

Mission Possible: Greensboro, North Carolina

Mission Possible is an innovative performance pay program. Mission Possible is a comprehensive teacher incentive program launched in 2006 in the Guilford County School System in Greensboro, North Carolina. The program includes both recruitment and performance incentives to attract and retain highly effective teachers in high-poverty, low-performing schools. In 2006-07 the program included 20 schools and 383 teachers and administrators, of whom 24 percent earned bonuses totaling \$268,250.

Teacher recruitment and retention have improved significantly.

- In 2007, the number of teacher applications increased from 7,501 to 10,509.
- In the 2006-07 school year teacher retention improved from 62 percent to 87 percent.

Students are performing better.

- 25 percent of the participating schools reached AYP goals for the first time, resulting in bonuses for those schools' curriculum directors and principals.
- 16.7 percent of the participating classes improved their collective test scores at least one standard error above the average, resulting in bonuses for those teachers.

Mission Possible offers a range of cumulative incentives.

- Recruitment incentives are available for K-2 teachers and for math and English teachers in grades 3-12.
- Teachers receive a \$2,500 bonus if their students' test scores improve one standard error above the average, based on a "value-added" measure of student learning gains.
- Teachers receive a \$4,000 bonus if the scores improve 1.5 standard errors above the mean.
- Incentives are cumulative: A successful math teacher can earn \$18,000 in additional salary, including a \$10,000 recruitment bonus, a \$4,000 maximum annual performance bonus, and a \$4,000 annual stipend for attending a Summer Math Institute.

The program is funded by multiple sources. The federal government provided the seed money for Mission Possible with an \$8 million grant and Guilford County secured local funds to expand the program. In the 2006-07 school year:

- 42 percent of the program budget came from the federal Teacher Incentive Fund;
- 42 percent of the program budget came from local dollars; and
- 16 percent of the program budget came from the University of North Carolina system and Action Greensboro, a coalition of local foundations.

Source: Guilford County Schools power point presentation, downloaded November 13, 2007.
http://www.gcsnc.com/depts/mission_possible/powerpoint/MP%20Overview%20K-12.ppt