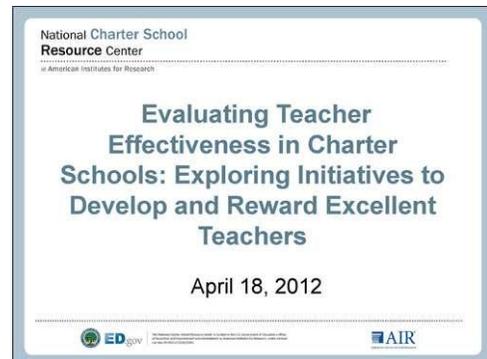


Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness in Charter Schools: Exploring Initiatives to Develop and Reward Excellent Teachers

PEGGIE:

This is Peggie Garcia from the National Charter School Resource Center. Welcome to our webinar, *Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness in Charter Schools: Exploring Initiatives to Develop and Reward Excellent Teachers*. We'll get started in just a moment. But before we begin, I wanted to give you a quick introduction to the webinar platform if you have not joined us before. On the left-hand side of the platform, you'll see a chat window. Please go ahead and enter your questions at any time during the webinar. We'll have Sarah speak for about 35 minutes, and then we'll do Q & A at the end. But please go ahead and enter your questions at any time, and we'll add them to the queue. If you have audio problems at any time during the webinar, please go ahead and call in at the conference number that you see in the chat window and enter the participant code 2887642. If you're listening to the audio portion through your computer and you join by phone, please mute your computer speakers to prevent an echo effect.

Below the chat window on the lower left-hand side is a file share window. There's a document there called *Achievement First PDF*. If you did not get the reminder that Amanda sent this morning, then you can go ahead and download the PDF of the slides that Sarah will deliver, and you can take notes on your slides during the webinar. Underneath the PowerPoint there are a few reminders. Again, to ask a question, you can enter a question in the chat at any time. You can use the full screen option on the top right of your screen or the file share window

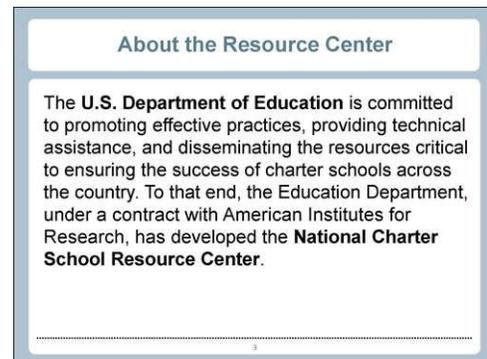


Slides 1 and 2

download option if the text is too small at any point. And, finally, if you listen over your computer, please know that your bandwidth will affect the quality of the audio. To hear the highest quality audio possible, you should use a wired connection for your computer as opposed to wireless. Close all applications other than Adobe that are running on your computer. Clear your browser's cache and cookies. The webinar is being recorded. An archive will be available after the webinar, typically within three business days at www.charterschoolcenter.org/webinars.

The Resource Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, and we serve the charter school community throughout the country.

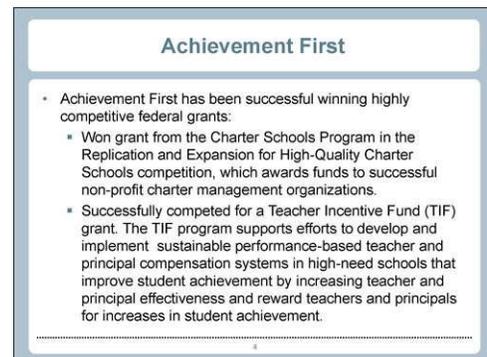
This webinar is going to feature Achievement First [AF]. Because we are federally funded, we wanted to just say a quick note about how they have been very successful in winning highly competitive federal grants. Achievement First is currently a grantee for both the Charter Schools Program grant and the Replication and Expansion for High-Quality Charter Schools competition. They also successfully competed for a very competitive Teacher Incentive Fund [TIF] grant. The TIF fund supports efforts to develop and implement sustainable performance-based teacher and principal compensation systems in the high-need schools that improve student achievement by increasing teacher and principal effectiveness and rewarding teachers and principals for increases in student achievement. So, we're really excited to have Sarah Coon join us.



About the Resource Center

The **U.S. Department of Education** is committed to promoting effective practices, providing technical assistance, and disseminating the resources critical to ensuring the success of charter schools across the country. To that end, the Education Department, under a contract with American Institutes for Research, has developed the **National Charter School Resource Center**.

Slide 3



Achievement First

- Achievement First has been successful winning highly competitive federal grants:
 - Won grant from the Charter Schools Program in the Replication and Expansion for High-Quality Charter Schools competition, which awards funds to successful non-profit charter management organizations.
 - Successfully competed for a Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant. The TIF program supports efforts to develop and implement sustainable performance-based teacher and principal compensation systems in high-need schools that improve student achievement by increasing teacher and principal effectiveness and reward teachers and principals for increases in student achievement.

Slide 4

I'm going to go ahead and introduce her in a moment, but, before I do that, we'd like to learn a little bit more about you. So, we're going to have two quick polls here. The first one is where are you in the development of your own teacher career ladder or performance-based compensation system? You're just beginning to think about it and sort of are doing some research, you're designing and piloting a system right now, and you already have a system that you've implemented that's up and running. We'll leave a few more seconds for people to respond. So far, it looks like a slim majority are in the second bucket. Okay. Great. We'll close that one.

The second poll is asking which parts of the Achievement First model would you most want to learn about during the webinar today? You can check more than one of these if you like. Would you like to learn more about lesson observations, surveys, student achievement measures, compensation and other rewards, alignment with teacher development, teacher investment and communication, or school leader training? Great. So it looks like lesson observations, alignment with teacher development, and compensation and other rewards looks like the big winner. But it looks like they're pretty evenly spread out except for surveys. Sarah, it looks like no one wants to talk about surveys. [laughs]

With that, I'm going to go ahead and give a quick introduction of Sarah Coon. She is the senior director of talent and development at Achievement First. She leads Achievement First Teacher Career Pathway, which is designed to identify, develop, and recognize excellent teachers. Ms. Coon joined Achievement First in 2008 as a Broad resident. Prior to joining the Broad residency, she was the founding executive [director of the University of

The slide is a rectangular box with a light blue border. At the top, the word "Presenter" is centered in a small, dark font. Below this, the name "Sarah Coon" is centered in a larger, bold, dark font. Underneath the name, her title "Senior Director, Talent Development" is centered in a smaller font. Below that, her role "Lead for Teacher Career Pathway Initiative" is centered in a smaller font. At the bottom, "Achievement First" is centered in a smaller font. A small number "5" is visible at the bottom center of the slide.

Slide 5

Pittsburgh's Learning Policy Center, an organization that] influences education policy with high-quality research on teacher and organizational learning. She has a very impressive bio, but I'll stop there and go ahead and turn it over to Sarah. Sarah, thank you so much for joining us, and we're really excited to learn more about your program.

