



Sidney Lanier High School

AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

1201 PAYTON GIN

AUSTIN, TEXAS 78758

(512) 414-7429

Tracey L. Cortez

Agricultural Science Teacher

September 7, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

Historically teachers are probably the most over-worked and under-paid individuals in the workforce. Many teachers choose to teach because they love working with students and enjoy the relationships that form in the classroom as a student progresses through their academic career. Personally, I do not know a teacher that teaches solely for the pay, but many teachers would appreciate monetary incentives for their hard work.

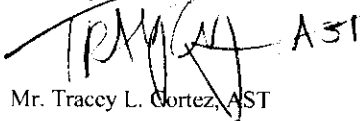
On behalf of Lanier High School I would like to thank the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Legislature for their support and funding of incentive based pay programs for Texas teachers. Many teachers on the Lanier High School campus work extremely hard to increase student achievement with little to no additional compensation. Although this program is just a pilot program we would like to see it continued because we feel that many people on our campus work hard outside the call of duty and should be rewarded for their student's academic accomplishments.

The process of designing a plan to disperse the funds was smooth and trouble-free. The committee was made up of teachers from each of the content areas as well as representation for classified employees. The committee had to make compromises as well as collaborate to determine what would work best for our campus. The committee was focused on the goal of increasing student achievement. After several meeting and revisions the committee is confident with the plan that is being proposed.

Student achievement is Lanier High School's top priority and will continue to be because our students are our customers, and teachers are employed to serve their customers to the best of their abilities. Incentives based pay programs will push teachers to share more ideas, participate in more campus events, and increase their student's achievement by giving the teacher an incentive to work extra hours beyond the normal duty day.

In closing, thank you for supporting and funding incentive based pay programs for Texas teachers. I know that the results will outweigh the costs because of increased student achievement and decreased retention and drop out rates.

Sincerely,

 AST

Mr. Tracey L. Cortez, AST

*From the Office
Of
Tracey L. Cortez*



Sidney Lanier High School

1201 PAYTON GIN
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78758
(512) 411-2511

Edmund R. Oropez
Principal

September 7, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

I want to thank you for the opportunity to build our school community, support "good" teaching, and reward the dedication involved at a school like Lanier High School.

Teachers do not choose to be a teacher because of the money; it is a calling and a commitment within one's self. A monetary incentive can be seen as a disastrous initiative in education, but I feel that the committee of staff and faculty members at Lanier HS worked very hard to create an equitable plan that set clear priorities for the school as a whole.

The committee discussed ways to include non-credential staff members and non-classroom teachers in the incentive plan. It was important to us to demonstrate within the plan that we feel that every person on our campus can make a difference in the success of our students. Building a school community where everyone feels valued and appreciated is a building block in the school's foundation and future.

Our top priority was to compensate teachers who are engaging students and providing rigor in the classroom to make a difference in student achievement scores. These teachers have a dedication and understanding of the needs of their students and are able to make significant strides in these areas.

The committee as a whole felt strongly that it was important and essential for the success of our programs and curriculum that we retain teachers who had experience with Lanier students. We need teachers to remain at Lanier to build stability and cohesiveness. It is detrimental to Lanier students when a majority of teachers from a department or a grade level leave the school. We wanted to acknowledge the dedication and loyalty of the faculty and staff for remaining at Lanier.

The committee reviewed several plans and discussed at length the priorities for Lanier. We examined our school goals and Campus Improvement Plan to refine our priorities in the incentive plan. We were often frustrated because what we considered an improvement or even an advancement of changing what has long been regarded as acceptable for these students such as: low percentage of students attempting the Advanced Placement exams, SATs, or University Interscholastic League competitions; we were unable to recognize this type of improvement within the incentive plan. In the future we hope the grant committee would consider alternative measurements in such areas as those listed above. There are many factors that can indicate and improve student achievement and success.

