



May 15, 2015

Ms. Dianna Wentzell
Commissioner of Education
State Department of Education
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Via EMAIL: shannon.marimón@ct.gov

Dear Commissioner Wintzell,

On behalf of Amistad Academy, Elm City College Preparatory, Achievement First Bridgeport Academy, and Achievement First Hartford Academy, please find attached documents related to the Achievement First Teacher Career Pathway, the district-approved alternative teacher evaluation system. The Teacher Career Pathway is described in detail in the attached document which was originally submitted on May 3, 2013, and subsequently approved by the Connecticut Department of Education as an alternative evaluation plan for 2013 and 2014. The document had been amended in 2014 to reflect modifications to accommodate the SBAC state test that was implemented as a field test in 2014 and fully this year.

Because the Teacher Career Pathway is substantially in compliance with the Guidelines for Educator Evaluation, and in fact surpasses these requirements in many cases, in 2013 and 2014 we were granted a waiver from the provisions described below, and by way of this letter formally request an extension of the waiver for the 2015-16 school year.

Weighting of Student Achievement in Overall Educator Rating

The Connecticut Guidelines require that 22.5% of the educator rating be based on standardized test results, in addition to 22.5% of the rating based on non-standardized results. The Teacher Career Pathway exceeds this requirement by basing 40% of the rating on standardized achievement results for all grades and subjects that have state tests and/or nationally-normed standardized assessments. This ensures that the assessments which inform this component of rating are valid and reliable. While the total weighting of student achievement is 40% as opposed to the 45% required in the guidelines, we believe that basing the entire student achievement portion on standardized assessments establishes an exceptionally rigorous system. In grades and subjects where a state test is not available, student achievement growth is measured using measures developed by Achievement First's Data Strategy Team and accounts for 20% of the teacher's overall evaluation.

403 James Street
New Haven, CT 06513
203 773 3223



335 Adams Street, Suite 700
Brooklyn, NY 11201
718 623 2660



Four-Level Matrix System

The Teacher Career Pathway rates all teachers on a 400-point scale, which is then mapped onto the 4-level matrix system for reporting purposes. Because Achievement First operates schools across three different states (Connecticut, New York, and Rhode Island), it is necessary to calculate educator evaluation ratings against this centralized rating scale, and then to map these ratings onto the reporting requirements for each state. Because the centralized rating scale is updated on an annual basis as a result of implementation feedback and changes in state testing regimes, the 2014-15 cut points for Achievement First's Connecticut 4-level matrix is still in development.

Administrator Evaluation

The Achievement First administrator evaluation system is described in detail in the attached submission to the US Education Department related to the Achievement First Teacher Incentive Fund grant.

Conclusion

The Achievement First Teacher Career Pathway is a nationally recognized model in educator evaluation, and has been informed by five years of implementation experience (two pilot years and three years of full implementation). The development and implementation of the Pathway has been supported by a federal TIF grant, and the Pathway has been featured as a best practice by such national thought leaders as the Aspen Institute. We believe that Teacher Career pathway is substantially in compliance with the Connecticut Guidelines, and that it in most cases it exceeds the rigorous requirements of the Guidelines. For these reasons, we respectfully request a waiver so that we can continue the use of our Teacher Career Pathway.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns regarding this submission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D Scot Kerr".

D. Scot Kerr
Associate Director External Reporting

Attachments: SEED Alternative Plan 2015
Achievement First Site Visit Protocol 130516

403 James Street
New Haven, CT 06513
203 773 3223



335 Adams Street, Suite 700
Brooklyn, NY 11201
718 623 2660



May 3, 2013

Updated: June 16, 2014

Updated May 14, 2015 – Timeline, SAMs

The Achievement First Teacher Career Pathway

District-Proposed Alternative Education Evaluation System

Amistad Academy Charter School

Elm City College Preparatory Charter School

Achievement First Hartford Academy

Achievement First Bridgeport Academy

Overview of the Achievement First Teacher Career Pathway

Achievement First seeks approval to implement its district designed educator evaluation system – the AF Teacher Career Pathway – during the 2013-14 school year and beyond in its Connecticut schools. Already successfully piloted in the organization’s New York and Connecticut schools in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, The AF Teacher Career Pathway is a coordinated approach to evaluating, recognizing and developing great teachers as they progress through five career stages (intern, new teacher, teacher, distinguished teacher, master teacher). These stages were developed to celebrate excellent teachers and are accompanied by increased compensation, recognition and professional growth opportunities.

Each teacher has a comprehensive evaluation annually, regardless of years of experience or prior performance. This evaluation includes student growth measures, lesson observations and survey feedback from students, parents, peers and school leaders.

Timeline

The approximate timeline for implementation of the evaluation system is shown below. This is drawn from the *Teacher Career Pathway Teacher Guidebook* (Appendix K) . The orientation takes place each year during mandatory summer training for all teachers. Below is the calendar for the 2014-15 school year which is currently in development for 2015-16.

