



Lessons Learned from Texas Performance Award Programs

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Agenda

- Background on Performance Pay in Texas
- D.A.T.E. Technical Assistance Center
- Lessons Learned from the D.A.T.E. Program
- District Outcomes



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What is Strategic Compensation?

- Strategic compensation recognizes and rewards individual and/or group contributions that increase student achievement through:
 - Executing effective instructional strategies;
 - High-quality staff collaboration among grade level, subject area, campus-wide, and district-wide cohorts;
 - Engaging in meaningful professional development opportunities; and
 - Increasing utilization and effectiveness of indirect instructional components, such as student mentoring.



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Texas Strategic Compensation Initiatives

- Created in May 2006, when the 79th Legislature, third-called special session, passed House Bill One—including TEEG & D.A.T.E.
- **Texas Educator Excellence Grant (TEEG)**
 - Provided approximately \$100 million annually to approximately 1,000 campuses.
 - Campuses selected based on percentage of economically disadvantaged students and achievement levels.
 - TEEG was discontinued after its third cycle in the 2009 legislative session.



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Texas Strategic Compensation Initiatives

- **District Awards for Teacher Excellence (D.A.T.E.)**
 - All districts in the state were eligible to apply.
 - Funded at \$147.5 million for the 2008-2009 school year.
 - \$397 million appropriated for both the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years.
- **D.A.T.E. Cycle 1:** 203 districts participated in 2008-09 and 2009-10, to continue in the 2010-11 school year.
- **D.A.T.E. Cycle 2:** 121 districts to begin implementation in the 2010-11 school year.



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District Awards for Teacher Excellence (D.A.T.E.)

- Of the 203 Texas school districts participating in Cycle 1:
 - Approximately \$75/student based on Average Daily Attendance
 - Impact approximately half of Texas' 4.6 million students and 310,000 teachers
 - Comprise 53.8% of economically disadvantaged students in Texas
 - Reach 62.1% of the Limited English Proficiency students in Texas
 - Include districts ranging in size from 100 to over 180,000



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District Awards for Teacher Excellence (D.A.T.E.)

- Texas school districts can utilize the D.A.T.E. program to enact systemic reform.
- The purpose of D.A.T.E. is to provide districts the necessary funds to:
 - Award teachers for positively impacting student achievement;
 - Create capacity and sustainability for improved instruction within the district; and
 - Provide catalyst for greater alignment of various district practices with overall district goals.
- D.A.T.E. accomplishes these goals through the establishment of a grant structure that allows for flexibility among districts to design and implement a program that addresses local needs.



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District Awards for Teacher Excellence (D.A.T.E.)

Part I Funds:

- Make up **at least** 60% of the grant award and must be used to:
 - Award classroom teachers and school administrators who positively impact student achievement;
 - Utilize criteria to measure individual teacher and/or group impact on student achievement; and
 - Should be distributed based on criteria that is quantifiable, reliable, valid, and objective.

Part II Funds:

- Make up **no more than** 40% of the grant award and can be used to:
 - Recruit and retain teachers and principals in critical needs areas;
 - Provide stipends to career, mentor, master teachers, and NBPTS;
 - Support on-going applied professional growth;
 - Increase data capacity;
 - Reward other campus employees who demonstrate excellence; and
 - Implement elements of the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP).



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D.A.T.E. Technical Assistance Center

- Unique statewide model run by the Institute for Public School Initiatives at The University of Texas System.
- Provides customized service to districts with diverse needs based on lessons learned from the state and nationally.
- Provides tools and supports through the experienced Technical Assistance partners.
- Builds capacity for long term support across the state.