The committee created priorities that reflect the needs of our school and students; we are a community who can only succeed when we work as a team, to provide the best teaching and services to our students. Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Stella Farris
Librarian
Lanier High School

From the Library

Stella Farris- Librarian



Sidney Lanier High School

1201 PAYTON GIN
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78758
(512) 414-2514

Edmund R. Oropez
Principal

September 7, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been teaching at Lanier for twenty-five years and have been English department chairperson at Lanier High School for six years. It is this leadership role that lead me to membership on the incentive grant criteria committee.

This has been a collegial yet grueling task and a lesson in one plus one equals three. We each entered the committee room with either a list of ideas or no ideas at all. Hours of discussion, argument, compromise, reconsideration, "eureka moments," and moments of having to "start all over again" produced a workable, understandable, and equitable plan.

Because we did not want the incentive grant to become a divisive issue, I will admit that we were sometimes guided by our desire to make everyone happy. Finally however, we developed a plan that is chiefly based on measurable student performance criteria and criteria that will help individuals and the faculty as a whole grow professionally. I am confident that our final plan will encourage teachers to work hard for the success of our students and reward that success. I am especially pleased with our decision to reward teachers whose sub-populations show incremental growth. Each minute gain represents an individual child who is learning, growing, and becoming successful.

Sincerely,

Carole Peck

*From the Office
Of
Stacia Crescenzi*

Minutes from 8/14/06

Ms. Crescenzi gave an overview of the grant program. We went through the powerpoint presentation on paper and were given copies of the incentive structure and “things to consider”

It was reiterated a number of times that our deadline is quite close. We must have all our information sent to the district by September 5th, 2006.

The group discussed the manner in which information needs to be shared with departments and staff members. This should be an open process that keeps student achievement at the center of any incentive. The committee also discussed how a grant of this nature can be touchy. It is wonderful and exciting, but at the same time, if not undertaken well and agreed to by the entire community, it can create contention and discontent amongst staff members. This is what we want to avoid.

The group then agreed upon three meeting dates next week. We will meet Monday August 21st from 4:45 – 7:00pm, Wednesday August 23rd from 4:45 until back to school night starts and on Thursday August 24th from 4:45 – 7:00. At this point we feel we will be ready to present it to the entire staff for approval.

8/21

Brain storm ideas

Improvement on a team

92 % class attendance

Present to win...return the next year

TAKS tutoring - 12th grade

AP - improved scores over previous year

% improvement on TAKS in each cell...not just overall

SPED - SDAA improvement

Exception to staying - retiring, transfer within district

Compare this years students' scores to last year students' scores

Tier basis - focus on different performance scores, math and science are under the gun

If not a core teacher still involved, can create the teams between elective and core teachers

If tutoring, improved results of the students' you are tutoring. From any subject area.

Increase in % of commended students

More students are improving on writing, more 3s and 4s

Student certification programs, % that get certifications

Professional certifications (ESL. SPED)

Point system - how much take part in school community, committee meetings,

Sponsors

Criteria within 25%

157,500 = 75%

78,500 = 25%

108 teachers

82.5 other staff

If create a new program, student involvement ...new classes, innovative, start up something (literary magazine)

Support for teaching staff - people who help provide for classroom teachers

Classified vs. Credentialed

Recommendation system

How can we quantify “support”? - recommendation, reporting by teachers, emails of what people have done (repository) -

Can we send in negatives, to report when people were “obstructive”?

T.A.'s/inclusion teachers interaction with students and supporting teachers

Need motivation for classifieds to get involved

\$52K = other staff

SDAA scores - how are they being contributed to by staff, how are T.A.s and inclusion having to grow and be involved

Being part of a “team”

% of classroom attendance

Teacher attendance

Teachers that regularly cover for teachers who are out

Would we have to define absences?

Classified personnel are not as confined to ½ day, whole day - but what strain does being out put on the classroom teacher

Will teachers lose points for being out for Dr. appts was discussed

Points for professional development

Points relating to getting more trained in subject area

Points for ESL, SPED, AP certified - areas that help you in your regular classes

Overall improvement as a department

Can we look at examples of other schools who have done the same thing?

