

Strategic Compensation and Staffing

What is Strategic Compensation and Staffing?

Strategic Compensation policies provide additional wages, bonuses and/or other monetary benefits to educators who demonstrate high performance based on student outcomes, classroom observations and evaluations; take on additional roles or responsibilities; or teach in high-need subjects or schools.

Strategic Staffing policies provide high-performing teachers with higher salaries for taking on greater responsibilities, such as leading teams or mentoring less experienced teachers, to advance their careers without leaving the classroom.

Three Components of Strategic Compensation and Staffing Policies

Evaluation	Leveraging High-Impact Teachers	Working Conditions
Strategic compensation policies include fair and rigorous evaluations of the impact teachers have on student learning.	Strategic compensation and staffing policies increase the reach of effective teachers by incentivizing them to fill critical vacancies, teach more students and mentor other teachers.	The most effective strategic compensation and staffing policies should positively impact working conditions by providing more collaboration, mentorship, earned autonomy and professionalism.

Why implement Strategic Compensation and Staffing?

Strategic compensation and staffing systems help retain top educators, improve student learning and expose more students to great teachers.

- Studies consistently show that compensation tied to teacher effectiveness, instructional impact and subject-area demand strengthens teacher retention and student outcomes.
- Strategic compensation can be used to create leadership roles that keep great teachers in the classroom, provide emerging teachers with more mentorship and collaboration and improve student performance.

Four tips for designing effective policies

- Identify high-performing teachers based on objective and observable evaluation criteria.
- Create consistent and transparent pay structures that reward high-performing teachers and differentiate compensation based on experience, subject, school and responsibility.
- Create meaningful leadership roles to leverage high-performing teachers' expertise and increase their reach.
- Ensure high-performing teachers primarily remain in student-facing instruction roles.

What are strategic compensation options?

Effective strategic compensation systems design pay structures around four components that help states create clear, lasting and impactful policies.

WHO is teaching?	WHAT are their duties?
Teacher pay should account for prior relevant work experience and certification type (e.g., emergency, initial, full)	Pay structure should differentiate for high-demand subjects and additional job responsibilities, such as mentoring, coaching, and leadership roles
WHERE are they teaching?	HOW effective are they?
Teacher pay should align with school needs, offering higher salaries in high-poverty and rural areas facing shortages, while also reflecting regional living costs	Pay structures should recognize and reward top-performing teachers who's impact is proven through student success and performance evaluations

Components of Strategic Teacher Compensation

What are strategic staffing options?



Career Ladders: Multiple tiers of leadership positions for teachers to pursue without leaving the classroom. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Mentoring new teachers
- Leading professional development
- Conducting observations and feedback sessions
- Leading teams of teachers
- Modeling lessons
- Providing feedback on curriculum, evaluations and policies



Increased Reach: Leverage effective teachers by increasing class sizes; utilizing experts across classrooms or schools; or creating teams of teachers to ensure the most effective teachers educate the largest number of students.

How do states identify top teachers?

Effective strategic compensation and staffing policies rely on meaningful evaluation systems. The strongest evaluation systems incorporate multiple measures that are equally weighted, resulting in lower year-to-year changes and a greater ability to predict student gains. Research from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) indicates that [successful](#) evaluation systems include:

- Multiple measures (both objective and subjective) of teacher performance
- Observations of all teachers (multiple times per year by more than one observer)
- Objective measures of student achievement
- Student surveys
- At least three rating categories (i.e., more nuanced than a binary effective/ineffective label)

Learn More

ExcelinEd's [Advanced Teaching Incentive \(ATI\)](#) model policy combines these policies to create a career ladder system that incentivizes effective teachers to stay in the classroom while taking on new roles, working where they are needed most and increasing their salaries.

