

DATE

[Name of TIF Grantee Project Director]

[Name of TIF Grantee]

[Address]

[City], [State] [Zipcode]

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 will hear more about 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.

We will protect the confidentiality of the information you provide, to the extent provided by law. After we collect your responses, your name and the institution's or school's name will be disassociated from the data. Pseudonyms will be used for each grantee. Your responses will be used to summarize findings in an aggregate manner (across groups of grantees), or will be used to provide examples of program implementation in a manner that does not associate responses with a specific site or individual. Although participating institutions will be acknowledged in the final report, they will not be identified in the text of any report.

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,

Joseph Conaty
Acting Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary
Education

Alan Ginsburg
Director, Policy and Program Studies
Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy
Development

Cc: [name of Chief State School Officer] [Title] [State]
(Note: for EPIC/Charter there are 18)