

# GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY™

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College of Doctoral Studies

## **PAY FOR PERFORMANCE**

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EDUCATION POLICY PAPER 1: GRAND CANYON UNIVERSITY

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# WHITE PAPER ON PAY FOR PERFORMANCE

Virtually everyone agrees that educators should be held accountable for student achievement. The question is how to adequately and fairly evaluate a teacher's performance relative to how it affects student achievement and then determine how to compensate those teachers whose students demonstrate adequate yearly progress or beyond. Pay for Performance is often a suggested method for this evaluation. This paper will provide information regarding the concept of Pay for Performance (PFP)

There is a dearth of research that supports paying teachers beyond their base salaries in order to improve student achievement. Rather, there is a broad body of research that indicates that PFP might actually do damage as teachers feel the threat to their livelihoods because of the narrow method of measuring their efficacy. PFP has been documented as compromising the good will and cooperation among teachers since it creates competition for a small amount of money that often results in an attitude of "I'm out for myself only." This attitude results in the loss of necessary collaboration and communication found to nurture student achievement and success. Another detriment to using these scores to determine PFP is that students see no reason to perform well since their classroom grades are not reflective of their individual performance on such assessments. Students know that colleges and universities place a higher value on test results from the ACT and SAT than state standardized tests. The National Center of Performance Incentives, commissioned during the George H.W. Bush administration, found that, "There is no conclusive evidence on the power of financial awards in promoting more effective teaching and evaluating student performance, or on the long-term effect of performance awards on the supply of effective teachers." No research exists to support PFP for teachers as a method for improving teaching efficacy and student performance. Additionally, there has been a growing concern regarding cheating by teachers to ensure their students' test scores increase enough to earn the financial reward for the teacher. To emphasize this concern, Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan actually intends to publish a guide explaining what to look for regarding cheating on test results. This guide seems counterproductive to the goals of educating the American student. Would

not the funding to create and publish such a guide be better spent on professional development that will equip teachers with a deeper repertoire for teaching the students of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

***THREE RECENT AND HIGHLY VISIBLE STUDIES THAT SUPPORT THE FINDINGS OF THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR PERFORMANCE INCENTIVES ARE:***

- the New York Public Schools Teacher Bonus Program
- the first scientific study of performance pay ever conducted in the United States, which was conducted in Tennessee by Vanderbilt University in partnership with the RAND Corporation
- the Chicago Public Schools Teacher Performance-based Pay Program which was initiated under the leadership of Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan when he was Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools.

The New York Public Schools conducted a three-year study (2008 – 2011) that distributed \$56 million in performance bonuses to teachers and other school staff members over the time of the study. Weighing surveys, interviews and statistics, the study found that the bonus program had no effect on students' test scores, on grades on the city's A to F school report cards, or on the way teachers did their jobs. The study found that most schools distributed the bonuses equally to all staff members. But, even where schools rewarded some teachers more than others, there was no positive effect on student performance. Teachers reported that improving as teachers (through professional development opportunities) and seeing their students learn were bigger motivators than a bonus. The results of this study add to a national growing body of evidence that so-called pay-for-performance bonuses for teachers that consist only of financial incentives have little to no effect on student achievement.

The Vanderbilt University study took place over the 2006 – 2009 school years with volunteer participation by math teachers in grades 5 – 8 in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools. In the absence of any other incentive programs, over the 3-year life of the program, teachers were rewarded with bonus pay tied to student performance. The study's question was, "If teachers know they will be rewarded for an increase in their students' test scores, will their student test scores increase?" Researchers found that the answer to that question is "no" – bonuses alone do not help teachers work harder

to see their students' scores rise.

A third most recent study began when Arnie Duncan was Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools. During the 2007 – 08 school year, the Chicago Teacher Advancement Program was implemented. The program has multiple steps, including increased teacher development, and an incentive payment plan for which teachers are paid more when their students do better on standardized test scores. Under the program, payments to teachers in the experimental group averaged \$1100 for those in schools in their first year of implementation, and \$2600 for those teachers in schools in their second year. Results from the study, conducted by Mathematica Policy Research Inc. and released in June, 2010, showed no evidence that the Chicago TAP improved student math and reading tests when compared with a group of similar schools that did not use the system.

Educators are often compared with the Business Community and in the arena of Pay for Performance that comparison continues. Educators should be paid for results, corporate barons insist, just like they are. Yet business management literature is filled with warnings about incentives that rely heavily on quantitative rather than qualitative measures. No less than Edward Deming, a nationally recognized authority on the successful strategies of business and corporations, admonishes, “Businesses seeking to improve quality and long-term performance should do away with standards, eliminate management by numbers and numerical goals, and abolish merit ratings.” These latter measures encourage employees to focus on short-term results, Deming argues that “management by numerical goals is an attempt to mandate without knowledge of what to do, and in fact is usually management by fear!”

Quite contrary to their rhetoric, it seems that businesses actually heed the warning. A May 2010 Economic Policy Institute report estimates that only one in seven private-sector employees is covered by a bonus or merit plan, which accounts for just a fraction of total compensation.

