



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

REPORT

**TEACHER INCENTIVES
IN
HARD-TO-STAFF SCHOOLS**

REPORT TO

**SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

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INCENTIVE PROGRAM TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN TEACHERS IN VIRGINIA'S HARD-TO-STAFF SCHOOLS

Purpose

The Teacher Incentives in Hard-to-Staff Schools initiative is a program designed to improve student achievement in “hard-to-staff” schools by attracting and retaining licensed, highly qualified, and experienced teachers through an incentive-based program.

Teachers who are eligible to receive the hiring and retention incentives must meet criteria established by the Department of Education and applicable highly qualified requirements in the federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)*. The teacher eligibility criteria are listed in Appendix A.

Research

The *Southeast Center for Teaching Quality* reported in “Recruiting Teachers for Hard-to-Staff Schools” (January 2002) that demographic experts predict a need for a significant number of new teachers in the next decade. Among the schools hardest hit by this increased demand will be those characterized as “hard-to-staff.”

While no exact definition exists of hard-to-staff schools, reports of the *Education Commission of the States (ECS)* define “hard-to-staff” schools as “those that have great difficulty in finding and retaining qualified and effective teachers. Many hard-to-staff schools are high-poverty inner-city schools or rural schools that, as a consequence of their location in economically depressed or isolated districts, offer comparatively low salaries and lack the amenities with which other districts attract teachers. Typically, such schools have high turnover rates and a high percentage of relatively new teachers because more experienced teachers, whose seniority gives them greater choice in their teaching assignment, tend to go elsewhere. This makes it difficult not only for the schools to maintain stability, but also to develop a strong organizational culture that supports learning.”

The Education Trust maintains from both research and extensive experience in classrooms across the country that poor and minority students will achieve at the same high levels as other students if they are taught at those levels. Their research also supports the fact that “while the teaching force in high-poverty and high-minority communities certainly includes some of the most dedicated and talented teachers in the country, the truth is that these teachers are vastly outnumbered by under- and, indeed, unqualified colleagues.” (*Thinking K-16*, 1998 Summer, “Good Teaching Matters”)

Pilot Program Components

The Teacher Incentives in Hard-to-Staff Schools pilot program capitalizes on the concept of offering incentives to attract and retain licensed, highly qualified, experienced teachers in hard-to-staff middle and high schools where critical shortage areas are most likely to occur because of specific requirements to teach in certain content areas.

In recognition of the fact that supportive working conditions, professional collegiality, and buy-in are critical to the success of efforts to renew a school, incentives are offered to the entire faculty of a school that succeeds in raising student achievement.

The initiative also includes a required training component for the entire faculty and administration of the schools involved in the pilot. The faculty and building-level administrators receive incentives to attend specialized training designed to help them meet the challenges of working in a hard-to-staff school.

Hard-to-Staff School Eligibility Criteria

While there is no one definition of a hard-to-staff school, the research identifies certain conditions that frequently exist in some predominantly urban or rural schools that might contribute to difficulty in hiring and retaining an experienced teaching staff.

Based on research reports of conditions or characteristics frequently evident in a “hard-to-staff” school, the Department of Education established eight criteria that might typically exist within hard-to-staff schools in Virginia.

For purposes of this initiative, a hard-to-staff school has been identified as one that meets at least four of the following criteria:

- Accredited with warning;
- Average daily attendance rate is two percentage points below the statewide average;
- Percent of special education students exceeds 150 percent of the statewide average;
- Percent of limited English proficient (LEP) students exceeds 150 percent of the statewide average;
- Percent of teachers with provisional licenses exceeds 150 percent of the statewide average;
- Percent of special education teachers with conditional licenses exceeds 150 percent of the statewide average;
- Percent of inexperienced teachers hired to total teachers exceeds 150 percent of the statewide average; and
- School has one or more inexperienced teachers in a critical shortage area.

In addition to meeting the four criteria:

- The school must have an immediate need to employ highly qualified teachers in areas of deficiency within the school;
- A strong majority of the faculty, as well as all the administrators of the school, must support and be active in the activities devoted to improving student performance related to this initiative; and
- The schools developed a quality mentoring program for beginning teachers pursuant to requirements established by the Department of Education for hard-to-staff schools.