SARAH:

Thank you, Peggie. Hi, everyone. At Achievement First, we've been designing and piloting and now implementing the Teacher Career Pathway for several years. We've learned a great deal from both our successes and our challenges. So, it's a pleasure to talk with you now and be able to share our work. I really hope this is useful for you as you begin thinking about your own work with your schools. My only request is that when you take our work and you build on it, I really encourage you to share it back with us so we can continue to improve our own model as well.

During this session, my goals are for each of you to be able to:

- Describe how Achievement First is identifying, developing, and rewarding our excellent teachers through our Career Pathway.
- [Articulate] how Achievement First has worked to invest and communicate with our key constituents.
- Be able to apply these lessons to your own schools.



AF Teacher Career Pathway
National Charter School Resource Center Webinar
April 2012

Slide 6



Slide 7

First, I'll do a quick introduction of Achievement First, talk to you about the Career Pathway purpose and how it came to be, the timeline, and then identifying excellence, how it is we evaluate our teachers, what some of the big benefits are for our teachers, and then the results before taking your questions. Throughout that I do have information about lessons we've learned related to each of these pieces.

A bit about Achievement First. We are a K–12 public charter school network. We're located in Brooklyn as well as in New Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport, Connecticut. We were started in 1999 with our flagship school, Amistad Academy that's in New Haven, Connecticut. This year we have 6,200 students, 550 teachers in our 20 schools. We're looking to grow to over 30 schools, at which point we will be as big as, larger than 99 percent of school districts serving low-income students.

The mission of Achievement First is to deliver on the promise of equal educational opportunity for all of America's children. What's really always resonated with me about this mission is that it's really about all children, which is why I'm so happy to be able to share our work with you today.

We focus on three big areas in order to achieve this mission. One is quality, ensuring we have gap-closing schools for our students. Scale, we really want to be a proof point that at scale, this level of achievement is possible. And then sustainability, that we can do this work at the same level of financial costs as other districts.

Agenda

- ✓ Introduction to Achievement First
- ✓ Purpose of the Teacher Career Pathway
- ✓ Timeline
- ✓ Identifying Excellence
- ✓ Big Benefits for AF Teachers
- ✓ 2011-2012 Results
- ✓ Your Questions

Slide 8

Introduction to Achievement First

- ✓ K-12 Public charter school network in NY (Brooklyn) and CT (New Haven, Hartford, Bridgeport)
- ✓ Started in 1999 with Amistad Academy in New Haven
- ✓ In 2011-2012 school year:
 - 6,200 Students
 - 550 teachers
 - 20 Schools

Slide 9

The Mission of Achievement First

Only the educated can lead.

The mission of Achievement First is to deliver on the promise of equal educational opportunity for all of America's children. We believe that all children, regardless of race or economic status, can succeed if they have access to a great education.

Achievement First schools will provide all of our students with the academic and character skills they need to graduate from top colleges, to succeed in a competitive world, and to serve as the next generation of leaders of their communities.

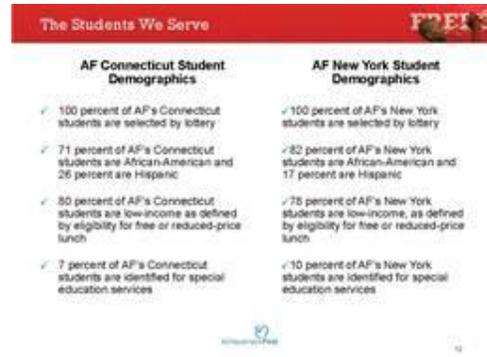
Slide 10

AF's Strategic Plan: Areas of Focus

- ✓ **Quality:** Our goal is gap-closing, college-preparatory success for all students.
- ✓ **Scale:** We aim to be a proof point for most U.S. school districts that student success is possible at scale.
- ✓ **Sustainability:** We will operate at the same cost as our host districts, eliminating another "yes, but" excuse and ensuring our long term viability.

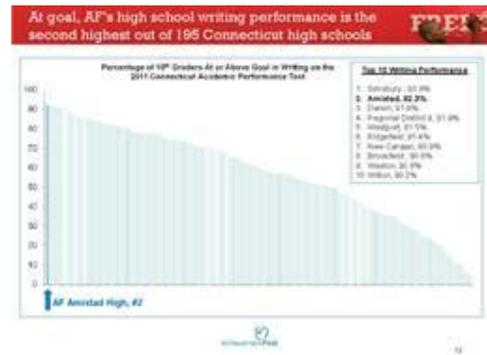
Slide 11

All of our students apply by lottery. We serve primarily low-income students and children of color. [audio skips]



Slide 12

This slide is really my favorite because it shows about getting kids not only to college and through college and what it's going to take to really prepare our high school students to do that. On a writing performance assessment, out of all of Connecticut's 195 high schools, Amistad Academy students were Number 2 out of all of those high schools, and we're really proud of those results. We think the preparation they had in our middle school and throughout high school really enabled them to get there.

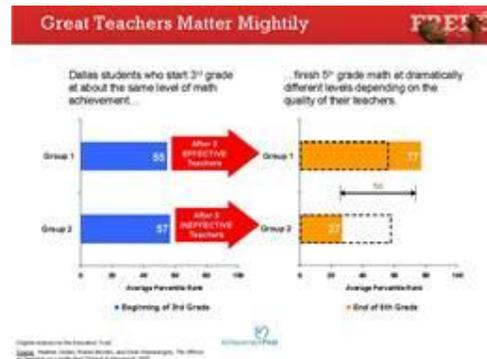


Slide 13

Moving into the purpose of the Teacher Career Pathway, there's a wonderful study that shows something that we all know. And that is that great teaching truly matters. When you take groups of students who start at the same place in third grade and then after three years with an effective teacher, they're 50 percentile points ahead [audio skips] that teaching is absolutely essential.

Agenda

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Slides 14 and 15

In the more recent study that came out just in January has shown that the impact is not only short term but it's truly long term. Students with great teachers have a lifelong impact. They attend college, they earn higher salaries, they live in better neighborhoods, and they're able to save more for retirement.

"We find that students assigned to higher value-add teachers are more successful in many dimensions. They are more likely to attend college, earn higher salaries, live in better neighborhoods, and save more for retirement."

- Chetty, Friedman, and Rockoff (2012). The Long-Term Impacts of Teachers. Teacher Value-Added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood.

Slide 16

If we know that great teaching truly matters, and I know everyone on the call understands and believes that, then it's really important that we listen to them and understand what they're looking for in their career. Starting years ago, we started talking to teachers and understanding what their interests were, and they told us two things. One is that they wanted to stay in the classroom and have a really clear career path. At Achievement First, we have a

Teachers Eager to Make Their Impact From Within the Classroom Told Us Two Things:

- I want to stay in the classroom and have a clear career path
- To be the best teacher I can be for my students, I need to continue to learn and grow as an educator

Slide 17

strong leadership pipeline where teachers know what it looks like if they want to become a grade-level chair, a coach, a dean, a principal in residence, and then a principal. There's a clear pipeline. But they said what do I do if I want my impact to be from within the classroom? Second, they said they want to continue to grow throughout their career. We do a great job of developing teachers early on in their career. And we want to make sure that we're continuing to invest and continuing to push teachers, even our very best teachers, to continue to get better and better. These two things that our teachers were looking for made a lot of sense to us.

