



Teacher Attitudes on Pay for Performance:

Evidence from Hillsborough
County, Florida

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Motivation

- Pay-for-Performance (PFP) is increasingly common
 - Florida, Minnesota and Texas: \$550 million in PFP
 - Federal TIF Grants in 2006: \$99 million
- Little systematic evidence on teacher attitudes toward PFP in general, or specific forms of PFP
- Success of incentive pay depends on understanding and support of teachers



Outline

1. Prior Literature
2. Research Questions
3. Setting
4. Survey
5. Sample
6. Findings
7. Policy Implications



Prior Research

- Prior work is often contradictory
 - Different definitions/forms of incentive pay
 - Different samples and survey quality
- Some common findings
 - Most support or paying teachers for extra work and working in hard-to-staff schools
 - More support among Black, Hispanic, male and less experienced teachers
 - More support among teachers with “good” principals as perceived by teacher



Research Questions

- How do teachers view PFP in general?
- How supportive are teachers of different methods for identifying high-performing teachers?
- To what extent do teachers understand existing PFP policies?
- To what extent do teachers support existing PFP policies?
- How are teachers' views of PFP related to teacher and school characteristics?



The Setting: Hillsborough County, Florida

- Florida has considerable experience with PFP
 - 2006-07: STAR (Special Teachers are Rewarded) program in FL; reward top 25% of teachers based on student performance
 - March 2007: Merit Award Program (MAP) replaces STAR; allows rewards to teams, and includes supervisor evaluation as important component



The Setting: Hillsborough County, Florida

- Hillsborough County
 - 199 traditional schools (including Tampa)
 - 192,000 students (27% Hispanic, 23% Black; 49% free lunch, “B” Grade on Florida’s accountability system in 06-07)
 - Successfully implemented several financial incentive programs in the past
 - First district in FL to have PFP plan approved (joint submission by the district and the teachers’ union)



Research Questions

- Sample included all full-time instructional personnel in 199 traditional public and magnet schools
- Voluntary, online survey over two-week period in May 2007
- 23 of 199 schools did not respond; in other schools, 20% response rate
- Concern with non-random response
 - Respondents were similar to non-respondents in terms of race, gender and experience
 - Possible differences in terms of attitudes/opinions



Our Teacher Sample

- 1691 respondents
- 19% male; 11% Hispanic; 7% Black
- Range of experience
 - 14% with 1-3 yrs exp
 - 27% with 4-9 yrs exp
 - 15% with 10-14 yrs exp
- 53% in elementary schools
- 56% have union membership



General Views

- Teachers express only moderate support for PFP
- Most supportive of individual-based (rather than group-based) rewards
- Only 50% agree that this would be a positive change in teacher compensation
- 56% agree that incentive pay will destroy the collaborative culture of teaching
- 34% agree that it will make teachers work harder



Variation across Teachers

- Race and gender not associated with support for incentive pay
- Teachers with 1-3 yrs exp. express more support than teachers with 20+ yrs exp.
- Middle/high school teachers are more supportive of PFP
- Teachers in schools with higher % non-white children are more supportive
- Teachers who are more risk-seeking and less patient are more supportive of PFP
 - Other personality measures not associated with support



The Importance of Leadership and Self-Efficacy

- Teachers who have a more positive view of their principal's leadership express more support for incentive pay
- Teachers with a greater sense of teaching self-efficacy express more support for incentive pay
 - The amount a student can learn is primarily related to family background
 - When I really try, I can get through to the most difficult student
 - If a student in my class becomes disruptive, I feel assured that I know some techniques to redirect him/her



What Should be Rewarded?

- Teachers believe many factors should be considered
- Teachers emphasize “input-based” measures
 - Professional development: 86% agree
 - Advanced degree: 79% agree
 - Collaboration: 75% agree
- Less support for rewards based on student achievement
 - High student test scores: 37% agree
 - Student gains on FCAT: 46% agree
 - Supervisor evaluation: 75% agree



Knowledge of STAR and MAP

- Teachers do not understand how the current PFP systems in Florida operate
 - Clear understanding of what STAR measured and rewarded: 46% agree
 - Clear understanding of the target I needed to reach under STAR: 43% agree
 - Even less understanding of MAP (understandable given how new it is)



Policy Implications

- Importance of teacher education and buy-in
 - Focus on teacher concerns (e.g., collaborative nature of teaching)
 - Florida's top-down vs. Texas' shared governance
- Allow teachers to opt-out (e.g., Denver ProComp)
- Financial incentives for working in hard-to-staff schools
- PFP should not be a stand-alone policy
 - Combine with leadership reforms and professional development

