



# Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) Q & A Spring 2011

**5-year grant total: \$24.4 Million**

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## ***General Information***

### **What will the TIF grant do?**

- Chalkboard’s TIF grant, in partnership with Albany, Bend-La Pine, Crook County, Lebanon, Oregon City, Redmond and Salem-Keizer, funds the work of the CLASS Project while expanding the project to meet federal TIF requirements.
- In short, TIF regulations will require that participating districts define effective teaching, based in part on multiple measures of student achievement, and then redesign evaluation and compensation to recruit, reward, and retain effective teachers.
- Participating districts will have a year to locally design the integration of new career paths, relevant professional development, effective performance evaluations and new compensation models. The new models will include:
  - Differentiated levels of compensation for effective teachers and principals
  - Fiscal sustainability of the comprehensive models, including the new compensation systems
  - Use of value-added measures of student achievement
  - Increased recruitment and retention of effective teachers to serve high-need students and in hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas in high-need schools

### **What do you expect the outcomes of the TIF grant to be?**

- We expect that in the TIF districts new models will be developed and implemented that meaningfully inform the national conversation around teacher and leader effectiveness.
- Where teachers feel supported, aware of their students’ growth, held to high standards, and given the support to continually improve, we expect student achievement to increase significantly.

### **What is the timeline for implementing new systems?**

- Chalkboard will work with the federal government to obtain the most up-to-date information on the TIF timeline and implementation expectations. To the best of our knowledge:
  - Districts will have one year to design their models, beginning in October 2010.
  - Reporting to the Department of Education will be an important part of the grant process. There will be a report on the design year due June 30th, 2011 and a

second report due that describes the work that takes place from July through September.

- Beginning in the 2011-12 school year, districts will begin building capacity and implementing new systems.
- Districts will continue to change and tweak systems throughout the life of the grant.

### **Is it viable or realistic for a district to fully design, in a way that meets the federal requirements, in one year?**

- Yes. While we all acknowledge that TIF presents a “robust agenda,” we believe our current design structure, coaching support, and district focus all lend well to a successful design year.
- We will move forward with a sense of urgency balanced with pragmatism. It will be important to “step up, step back” throughout the year to accurately assess our progress and determine key areas for support and action.
- From a larger perspective, we suspect that we may have more supports and structures in place than other TIF awardees who are new to this complex work.

### ***Participating Districts***

#### **Which school districts are participating?**

- Albany, Bend-La Pine, Crook County, Lebanon, Oregon City, Redmond, and Salem-Keizer
- The TIF districts have signed an MOU (Memo of Understanding) that describes the requirements of TIF and implies the district’s commitment to the process.
- Districts will have a year of design during which they will develop models that meet the needs of their district and federal requirements. Districts will be able to continually tweak their models throughout the grant.

#### **How can districts work together on TIF?**

- We see new collaborative models emerging with alignment of work across districts. The Central Oregon Consortium of CLASS districts provide one successful model.
- Coaches will be pivotal in aligning shared work, tracking joint needs, and encouraging cross-district collaboration.
- Chalkboard also sees opportunities to bring in national experts, consultants, and requested presenters to provide support for all TIF districts.
- All-TIF meetings will provide a time for sharing ideas and strategizing next steps across districts.

#### **Why were only seven of the CLASS districts selected?**

- TIF eligibility is based on school-level data. Qualifying schools had to have at least 50% high-need students (students receiving free or reduced price lunch) and be underperforming compared to similar districts in at least one tested subject.
- Only underperforming, high-need schools are eligible for certain portions of the TIF funds, but work that benefits a whole district around evaluation and professional development is also an acceptable use of funds.
- The federal government encouraged TIF applicants to cap their requests at \$5-10 million (with additional funds available to evaluation competition applicants). Using

current CLASS district budgets as a baseline, we had to limit the scope of our application to keep it within budget.

**Can districts continue with TIF if the district's focus is not compensation, but, say, evaluation instead?**

- We expect that the TIF districts will focus on all four components of CLASS, including compensation. Districts will work through the design process afforded by the planning year to create new career pathways, job-embedded professional development, effective performance evaluation systems, and new compensation models. The application calls for thoughtful designs for each of these elements, with the federal government most interested in the compensation piece. Through your work, we expect that we will demonstrate that there must be integration and alignment amongst all of these components to truly see an impact on the effectiveness of teachers and the achievement of students.
- TIF is focused on designing and implementing Performance-Based Compensation Systems to increase teacher effectiveness. We know that effectiveness is not driven by compensation – increased effectiveness is realized through a comprehensive approach (i.e. CLASS) that provides teachers with the tools and support they need, want, and design themselves. Compensation must be a part of that approach and is in the CLASS design.

**What do the requirements of TIF mean for the CLASS Project?**

- Chalkboard is committed to continuing CLASS in Oregon beyond the TIF grant.
- Districts in Oregon continue to contact Chalkboard to express interest in participating in the CLASS Project. Chalkboard will continue to pursue options that would give every district the opportunity to take part in this work.
- CLASS models have thus far been developed at the district level. Districts will continue to drive the design process, but for the TIF grantees, certain funds will be designated for underperforming, high-need schools.

***TIF Design Process***

**Will the TIF blueprint process be different than the CLASS blueprint process?**

- The comprehensive design work that the CLASS districts have already undertaken will provide the foundation for TIF.
- While building on the CLASS process, the TIF blueprints will be framed a bit differently. In order to meet the federal requirements, districts will have to design the four components of CLASS (career paths, evaluation, professional development, and compensation) in ways that specifically address the TIF priorities mentioned above, including: developing a definition or definitions of teacher/principal effectiveness; developing new compensation models that take effectiveness into account; and increasing the recruitment and retention of highly effective teachers in high-need schools and subjects.

