

McGraw-Hill

HR Management

Sulphur Springs Teachers

Five, ten, fifteen, twenty [fade out].

Two years ago Sulphur Springs Elementary School in Tampa received an F rating under Florida's school grading system.

It always says [inaudible].

The school district responded by bringing in a new principal, Christi Buell, who replaced 29 out of 43 teachers, more than 60 percent of her staff.

It was a very dire situation. We were told that the school could potentially be closed down.

Very nice [inaudible].

Buell managed to bring in fresh blood, in part by utilizing the district's merit pay program, which pays teachers more when their students pull better grades.

Performance incentives do make a difference. It helps to attract the teachers to your school.

What word do you think that is, Michael?

But it also motivates them to do their very best.

It was a "ah." Now it's a —

O [fade out].

Teachers can earn \$5,000 extra if their students are among those who show the most improvement on test scores within the school year. Fourth grade writing teacher Donna Calderoni [phonetic] got a merit pay bonus last year.

Because that's what you've got to convey to the reader.

A teacher incentive pay is the cure. It is a positive at the end of a year of hard work, absolutely.

But does it lead to brighter students? There are critics of merit pay who say there's little research proving it works, it is hard to administer fairly, and it can create ill will among teachers.

If a compensation system creates competition between individual teachers in the building, that is not good for the students.

The criticisms haven't stopped President Obama from embracing the idea.

Too many supporters of my party have resisted the idea of rewarding excellence in teaching with extra pay, even though we know it can make a difference in the classroom.

Please set the continental plates [fade out].

There's no question that teacher incentive pay is a controversial thing, okay?

MaryEllen Elia is the Superintendent of the Hillsborough School District, which includes Sulphur Springs Elementary. Her district has received a \$100 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, in part to study and fine tune the effectiveness of the pay-for-performance approach.

We're committed to make sure that we get the program right, that it's fair, that it's equitable.

In fact, it appears to have worked here. That F Sulphur Springs Elementary School got two years ago became a B this school year.

Ultimately what we're shooting for is student success, and if the money helps us get there, then it's a great motivator.

One, two, three.

Three people said yes.