403 James Street
New Haven, CT 06513
T 203 773 3223 F 203 773 3221



510 Waverly Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11238
T 718 623 2660 F 718 622 5998

Month of Deadline	TCP Activity	2014-15 Date
July	Determine Operations Ownership for 2014-15	7/1/2014
	New Teacher Training Session on TCP	7/21/2014
August	Eligibility Review Window Opens (Aug 21 – Sept 5)	8/21/2014
September	Eligibility Review Window Closes (Aug 21 – Sept 5)	9/5/2014
	Staff Training: Coaching & Evaluation Using the 2014-15 AF Essentials Rubric Session #1 for Principals (during cohort time)	9/9/2014
	Window #1 Lesson Observation Scheduling Starts (Sept 22 – Oct 3)	9/22/2014
	Staff Training: Coaching & Evaluation Using the 2014-15 AF Essentials Rubric Session #1 during ISL Cohort Session	9/30/2014
October	NY/CT/RI TCP Advisory Panel Meetings #1	TBD
	Window #1 Lesson Observation Scheduling Ends (Sept 22 – Oct 3)	10/3/2014
	Staff Training: Coaching & Evaluation Using the 2014-15 AF Essentials Rubric Session #1 for NY Deans of Students & NY NS during Cohort Session	10/3/2014
	Window #1 Lesson Observation Window Opens (Oct 6 – Dec 5)	10/6/2014
	Staff Training: Coaching & Evaluation Using the 2014-15 AF Essentials Rubric Session #1 for CT Deans of Students & CT NS during Cohort Sessions	10/6/2014
November	SAMs Principal Review Window Opens (Nov 20 – Dec 12)	11/20/2014
	Mid-Year Hire Eligibility Cut-Off Date	11/26/2014
December	NY/CT/RI TCP Advisory Panel Meetings #2	TBD
	Principal Cohort SAM Review Day	12/4/2014
	Window #1 Lesson Observation Window Closes (Oct 6 – Dec 5)	12/5/2014
	Dean SAM Training Webinars Start (Dec 8 – Dec 19)	12/8/2014
	Window #1 Lesson Observation Data Entry due in AF Platinum	12/9/2014
	SAMs Principal Review Window Closes (Nov 20 – Dec 12)	12/12/2014
	Dean SAM Training Webinars End (Dec 8 – Dec 19)	12/19/2014

Month of Deadline	TCP Activity	2014-15 Date
January	Teacher-Student Links Window Opens (Jan 5 – Jan 23)	1/5/2015
	Dean SAM Training Webinars Start (Jan 5 – Jan 23)	1/5/2015
	SAMs Conversation Window Opens (Jan 12 – Jan 23) – option to incorporate with stage conversations	1/12/2015
	Window #2 Lesson Observation Scheduling Starts (Jan 14 – Jan 23)	1/14/2015
	Teacher-Student Links Window Closes (Jan 5 – Jan 23)	1/23/2015
	Window #2 Lesson Observation Scheduling Ends (Jan 14 – Jan 23)	1/23/2015
	SAMs Conversation Window Closes (Jan 12 – Jan 23)	1/23/2015
	Final Stage Advancement Information Shared with Principals	1/23/2015
	Optional (<i>mandatory for staff in need of additional support</i>): Coaching & Evaluation Using the 2014-15 AF Essentials Rubric Session #2 – All CT School & All CT NS (Day of Practice #3)	1/26/2015
	Window #2 Lesson Observation Window Opens (Jan 26 – Apr 24)	1/26/2015
	Stage Conversation Window Opens (Jan 27 – Feb 5)	1/27/2015
	Dean SAM Training Webinars End (Jan 5 – Jan 30)	1/30/2015
	School-wide Announcement of Distinguished and Master Teachers (Jan 30 or Feb 5)	1/30/2015
	Optional (<i>mandatory for staff in need of additional support</i>): Coaching & Evaluation Using the 2014-15 AF Essentials Rubric Session #2 – All NY School & All NY NS (Day of Practice #3)	1/30/2015
	NY/CT/RI TCP Advisory Panel Meetings #3	TBD
February	Stage Conversation Window Closes (Jan 27 – Feb 5)	2/5/2015
	School-wide Announcement of Distinguished and Master Teachers (Jan 30 or Feb 5)	2/5/2015
	All SAMs Released to Teachers	2/6/2015
	Network-wide Announcement of Distinguished and Master Teachers (may change slightly)	2/10/2015
	Student and Family Surveys Window Opens (Feb 23 – Apr 6—may change slightly)	2/23/2015
	Peer and School Leader Surveys Window Opens (Mar 2 – Mar 27 - specific dates TBD)	3/2/2015
March	SAM Replacement Scheduling Starts (Mar 23 – Apr 2) – F.K.A. Window 3	3/23/2015