Selection of Divisions and Schools

The program began in fall 2004 in Caroline County and Franklin City, two divisions that traditionally have had difficulty hiring and retaining highly qualified teachers. Beginning in 2005-2006, the program was expanded to Brunswick and Greensville Counties and Petersburg City. Brunswick and Greensville Counties only participated in 2005-2006.

Caroline County and Franklin City each have only one middle school and one high school, thus providing the opportunity to have a greater impact on the continuity of a strong, consistent teaching staff between the two schools. Both the middle and the high school in each of these divisions met the minimum eligibility criteria, with at least one school in each division meeting at least four of the eight hard-to-staff criteria.

A request was made of the 2006 General Assembly to include funding to support the program in all five school divisions. However, the general fund support in the Education for a Lifetime Initiative for the Hard-to-Staff Schools initiative was reduced and did not include Greensville and Brunswick Counties as proposed in the introduced budget. Funds for Petersburg City also were reduced significantly.

Hiring Incentive for Eligible Relocating Teachers

During the first year of the program, the Department of Education used federal NCLB Title II, Part A, Teacher and Principal Training and Recruitment funds to provide a one-time hiring incentive of \$15,000 to teachers who met the eligibility criteria and agreed to:

- Relocate to a hard-to-staff middle or high school in one of the two participating school divisions;
- Teach in the hard-to-staff school for at least three years; and
- Participate in training for hard-to-staff schools during the first year of the pilot program and in a formal support network during year two.

When the program was expanded in 2005-2006 to include Brunswick County, Greensville County, and Petersburg City, the hiring incentive was modified to reflect 30% of the average teacher's salary in each division. As an example, the average teacher

salary in Petersburg City Public Schools in 2006-2007 was \$37,902 which would make the hiring incentive \$11,370 (30% of \$37,902 = \$11,370).

Retention Incentive for Eligible Existing Teachers

The pilot program also includes incentives to stem the flow of experienced teachers leaving Caroline County and Franklin City.

- Teachers already teaching in the participating hard-to-staff schools who met the eligibility criteria received a \$3,000 bonus as an incentive to stay.
- The retention incentive in the expansion school divisions was modified to reflect 10% of the average teacher's salary in each division. As an example, the average teacher salary in Petersburg City Public Schools in 2006-2007 was \$37,902 which would make the retention incentive \$3,790 (10% of \$37,902 = \$3,790).

Benefits to All Teachers

All teachers and administrators in the schools received a \$500 stipend for participating in training focused on helping them meet the challenges of working in a hard-to-staff school.

Teachers also have first priority to receive funds from the state to assist in earning national board certification.

All teachers benefited from the funding provided to the schools to improve working conditions.

Improved Working Conditions

In year one of the program (2004-2005), participating schools received base funding of \$150 per student to be used for projects to improve the working conditions. Projects could include, but were not limited to, some or all of the following:

- Improvement of school environment and/or working conditions;
- Hiring of additional instructional assistants;
- Additional training for teachers;
- Purchase of classroom materials; and
- Attendance incentives.

Total funding received by Caroline County in 2004-2005 was \$618,194. Total funding received by Franklin City in 2004-2005 was \$230,469.

In year two of the program (2005-2006), schools that demonstrated increased student achievement as evidenced by at least a 10 percent reduction in the failure rate in Standards of Learning (SOL) reading or mathematics from the previous year received base funding of \$200 per student. These funds were used by the schools in ways similar to those described above. However, at least 50 percent of the funds were to be used as salary incentives for all faculty members of the school. Total funding received by Caroline County in 2005-2006 was \$691,214. Total funding received by Franklin City in 2005-2006 was \$237,069.

Caroline High School and Franklin High School achieved a 10 percent reduction in the failure rate in both reading and math from the previous year on Standards of Learning tests and received base funding of \$200 per student for the 2005-2006 school year.

