

(on ED letterhead to be supplied by PPSS)

[date]

Dear [name of TIF Grantee Project Director]:

As a recipient of a FY2006 Cohort 1 or 2 Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant, both the TIF program and the Policy and Program Studies Service of the U.S. Department of Education look forward to working with your program on the national evaluation sponsored by the Department and conducted by SRI International, Berkeley Policy Associates, and the Urban Institute. As you may have heard during the grantee conference in June, this study will:

- document components of pay-for- performance plans in TIF-supported programs;
- review program implementation activities; and
- determine the effects of pay, related supports and incentives on effective-teacher and principal supply and student achievement in high-need schools and hard-to-staff subjects.

The study will include several data collections:

- Phone interviews will be conducted with key individuals in each grant program in the fall of 2009. These individuals will include project directors, program evaluators, technical assistance providers, teachers' union representatives, district leaders, school leaders and others identified as key to the grant.
- Your program may also be selected to participate in a random survey of participants, as well as more in-depth case studies and collection of outcome data in later years of the study. More specifically, during the spring of 2010 and the fall of 2011, national surveys will be administered and site visits will be conducted in 12 of the programs supported by TIF, expanding upon interviews with key project staff. SRI and its subcontractors will also visit a sample of schools to interview principals and small numbers of teachers directly.

To minimize respondent burden by reducing redundancy in data collection, SRI has already gathered data from grantee documents and evaluations submitted to the U.S. Department of Education, CECR, and local evaluators. Combined, these data collection efforts will provide an in-depth understanding of program components, implementation, and outcomes. We expect interim reports to be issued in 2011 and 2012, with a final report published in 2013.

We recognize that participation in this study will require time and energy from many program participants and leaders and greatly appreciate your participation. Findings from the study will inform both national educational policy and local practice. As you know, there is renewed and widespread interest in performance pay in education, with up to \$400 million in federal funds and millions of other dollars in local revenue being expended in experiments in new methods of educator pay. Despite this increased investment, little is known about best practices and outcomes, on a national scale, of these efforts. Therefore,

you are on the leading edge of reform, which makes your participation so valuable. The information collected for this study can be used, for example, by (1) states, districts, and schools to identify and develop policies to support promising practices in pay-for-performance systems and (2) the U.S. Department of Education to support refinement in current systems and new efforts in future pay-for-performance systems.

The information that is collected for this study will be used only for research purposes and information will not be provided that identifies you or your schools to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law. Reports prepared for the Department of Education will summarize findings across the sample of TIF supported programs, schools, and districts, and will not associate responses with a specific individual or school. Participating individuals and schools will not be identified in the text of any report unless implementation practices are highlighted, in which case permission will be obtained from the appropriate staff before the information is included in the reporting. All participants will be informed of the purposes of the data collection and the uses that may be made of the data collected, and provided with a consent form that outlines privacy rights.

If you have any comments or questions regarding the study, please contact the Project Director, Alix Gallagher, at 650-859-3504 or via e-mail at alix.gallagher@sri.com. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

April Lee
Director, Teacher Incentive Fund Program
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

Alan Ginsburg
Director, Policy and Program Studies Service
Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development
U.S. Department of Education

Cc: [name of Chief State School Officer in State(s) in which program is operating—note that for non-profits, this will typically be multiple states; in the case of a small district, it may only be one Chief State School Office needing to be notified)