

August 21, 2008

Dear (Potential Evaluator):

The Fund for Public Schools is interested in retaining an evaluator to conduct an assessment of the School-Wide Performance Bonus Program (SWPBP) launched in the New York City public schools this past school year. The SWPBP is the result of an agreement between the Department of Education (DOE) and the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) to provide school-wide bonus pay to teachers in schools that meet performance targets based largely on student academic growth.

We are writing to inquire whether you would be interested in submitting a brief description about how you would approach a comprehensive evaluation of the SWPBP. The 07 – 08 SWPBP consists of 205 schools that were randomly selected from about 430 “high-need” ones across grades and the City (the list of 430+ was generated by the Department’s Office of Accountability and is based on the make-up of the student body). We are interested in assessing the impact of the Program in the following areas: (1) the extent to which the Program improved the performance of participating schools measured by performance against bonus metrics versus the performance of similar control group schools not participating in the program; (2) the ways in which the Program affected the interactions between and among teachers, supervisors and students in participating schools, and specifically whether it increased levels of collaboration between supervisors and teachers; (3) the extent to which the Program affected hiring and retention patterns in participating schools; (4) the extent to which the bonus program led to other changes in the school that might have impacted student performance (programmatic, instructional, operational changes); (5) issues around implementation and communication that could be improved in future years; and (6) other issues that may arise during the implementation of the program and/or your study of it.

Some background on the Program is attached and pasted below. If you are interested, please provide me with a brief description of how you envision evaluating the bonus program by Friday September 5<sup>th</sup>. At this stage we are not looking for a detailed proposal as much as an outline that addresses how you might go about tackling an evaluation of this sort. Also, since this is a “joint” UFT-DOE negotiated program, the evaluator we choose will have to be agreed upon by both parties and we will share your ideas with the UFT before proceeding. We envision the initial evaluation commencing as soon as possible and focusing on the first year of the program, to be followed by a full evaluation after year two of the program (this is a two school year pilot and the second year of it will commence in the next few weeks).

I have also attached the original DOE-UFT agreement, a memo explaining the program to principals and FAQ’s that we sent to participating schools, as well as “Educator Guides” that explain the methodology used to calculate scores on which the bonuses are based. I look forward to receiving your ideas very soon and please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you.

Cate Swinburne  
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