The Virginia Department of Education contracted with the Southeast Center for Teaching Quality (SECTQ) to conduct a working conditions survey at the end of the first year of the pilot. SECTQ then met with both Caroline County and Franklin City to share the results of the survey and to help the divisions analyze the data in planning for the 2005-2006 school year. The divisions used feedback from the survey to develop strategies to improve communication, empower teachers, improve instruction, and strengthen leadership at the both the middle and high schools.

Training

The entire faculty and administration of all schools involved in the initiative received training to help them meet the challenges of working in a hard-to-staff school.

Part of the training involved the choice of mentor teacher training models, consistent with those used for mentoring programs in hard-to-staff schools.

The schools are implementing a quality mentoring program for beginning teachers pursuant to requirements established by the Department of Education for hard-to-staff schools.

**CAROLINE COUNTY:
FY 2004-2005 – FY 2006-2007**

Budget

School Division	2004-2005 Expenditures	2005-2006 Expenditures	2006-2007 Expenditures
Caroline County	\$618,194	\$691,214	\$572,683

*Funding in 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 was from federal funds. Funding in 2006-2007 was from state funds with a local match based upon the composite index of local ability-to-pay.

Incentives

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Participating Teachers	156	158	145
Teachers Who Received \$3,000 Retention Bonus	57	74	67
Teachers Who Received \$500 Training Stipend	156	158	145

In 2004, the program provided a \$15,000 one-time hiring incentive. Since Caroline County was unable to recruit new candidates for the first year of the program (2004-05), largely due to the late implementation of the pilot (August 2004), there were not eligible candidates for the \$15,000 hiring incentive the first year.

Caroline County was able to use the funds to recruit 16 eligible candidates for the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years.

The \$15,000 hiring incentive helped to generate an increase in the number of teacher applicants from approximately 200 to over 500 applications received in one year. All new teachers hired are fully licensed or qualify to be licensed to teach in Virginia.

Training

Caroline County selected The New Teacher Center Santa Cruz mentor teacher training model. This model was selected because it provides direct, hands-on support of new teachers through the use of teacher advisors and a new teacher coach. The model also provided training for principals and the director of instruction in classroom observation and using student data, which provided support to all teachers.

The new teacher advisors tailored support to respond to each new teacher’s needs and capabilities, conducted assessments of instructional practices, linked professional development to daily classroom issues and trained new teachers in how to use student performance data to differentiate instruction.

Both new and veteran staff participated in collaborative learning teams and learned how to use student work to help direct instruction.

Working Conditions Funds

During the first two years, these funds were typically used for instructional assistants in the classrooms and teacher coaches to support the mentoring program as well as instructional materials such as:

- Globes;
- Maps;
- Science equipment;
- Foreign language dictionaries;
- Student calculators; and
- Audiovisual and technology equipment to support classroom instruction.

Retention and Attrition

	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Caroline Middle School				
Total number of teachers	53	68	68	68
Number of teachers who left	18	5	15	14
Reasons for leaving	17 resigned 1 resigned to take position in higher education	4 resigned 1 retired	12 resigned 3 license expired*	11 resigned 2 retired 1 license expired*
Caroline High School				
Total number of teachers	71	89	90	90
Number of teachers who left	22	14	23	4
Reasons for leaving	1 promoted 14 resigned 2 retired 5 non-renewal**	5 resigned 2 retired 4 non-renewal** 3 license expired*	15 resigned 1 retired 7 license expired*	1 retired 3 resigned

*The three-year provisional licenses expired and the individuals did not complete the requirements for full licensure.

**The teacher’s contract expired and was not renewed by the local school board.

In 2005 – 2006 Caroline County successfully used the \$15,000 incentive to hire:

- 1 middle school English teacher;
- 2 middle school special education teachers;
- 1 high school mathematics teacher; and
- 1 high school agriculture teacher.

