



What is SDI+?

In its fourth year of implementation in 2010-11, South Dakota INCENTIVES^{plus} is a pilot project designed to learn more about performance-based compensation in schools.

The project incorporates a financial incentive system that targets teachers, paraprofessionals and principals in high-need schools in mainly rural areas. The system includes professional development and financial incentives to principals and instructional staff based on school-wide gains in student achievement and involvement in capacity-building professional development.

To learn more, visit http://www.doe.sd.gov/secretary/incentives_plus.asp.



www.doe.sd.gov



south dakota INCENTIVES^{plus}



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How do financial incentives work?

At the core of SDI+ is the Building Leadership Team. The BLT is a school-based team including the principal and teacher leaders engaged in a collaborative, data-driven process to focus instruction on identified learning needs. This team takes the lead role for developing and nurturing the healthy environment associated with a Professional Learning Community.

If a school demonstrates gains by making adequate yearly progress (as defined by No Child Left Behind) or by showing progress via the growth model, all of the instructional staff and principal receive a school-based cash award.

In addition to the school-based award, teachers, paraprofessionals and principals can receive awards for building their capacity through identified professional development activities. Teachers may choose to participate in opportunities leading to National Board Certification, while principals participate in a Leadership Academy. Furthermore, teachers, paraprofessionals and principals can earn awards for participating on a BLT or engaging with a Collaborative Work Group.

What has been accomplished?

- More than \$7 million has been awarded to South Dakota teachers, paraprofessionals and principals since the program started. More than two-thirds of participating schools received school-based awards.
- More than 600 teachers submitted TakeOne portfolios, a component of National Board Certification, as a professional development experience. Of this number, nearly 100 teachers are pursuing National Board Certification.
- Forty-three principals and administrators received onsite professional development through mentoring and coaching. The positive impact is reflected by improvements in classroom instruction and increased principal retention.
- A growth model that values individual student gains and is implemented as a supplement and alternative to AYP was developed.
- The healthy culture of Professional Learning Communities has taken root in schools. As a result, instruction is focused, teaching staff is invested, and student achievement is increasing.

What's next?

As SDI+ engages in the fourth year of implementation and anticipates the fifth and final year of grant resources, attention shifts to sustainability. Toward that end, site leaders and teams will develop plans for sustaining key components of performance-based compensation which fit with their respective needs and resources.

As part of the planning effort, SDI+ sites will reflect on the impact of grant activities such as the professional development for teachers and principals, the collaborative BLT process for making data-based decisions for instruction, or awards paid to teaching staff. Those components that are most valued will be the highest priority for sustainability.

Equally important, site leaders will assess the financial resources that might be committed to the performance-based compensation effort. Clearly, that will be challenging yet essential for sustainability planning. With priorities set and resources earmarked, site leaders will draft a plan to guide them in the transition beyond the grant period.

So, what can project leaders and school district officials gain from SDI+? At a minimum, it is apparent that districts participating in SDI+ will possess firsthand experience to help ground discussions and guide decision-making in an informed manner. As a result, they may serve as models for other schools addressing the topic of compensation.