Month of Deadline	TCP Activity	2014-15 Date
	Peer and School Leader Surveys Window Closes (Mar 2 – Mar 27)	3/27/2015
	NY/CT/RI TCP Advisory Panel Meetings #4	TBD
April	Debrief of Peer and Leader Surveys during Regular Coaching Meetings (exact dates TBD)	TBD
	SAM Replacement Scheduling Ends (Mar 23 – Apr 2) - F.K.A. Window 3	4/2/2015
	SAM Replacement Window Opens (Apr 6 – May 15) – F.K.A. Window 3	4/6/2015
	Student and Family Surveys Window Closes (Feb 23 – Apr 6—may change slightly)	4/6/2015
	Teacher-Student Links Review #2 Begins (Apr 6 – May 29)	4/6/2015
	Peer and School Leader Surveys Data Released in AF Platinum	4/13/2015 (tentative)
	Window #2 Lesson Observation Window Closes (Jan 26 – Apr 24)	4/24/2015
	Comprehensive Evaluation Window Opens (Apr 27 – May 22)	4/27/2015
	Window #2 Lesson Observation Data Entry Due in AF Platinum	4/28/2015
	Celebrations for Distinguished and Master Teachers (TBD between May 4 – Jun 12)	5/4/2015
May	Specials SAM Portfolios Due (may change slightly)	5/11/2015
	Course/SAM Matching Starts (May 11 – May 29)	5/11/2015
	SAM Replacement Window Closes (Apr 6 – May 15) – F.K.A. Window 3	5/15/2015
	SAM Replacement Data Entry due in AF Platinum	5/19/2015
	Comprehensive Evaluation Window Closes (Apr 27 – May 22)	5/22/2015
	Course/SAM Matching Ends (May 11 – May 29)	5/29/2015
	Teacher-Student Links Review #2 Ends (Apr 6 – May 29)	5/29/2015
	Student and Family Surveys Data Released in AF Platinum	5/29/2015
June	Comprehensive Evaluations and Family/Student Survey Debrief Window Opens During Coaching Meetings (Jun 1 – Jun 19)	6/1/2015
	Celebrations for Distinguished and Master Teachers (TBD between May 4 – Jun 12)	6/12/2015
	Comprehensive Evaluations and Family/Student Survey Debrief Window Closes (Jun 1 – Jun 19)	6/19/2015

Orientation to Process

Clear teacher communications are a top priority in this work. All teachers receive a comprehensive *Teacher Career Pathway Teacher Guidebook* annually which outlines all goals, policies and practices related to the evaluation system (Appendix K). All teachers also have access to an online Student Achievement Measure Handbook, which includes detailed video overviews of the SAM assessments and methodologies.

Additionally, principals use turnkey presentation materials to share information related to Teacher Career Pathway with their teachers; the 2013-2014 presentations will include:

- 1) Summer 2015: Overview of Teacher Career Pathway
- 2) Summer 2015: Training on *AF Essentials Observation Rubric*
- 3) Fall 2013: Student Achievement and Stage Advancement
- 4) Winter/Spring 2016: TCP Spring Activities and Peer Surveys

Sample materials for these turnkey presentations can be found in Appendix A.

Teachers also receive regular information through their coach as they work through the evaluation process together, for example during lesson observation debrief conversations, student achievement conversations and stage conversations. Teachers with additional questions or concerns can reach out to our centralized email address (teachercareerpathway@achievementfirst.org) or connect with their Teacher Advisory Panel representative (a peer teacher who participates in bi-monthly meetings to provide feedback and input on the Pathway).

New teachers attend an additional session about Achievement First's Teacher Career Pathway during network-wide New Staff Training in August.

Goal-Setting Conference

All teachers have a goal-setting conversation in August or September with their supervisor, who also serves as coach. During this conference, teacher and coach work together to draft the teacher's professional learning goals. These goals focus on the highest impact levers that will help teachers to meet their student achievement goals. Goals are captured in the teacher's "My Goals" tab in AF Platinum, Achievement First's online talent management system. All principals and coaches use the Teacher Goal-Setting guide, which includes a section on Teacher Goal-Setting Conversations (Appendix B)

Mid-Year Check-in

Teachers and coaches revisit the goals set earlier in the year and reflect upon progress, at the Teacher Development Step-back (January/February). During this conversation, they draw on

the teacher's Window #1 Teacher Career Pathway lesson observation data as well as the coach's regular informal lesson observations. Teachers complete a self-reflection on their goals as pre-work. The coach and teacher may together opt to refine goals or create new goals as appropriate (i.e., if a teacher has accomplished some of his or her initial goals, changed content areas, or realized a key lever for improving his or her practice was missing from the original set of goals).