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Technical Assistance Center

- The D.A.T.E. Technical Assistance Center supports districts through the design and implementation of strategic compensation initiatives.
- Call Center
(512) 579-5050
txeducatorawards@utsystem.edu
- Website: <http://www.txeducatorawards.org>
- Workshops and professional development
- On-site visits to districts
- Regional Education Service Centers capacity building
- Program design consultations



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Additional Technical Assistance Activities

- Host national conferences
- Present at state and national conferences
- Policy briefs and publications
- Policy forums
- Upcoming D.A.T.E. Summer Institute, June 28-30 in San Antonio



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Technical Assistance Results

- Highly utilized:
 - 82% of D.A.T.E. Cycle 1 districts used at least one optional service
 - Over 70% have used call center—over 1,000 calls
 - Over 70% have attended at least one optional workshop
- High levels of agreement when expressing “helpfulness” and “usefulness” of technical assistance trainings.



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Lessons Learned from D.A.T.E. Design and Implementation

Strategic compensation is not a “magic bullet.”

It is a larger commitment to support a district’s overall instructional program.



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Lessons Learned: Context Matters

Technical assistance support needs vary by district.

- No “one size fits all” approach to performance pay programs.
- Challenges differ by district size and context.
- Smaller districts tend to favor group awards over individual.
- Larger districts have more difficulty with communication, tracking, and rewarding teachers.



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Lessons Learned: Program Design

- Focus on district needs.
- Provide meaningful awards.
- Target specific behaviors and outcomes.
- Consider perceived fairness of performance measures.
- Provide professional development and other supports aligned with program goals.



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Lessons Learned: Communication

- Create buy-in through stakeholder engagement and transparency.
- Develop communication plan at the beginning of the school year to ensure that program goals and structure are clear to all stakeholders.
- Be proactive and continue to communicate throughout implementation.



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Lessons Learned: Program Management & Monitoring

- Develop an action plan with clear timelines and objectives.
- Assign clear roles and responsibilities.
- Empower campus leaders, especially principals, to drive program implementation.
- Connect the necessary district departments to implement the program.
- Build in time for continuous and ongoing evaluation, allowing for mid-course corrections.



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Lessons Learned: Data Management and Analysis

- Ensure data management tools are in place prior to beginning of the program implementation year.
- Understand what performance measures and data requirements are needed to support your program.
- Double check data accuracy.
- Provide additional information to inform instruction and support needs.
- D.A.T.E. funds can be used to improve data capacity and infrastructure.



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Lessons Learned: Payouts

- Payouts provide a good test of program planning, design, and communication.
- Coordination between multiple district departments is critical.
- Ensure accuracy prior to distributing awards.
- Follow up the payout process by addressing needs of individuals who did not earn awards.
- As always, communication is key to success, with both internal and external stakeholders.



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Strategic Alignment of District Processes

Aligning district process with program goals is the key to success!

- Focus on the systemic support of instruction rather than on monetary awards (mentoring, professional development, leadership opportunities).
- Align and include all district divisions involved in the program.
- Align district processes to support educators in meeting the goals of the program.
- Develop strong data management systems to meet evolving program needs.



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D.A.T.E.

Lessons Learned & Program Outcomes

- Northside Independent School District in San Antonio, TX
- Beginning third year of implementation in the 2010-11 school year



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NISD DATE Background

- 33 campuses participating in Year 2
- Awards core content area teachers and teachers who directly support TAKS tested content areas
- Awards are team based
- Measures student achievement performance based on TAKS results
- Approximately 1,850 teachers eligible for awards ranging from \$1,500 to \$3,600



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NISD Lessons Learned – Communication

- Challenge to communicate effectively with large number of staff members, each with their own unique eligibility
- Important to identify a campus staff member responsible for communication on campus – principals serve this role



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NISD Lessons Learned – Communication

- Implemented communication methods such as:
 - Briefings at campus
 - Website
 - Emails
 - Webinars
 - Eligibility verification letters,
 - **Online award verification**



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NISD Lessons Learned – Communication

- After year 2 we are still identifying ways of improving communication



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NISD Lessons Learned - Teacher Eligibility

- Consider many factors in defining teacher eligibility:
 - Job function, hours per day, days per year
- Define rules applicable at all campuses--very complex issues
- Identify a snapshot date to determine eligibility
 - Jobs change throughout the school year
- Consider special situations:
 - Retirees, displaced staff, resigned staff, military staff
- Address ineligible staff