So, we started working with them to create the Teacher Career Pathway. The Career Pathway has five career stages that teachers advance through. There's clear performance criteria for each teacher as they advance. And as they advance, they're receiving feedback and supports to help them continue to learn and grow. As they advance, they have increased status, compensation, and professional development opportunities.

The Number 1 goal of everything that we do at Achievement First is about student achievement. The Career Pathway supports that in a number of ways. One is that we're celebrating excellence in our teachers. Two, we're investing in their ongoing support and development throughout their careers. Three, setting very clear expectations and standards for what instructional excellence looks like and helping them to learn and grow. And, finally, to develop schools with strong teams of teachers that are working together for the success of all of their students.

Teacher Career Pathway Defined

- Formal, sustained recognition for all teachers with multiple stages for advancement throughout a teacher's career.
- Clear performance criteria and a clear advancement process
- Feedback and supports to help teachers to continue to learn and grow
- Rewards as teachers advance:
 - Increased status
 - Financial compensation
 - PD opportunities

Slide 18

Goals of the AF Teacher Career Pathway

In order to meet our mission of equal educational opportunity for all of America's children, Achievement First believes every student must have an effective teacher.

The AF Teacher Career Pathway supports this goal by:

- ✓ Celebrating excellence in the teaching profession through recognition and reward
- ✓ Investing in the on-going support and development of teachers at all stages of their careers
- ✓ Setting clear standards for instructional excellence and providing frequent training and feedback to help teachers learn and grow
- ✓ Developing schools with strong teams of teachers working together for student success

TEACHERS ARE PLATINUM

Slide 19

The timeline—we have been working on this for several years now. Despite not having some of the barriers that I would say some of the large districts have, we decided very intentionally to go a slower path. We’ve been working on the research and design since 2009. We did a mini-pilot two years ago with just 30 of our teachers and continued to refine our evaluation tools through that mini-pilot. We then went on a road show. The co-CEOs and myself went to every single school. We talked to teachers. We described what this would look like and got their feedback. Then we did a networkwide pilot last year of all the different evaluation components, without having any high stakes attached—just as an opportunity to have teachers experience it and be able to give us feedback to continue to improve it. This year, we’re in full-scale implementation with all of the different components of our evaluation and development. And then next fall, we’ll have our first teachers move into Stage 4 based on the results of this school year.



Slides 20 and 21

Even before 2009, there was work [we were] doing that created a foundation for us to go down this path. This is building on existing talent practices. We already had a process in place for strong recruitment, growing our talent and then ensuring we stay connected to them throughout. When you think about growing our talent and keeping them, the yellow circle in the middle, all of those items are really touched by the Teacher Career Pathway, which helps to develop, recognize, engage, compensate, and evaluate.



Slide 22

Before we begin getting a little bit more specific, there were a few things we did. One, we've named talent as an organizationwide priority. We had strong principals that teachers trusted. This is absolutely critical to ensure that your leaders are very strong in order for them to be able to really implement this well. We had a robust recruitment and selection. We had a strong leadership pipeline. We had competencies for every role. We knew what excellence looked like for someone who was a principal, for teachers, our operations, and our network teams. And we did have a consistent evaluation across our schools. Our professional growth plan had a very clear—for each of the competencies—a very clear evaluation that went along with that. And then we also had mechanisms for teachers to give feedback. As we went into evaluating teachers in this way, they also were able to provide feedback to their school leaders as well as to the network. This kind of 360 feedback—everyone helping each other to grow and just having that be a part of our culture—was really important to this being successful.

Okay. Identifying excellence. Lots of folks on the poll were interested in hearing how it is that we evaluate teachers, so I'll talk a little bit about that now.

Before Beginning the Teacher Career Pathway

- ✓ Named talent as an organization priority
- ✓ Strong principals that teachers trusted
- ✓ Robust recruitment and selection
- ✓ Strong leadership pipeline and development
- ✓ Competencies for every role
- ✓ Consistent evaluation across schools
- ✓ Mechanisms for teachers to give feedback back to school leaders and the network

Slide 23

Agenda

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- ✓ 2011-2012 Results
- ✓ Your Questions

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This is the first thing that we started with when we talked to our teachers and met with them for the last couple of years. The first thing we did was really think about how do we define something as complex as teaching. You know great teaching when you see it. But how do you create an evaluation that ensures that there's a consistent and fair measure across all of our different schools? And when we worked with teachers, we pretty quickly came up with these two pieces—two student outcomes and two teacher inputs. The two student outcomes are student achievement and student character. The teacher inputs are quality instruction and core values and contributions to the team. These four pieces really resonated with our teachers. The tricky part then is how do you actually evaluate these?



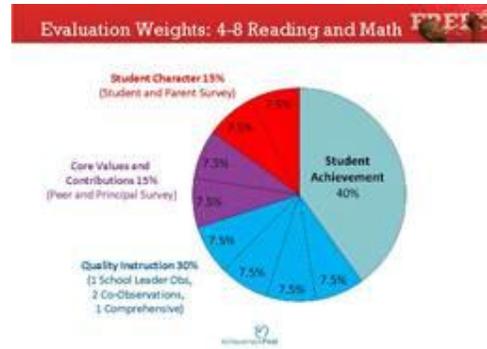
Slide 25

When we look at our Teaching Excellence Framework, which is what we call this entire model, we have different tools to evaluate each of these. For student achievement, we look at the impact of a teacher on a student's academic growth. For student character, we used both a student survey as well as a parent survey. And for teacher inputs, for quality instruction, we have a series of lesson observations, and then core values and contributions to the team, we use both a peer survey as well as a principal and dean survey. We're going to go through each of these in a little bit more detail now. As I continue talking, I do want to share that all of these slides are slides that we have shared with our teachers. I think it's helpful to see the way in which we've presented this information to our schools.



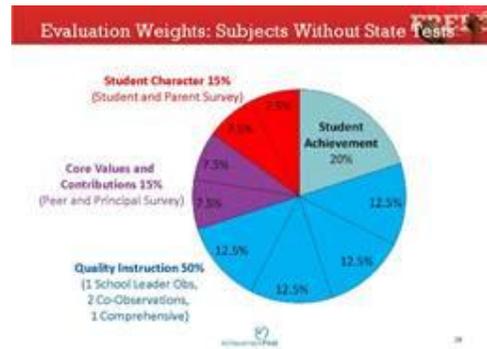
Slide 26

When we think about how much each of these evaluation components weigh, here is a pie graph that shows that. Student achievement is worth 40 percent when we have a standardized state assessment. So, in Grades 4 through 8, reading and math, student achievement is worth 40 percent. Quality instruction, our lesson observations, are worth 30 percent. Each of the four surveys are each worth 7.5 percent.



Slide 27

In courses without a standardized state assessment, student achievement, the weight is smaller, so it's 20 percent. Then lesson observations become a larger piece of the pie, and in total they're worth 50 percent, 12.5 percent each. The surveys remain the same.