End-of-Year Conference

Teachers hold a Stage Conversation with their principal annually to learn the outcome of their evaluation (see Appendix C for the protocol for this conversation, for which principals are trained and prepared). This conversation occurs privately and in a supportive setting in the event that teachers are disappointed or surprised if and when they do not meet the criteria for advancement. This conversation is explicitly linked to an in-depth discussion of the key data that determines the evaluation, as described below:





- **Student Achievement Conversation:** The Student Achievement Conversation is an opportunity for AF teachers to review last year's student achievement outcomes on both individual student and class aggregate levels. The student achievement report and 1:1 student achievement conversation accelerate teacher growth and development by turning evaluation data into meaningful lessons learned and next steps.
- **Surveys and Comprehensive Observation debrief:** During the final month of the school year, teachers receive a 1:1 debrief conversation with their coach during which they review their peer, principal/dean, family and student survey results as well as their comprehensive lesson observation scores.

4-Level Matrix Rating System

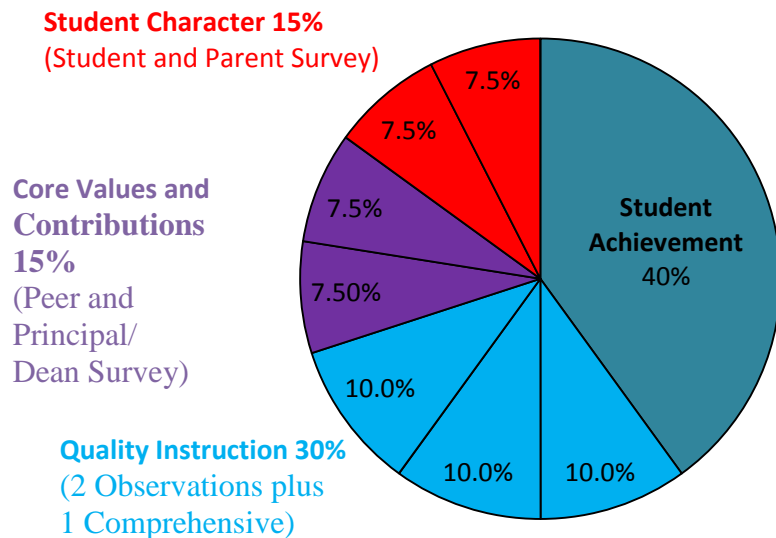
Based on an overall score derived from the multiple measures described below, teachers will be classified as one of the following performance categories.

- Exemplary
- Proficient
- Developing
- Below Standard

Teachers are evaluated using AF's Teaching Excellence Framework, which measures both student outcomes and teacher inputs.

TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK				
Evaluation Components	Student Outcomes		Teacher Inputs	
	Student Achievement	Student Character Development	Quality of Instruction	Core Values & Contributions to Team Achievement
				
Evaluation Instruments	Teacher's impact on student academic growth	Student survey on their experience in the classroom and parent survey of relationships and communications	Lesson observations (2 formal observations and 1 comprehensive score based on weekly or bi-weekly informal observations)	Peer survey and principal/dean survey of core values and contributions to team achievement
Where to learn more	See the 2012-2013 <i>Teacher Career Pathway School Leader Guidebook, Section 5: Measure Student Achievement</i> , pages 47-56.	See the 2012-2013 <i>Teacher Career Pathway School Leader Guidebook, Section 6: Surveys</i> , pages 57-61. The 2012-2013 <i>Teacher Career Pathway Survey Questions</i> are included in Appendix F.	See the 2012-2013 <i>Teacher Career Pathway School Leader Guidebook, Section 4: Lesson Observations</i> , pages 29-45. The 2012-2013 <i>AF Essentials Observation Rubric</i> is included in Appendix E.	See the 2012-2013 <i>Teacher Career Pathway School Leader Guidebook, Section 6: Surveys</i> , pages 57-61. The 2012-2013 <i>Teacher Career Pathway Survey Questions</i> are included in Appendix F.

These metrics are weighted as follows:



Goal Setting Process

The abundance of feedback data available to teachers through the Teacher Career Pathway (including lesson observations, survey results and student achievement data) informs not only stage placement, but perhaps even more critically, the annual professional learning goals process for teachers. Teachers engage in two formal 1:1 touch-points with their coach each year to set and review goals prior to the final review.

Teachers receive detailed feedback regularly on their practice, including on all Teacher Career Pathway evaluation results. Teachers debrief their evaluation results at each of these formal touch points:

- Regular instructional coaching, informal observation and debriefing (see **Instructional coaching** below)
- **Formal Lesson observation debriefs:** Following each formal lesson observation, teachers participate in a 45-minute debrief conversation with their observers. The purpose of the debrief conversation is to provide teachers with immediate feedback and provide opportunities to apply the feedback in order to develop their practice. Ideally Teacher Career Pathway observation debriefs occur on the same day if time and schedules permit; however, debriefs may occur at any point within one week following the observation. The observation and debrief process includes providing detailed written feedback to the teacher on every Essential via AF Platinum. The written feedback is revisited by teachers during future coaching session and goal-setting.

- The “**Student Achievement Conversation**” and “**Surveys and Comprehensive Observation debrief**” referenced above in the End of Year Conference section also play a significant role in goal setting.

The goal setting process is described in detail in the Teacher Goal Setting materials (Appendix B).