**Is TIF only for teachers?**

- TIF specifies that project designs incorporate plans to support, strengthen and reward teacher and principal effectiveness.
- Many CLASS districts have chosen to include classified staff in their project designs as well. While the TIF grant does not include specific funds for classified staff, due to

budget constraints, districts will still be encouraged to make a local decision about including classified staff in the project.

**How much time will design team members be out of their classrooms? How will this be accounted for? What considerations need to be made?**

- Earlier this year Chalkboard provided dollars to the CLASS Project districts that could be used to pay for release time.
- District design teams will decide how they want to structure meetings and out-of-class time. A team might decide, for example, to meet after work hours or on off days and be compensated for their time.
- Chalkboard will not dictate the meeting schedules for the design teams.

***Evaluation and Compensation***

**What is a Value-Added Model?**

- A Value-Added Model (VAM) is required for all TIF grant recipients.
- A VAM is intended to be a statistical analysis of a teacher's impact on student growth. There is no one way to create a VAM and each district will be asked to inform the creation and implementation of a local model.
- By taking into account factors outside of a teacher's control (socio-economic differences, previous scores, etc), a VAM attempts to show the "value" a teacher adds to a student's learning.
- The Value-Added Model provides just one measure and will not be used on its own to determine effectiveness.
- The use of a VAM will be new to the CLASS framework and Chalkboard knows that the creation of a good model will need to be a careful process that requires the participation and best thinking of CLASS teachers and administrators as well as local and national experts.

**Why is this not "merit pay"?**

- The conversation happening nationally around student performance and teacher pay is oversimplified and divisive. We hope to bring a new level of depth and thoughtfulness to that conversation.
- Great teachers teach differently and must be assessed in multiple ways. Teachers cannot and should not be judged effective based on test scores alone.
- CLASS districts develop their own definitions of effectiveness that reflect their beliefs and priorities. Within the TIF framework a teacher's effectiveness becomes one factor in pay. A meaningful, rigorous evaluation system is the cornerstone of this process and is supported by relevant professional development. Multiple measures of student growth will be just one part of the comprehensive system.
- Tying teacher pay to a single test score is not the goal of the TIF grant or the CLASS Project. Merit pay is top down, does not leave room for teacher input, and has not been shown to raise student achievement. In 2008, Chalkboard opposed a statewide ballot measure to implement merit pay.

**What role does student achievement play?**

- Student growth is the focus of CLASS and TIF.
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in pay. A meaningful, rigorous evaluation system is the cornerstone of this process and is supported by relevant professional development. Multiple measures of student growth will be just one part of the comprehensive system.

- Districts will be able to design models that include student growth differently.

### **Will value-added models be directly linked to compensation?**

- Value-added model scores (whether at the individual, team or school level) will be one piece of how a district determines the effectiveness of its teachers and principals. Districts can include a range of other measures in determining effectiveness and weight measures as they see fit. Other measure of effectiveness could include: classroom observations, peer reviews, student surveys, educator portfolios, leadership roles, formative student assessments, etc.
- Each district will develop plans to differentiate compensation based on a comprehensive definition of effectiveness, not on VAM scores alone.

### **Does every district have to include individual teacher value-added scores in determining teacher effectiveness?**

- Mathematica, a nationally-recognized policy research organization, has stated that there is no TIF requirement that necessitates that districts use individual teacher value added scores in defining effective teaching. Mathematica stated that districts could use individual teacher value-added scores, teacher team value-added scores, school-level value added scores or any combination of the three as measures in determining individual teacher and principal effectiveness.

### ***TIF Evaluation***

#### **Will all TIF districts be evaluated?**

- All districts participating in the TIF grant will take part in a local evaluation of their CLASS designs and outcomes.

#### **What is the TIF evaluation component?**

- As part of the TIF grant, two districts qualified and agreed to participate in an additional component of the grant. Those two districts are Bend-La Pine and Albany.
- The TIF evaluation component, that Bend-La Pine and Albany will participate in, is intended to help generate more research about the effects of new compensation models.

#### **How are Bend-La Pine and Albany different than the other TIF participants?**

- In addition to the comprehensive CLASS design for all TIF districts, Bend and Albany agreed to have their compensation models studied by Mathematica, a nationally-recognized policy research organization.
- Bend and Albany will receive significant additional dollars for their participation in the TIF evaluation component. Bend will receive an additional \$1.5 million and Albany will receive an additional \$1 million on top of other TIF support.

#### **How did Bend- La Pine and Albany qualify for the TIF evaluation component?**

- In order to qualify for the TIF evaluation component, a district had to have eight or more high need schools in grades 3 through 8. At least two of the schools had to be within the same grade configuration.

- Like all participating districts, local association support was required to participate in the evaluation component.

## ***Resources***

### **Who will be available to provide technical assistance to TIF districts?**

- For questions related to technical topics such as, VAM, multiple measures of effectiveness, differentiated compensation, principal evaluation, etc. there are a number of research and policy organizations that Chalkboard and the CLASS coaches can connect with. Those organizations include: Mathematica, Westat, and Vanderbilt University.
- Chalkboard plans to host technical assistance meetings for all TIF districts, but feel free to make a request to your CLASS coach if you have technical questions and would like to reach out to one of the partner organizations.
- More information about CLASS and TIF is available at [www.chalkboardproject.org](http://www.chalkboardproject.org) and at [www.educators4reform.org](http://www.educators4reform.org)