Slide 28

So, diving in a little bit to each of these... Student achievement—everybody in our network has an individual student achievement measure. All of it is based on growth. Whenever possible, we use a teacher value-added model. Then in courses without that state assessment, we've developed a matrix model of student growth that's able to compare where students began and where they ended at the end of the year. Now, we know that while this is the best student achievement measure we've ever had, we know that it's imperfect, and we're very transparent about that. We mitigate for that imprecision by having multiple measures of teacher effectiveness—this entire framework that I'm describing. We also have performance groups instead of specific scores. What that means is instead of telling a teacher that their student achievement measure is a 72, we're able to say that they're having a positive impact or an exemplary

Student Achievement

- ✓ Every teacher has an individual student achievement measure
- ✓ All measures are based on a teacher's impact on student growth using common state or network assessments
 - Whenever possible, we use teacher value-added
 - In courses without a state assessment, we have developed a "matrix" student growth measure
- ✓ How we mitigate for the imprecision:
 - Multiple measures of teacher effectiveness
 - Performance groups instead of specific scores
 - Principal discretion

Slide 29

impact on student achievement. And we have four different performance groups. Third, we have principal discretion. The principal discretion is really important to us. For courses where our student achievement measure is more informative, there's less principal discretion. But for those that are a bit less informative, we actually have more principal discretion. We really use that discretion to both understand the context in which that teacher teaches, as well as they help us to identify the performance group in those less informative SAMs—student achievement measures—we call them SAMs.

Student character is explicitly assessed in a few things. We have student surveys and parent surveys. We also assess those through lesson observation and planning. In our rubric, it includes some student character measures. And then our peer survey and principal and dean survey also talk a bit about student character. I should say as well that for any of this information, if you would like more, we are happy to post it and share it with you. If you'd like to see the student survey questions, if you want to learn more about how we're measuring student achievement, we have some information that we can share out about that. I know that student achievement in particular has been a tricky one, especially in those untested subjects. So, we can share more detailed information about what that looks like.

Student Character

Student Character Development

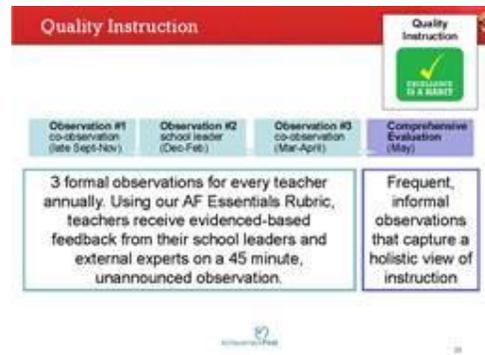
- ✓ Explicitly assessed in:
 - student survey
 - parent survey
- ✓ Also assessed in:
 - lesson observations and planning
 - peer survey and principal/dean survey

INITIATIVE

Slide 30

We've just talked about the student outcomes. Now we're going to think about what the teacher inputs look like. For quality instruction, we have a series of lesson observations. We have three formal lesson observations throughout the year. They're 45-minute unannounced observations. We use our own Essentials Rubric, which is based on the AF Essentials of Great Instruction, which is something we've had for many years, which has really defined what excellent teaching looks like. It's built off of the work of Jon Saphier and Doug Lemov as well as all of the teaching that we've seen in all of our schools. Then we built that out into a rubric. And these observations, there's three observations. Two of them, we call co-observations, where a school leader observes a lesson alongside an external observer. This person is usually somebody within our network, the achievement director, who has a special content area expertise or a regional superintendent. Someone with instructional expertise who is able to join our school leaders for an observation. They watch the lesson together. They debrief that lesson together, and then they debrief with the teacher together. We've found this to be a really great way to not only norm across all of our schools and make sure there's a common standard of excellence, but also it's really been a wonderful way to grow the instructional eye and the debrief skills of our school leaders. We've gotten great feedback from our school leaders about what great development this has been for them.

We also have a comprehensive observation. When we started designing this with teachers several years ago, one of the things they said was that they really wanted this hard evidence that would help make it very clear how they were performing. And then they also at the same time wanted to make sure that all of the informal observations that are happening throughout the course of the year also



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count. [Inaudible] that's also taken into consideration. There's an end-of-year comprehensive evaluation where the coach will think about all of the informal observations throughout the year. Again, each of these four pieces, Observation 1, 2, and 3, plus the comprehensive, are equally weighted and they count for either 7.5 percent or 12.5 percent each within that overall pie.

Again, I see a question here about who participates in the observations with the school leaders. We call them co-observers. In general, they're people internal to our network, regional superintendents who oversee all of our schools, or people with content area expertise. We have a math achievement director, an ELA [English language arts] achievement director who also work across our schools. They will go ahead and observe with the school leader. We've also hired some people who are external to our schools but have strong instructional backgrounds, and they're also able to help do these observations. Yes, we will definitely share the AF Essentials Rubric with you. I've got that on my list. I promise we'll be able to share that with you.

Then, finally, the fourth piece is core values and contributions to the team. When we talked about this with teachers, they were really worried that this was going to create competition between teachers, this overall idea of the Teacher Career Pathway. So they were very thoughtful about wanting to make sure in both the way we evaluate teachers as well as the way in which we reward them, that for both we have an incentive for teachers to continue to be great teammates and to work together as a team. The way in which we evaluate that is through both a peer survey as well as a principal and dean survey, and these ask the same questions but from different

Core Values and Contributions to Team

- ✓ Great Teachers = Great Teammates
- ✓ Assessed by:
 - Peer survey (closest peers – grade/subject teams)
 - Principal/dean survey with the same questions

Core Values and Contributions

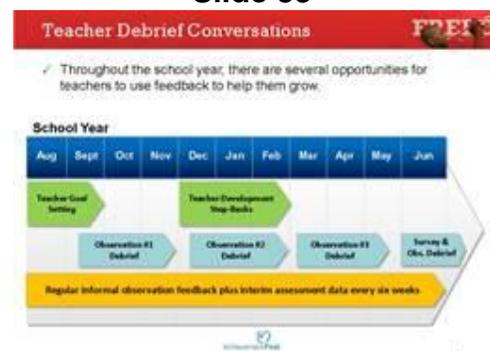


Slide 32

perspectives responding to the survey.

With all of these four pieces of the Teaching Excellence Framework, we know that it's a balance. So, this objective data is very valuable. But we also always consider professional judgment of a principal and coach, and you'll see that throughout our entire model.

This all ties in with teacher development. It's really important to us that we make sure that teachers are learning and growing and that this is not just an evaluation. So, throughout the course of the school year, we have regular informal observation and feedback that teachers receive from their coaches. In addition, they have opportunities to look at interim assessment data every six weeks and debrief that. They look at lesson plans together. They're getting ongoing coaching. What we've added with the Teacher Career Pathways, these three lesson observation debriefs as well as at the end of the year having a survey in observation debrief. Then the two pieces in green—at the beginning of the school year, we have teacher goal setting. And then midyear, teachers step back and look at the goals that they've set with their coach and think about are they making adequate progress towards their goals and what do they need to do to improve. The goals include both student achievement goals as well as professional learning goals. The professional learning goals align with the overall Teaching Excellence Framework. In the registration, we did see a question about is this differentiated for new teachers versus veteran teachers, our evaluation, and it's not. We really believe that in order to have all teachers continue to learn and grow, they all deserve this feedback, and that's really what they wanted. This is not a system where you kind of no



longer have to get evaluated because you've met a certain threshold. Instead, it's really designed because teachers wanted more feedback and they want to continue to grow. So, for new teachers, veteran teachers—everyone receives this helpful feedback.