Indicators of Academic Growth and Excellence

Achievement First’s Student Learning Objective (SLO) and Growth Model Ratings include two components:

1. **Student Learning Objectives:** Prior to the start of each school year, grade level teams work with school leaders to establish rigorous SLOs for the grade level based on data from the previous year (when applicable). Goals are aligned with the school’s five year strategic goals which are driven by the AF Report Card. Principals approve all grade level goals. All teachers are held accountable for meeting grade level goals.
2. **Growth Model Ratings:** In addition, all teachers are individually held accountable for achieving at least a minimal impact on student achievement as defined by Achievement First’s growth model (called Student Achievement Measures or SAMs). Over 15,000 hours have been dedicated to the development of robust individual student achievement measures (SAMs) for each grade and subject. This work has been led by internal team members of Team Data, Team Talent Development and Team Teaching and Learning in collaboration with external partners from Harvard University, the University of Wisconsin, and Stanford University. In addition, we have researched practices from districts, charters and non-profits nationally. Each teacher is placed into one of four student achievement measure performance bands (negative impact, minimal impact, positive impact, exemplary impact) based on his or her impact on student growth.

Throughout the design process, developers ensured each measure held true to the following principles:

- Growth-based: We define success by student growth, not attainment.
- Comprehensive: A great teacher will demonstrate growth consistently for an entire class, not just for some scholars.
- Non-competitive: We want to set up a situation where all teachers can be successful, so we need to compare an individual teacher’s impact to a very large non-AF data set (e.g. all NYC public school classrooms) or when that is not possible, we need to set a bar that everyone has the opportunity to meet.

- Differentiated: We know that growth is different based on where a student starts, so we need to factor that in.

Student Achievement Measures are calculated using three distinct methodologies:

NOTE: Elements of measuring student achievement are modified by the shift from prior state testing methods (CMT/CAPT) to the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). Please see the [Addendum](#) at the end of this document.

- Teacher Value-Added: This method can be applied when we have a standardized assessment, a large sample size and multiple years of data. At AF, it is used for Grades 3-8 ELA, Math, and Writing, Grades K-3 Math, and Grades 5 & 8 Science (CT). Teacher value-added is a statistical method used to calculate a teacher's impact on the academic growth of a group of scholars. It represents the difference between the growth that actually occurred and the growth that we would typically observe for the classroom.
- Matrix Model: In other courses such as K-2 Reading, Grades 7-8 History, middle school Science (NY), ELL, and all high school assessments, a matrix model is used to measure a teacher's impact on student achievement. Using the matrix model, we are able to identify a student's movement, starting and ending performance, and then evaluate overall trends across the classroom to determine a teacher's overall impact on student performance.
- Portfolio Review: The student achievement measure for Art, Music, PE, Dance and Theater teachers is a spring portfolio review. The portfolio includes Student Learning Objectives on written assessments, individual skills and for some courses group performance. The portfolio is reviewed by an expert in the content area and by the specials achievement director.

The specific assessments and the weighting for each are explained in the tables below. Interim Assessments (IAs), which are internally produced assessments that meet the definition of "non-standardized" assessments in the *Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation*. They are administered every six weeks to provide formative assessment data for teachers. Process based assessments (PBAs) are a rubric-based evaluation of student writing, research, and analysis.

Elementary Schools:

Grade/Subject	SAM Type	Anchor Assessment	Post Assessment	Weighting in TCP Framework
K ELA	Matrix	Middle of year STEP or F&P	STEP or F&P	20%
1 - 2 ELA	Matrix	Baseline STEP or F&P	STEP or F&P	20%
3 ELA	Matrix	Prior year DRP	SmarterBalanced Reading or Internal EOY exam (Cycle 5)	20%
4 ELA	Matrix	TBD -	SmarterBalanced Reading or Internal EOY exam (Cycle 5)	20%
		R&D in summer 2015		
K - 1 Math	Matrix	Cycle 1 MAP	EOY MAP	20%
2 Math	Matrix	Cycle 1 MAP	EOY MAP	20%
3 Math	Matrix	TBD - R&D in summer 2015	SmarterBalanced Math or Internal EOY exam (Cycle 5)	20%
4 Math	Matrix	TBD - R&D in summer 2015	SmarterBalanced Math or Internal EOY exam (Cycle 5)	20%
K - 4 Writing	No SAM	-	-	N/A
(Finalized 11/3)	For departmentalized instructors in Grade K-3 who primarily taught writing: Extra lesson observation			
K - 4 Science	No SAM	-	-	N/A
	For departmentalized instructors in Grade K-4 who primarily taught science: Extra lesson observation			
K - 4 History	No SAM	-	-	N/A
	For departmentalized instructors in Grade K-4 who primarily taught history: Extra lesson			
Foreign Language	No SAM - Extra lesson observation	-	-	N/A
Technology/Computers	No SAM - Extra lesson observation	-	-	N/A
Specials (art, PE, music, dance, theater)	Portfolio	-	-	20%