Accreditation and Federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Benchmarks

School	Subject Score & School Status	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Caroline Middle				
	Reading	68	67	73
	Mathematics	75	78	52*
	Science	79	85	82
	History	70	67	92
	Accreditation Status	Accredited w/ Warning	Accredited w/ Warning	Accredited w/ Warning
	AYP Status	Did not make AYP	Did not make AYP	Did not make AYP
Caroline High				
	English	79	90	82
	Mathematics	63	75	74
	Science	68	68	74
	History	67	68	76
	Accreditation Status	Accredited w/ Warning	Accredited w/ Warning	Fully Accredited
	AYP Status	Did not make AYP	Did not make AYP	Made AYP

*Introduction of new Standards of Learning tests in mathematics in grades 4, 6, and 7 in 2005-2006 resulted in a decline in student performance.

Licensure

School Name	Teachers with Provisional Licenses		% Classes Taught by Properly Endorsed and Licensed Teachers	
	2004-2005	2005-2006	2004-2005	2005-2006
Caroline Middle	12	12	93.3%	100.0%
Caroline High	18	20	84.9%	95.8%

*2006-2007 data not yet available

**FRANKLIN CITY
FY 2004-2005 – FY 2005-2006**

Budget

School Division	2004-2005 Expenditures	2005-2006 Expenditures	2006-2007 Expenditures
Franklin City	\$230,469	\$237,069	Did not participate

*Funding in 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 was from federal funds.

Incentives

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Participating Teachers	79	63	Did not participate
Teachers Who Received \$3,000 Retention Bonus	18	18	
Teachers Who Received \$500 Training Stipend	79	63	

In 2004, the program provided a \$15,000 one-time hiring incentive. Since Franklin City was unable to recruit new candidates for the first year of the program (2004-05), largely due to the late implementation of the pilot (August 2004), there were not eligible candidates for the \$15,000 hiring incentive the first year.

Training

Franklin City implemented ETS Pathwise: A Framework for Teaching training program. This mentor teacher training model was selected because it closely aligned with their current staff development plan.

Working Conditions Funds

During the first year, these funds were typically used for a high school special education instructional assistant, a high school part-time attendance aide, and middle school incentives, as well as instructional materials such as:

- Globes;
- Maps;
- Science equipment;
- Foreign language dictionaries;
- Audiovisual and technology equipment to support classroom instruction;
- Instructional materials/manipulatives for all disciplines;
- Classroom equipment such as cabinets and bookcases;
- Whiteboards, materials to implement specific instructional strategies; and
- Student calculators.

Retention and Attrition

	2003-2004 Baseline	2004-2005	2005-2006
Joseph P. King Middle School			
Total number of teachers	28	31	33
Number of teachers who left	5	9	5
Reasons for leaving	3 resigned 1 terminated 1 non-renewal**	3 resigned 1 retired 1 terminated 2 licenses expired* 2 reduction in force	2 resigned 1 retired 1 terminated 1 non-renewal**
Franklin High School			
Total number of teachers	38	40	42
Number of teachers who left	8	8	4
Reasons for leaving	4 resigned 2 retired 2 licenses expired*	4 resigned 4 licenses expired*	2 resigned 1 retired 1 termination

*The three-year provisional licenses expired and the individuals did not complete the requirements for full licensure.

**The teacher’s contract expired and was not renewed by the local school board.

In 2005-2006, Franklin City used the \$15,000 incentive to hire:

- 1 high school mathematics teacher;
- 1 special education teacher; and
- 1 high school guidance counselor.

In 2005-2006, Franklin City hired 14 highly qualified middle and high school teachers.

Franklin City teachers willingly attended Saturday training sessions and received the \$500 stipend for participating. The high rate of participation allowed the division to “fast track” instructional improvement efforts.

Accreditation and Federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Benchmarks

School	Subject Score & School Status	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
J.P. King Middle				
	Reading	86	76	66
	Mathematics	100	93	48*
	Science	77	80	74
	History	81	97	63
	Accreditation Status	Fully Accredited	Fully Accredited	Accredited w/ Warning
	AYP Status	Made AYP	Made AYP	Did not make AYP
Franklin High				
	English	83	92	92
	Mathematics	77	80	73
	Science	71	75	70
	History	78	74	77
	Accreditation Status	Fully Accredited	Fully Accredited	Fully Accredited
	AYP Status	Did not make AYP	Made AYP	Did not make AYP

*Introduction of new Standards of Learning tests in mathematics in grades 4, 6, and 7 in 2005-2006 resulted in a decline in student performance.