[End of Chapter 1]

SARAH:

A couple lessons learned about evaluation. Highly recommend that there's a very clear instructional model and evaluation framework in place before you apply any rewards or make it high stakes in any way. Two, because teaching is difficult and it includes so many different pieces, I think it's important to think both about the outcomes and the inputs. But whatever you do, you have to remember that this is going to drive teacher behavior. So, it's important that it aligns with your values and it's driving teachers towards the behaviors you most want to see. Again, professional judgment of your principals is so important, and they really need credibility in order for that to work. Finally, I would say that these are observations and the evaluation can be very anxiety producing for our teachers. I really expected that because we do informal lesson observations all the time, it's just part of our culture. I think I underestimated a little bit that this would be difficult for teachers at first. Overwhelmingly, the response has been positive, but it has had an impact where it's created some anxiety for teachers. So, I think it's important to think about that and think about how are you going to build your culture to reduce that as much as possible.

Lessons Learned: Evaluation

- ✓ Have an instructional model and evaluation framework in place prior to evaluation and reward systems.
- ✓ Teaching is hard and multi-faceted. The evaluation should reflect that by being holistic and focusing on both student outcomes and teacher inputs.
- ✓ Evaluation will drive behavior, so make sure it drives it in the direction that aligns with your values.
- ✓ Evaluation requires both objective data and professional judgment. Those who will need to exercise professional judgment need credibility.
- ✓ Because it is deeply personal, observations are anxiety producing for teachers – even in schools where they already receive regular informal feedback.



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And then also it's important to think about this for teacher development and not just teacher evaluation, to plan for how people are going to use the data. This is an extraordinary amount of data that can be very valuable if you have a clear plan for how you're going to use it, align it to your existing teacher development practices. And plan for extensive school leader development as well. There's a lot of new skills in order to do this well. We've invested a lot of time with our school leaders in helping them to be successful leading the Career Pathway in their own schools.

Okay, big benefits. Lots of people had questions about this in our poll. We have five. One is compensation. Two is a schoolwide bonus. Three, we have differentiated learning and development opportunities. We have more feedback from more sources to help teachers continue to grow. And then we have consistent recognition across the network.

Lessons Learned: Teacher Development

- ✓ Focus on teacher development, not just teacher evaluation
- ✓ Plan for how teachers, coaches, schools and the network will use data to drive teacher development.
- ✓ Align the work with existing teacher development practices.
- ✓ Plan for extensive school leader development too. It will take hard work and training for principals to lead this well in their schools.



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Agenda

- ✓ Introduction to Achievement First
- ✓ Purpose of the Teacher Career Pathway
- ✓ Timeline
- ✓ Identifying Excellence
- ✓ Big Benefits for AF Teachers
- ✓ 2011-2012 Results
- ✓ Your Questions

Five Big Benefits for AF Teachers

1. Increased individual compensation based on teacher effectiveness
2. Team incentives and recognition – school-wide bonus
3. Differentiated teacher learning and development opportunities
4. More feedback from more sources to help teachers grow
5. Consistent recognition



Slides 37 and 38

Getting a little bit more specific here, as teachers advance through each of the career stages, their base salary does increase. Stage 3 teachers, that's equivalent to our current salary schedule. And in Stages 4 and 5 is where teachers will see those real salary increases. It was important to us that Stage 3 remained equal to our peer organizations and higher than our host districts as it is now. Teachers have longer school days in a school year.

The bonuses, we have what we call the AF-wide School Report Card. Every school is evaluated on the academic progress they make with their scholars as well as looking at several operational components. Every person in the school is then eligible to earn this bonus. It's in 11–12, that bonus is 10 percent, the maximum bonus based on their individual salaries. This, again, was really important because we wanted to incentivize them.

Third, robust learning opportunities. Again, our teachers said to us, I didn't join teaching to earn a ton of money. What they really most want to do is continue to become better and better teachers. There are several ways that we are focusing on that. One is that they get to participate in a senior and master teacher learning cohort where they come together with the other best teachers across our network to continue to grow. Second, they get an individual professional development budget. They are very excited about this. They're really thrilled to have the opportunity to spend the money on different professional development opportunities. We're encouraging that they cannot spend the money on the math conference in the Bahamas. [laughs] But we think they're going to make great choices that are going to help them with their own professional learning. We have special visits where they'll be able to come and observe high-performing teachers regionally and nationally. We may be

Big Benefit #1: Performance-Based Compensation

- ✓ With the introduction of TCP, we are moving to a model that rewards performance more than experience or education.
- ✓ Our salaries remain higher than our host districts and competitive with our peer organizations.
- ✓ Teachers who advance to Stages 4 and 5 earn significant salary increases.

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Big Benefit #2: School Bonuses

- ✓ All team members in a school have an opportunity to earn a bonus based on the overall success of the school (measured by the AF School Report Card).

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Big Benefit # 3: Robust Learning Opportunities

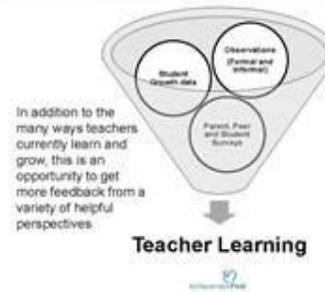
- ✓ Participation in senior/master teacher learning cohort
- ✓ Individual professional development budget
- ✓ Special visits to observe high-performing teachers regionally/nationally
- ✓ Formal partnership with Team Teaching and Learning on curriculum and professional development

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reaching out to some of you because there are teachers interested in seeing some of your great teachers. They wanted this opportunity to really help with networkwide curriculum and professional development.

The next big benefit is just more feedback. They're now getting feedback from so many sources. They get it from their peers and their principals and students and parents. These external observers. Lots of places. All that information is just going to help them become a better and better teacher.

Big Benefit # 4: More Feedback from More Sources



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Finally, consistent recognition. Our teachers have always been recognized a great deal within their schools, and this is an opportunity for them to get networkwide recognition. This includes announcing them at our big annual professional development day and in our publications, using their videos as exemplars, and having a big dinner with our co-CEOs to celebrate.

Big Benefit # 5: Consistent Recognition

- ✓ Announcement at AF-wide PD day and listing in network Many Minds, One Mission newsletter e-newsletter
- ✓ Teaching videos used as exemplars
- ✓ Annual recognition dinner with co-CEOs



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So, I know what everyone is thinking right now. Everyone is thinking how do you pay for this. The initial design and pilot was funded by a private foundation and our federal TIF grant. The first three years of the teacher salary increases and bonuses are also funded by TIF. But, as I said, it's really important for us to be able to be financially sustainable over time. So, we're already starting now to work with principals to think about how they can reduce their costs and increase revenue over the next three years so that when we don't have that TIF grant anymore, that we're still in a good place and this continues to be a successful model

So... How Do You Pay for This?