Middle Schools:

Grade/Subject	SAM Type	Anchor Assessment	Post Assessment	Weighting in TCP Framework	Proposed change from 13-14	Rationale for Change
5 - 8 ELA	Matrix	TBD - R&D in summer 2015	SmarterBalanced Reading or Internal EOY exam: Cycle 5	20%	Anchor assessment switch Post assessment switch	We need to adjust for the fact that we will have neither CMT nor SmarterBalanced data to serve as our anchor. New assessment available for post test - if we receive SBAC data by 8/31 we'll use that; otherwise we'll use the internal EOY exam.
5 - 8 Writing	Matrix	TBD - R&D in spring 2015	Internal EOY exam: Cycle 5	20%	Anchor assessment switch	We need to adjust for the fact that we will have neither CMT nor SmarterBalanced data to serve as our anchor.
5 - 8 Math	Matrix	TBD - R&D in summer 2015	SmarterBalanced Math or Internal EOY exam: Cycle 5	20%	Anchor assessment switch Post assessment switch	We need to adjust for the fact that we will have neither CMT nor SmarterBalanced data to serve as our anchor. New assessment available for post test - if we receive SBAC data by 8/31 we'll use that; otherwise we'll use the internal EOY exam.
5 - 8 Science	Matrix	TBD - R&D in spring 2015	Internal EOY exam: Cycle 5	20%	Anchor assessment switch	We need to adjust for the fact that we will have neither CMT nor SmarterBalanced data to serve as our anchor.
5 - 8 History	Matrix	TBD - R&D in spring 2015	Internal EOY exam: Cycle 5	20%	Anchor assessment switch	We need to adjust for the fact that we will have neither CMT nor SmarterBalanced data to serve as our anchor.
Foreign Language	No SAM - Extra lesson observation	-	-	N/A	No change	-
Specials (art, PE, music, dance, theater)	Portfolio	-	-	20%	No change	-

High Schools:

Course	SAM Type	Post Assessment	Weighting in TCP Framework	Proposed change from 13-14
Literature I	Matrix	Internal EOY exam: Cycle 4	20%	No change
Literature II	Matrix	Internal EOY exam: Cycle 4	20%	No change
American Literature	Matrix	Internal EOY exam: Cycle 4	20%	No change
AP Language & Composition	Matrix	Internal EOY exam: Cycle 3	20%	No change
Language & Composition	Matrix	Internal EOY exam: Cycle 3	20%	No change
Composition I	Matrix	PBA Cycle 4	20%	No change
Composition II	Matrix	PBA Cycle 4	20%	No change
Composition III	Matrix	PBA Cycle 4	20%	No change
Composition IV	Matrix	PBA Cycle 4	20%	No change
Algebra I	Matrix	Internal EOY exam: Cycle 4	20%	No change
Geometry	Matrix	Internal EOY exam: Cycle 4	20%	No change
Algebra II	Matrix	Internal EOY exam: Cycle 4	20%	No change
Algebra II with Pre-Calc	Matrix	Internal EOY exam: Cycle 4	20%	New course
AP Calculus	Matrix	AP Calculus	20%	No change
Physics	Matrix	Internal EOY exam: Cycle 4	20%	Last year we used the released MCAS
AP Physics	Matrix	AP Physics	20%	New course
Chemistry	Matrix	Internal EOY exam: Cycle 4	20%	Last year we used the released Chemistry Regents

Observation Protocol

All Achievement First teachers have three 45 formal observations annually, as described below. Observers include both school leaders and instructional experts outside of their school.

Teachers in their 1st and 2nd year of teaching (total years of teaching, not just teaching in the AF network):

- 2 school leader observations
- 1 comprehensive observation

Teachers in their 3rd or higher year of teaching

- 1 school leader observation
- 1 co-observation with an external observer
- 1 comprehensive observation

Observers use the *AF Essentials Observation Rubric* for their observation and feedback. Each teacher formally debriefs with their observers and also receives a written summary of their performance. In addition, teachers receive weekly or bi-weekly informal observations and feedback from their coaches. These informal observations inform a teacher's comprehensive lesson observation scores within the Teaching Excellence Framework. See the *2012-2013 Teacher Career Pathway School Leader Guidebook (Appendix I), Section 4: Lesson Observations*, pages 29-45 for a complete overview of the formal, twice-annual lesson observations that AF teachers receive as part of the Teacher Career Pathway. See *Section 3: Teacher Development and Support*, pages 23-28 in the same guidebook for an overview of the frequent informal lesson observations that teachers receive through AF's instructional coaching program.

Debriefing Lesson Observations: Teachers participate in a debrief conversation with their observers following each formal observation (as well as most informal observations). Debrief conversations make the evaluation data meaningful for teacher development by focusing on next steps to improve teacher practice based on the observation data. Observers are trained to facilitate strong debrief conversations following the protocol outlined in Appendix D.