Once we have a Lanier plan, research other HS that have gotten similar grant

Next year's professional development

Stipulate specifically where money goes if there is any left

Presenting at professional development

Presenting at state and national conferences

Do something (on campus) with your prof. development when you come back with it

If you're already getting paid, can you get stipends

Credit Recovery, Saturday School - point system

Time commitment, even if paid, is important

Active participants at football games, other activities that cause students to be inspired toward more effort

Plays, concerts, etc. - encouraging student involvement

People who increase parental or family involvement (unsure of how to quantify)

Professionalism - punctual, prepared - again, how is this measured

PDAS - for certified personnel

Point system based on attendance

What happens with expectant mothers? Teachers with young children?

Core teachers - retrograde analysis, % improvement over previous years (apples-to-apples)

Core teachers recommend other teachers that they know are

82 staff - \$630/person - if all things equal

Teachers \$1458/person - if all things equal

Must watch out for teacher burnout due to point system (don't know when money is coming)

Areas with characteristically low retention-rates

Cross-curricular participation

Goals need to be realistic and measurable

Start with a flat rate, then tier

Tier 1: anybody who does this this this gets a stipend

Tier 2: section that is based on points which says "a percentage of"

Is this money taxed, is it sheltered? Do you pay SS, retirement?

We need to make sure that teachers are aware that the money may have % our for tax, etc. "after taxes"

Mr O's opinion: Make sure whatever we do is simple in two ways: 1) staff can understand how to get it easily and if they are going to get it, and 2)

Must write the language such that we will not lose money for teachers who leave over the summer

The state recommends that base stipends are between 3k and 5k

Take 75% of the money and make it flat, then take some of the teachers out of the pool for the point system after they get their 75%

“Educator” teaching 4 hours a day - don’t have to be hired as a classroom teacher

Higher stipends may cut the # of people who get a stipend in half

The higher incentive could encourage people to hone in on their problem areas

Will the stipend be more for areas that increase their improvement by EXCEEDING the original goal

Focus on under-represented populations

Will merit pay cause problems because people will be trying to get rid of the bad kids and get the best ones

AP classes on improvement from passing to 4s

Last year’s kids scores to this year

May have problems with freshmen

TA’s who are teaching (Do? Noe? ESL, LifeSkills, SBS)

T.A.’s shouldn’t be divided among themselves

T.A.’s go to the 25% category

Librarians go into 25%

Use TAKS scores, use Benchmarks (debate due to admin errors - lack of student seriousness)

How do we deal with who has Pre-AP, who has inclusion, etc.?

Should we do a tier for Freshman team? Sophomore team?

Ask depts about retention bonus.

What should be the second and third level?

CATE how many kids get certs

How many CORE teachers do we have?

What do we do about the PE teachers?

Can we put the different categories of teachers into strands (CORE, non-CORE, other 25%) - people seem to agree with this idea

The tiers are set up within the COREs

8/23

	Core (68 individuals)	Elective (40 individuals)	Non-classroom (the 25% group)
Tier 1	Returning to Lanier and 92% Attendance \$750.00	Returning to Lanier and 92% Attendance \$750.00	Returning to Lanier and 92% Attendance \$300.00
Tier 2	<p>Departmental improvement by subpopulation</p> <p>Money: \$47,600 to be split (~\$700.00 each)</p> <p>Criterion: 5 out of 7 subpopulations (including "All" as a subpopulation) show improvement (a.k.a 70% of the subpopulations improve)</p>	<p>Departmental improvement by subpopulation</p> <p>Money: \$20,000 to be split (~\$500.00 each)</p> <p>Criterion: Improvement in AP tests (more taking them, more passing them), number of certifications, UIL competitions, national exams, elective area competitions, CPR certifications, EMT-B certifications, Presidential Fitness test, pushing kids to DAP</p>	(Skip straight to Tier 3)
Tier 3	Achievement points \$8,800	Achievement points Team with core to teach TAKS	Achievement points

If you don't meet #1, then you cannot go to Tier 2 or Tier 3.