In review, business literature assails performance pay. Businesses use it only sparingly. Education should therefore adopt performance pay as a centerpiece of reform. This is dizzying logic, but at least we have some insight into the process that doled out obscene bonuses to the executives who lost billions of

dollars and brought our national economy to the brink of disaster.

Clearly this report does not reflect an exhaustive search of the literature on pay for performance; however, when searching for information that validates pay for performance to raise student achievement, one comes up empty-handed. This is not to say that a viable and valuable method of paying teachers for what they know and what they can do to raise student achievement isn't possible. But, to dangle the carrot of pay for performance in front of a group that already feels disenfranchised because of inadequate compensation and the lack of professional development, seems counterproductive. Rather, it is suggested that Arizona establish a system in which all stakeholders collaborate in the development of college training programs, performance appraisal processes and instruments to create ownership and commitment to effect performance appraisal focused on improved student learning. This process should begin with teacher training in colleges and universities and carry through to a teacher's last day of service. Through professional development, coaching, ongoing collaboration with experts in the teaching profession, training for instructional leaders who will commit to implementing an agreed upon evaluation system with fidelity, Arizona would more than likely be able to invest its funding for education in a system that not only raises student achievement, but attracts the best and brightest to the profession of education in our state.

***TO SUMMARIZE, WHAT CAN WE CONCLUDE FROM REVIEWING PAY FOR PERFORMANCE FOR TEACHERS?***

- There does not exist a body of research to support Pay for PFP for teachers.
- There does exist a body of research which concludes that PFP for teachers does not improve student achievement.
- Two very recent high profile PFP for teachers initiatives in Chicago and in NYC, implemented by high profile individuals (Secretary Duncan, when he was Superintendent in Chicago, and Mayor Bloomberg in NYC) have been basically abandoned because neither initiative reported any discernible improvement in student achievement.
- It is a myth that the business/corporate community widely uses performance pay incentives to drive productivity.
- Students have no real incentive to score well on state assessments, in that their classroom grades are not reflective of their individual performance on such assessments.

- In considering PFP for teachers and using state assessments as the main determinant of teacher effectiveness and accountability, completely misses the purpose and intent of a well-rounded education for students, and does not accurately measure the myriad and complex responsibilities of teachers. Einstein's cogent warning should give pause to those who advocate PFP for teachers, "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted."

#### ***WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT?***

1. Develop a multi-dimensional evaluation system for teachers which incorporates the many and varied components which are essential to accomplished teaching.
2. Charge a representative "blue ribbon" task force with the responsibility to develop the teacher evaluation framework and report its findings and recommendations to the legislature, within a time frame not to exceed one year.
3. Fund a major initiative to maximize the use of the state's 400 plus Nationally Board Certified Teachers, each of who has received national recognition as an accomplished teacher, and is serving in such roles as: mentors for new teachers, professional development specialists, curriculum developers, and master teachers supporting veteran classroom teachers. This select group of teachers represents a great state resource which has largely been overlooked in improving the state's teaching force.
4. Provide significant financial resources to promote high quality, ongoing and comprehensive professional development for all teachers. While the state presently has a mandate for professional development, it provides minimal funding to implement this mandate. The legislature should plan to expend any funds which are under consideration for PFP for teachers, to fund a state-wide initiative to improve and enhance the state's teaching force. A commitment of this kind would provide a greater reward for the state's use if its funds in that would potentially impact on the universe of the state's teachers rather than a very select few who would be rewarded under a PFP for teacher model. In effect, rather than celebrating "victory gardens", the state would be committed to an "amber waves of grain" approach.

## Author Biography

Dr. Gerald N. Tirozzi served as an Executive Director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) until July 1, 2011. Dr. Tirozzi has an extensive background in the educational field and is a nationally recognized leader in education reform. Prior to joining NASSP in March 1999, Dr. Tirozzi held a variety of positions in the field of education. These included: Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education...from 1996 to 1999; Professor of Educational Leadership at the University of Connecticut from 1993 to 1995; President of Wheelock College from 1991 to 1993; Commissioner of Education in Connecticut from 1983 to 1991; Superintendent of New Haven (CT) Public Schools from 1977 to 1983. Early in his career, Tirozzi also served as science teacher, assistant principal, and principal. Dr. Tirozzi serves on a number of national educational advisory boards, task forces, and professional organizations. Some of these include: the Educational Research Service, the League, the Learning First Alliance, Pearson Education National Policy Board, the USA Today Education Advisory Panel, and the U.S. Department of State's Overseas Schools Advisory Council. Dr. Tirozzi is the author of numerous articles on educational topics that have been published in educational and scholarly journals. Some of these writings have been collected in the publication, *Reflections on School Leadership*. Dr. Tirozzi's public service and leadership have been recognized by a number of state and national organizations. Some of these include: the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, the Horace Mann League, the U.S. Department of Education, Michigan State University, and the Connecticut Legislature. Dr. Tirozzi holds a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Educational Administration and Higher Education from Michigan State University. He has a Sixth Year Certificate in Education Administration from Fairfield University in Connecticut. He received a Master of Arts Degree in Guidance and Counseling and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education from Southern Connecticut State University.

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