- ✓ The initial design and pilot was funded by private foundations and a federal Teacher Incentive Fund grant.
- ✓ The first three years of the teacher salary increases and bonuses are funded by the TIF grant.
- ✓ We are working with principals now to gradually reduce costs and increase revenue over the next three year so that this will be a financially sustainable model. Leaders agree that excellent teachers are a smart investment.

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for evaluating, developing, and compensating our teachers. The feedback we've gotten is that this is right. The most important thing that school leaders can be investing in is great teachers.

All right, a couple of rewards and lessons learned. Ask your teachers what's going to motivate them. Some of the things that they were most excited about were not things I realized were going to be the most exciting to them. By really listening to them and hearing what they want, we were able to design this and meet their needs. The nonfinancial rewards were huge to them. I really encourage you to think about what, besides compensation or bonuses, are really going to speak to your teachers. Finally, making sure that your rewards incentivize both individual success as well as teamwork.

Okay, so I'm going to share a couple of our results, and then we'll move into questions. We are not done with this school year, so these are just some of the initial results. Ultimately, how we're going to measure if this is successful is did we increase student achievement? Are we keeping our best teachers? And are we growing teachers? I think we're in the right direction with all three of those things. The results I'm going to share are going to be just some of these initial things that we're seeing.

As I said, we did this road show where we went to every school, and what we heard from our teachers was that this was the right direction for AF to be heading. 98.6 percent of our teachers said this was the right direction. When you describe the big idea, they were very excited about it. I think the challenge for us is to make sure that we're able to maintain that excitement as they are being evaluated and as the stages are really happening. 76 percent of our teachers rated their first two lesson observation experiences as an A+, A, or B on an optional

Lessons Learned: Rewards

- ✓ Ask your best teachers what rewards most motivate them... and then do that!
- ✓ Non-financial rewards matter – great teachers care most about becoming their best.
- ✓ Rewards should incentivize both individual success and teamwork.



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Agenda

- ✓ Introduction to Achievement First
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Celebrations!

- ✓ In fall 2010, 98.6% of teachers indicated that this is the right direction for AF
- ✓ 76% of teachers rated their first two lesson observation experiences as an A+, A or B on an optional survey (and getting better each window)
- ✓ 100% of school leaders said that the co-observations were extremely or valuable for their own learning and development
- ✓ Schools and the network are having in-depth conversations about instruction

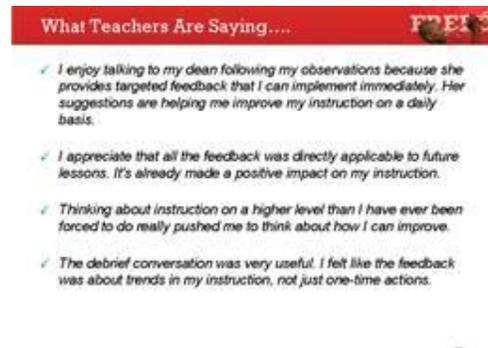


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survey. It's getting better with each window. 76 percent is not normally something that we would be celebrating at Achievement First, but I think because it was an optional survey, the majority of teachers did respond, but people had the option, and because it was very new. We do feel like this is a success.

Third, this number is outstanding. 100 percent of school leaders have said that the co-observations were extremely or very valuable for their own learning and development. I think that it is a huge opportunity for us that we have these co-observers that are going and observing alongside of our school leaders. I think that was a really valuable choice that's had a big impact on our school leaders. Similarly, the schools and the network, they're having in-depth conversations about instruction. They have opportunities to calibrate around our observation rubric, watching video together, and duking it out and discussing was this a great aim or was it not? And in that debate and discussion, I think we really are able to up our game around what excellence looks like.

Here's a few quotes about what teachers are saying in those observation surveys. And I think a theme here is that people are finding these debrief conversations really useful. It's helping them to improve their daily instruction, but it's pushing them to think at a higher level about their instruction than they have before.



What Teachers Are Saying.... 

- ✓ *I enjoy talking to my dean following my observations because she provides targeted feedback that I can implement immediately. Her suggestions are helping me improve my instruction on a daily basis.*
- ✓ *I appreciate that all the feedback was directly applicable to future lessons. It's already made a positive impact on my instruction.*
- ✓ *Thinking about instruction on a higher level than I have ever been forced to do really pushed me to think about how I can improve.*
- ✓ *The debrief conversation was very useful. I felt like the feedback was about trends in my instruction, not just one-time actions.*

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A couple of quick lessons learned around teacher investment. First, teachers have great ideas. We took the time to work with our teachers to design this, but it wasn't because we were trying to get them bought into the process. It was because we really knew they were going to come up with great ways to evaluate and compensate and develop our teachers. Second, really encourage you to engage your principals, cross-functional network leaders early and often. It's really going to take everyone's best work to get this right. This work, for us, has involved every single one of our network teams from human capital and finance, teaching and learning, leadership development, operations, data systems. Everybody is involved. This road show, going out to 20 schools when they span across two states was not a small undertaking, especially for our co-CEOs, but it was well worth it. And you cannot communicate too much. I think I have been surprised. I feel like we communicate all the time, and yet there is still a need to continue to talk and help people understand the big picture as well as the specific details. Our teachers understand that this is going to continue to evolve and improve over time and that they're our partner in making sure that it's the best they can be. We're really open about what the challenges are and why we are making different choices. Finally, pilot, pilot, pilot. I'm so glad we did the mini-pilot and the big pilot. We didn't have to do that, but it was a good choice for us in order to figure out how to make the strongest tools as well as the execution.

Lessons Learned: Investment

- ✓ Teachers have great ideas! Identify high-credibility teachers and leaders to engage in the design process and on-going revisions.
- ✓ Engage principals and cross-functional network leaders early and often. It will take everyone's best work to get this right.
- ✓ CEO "roadshow" of a robust draft to all teachers for more input. Resulted in 98.6% of teachers saying this is the right direction for AF.
- ✓ You cannot communicate too much. Teachers and leaders will be your best communicators to teachers.
- ✓ Be transparent about challenges and trade-offs and create an on-going feedback loop.

Pilot, Pilot, Pilot.

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The last slide here is execution, lessons learned. So, the big idea is fairly easy. It may seem hard at first but it's actually.... Where it gets really tricky is when you start thinking about every individual teacher and what their unique teaching situations are and have to figure out exactly how to make it work for them. It's also, as I mentioned, the collaboration is really key. Student-teacher links have to be accurate. This is a very specific one, but I'm sure you've heard it if you've talked to other districts doing this work—making sure the student-teacher links are accurate is incredibly important in order to have accurate measures of student achievement. Then, finally, a strong data system is necessary to capture all of this robust information and to be able to communicate it back to inform teacher practice. This year in 2011–2012, we had several different interim systems. And moving into 12–13, we are developing an online platform that will be able to collect and communicate out all the results to teachers as well as to hold all of their goal setting.