When dividing elective departments, we are putting Speech and Journalism with Fine Arts.

Earning achievement points:

- Work or attend graduation
- More than required attendance (>95%)

- Extra hours of professional development (and present at the school or at the PG event)
- Team teach TAKS with the Core teachers (elective teachers)
- Attend school events (UIL, helping at track, chaperoning)

How to divide the money for the point system:

- Must have X points to be eligible
- Divide the total money leftover by the total points earned
-

What is the overall structure of the stipends?

Tier 1: \$750 signing bonus (Teachers) (this would cost \$81k - \$94500 left for other tiers)

Retention: To qualify to get anything, you must complete the year and return next year.

Exceptions (possible): retirement, movement within the district

Attendance: Must be present 90% of the time, no exceptions made for sickness, family illness.

(You get 4 A days and 4 B days)

Exceptions (possible): maternity leave? Catastrophic illness?

Tier 2:

Who is eligible?

8/28

3rd Tier

Earning Achievement Points – add individual improvement in TAKS

1st Tier – Agree to teach 9th grade...\$50 per each section, up to \$300

Earning achievement points:

- Work graduation – 5 points
- More than required attendance (>95% = 9 days) – 10 points
- Extra hours of professional development (and present at the school or at the PG event) – 5 points for each time you present a PD that you attended to peers on campus or documented evidence of use in classroom
- Team teach TAKS with the Core teachers (elective teachers) - 15 points oked through department chair, file kept by individual teacher
- Volunteering to work school events (UIL, helping at track, chaperoning) - 5 points per event
- Tutoring – 1 point an hour—sign in sheets to keep track
 - Tutoring must be TAKS. Sign up through departments
 - Minimum of 25 hours

You must have 30 points minimum to “buy into” the third tier.
Each point equals one percent.

25%

- Change \$300 to \$400
- Two \$1,000 scholarships

Tier 3 – percentage of points

95% attendance at work = \$100

If certified – same as Tier 3 (on professional side) in points and percentage

If not certified – Every documented commendation (in writing) = 5 points

“Buy in” = 15 points

Send out in draft status to department chairs and committee members.

Total \$ divided by total points = \$ per point

Discussion – concerns over “double dipping” for teachers being paid for tutoring
How to give points to individual teachers, what percentage of students
increase how much?

Prioritize achievement points -

3 teachers to write letters = Cortez or Kaiser, Peck and Stella

Minutes from Grant Committee Meeting

September 6th, 2006

Met to revise plan according to the suggestions made by Ralph Huhn.

Determined that for Criteria 1, we would use 1% point for each point of improvement in subpopulations. This discussion alone took over 45 minutes.

We also added SDAA scores so that special education teachers could be included.

Agreed with a vote (complete consensus) to use \$50,000 for this section of the grant.

Adjusted the second criteria to give points if various numbers of subgroups improve.

We want all rest of the money from the 75% to be in one "pot" from which the teachers who accumulate points can receive money. However, if the district does not accept this idea, we put approximate numbers of dollars that will be spent in each area. Group agreed on the amount to write in each section.

We changed the stipend for 9th grade teachers returning to only those who agree to teach Algebra 1 and Biology. Those are the areas where we have the greatest turnover in teachers as well as the areas where it is most difficult to find a qualified applicant. We debated the amount of money to give to these teachers, but ended up agreeing to keep the \$50 a section.

Minutes from 9/13/06

Reviewed our draft.

Reviewed draft sent by Crockett.

Debated again using passing rates as a means to determine increased student success. Group was not comfortable with this measure. Many felt that it would encourage teachers to inflate grades.

Liked use of benchmarks as evidence of formative assessment. However we felt that we needed to add use of unit exams and unit projects are acceptable means of formative assessment. Grade books will be used as documentation.

The group also liked Crockett's idea of giving points to teachers who implement high yield teaching strategies around math and science TAKS objectives. However, it does not feel appropriate for math or science teachers to receive these points.