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NISD Lessons Learned – Data Integration

- Managing large amounts of data
 - Database expertise is very helpful
- Compiling data can prove to be challenging
- Using data acquired from multiple sources
 - HR, testing, master schedule, campus rosters
 - Data compatibility issues



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NISD Lessons Learned – Growth Measures

- Exploring implementing growth measures in Year 3
- Approaching growth measures very cautiously
- Calculating growth measures is extremely complex
- Concerns among campus staff include:
 - Ceiling effect with high achievers
 - Use of results for each teacher



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NISD Program Outcomes

- Increased positive opinions about the grant among teachers
 - Initially concerned it would cause divisiveness
 - Actually encouraged teachers to collaborate, work as a team to earn award
- Increased student achievement, teacher retention at D.A.T.E. campuses



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NISD Program Outcomes

- How much of these improvements can we attribute to D.A.T.E.?



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General D.A.T.E. Program Outcomes

Preliminary outcomes gathered from D.A.T.E. Cycle 1 district case studies and evaluation reports to the Texas Education Agency.



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Plans with a Purpose

- Goals and performance measures outlined in districts' D.A.T.E. programs drew attention to specific areas of student need and helped teachers focus on meeting those needs.
- “Teacher and student weaknesses were easily identified, therefore areas for improvement were quickly addressed.”
- “Made the entire staff more aware of their roles in our students' achievement (both success and failure).”
- Reinforced district vision for teaching and learning.



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Increased Data Use

- More focused, targeted used of data.
- Reinforced shift from “achievement” models to growth and value-added.
- The program helped “focus non-core teachers on their role in supporting the academic development of students.”
- The program “changed teacher practices by sharpening their focus on making data-driven decisions.”
- Program held teachers more accountable for student achievement on district assessments.



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Improved School Culture

- Program influenced school culture by “increasing teacher collaboration among core content teachers.”
- “The biggest impact [of the program] was the professional development and collaborative practices, which promoted internal growth and encouraged professional learning communities.”
- The program created a “culture of continuous improvement” through the alignment of performance measures and other district improvement initiatives.
- “D.A.T.E. has given our principals an additional instructional leadership tool they can use to nurture improved teacher practices and improve school cultures.”



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Recruitment and Retention

- District strategic compensation programs can serve as a human resource management tool.
- D.A.T.E. proved to be an effective retention tool for many districts, particularly in hard-to-staff campuses and subject areas .
- One district experienced a drastic reduction in teacher turnover rates, going from 14.3% turnover to 4.8% among teacher who earned a performance award.
- “D.A.T.E. has been an effective human resource management tool because the additional funding we received increased teacher’s overall pay and allowed the district to compete with a neighboring school district that receives millions of dollars in federal impact aid money.”



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Student Achievement

- “D.A.T.E. increased student achievement significantly as evidenced by [our] high school becoming a *Recognized* high school for the first time under the TAKS testing system.”
- “In our school district, the D.A.T.E. program influenced student achievement by increasing the TAKS scores in all grade levels at 25 different campuses.”
- “Achievement gaps closed even further among white and minority students at almost every grade level across all subjects.”
- The program “influenced student achievement by allowing us to motivate teachers and keep a laser focus in the areas of science and math. Students benefited from mentoring, tutoring, and other supports built into the programs.”
- Districts cited the reasons for improved academic success as being related to, “changes made in teacher practices, including time for teacher collaboration...study and implement best practices, and use student data to inform instruction.”



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Cautious Conclusions

- Outcomes serve as examples of how strategic compensation in education can work to improve teacher quality and student achievement.
- Difficult to assess where D.A.T.E. ends and good district policy begins.
- Concrete, strategic compensation goals have pushed these systemic considerations and greater overall alignment.
- “D.A.T.E. brought out the best of what we were aspiring to be.”



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Questions?

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