So, a few places you can learn more. We have an executive summary that we will share with you. There's also a wonderful case study that was written by Rachel Curtis at the Aspen Institute. It is from 2009, so there's definitely some changes that have been made since then, but it still gives a holistic picture of our work. Then, finally, as I said earlier, I'm happy to share our center's rubric or surveys or anything else that would be helpful. My e-mail address is there as well. If you are interested in working on the Teacher Career Pathway at Achievement First, then definitely make sure to e-mail me.

Lessons Learned: Execution

- ✓ It becomes more complex as it is applied to individual, unique teachers.
- ✓ It will take collaboration from all network teams and school teams to get this right. It also takes their time so buy-in is key.
- ✓ Student-teacher links need to be accurate.
- ✓ A strong data system is necessary to capture and communicate all of this data to inform teacher practice.



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How to Learn More

- ✓ Executive summary (2012)
- ✓ Aspen Institute case study (2009)
<http://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications>
- ✓ AF Essentials Rubric (2011-2012 SY)
- ✓ sarahcoon@achievementfirst.org




Slide 51

All right. Let's start taking your questions. I see that they are starting to come in.



Slides 52 and 53

PEGGIE:

Great. So why don't we start at the bottom, Sarah. Kelly, I think, has a relatively easy question. How did you determine the pilot participants?

SARAH:

That's a good question. Last year, we had all of our teachers involved. The first 30 teachers were some of the stronger teachers in the network and they were identified.... First schools identified that they wanted to participate. And then the principals identified a couple of teachers within their schools.

PEGGIE:

Great. If you are listening on the phone, you can hit Star 6 to unmute yourself if you want to ask a question over the phone. Otherwise, please type your questions into the chat. Erin's question might be a little bit more complicated. She's wondering about school leaders and how they make this work.

There's lots of observations, lots of debriefing. In terms of time, how have you addressed making this work within the time limits of the school day and the school year?

SARAH:

This is an excellent question, and it's something we have struggled with. I think it's really about making sure that school leaders are focused on what matters most. And if we believe that great teaching matters most, then investing time into teacher development and observations and feedback is a really important use of their time. We are fortunate that at Achievement First, we have several school leaders that are helping to make that possible. It's not just the principal [who] is the instructional leader. We also have academic deans at our schools. We also have deans of students or deans of school culture. We also have a director of school operations that's able to make sure the principals are focusing on the instructional work in their schools. So, I think it's, one, acknowledging that it is a lot of time, making sure there's clear structures in place and how schools are staffed and helping school leaders to really focus on instructional practice.

PEGGIE:

Could you talk a little bit more about the training to do the observations and provide the feedback to teachers?

SARAH:

Sure. We do regular trainings where we have school leaders sit down and watch a video together and then rate the video based on the Essentials Rubric. We have some little cards in bright colors, one through five, that school leaders are able to hold up, and we kind of discuss and debate different pieces of the rubric. Looking ahead to next year,

we're really planning to up that and have even more opportunities for school leaders to be trained. It's been very important that teachers also have that same opportunity. We sent packets to each school with videos that have already been normed by expert ratings and have expert ratings as well as even just these little cards to make it fun, and every school has those. So, it's both the teachers as well as the observers that have had that experience with the rubric.

PEGGIE:

And then Kelly is asking a follow up question about development. So, it sounds like this was mostly you, but how many people on your team assisted with the development of this model?

SARAH:

When this first began, it was truthfully a small project. And we quickly realized that it was a much bigger piece of work that did involve all of our network teams. So, we have grown the team from being just me to now having a few different people. We have kind of two arms of our team. I have one person that's really focusing on the teacher development and working with our teaching and learning team and our school leader development team. And then on the other side, I have one and a half people that's really focused on the operations of this work, and that side is going to be growing for next year as we continue to get a little bit bigger. We're going to be adding a half or a full person to that work. So, it still remains a small team, but we have what I think of as our extended team. We call it our working group that meets regularly from all of the other teams to make sure that we're very well coordinated.

PEGGIE:

Great. We had a question about untested subjects

come in. I know you have a slide in the appendix. I don't know if you might want to flip to that where you talk about the student achievement measures in all subjects. But could you talk a little bit about how you're gathering student achievement data particularly in untested subjects?

SARAH:

This one is a little bit tricky. I'll try to be brief, and then I can follow up more if that's helpful. Here's what it looks like for us. Wherever we can, as I said, we have teacher value added using state tests. And that's primarily in our middle schools, ELA and math as well as [audio skips]. We use this matrix model, F and P, as our reading assessment. And we verify that using DRP. In math, we use the Terra Nova. And then in high school, we have multiple assessments, and we use this matrix model, which looks at how much students grow in comparison to how much expected growth we have. Let me say that again. It compares their actual growth to how much we would expect them to grow based on their starting points. For each of those assessments, we've been able to say here's how much a child should grow based on their particular starting point. It's a bit more complex than that, and I could probably do an entire hour-long session on that. So, I hope that little bit is helpful.



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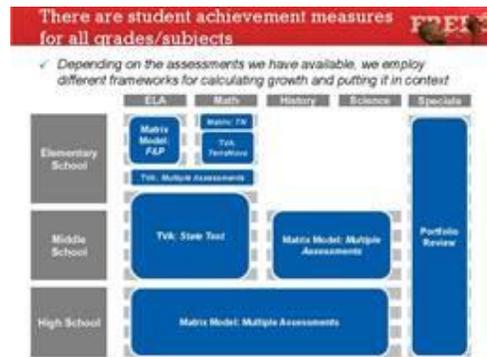
PEGGIE:

That is very helpful. Thank you for sharing that. A couple of people have questions related to the maximum amount of the bonus. I'm wondering if you could respond to their question.

An Overall Score is Determined for Each Teacher

Stage Calculator Example

| Teaching Excellence Framework | Year 1-5 (50%) | Student Growth (25%) | Classroom Management (10%) | Professional Learning (10%) | Student Learning (10%) | Student Engagement (10%) | Student Achievement (10%) | Overall Score | Teacher's Overall Score |
|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| Elementary | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% |
| Middle | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% |
| High | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% |



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SARAH:

Yep. Our current bonus structure is that everybody in the school from the principal to our deans, our teachers, our operations team members, they can all earn up to 10 percent of their own current salary. And depending on how the school does on their report card, those amounts are you can earn 10 percent, 5 percent, 2.5 percent, or 0 percent depending on how many points you earn towards the school report card.

PEGGIE:

Thank you for sharing that. Another question about one of the big benefits for teachers is the professional development money that they have. Could you give us a sense about how large that budget is? What kinds of things teachers have used to fund with their budget?

