

Resolution to Support Teacher Incentive Pay Provisions

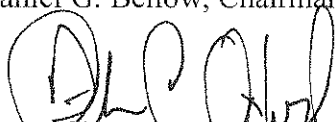
The Greater Houston Partnership has long supported the concept of incentive pay for teachers. The Partnership encourages the establishment of programs which reward achievement and provide consequences for not meeting prescribed objectives and improvements established by the local school district.

Currently before the Legislature is House Bill 3646 (Hochberg), which provides enhanced funding for Texas public schools. Included in the bill is an amendment that pertains to teacher incentive pay. Under the current law, 60% of grant funds must be used to reward teachers for improving student achievement. The committee amendment reduces the amount of funds used for rewarding teachers who improve student achievement to 30%.

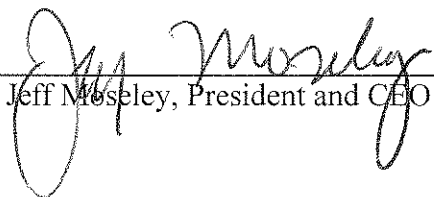
The Partnership recommends the committee amendment pertaining to this provision be deleted so that the current 60% incentive pay requirement remains in place.



Daniel G. Bellow, Chairman



Patrick Oxford, Secretary



Jeff Meseley, President and CEO

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 15, 2009

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Lori Vettters, Chairman, Education Policy and Strategic Planning Committee

SUBJECT: Resolution to Support Teacher Incentive Pay Provisions

RECOMMENDATION:

The Greater Houston Partnership has long supported the concept of incentive pay for teachers. The Partnership encourages the establishment of programs which reward achievement and provide consequences for not meeting prescribed objectives and improvements established by the local school district.

Currently before the Legislature is House Bill 3646 (Hochberg), which provides enhanced funding for Texas public schools. Included in the bill is an amendment that pertains to teacher incentive pay. Under the current law, 60% of grant funds must be used to reward teachers for improving student achievement. The committee amendment reduces the amount of funds used for rewarding teachers who improve student achievement to 30%.

The Partnership recommends the committee amendment pertaining to this provision be deleted so that the current 60% incentive pay requirement remains in place.

BACKGROUND:

The focus on K-12 education is on accountability that is geared toward the improvement of the quality of education and improving student achievement. Concurrently, many experienced teachers, dissatisfied with their compensation, recognition, and overwhelming demands on their time are leaving the field for other more highly compensated fields. Because of lower compensation levels, not enough high quality individuals are choosing teaching as a profession. We suggest investing in the workforce to improve recruitment and retention of highly qualified individuals which will thereby raise student achievement levels. Clearly, innovative compensation alternatives have to be developed to make it financially more attractive to enter and stay in teaching.

The current teacher workforce is aging and retiring, and yet K-12 student enrollments are increasing. Pay for performance programs are essential to teacher retention and should be undertaken in all districts in the region.

PROS:

- Award program sharpens focus on improved student achievement tying district activities to core classroom needs.
- Financial incentives can strengthen the link between student achievement and a teacher's contribution to achievement, thus rewarding high performing teachers.
- Program incentives are designed to attract and retain skilled teachers in schools that need improvement in core subjects.

CONS:

- Teacher incentive programs could be seen as punitive and unfair to weak or non-core subject teachers.
- Any program to strengthen the link between student performance and teacher pay must be a part of a larger comprehensive effort to improve school district service functions for maximum strategic effectiveness.

KNOWN OPPOSITION:

Generally opposition has been expressed by the state and local teacher unions.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Immediately communicate this position to the Senate and House Education Committee members who will be considering substitute language to HB 3646 during the week of May 18, 2009.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Based upon the 2010-2011 budget of \$395 million, \$118 million would be allocated which is 42% less than the current grant.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

This recommendation can be implemented with available Greater Houston Partnership staff and current operating budget resources.

COOPERATION WITH ALLIED ORGANIZATIONS:

N/A