Lesson Observation Feedback: Teachers and observers provide feedback on their lesson observation and debrief experiences via an optional post-observation survey. Results and analysis from the post-observation feedback survey from a recent lesson observation window (10/9/12-12/14/12) are included in Appendix H. Overall the survey results indicate high levels of teacher investment in the process and significant improvements in teacher perception between the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years.

Rubric

All formal lesson observations, and many informal lesson observations, utilize the *AF Essentials Lesson Observation Rubric* (Appendix E). The rubric is divided into four Domains of Instruction, each of which includes 1-3 Essentials of Instruction. The Essentials of Instruction align closely with the Rhode Island Professional Teaching Standards, including a shared focus on systematic

student assessment, the creation of a supportive learning environment, differentiation, and the effective delivery of content.

Norming/Calibration

Lesson observations are conducted exclusively by qualified observers, including AF principals and deans, Achievement Directors, Regional Superintendents, other Director-level members of network support and external expert consultants. To ensure fairness across the network, all lesson observers participate in a thorough lesson observation training process, which includes studying the *2012-2013 AF Essentials Observation Rubric* and norming ratings. All observers attend sessions at least once per quarter to view, rate and discuss lessons with other raters from across the network to norm their practices and increase reliability. Observers also participate in twice-annual calibration assessments to determine areas of the rubric on which they are calibrated and where they need to seek additional training or self-study opportunities. Beginning in 2013-14, we are adding an observer certification requirement. See Appendix D for examples of lesson observation training materials and calibration guidance.

General Survey Protocol and Final Ratings System

Professional responsibilities are assessed through annual student, parent, peer and principal/dean surveys. See Appendix F for a complete list of *2012-2013 Teacher Career Pathway Survey Questions*. See the *2012-2013 Teacher Career Pathway School Leader Guidebook, Section 6: Surveys*, pages 57-61 for an overview of survey policies and administration (Appendix I).

Development of Survey Questions: All survey questions have been developed and refined over the past several years. In conjunction with an expert in the field of survey creation and survey data analysis, the network has incorporated best practices and learnings from the national Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) study, peer organizations, and data analysis results from the pilot and Year 1 implementation. By utilizing questions from existing surveys, we have ensured that as many questions as possible have been field tested, and we have some comparison data from non-AF schools. Feedback provided by teachers during the survey pilot and first year of implementation has also been used to improve the quality and reliability of the questions.

All peer responders participate in a norming training prior to the survey window in order to garner more calibrated feedback. In the event that a responder does not have sufficient evidence to respond to a particular question, an “N/A” option is available.

Determining Survey Responders

- Student and family survey responders are determined based on the teacher-student links in our student information system (Infinite Campus). School operations teams complete a thorough review of all teacher-student links during December to prepare for the February survey administration.
- Peer and principal/dean survey responders are determined by the principal using the *Peer and Principal/Dean Survey Responder List Tool*. Peer teachers are selected as responders for other teachers with whom they work closely in order to ensure substantial evidence for feedback.

Student Survey Protocol

Student surveys are administered according to a clear protocol, and teachers are provided with training and a script to ensure that the protocol is followed. Training & guiding materials for administration are described in *2012-2013 Teacher Career Pathway School Leader Guidebook, Section 6: Surveys, pages 57-61 (Attachment I)*.

Definition of Effectiveness and Ineffectiveness

Effectiveness and ineffectiveness are defined according to the AF Teaching Excellence Framework described above, based on clear and transparent measures of student outcomes and professional practice.

To ensure the validity of the evaluation system, we have established a Governing Committee. This body is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the evaluations. The committee reviews an informal assessment of all teachers completed by Regional Superintendents and compares the result of that informal assessment with the formal Teacher Career pathway assessment to ensure general alignment. Naturally they are not seeking exact correlation between Regional Superintendent opinion and the data-driven evaluation, but this process ensure that the evaluation tools are not dramatically misidentifying teacher talent as compared with the perception of our internal instructional experts. Additionally, correlation analysis between the various measures included in the Teaching Excellence Framework is conducted to ensure that no single measure is telling a dramatically different story than the others.

Evaluation-based Professional Learning

Our talent management system – AF Platinum – allows for network-wide reporting of teacher’s annual goals and performance related to each evaluation component. Each instructional goal is tagged by the coach and teacher to an area on the *2012-2013 AF Essentials Observation Rubric*, allowing our Teaching and Learning team to identify trends in the aggregate goals data. These trends are one informal input (in addition to trends in evaluation scores, principal input and more) in determining the scope and sequence for all network-wide Professional Development offerings.

In addition to reporting on teacher goals, AF Platinum also aggregates teacher performance data on all areas of the Teaching Excellence Framework (student achievement, lesson observations and surveys). This data is used as one input in the determination of network-wide professional development and school site professional development. Particularly lesson observation results, all of which are scored on the *2012-2013 AF Essentials Observation Rubric*, show us where we are particularly successful and where we are struggling as a network. Professional development sessions are developed by our teaching & learning team to focus on leveraging areas of strength and improving areas of weakness across the network and for specific regions and/or school levels (i.e. elementary schools). These sessions are delivered at network-wide Professional Development events, including Content Days (4-5 times per year) and Achievement First-wide PD Day (once per year).