SARAH:

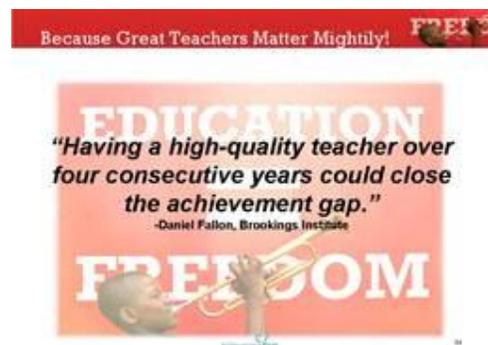
Yes. The current plan is that a Stage 4 teacher would be eligible for a \$1,500 individual professional development. And then a master teacher, a Stage 5 teacher, would be able to earn up to \$2,500. We haven't yet created the exact guidelines because we don't have Stage 4 teachers yet. That's happening for the first time this fall. But we're working right now to come up with some clear guidelines about what you would and would not be able to use that money for.

PEGGIE:

Could you talk a little bit about how those teachers will look different in the building? Will they have any different roles and responsibilities? The role for teachers? Or will they just be really seen as master teachers who are excellent in their craft?

SARAH:

That's a great question. I think this is something that's a little bit different about the Achievement First approach compared to other models that I've seen. In our model, to be a master teacher, you really need to be excellent in the classroom. You do not need to take on extra responsibilities as a coach or grade-level chair or other things. And that was a very intentional choice because we're also focused on teacher sustainability and work-life balance. So, if you want to be an amazing teacher throughout the day and then make sure that you're able to go home and spend time with your own child, that's an important thing that we want to be able to support. While the opportunity is there if you want to take on those additional roles, they're not required, and you would continue to earn a stipend for that additional role.



Slide 54

PEGGIE:

Great. That's really helpful. Kelly has a question that I think you've addressed a little bit. But if you could talk a little bit more about how you help school leaders stay consistent with the observation schedule and the feedback loop. She's asking specifically about the informal observations and not the more formal co-observations.

SARAH:

Right. I think that's a good question. We have had informal observations in our schools since the beginning, with when we were just one school with Amistad. We are helping to make sure that those happen on a consistent basis by working directly with the regional superintendent to make sure that those are happening as well as making sure that teachers are giving feedback on their experience in their coaching and observational feedback. We don't have right now that you must do X number of informal observations a year, but we do talk about having informal observations. Every other week a teacher should be getting observed. And we don't see these 45-minute formal observations.... The informals are not like that. They're much shorter observations, not a full write-up like there is for formal observations. Instead, it's more about an opportunity to come into a classroom for 15 minutes or so and share what are the big strengths that the observer saw and what are the big [inaudible] that they want to continue to work on in their coaching?

PEGGIE:

Great, that's helpful. We're going to be wrapping up [audio skips]. We had a question that came in over the registration page. You've talked a lot about developing a strong school culture and really developing teams and a cooperative, collaborative culture. But this is Peter's question, really about were there any instances in which differential

compensation created a negative reaction among the staff? And if so, what were the strategies you used to try to counteract that and to try to really build a staff and school culture that was coherent and collaborative?

SARAH:

I think that's a really important question and something that we're continuing to think about as we go through this work. I don't have any of the outcomes yet because we don't have the Stage 4 teachers identified. However, I would say what we're doing is a few things now to help be proactive about addressing that. One is that we're really are helping school leaders to own this process in their schools. We don't want it to feel like something the network is doing to them but, rather, that it's an important part of their school culture. For a principal to be the one who's leading that and leading the communications around it and setting the tone for the entire school. I think another thing is this continued focus on teamwork and collaboration. These are big parts of the core values of our network. And I think principals are really taking a lead in continuing to communicate and help to foster that within their schools. I would also say that it's important that our Stage 3 teachers.... That's the bulk of our teachers. That's where most people are. And that compensation is equivalent to what they're earning in our current system. And I think that that helps that this is just an opportunity to earn more. We're not taking anything away from teachers. We're providing an opportunity for them to earn more. I think it's going to be really important who our first Stage 4 teachers are and that they are people who are seen in the school as excellent teachers. I think it's going to really be important for the credibility of the overall Teacher Career Pathway to make sure that teachers are seeing that Stage 4 person and saying wow, that really is an

example of a great teacher and a role model for me.

PEGGIE:

Great. That's really helpful. I'm a little curious about next steps. I'm wondering, one, if you're engaged in sort of an evaluation of this program to determine the impact on school culture and student achievement and teacher quality. And then second, what you see as your next steps in the next three to five years.

SARAH:

Yes. So, the next steps, the big thing we're doing right now is we're preparing for our first Stage 4 teachers. We'll be defining the student achievement measures for each of our teachers. And we will be identifying our Stage 4s and providing those rewards to them. It's a really exciting time in this work for us to finally have the Stage 4 teachers that we can recognize.

PEGGIE:

Great. Does anyone have any last-minute questions? Please go ahead and enter them now. This has been incredibly helpful and very informative. Sarah, will we be able to post the rubric on our website, or would you prefer to share that with people via e-mail?

SARAH:

You can certainly post it on your website.

PEGGIE:

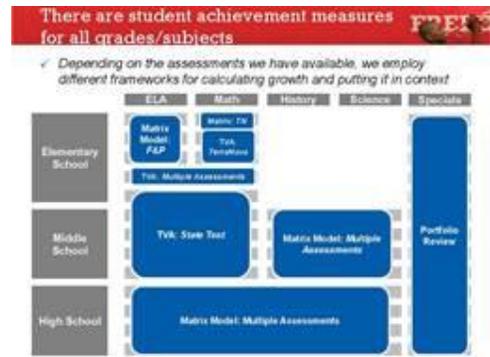
That would be great. I think that's something people would really like to look at and see how they might tailor it to the context of their schools and then, of course, share it back with you to let them know what kind of changes they made. I don't see any other questions coming in. Sarah, are there any last thoughts that you've like to share with the group?

SARAH:

I just want to say thank you for this opportunity. I really believe in the importance of great teachers. And I think it's important for all of us that great teaching is really recognized and developed and rewarded. And it's important that it's happening across the country and not just in Achievement First or in a couple of other schools and districts but, rather, that we across the country are really making teaching the rewarding profession that it is. I thank everyone for the good work that you're doing, and, again, I encourage you to share with us the things you've learned in your own schools.

PEGGIE:

Great. Well Sarah, I'd like to thank you for an incredibly informative presentation. And I'd like to thank all of our participants for joining us. We look forward to your participation in future webinars hosted by the National Charter School Resource Center. This webinar will be archived at the website you see on your screen along with the slide deck and the rubric that Sarah said she felt comfortable posting on our website. We're going to send you to an evaluation in a moment. We encourage you to share your feedback with us. Let us know what you liked about the webinar, what we could've done better, and what topics for future webinars you might like us to explore in the future. Again, thank you so much, Sarah. This is really a wonderful model for defining excellent instruction, for providing teachers with lots of feedback to help them develop to be master teachers, and for improving student achievement for all kids, which is I think what drives all of us. Thank you all for joining us, and we're going to send you to an evaluation in a moment. Thank you.



Slides 55 and 56

Thank you for participating.

- We look forward to your participation in future webinars hosted by the National Charter School Resource Center.
- This webinar will be archived at the following website:
<http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/webinars/>
- Please share your feedback with us through the evaluation.

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