Licensure

School Name	Teachers with Provisional Licenses		% Classes Taught by Properly Endorsed and Licensed Teachers	
	2004-2005	2005-2006	2004-2005	2005-2006
Joseph P. King, Jr. Middle	7	7	95.5%	85.2%
Franklin High	7	4	97.9%	96.5%

*2006-2007 data not yet available

**PETERSBURG CITY
FY 2005-2006 – FY 2006-2007**

Budget

School Division	2005-2006 Expenditures	2006-2007 Expenditures
Petersburg City	\$590,220.65	\$754,557.28

Incentives

	2005-2006	2006-2007
Participating Teachers	347	93
Teachers Who Received \$3,000 Retention Bonus	55	80
Teachers Who Received \$500 Training Stipend	347	N/A*

*Instructional training was not included in 2006-2007.

Retention and Attrition

	2005-2006	2006-2007
A.P. Hill Elementary School		
Total Number of Teachers	36	33
Number of Teachers Who Left	11	2
Reasons for Leaving	Resigned Retired Non-renewal	Resigned Non-renewal
Blandford Elementary School		
Total Number of Teachers	27	25
Number of Teachers Who Left	5	2
Reasons for Leaving	Resigned Non-renewal	Resigned Non-renewal
Peabody Middle School		
Total Number of Teachers	58	61
Number of Teachers Who Left	14	8
Reasons for Leaving	Resigned Non-renewal	Resigned Non-renewal

	2005-2006	2006-2007
Petersburg High School		
Total Number of Teachers	116	113
Number of Teachers Who Left	28	16
Reasons for Leaving	Resigned Retired Non-renewal	Resigned Non-renewal
Vernon Johns Middle School		
Total Number of Teachers	56	55
Number of Teachers Who Left	18	9
Reasons for Leaving	Resigned Non-renewal	Resigned Non-renewal
Westview Elementary School		
Total Number of Teachers	29	32
Number of Teachers Who Left	9	5
Reasons for Leaving	Resigned Retired Non-renewal	Resigned Non-renewal

Accreditation

School	Subject Score and School Status	2005-2006	2006-2007
A.P. Hill Elementary			
	Reading	71	66
	Mathematics	85	50*
	Science	47	38
	History	73	42
	Accreditation Status	Accredited w/ Warning	Accreditation Denied
	AYP Status	Made AYP	Did not make AYP
Blandford Elementary			
	English	74	77
	Mathematics	85	74*
	Science	83	76
	History	49	71
	Accreditation Status	Accredited w/ Warning	Accredited w/ Warning
	AYP Status	Did not make AYP	Did not make AYP

School	Subject Score & School Status	2005-2006	2006-2007
Peabody Middle			
	Reading	46	53
	Mathematics	53	25*
	Science	39	63
	History	39	27
	Accreditation Status	Accredited w/ Warning	Accreditation Denied
	AYP Status	Did not make AYP	Did not make AYP
Petersburg High			
	English	72	78
	Mathematics	44	42
	Science	49	53
	History	59	65
	Accreditation Status	Accredited w/ Warning	Accreditation Denied
	AYP Status	Did not make AYP	Did not make AYP
Vernon Johns Middle			
	English	40	60
	Mathematics	56	36*
	Science	58	63
	History	70	45
	Accreditation Status	Accredited w/ Warning	Accredited w/ Warning
	AYP Status	Did not make AYP	Did not make AYP
Westview Elementary			
	English	61	56
	Mathematics	53	53*
	Science	33	40
	History	52	42
	Accreditation Status	Accredited w/ Warning	Accredited w/ Warning
	AYP Status	Did not make AYP	Did not make AYP

*Introduction of new Standards of Learning tests in mathematics in grades 4, 6, and 7 in 2005-2006 resulted in a decline in student performance.

