



# Teacher Compensation in Tennessee

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## Nashville Teacher Compensation Reform Forum

August 7, 2009

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Commissioner of Education, State of Tennessee

**Cory Curl**

Governor's Office of State Planning and Policy





# National Call to Action

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**“It is no secret that when it comes to schools, talent matters — tremendously. To boost the quality of teachers and principals, especially in high-poverty schools and hard-to-staff subjects, states and districts should be able to identify effective teachers and principals. At the local level we want to see better strategies in place to reward and retain more top-notch teachers — and improve or replace ones who aren't up to the job.”**

*U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan  
Race to the Top Competition Announcement  
July 24, 2009*

# Historic Opportunity

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- \$10 billion investment in education reform through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
  - Save and create jobs
  - Encourage bold reforms
  - Spur long-term economic growth
- Key opportunities for states (and districts)
  - \$4.35 billion Race to the Top Grant
  - \$200 million Teacher Incentive Fund

# Tennessee's Focus

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**“I believe with all my heart that the simplicity and focus that is needed in education is to refocus on the individual teacher; a commitment to getting the best possible people to teach in each and every classroom. The problem is not at its core about organization, or technology, or measurement; it’s about human capital and how to maximize it. Once that is in place, everything else will fall in line.”**

*Governor Phil Bredesen*

*U.S. Chamber of Commerce*

*Institute on a Competitive Workforce Summit*

*September 2007*



# Tennessee's Accomplishments

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- Best practice in identifying effective teachers through the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS)
- Policies to encourage rigorous recruitment and selection of teachers through programs such as Teach Tennessee, Teach for America, The New Teacher Project, and Urban Teacher Residencies
- Teacher Equity Initiative to encourage the most effective teachers to teach the students who need them the most

# Tennessee's Accomplishments

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- Differentiated pay legislation of 2007 to ask school districts to rethink how they pay and reward teachers
- One of six states selected to participate in the NGA Policy Academy on Developing New Models of Teacher Compensation

# Tennessee's Moment

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- It's time to think big, act with courage, and **work together**
- It's time to seize opportunities arising from federal funding
- It's time for the state to foster an environment conducive to reform and innovation
- It's time for local school districts to be bold and creative - to design new comprehensive and transparent strategies to attract and keep the teachers our children need

# Strategy for Action

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**“There is great optimism and hope in our data that shows that no matter who you are or where you have come from, if a child is in front of an excellent teacher, and more importantly, a series of excellent teachers, he will make progress and perform well.”**

*Governor Phil Bredesen  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
Institute on a Competitive Workforce Summit  
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# What We Know

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- Teachers matter most to student learning
- Teachers differ in their impacts on student learning
- Teachers are sorted inequitably across schools and classrooms

# What We Have (Nearly) Always Done

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- Focused on a lot of solutions that have little impact on student learning
- Treated teachers as though they are all the same
- Permitted practices and cultures that lead to persistent disparities in teacher effectiveness across schools

## YOUR TEACHER COMPENSATION SYSTEM

# Make sure it supports effectiveness

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- Focus on what matters most – results for students
- Reward the highest performers
- Attract and retain the highest performers in the schools and classrooms where they are needed the most

## YOUR TEACHER COMPENSATION SYSTEM

# Link it to a larger strategy

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- Make sure your compensation system fits within your entire strategy for improving teacher effectiveness
  - Recruitment and selection
  - Evaluation
  - Mentorship, coaching, and other professional development

# Questions?

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