fascinating. There was a question for David earlier, but it looks like he sent someone the link with the list of all of the schools. I just sent people the 2012 schools, so that's helpful. We had a question early in the webinar from Heather. She's noting that schools can have great gains, but if they're starting at a very low level of proficiency, even great gains might not take them to proficient. She's wondering if that means that your schools could be not performing at a level of proficiency and might even be in jeopardy of closing, but still win an incentive because of the gains that they achieved.

ALLISON: We have schools that have relatively low proficiency, but because they're making greater than predicted gains... Remember, this year there were 179 schools in the grant, so those schools are all competing against each other, and if those schools have the top gain, it's regardless. There's no requirement that a school has to meet proficiency in their state to win an award.

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PEGGIE: Great. I encourage anyone... We have almost 10 minutes left, so if you have any questions, please go ahead and enter them in the chat. Allison, my curiosity would be, over the years of the TIF grant and all of the schools that you visited, what would you say are some of the key lessons learned that you might share with the charter school community about ways to improve instruction for kids?

ALLISON: I wish I could tell you the answer right now, Peggie. I guess when you look at the practices that schools have really identified... When we go into the school, the things that people really talk about—again, nothing new under the sun—but this huge focus is on instruction, the kind of support they provide for teachers, the coaching, the planning time, the collaboration. We just went into Camino Nuevo, one of their schools in Los Angeles, and the collegiality and the instruction in the class is ... There's a lot of talk now about kids doing the heavy lifting, so the teacher being the guide on the side, not the sage on the stage, and you see that in every single classroom when you go into some of these schools. Each teacher has their own style, but there are such high expectations that the teachers are going to be pushing every kid. So, I think that's one thing. The data; most of these schools are using a lot of interim assessments and talking about data—using it both academically and also looking at being focused on kids who have patterns of absences, patterns of getting in trouble, and tackling those problems early, putting a team to focus on it, so the kids aren't falling through the cracks. We see that in quite a few of our schools.

PEGGIE: Great, that's really helpful. What about teacher quality? Did you see some practices related to recruiting, selecting, developing, and retaining educators that might be good to share with the people on this call?

ALLISON: I think that there's a strong case study from E.L. Haynes that is going to be on [AUDIO SKIP] time winner of EPIC, around how they look at teacher candidates and the kind of sample teaching lessons and key questions that they ask teacher candidates. I think most of these charter schools, a lot of the charter schools that we visit, are getting a lot of candidates; they're very fortunate that way. They have a very high bar for what they're looking for and they ask their candidates to do a lot of things. They observe them at their school, they ask for a video, they're asking them to be part of a group discussion with their existing staff—and just really comprehensive—because they know that it's getting those teachers in there, the right people in there, is so key.

Then coaching, we did... Eileen Callahan who is the chief academic officer at Boston Collegiate; her job is coaching teachers. All of these principals are in there, or someone is in the teacher's room, a couple of times a week. It's amazing. I think that one of the questions that's starting to come up, especially with legislation around teacher evaluation, is how do you...? You do this really rigorous teacher evaluation but also have a teacher support/teacher coaching component, so teachers are getting the help they need to get where they need to get in a nonthreatening, non-high stakes, scary... you're going to get fired because you don't have the right proficiency rate. I think schools are really trying to balance that.

PEGGIE: One of the wonderful things about EPIC is you dig deep into these practices and have very specific protocols and wonderful resources to help charter schools look at what exemplary charter schools did and then apply those tools and processes to their own context. That's really valuable. Lakeesha is saying her school is located in North Carolina; has EPIC recognized any schools in North Carolina and are there any opportunities for training for people who might not be members of the consortium?

ALLISON: North Carolina has not been a big EPIC state. We've had a couple of schools—I think we had Maureen Joy was one I recall—but we haven't had a lot. We generally try to do recruitments through the charter school association, state charter school associations. We had good luck with some, and not good luck [with others]. To be in EPIC, you have to serve at least 30 percent of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch; that's really the only requirement, except you have to submit a lot of data to us. Mathematica needs to have a lot of data to run this robust value-added model. I think that's one of the reasons why we didn't have more schools in it.

The opportunity for training is definitely the master class, so we're trying to have some of our EPIC-winning principals lead conversations around some of the practices that are working for them. We're going to try to do one maybe in April with Sharif El Mekki who's the principal at Mastery-Shoemaker in Philadelphia, and talking about how do you build up the life skills and characteristics in kids so they can be successful in college? The focus on mastery is self-advocacy, and so he's going to talk about that. Again, these master classes are about discussion; they're really small, so we actually unmute everyone. It's very risky, but we do it. We try to really have a conversation. If you e-mail David or I, we'll get you on that list and you'll be invited.

PEGGIE: Great. And those are all online webinars so people don't have to travel—is that correct?

ALLISON: That is correct.

PEGGIE: Julie is asking: For schools involved with EPIC, how long does it take before you actually start seeing results? She sees a lot of underperforming charter schools in her work, so we're wondering what kinds of patterns you've seen in the rate of performance.

ALLISON: Unfortunately, we don't have great data on that because we've had a fluid membership, and schools that didn't win tended to ... I think we only had 24, 26, who were in the consortium all five years. Schools that didn't win, like in year one or year two—if they didn't win for a couple of years—they dropped out. So, we don't have good longitudinal data like that, sadly.

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PEGGIE: Great. Thank you so much. Please go ahead and e-mail David or Allison directly if you're interested in the master class that she mentioned. It sounds like a wonderful opportunity. Unfortunately, we have come to the end of our time, but I want to thank Allison and David for a very thoughtful and insightful webinar. The webinar will be archived [AUDIO SKIP] by Monday afternoon at the latest. Thanks to all of you for participating and interacting with us during the webinar. I'm going to send you to an evaluation in a moment. It would be great if you could take a couple of minutes and please fill that out and let us know what went well, what went poorly, and what topics you might like us to explore in future webinars. Again, thank you to everyone for presenting, and special thanks to David, Allison, and Ellen. Thank you.