Summary

The Teacher Incentives in Hard-to-Staff Schools Pilot Program concluded in the 2006-2007 school year. The program will continue in Petersburg City Schools for the 2007-2008 school year. Caroline County and Franklin City reported that the availability of funds to offer hiring incentives helped to yield a larger pool of highly qualified candidates. These funds were used to hire teachers in the areas of teacher shortage such as mathematics, science, and special education. Caroline County reports that 14 of the 16 teachers hired with the \$15,000 incentive returned for the 2007-2008 school year.

Training and mentoring provided support for new teachers as well as providing veteran teachers with best practice strategies for instruction. Overall working conditions improved in the schools as a result of the supportive training as well as from funds available to purchase instructional materials, provide tutors, or additional training for teachers. Both divisions plan to continue the professional development and mentoring model in place.

Student achievement data in Caroline County and Franklin City shows a pattern of growth in reading, science, and history, but not in middle school mathematics. Caroline High School became Fully Accredited and made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008.

APPENDIX A**TEACHER ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR HARD-TO-STAFF SCHOOLS
INCENTIVES****Minimum Teacher Requirements:**

- Be fully licensed to teach in Virginia (with a five-year active renewable license) and teaching in area of endorsement of the license;
- Be highly qualified per the No Child Left Behind provisions;
- Have at least five years successful full-time experience as a teacher, librarian, or guidance counselor in an accredited public or non-public school;
- Demonstrate professionalism and success in working with students per the indicators listed under the following sections;
- Demonstrate effective communication and collaborative skills per the indicators listed under the following sections;
- Agree to participate in a training program during Year One of the initiative;
- Agree to participate in a support program during Year Two and Three of the initiative; and
- For teachers who locate to a new school under the incentive program – Sign an agreement to remain at the school for at least three years beyond receipt of the initial incentive, with a prorated repayment for failure to fulfill the terms of the agreement.

Instructional Leadership

Candidate must satisfy all three of the following criteria:

1. Documented evidence of average or better student performance in the teaching area or consistent significant improvement in student achievement as demonstrated by, but not limited to, one or more of the following:
 - a. Performance data for their students that meet or exceed adequate yearly progress measures, accreditation benchmarks, or statewide averages on other student achievement measures; or that demonstrate student performance growth on such measures;
 - b. Student performance on division wide assessments developed or selected by the school division;
 - c. Student performance on pre- and post-tests approved by the school division;
 - d. Student performance on standardized or other nationally administered tests;
 - e. Student competency records in Career and Technical Education (CTE);
 - f. Numbers/percentages of students earning licenses in a content area, such as industry certification/licensure in CTE;

- g. Evidence of how instruction in the content area contributed to success on SOL tests (Example, foreign language instruction supported successful scores in English: Reading and English: Writing for a teacher's students);
 - h. Numbers/percentages of students taking and passing Advanced Placement exams, dual enrollment courses, International Baccalaureate exams, etc.;
 - i. Evidence of student performance and success in increasingly complex visual arts, performing arts, or practical arts skills; and
 - j. Other performance-based measures as approved by the school division.
2. Above average or better performance evaluations supported by outstanding classroom observation reports for the last three consecutive years.
3. Letters of outstanding recommendations from:
 - a. Previous supervisor, for those applying new; or
 - b. Current principal or others in a leadership position familiar with the candidate's teaching, for those currently on staff.

Professional Leadership

Candidate must satisfy three of the following:

1. Advanced degree in the teaching area or a related educational field;
2. Evidence of the use of instructional practices resulting from annual participation in professional development activities that meet the criteria for high quality professional development as outlined in Superintendent's Memorandum Informational No. 82 dated April 16, 2004;
3. National Board certification in the teaching area;
4. Documentation of professional leadership, for example: department chair, team leader, committee chair, mentor, coach, cooperating teacher, in-service provider at some time during the last five years; and
5. Documentation of service on school, division, state and/or national committees related to the teaching profession at some time during the last five years.

Collaborative Leadership

Candidate must satisfy two of the following:

1. Evidence of communication tools to provide information/feedback to parents;
2. Use of community resources/volunteers to enhance student learning; and
3. Involvement of students in co-curricular projects that extend student learning in their subject area.