Teachers can receive points for student attendance. 1 point per class for a maximum of 12 points. To receive a point the class must have 92% attendance rate. This does not include advisory.

The last thing we want to adopt from Crockett's plan are the points for teachers who sponsor extra-curricular organizations and have 90% passing rates for their students. Sponsors will receive 2 pts per 6 weeks where their group has at least 90% passing. Sponsors can receive a maximum of 6 pts. per semester.

We then debated whether or not to change any of the 25% part of the plan. After much discussion we decided that we are happy the way it is. It feels fair to the non-classroom teachers and certified staff.

SUBJECT: Governor's Educator Excellence Award Grant Program –
Texas Educator Excellence Grant (R-2)

PRESENTER: Julie Lyons

RECOMMENDATION

Approval of the incentive plans designed by the 20 campuses eligible for the Texas Educator Excellence Grant.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In May, the Board approved the incentive plans developed by Blackshear and Oak Springs as part of first Governor's Educator Excellence Award Grant Program. The first cycle were three-year grants with \$60,000 allocated each year for campus-developed incentive plans.

In July, the Texas Education Agency notified the District that 20 campuses were eligible to apply for the second cycle of the Governor's Educator Excellence Award Grant Program – Texas Educator Excellence Grant. The campuses, and their funding allocations, are:

High Schools

Akins	\$230,000
Crockett	\$220,000
Lanier	\$210,000
Travis	\$200,000

Middle Schools

Dobie	\$120,000
Mendez	\$120,000

Elementary Schools

Allison	\$ 75,000
Andrews	\$ 90,000
Barrington	\$120,000
Blanton	\$ 90,000
Cook	\$125,000
Houston	\$125,000
Jordan	\$ 90,000
Linder	\$135,000
Maplewood	\$ 45,000

Metz	\$ 75,000
Norman	\$ 75,000
Ridgetop	\$ 40,000
Rodriguez	\$120,000
Widen	\$120,000

The campuses received this award based on their having Math and/or Reading TAKS scores within the top quartile with respect to Comparable Improvement, based on the 2004-05 results. The purpose of the grant is to provide a system of financial incentives to award educators who demonstrate the ability to achieve higher levels of student academic performance.

The grant award is for one year only, and 75% of it must be spent only for incentive awards for classroom teachers (defined as an educator who teaches in an academic instructional setting not less than an average of four hours per day.) The plans must address areas A and B and may include areas C and D as noted below.

- A. Success in improving student performance using objective, quantifiable measures
AND
- B. Collaboration with faculty and staff that contribute to improving overall student performance on the campus
AND/OR
- C. Teacher's assignment in area that is experiencing a critical shortage of teachers or has had high turnover
AND/OR
- D. Teacher's demonstration of on-going initiative, commitment, personalization, professionalism, and involvement in other activities that directly result in improved student performance

In order to receive any incentive, the teacher must meet the standards set under A and B. The amount of the award per teacher and what criteria must be met to receive the award must be determined by a campus team, with significant teacher involvement, and approved by the Campus Advisory Council (CAC).

The remaining 25% must be used to provide incentives to other non-teaching staff and/or for activities such as professional development and teacher mentoring support.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATIONS

Teacher committees were formed at the campuses and these committees developed the incentive plans with assistance from central administration. The plans have been approved by the CACs and the District Advisory Council, and reviewed by the Superintendent. The plans award teacher incentives based on point systems or fixed stipend amounts for specific achievements and/or for service at high needs campuses. The plans also award incentives to non-teaching staff.

This grant is due at TEA by no later than October 5. We are asking that the Board of Trustees acknowledge receipt of the grant proposals. The AISD Teacher Compensation and Support Task Force will be reviewing these plans, and will report to the Board on what they learned from them and whether they are feasible for district-wide replication.

ACTION REQUIRED

Board approval.

CONTACT PERSON(S)

Julie Lyons
Maria Whitsett
Michael Houser