Team Talent Development provides reports to school leaders following each lesson observation window summarizing their teacher's performance on each row of the rubric. With this information, school leaders tweak their plans for Friday Professional Development to focus on leveraging areas of strength and improving areas of weakness across their team. School leaders are also able to pull ad hoc reports containing this information throughout the window should they choose to revisit their plans more frequently.

Instructional coaching: At Achievement First, we believe that developing teachers is the most important work of our principals and deans. Since effective teachers are the strongest drivers of student achievement, our success in meeting our mission depends on our success in developing our teachers.

To that end, we have invested heavily in large school leadership teams to ensure we have enough talented coaches to provide high-quality, individualized support to every teacher. In most of our schools, there are two academic deans, a special services coordinator, two deans of students, and a principal. We see the following instructional leadership practices as the core responsibilities of AF coaches:

- Observation, Feedback and Practice
- Unit and Lesson Plan Feedback
- Analyzing Student Work and Data
- Repeatedly-Do Work toward Long-Term Goals
- Targeted, Quick Walkthroughs

Coaches attend between four and eight workshops annually focused on developing skills for effectively coaching teachers. They receive and debrief upward feedback from the teachers they coach via annual 360 feedback surveys. In addition, new deans and coaches attend a

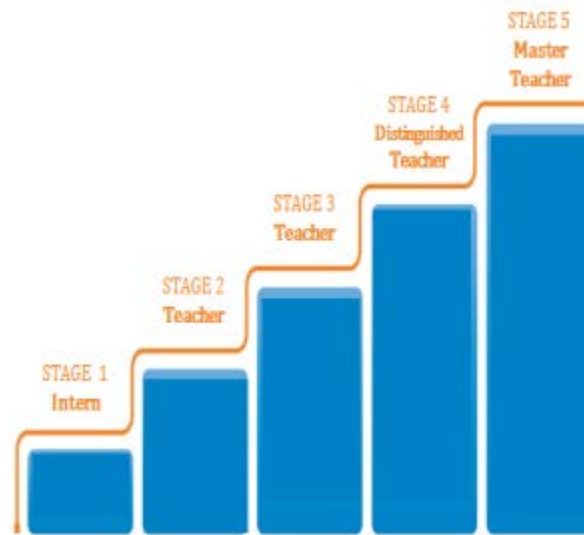
three-day orientation in the summer before they start and receive supplementary hands-on support from their school leadership team and Team Leadership Development at Network Support.

The purpose of frequent, recurring informal lesson observations is to support teacher development and thus improve student achievement. Through frequent observations, coaches are able to effectively diagnose key strengths and specific areas for growth. To that end, all teachers are regularly observed by their coaches outside of the twice annual evaluative observations conducted as part of the Teacher Career Pathway. These informal lesson observations provide coaches with a deep understanding of the teacher’s practice and inform how they spend their time in coach meetings and skill-building. Additional time spent by a coach in his or her coachees’ classroom lends credibility to the coach’s feedback and supports a strong partnership between coach and teacher. In general, informal lesson observations occur at least once a week. Unlike formal Teacher Career Pathway lesson observations, which must last 45 minutes, informal observations are frequently shorter – around 15-20 minutes. While informal observations still aim to help teachers develop on the Essentials, coaches may just focus in on a particular Essential or Sub-Essential and do not need to use the rubric or give ratings.

High-quality, frequent, informal observations can greatly accelerate a teacher’s development, but only if the debriefing of these observations is effective. We recommend that coaches aim to debrief lesson observations within 48 hours and that they prioritize discussing a key “big rock” that would take the teacher’s instruction to the next level and then practice and apply action steps related to that big rock. This emphasis on practice and application will lead to the strongest impact on teacher practice and increased student achievement.

Career Development and Professional Growth

Each component of a teacher’s evaluation data contributes to an overall scaled score annually. Teachers are eligible to advance to the next stage in the pathway based on two years of data within their current stage. Advancement is contingent upon meeting minimum thresholds for the overall scaled score as well as each individual component of the Teaching Excellence Framework (lesson observations, student achievement, principal/dean/peer surveys, student/family surveys).



- **Highly Effective Teachers:** Highly effective teachers will advance to the next stage of the Teacher Career Pathway. As they advance, teachers will earn the rewards described in Section B1. They will continue to participate in the annual evaluation and regular coaching to ensure continuous improvement.
- **Effective Teachers:** Effective teachers will continue to be coached toward advancement to the next career stage. Coaches will target their development plans around areas for improvement identified in prior evaluations.
- **Developing Teachers:** Developing teachers will continue to be coached toward advancement to the next career stage. Coaches will target their development plans around areas for improvement identified in prior evaluations. If teachers continue to be developing for multiple years, they will participate in a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) that may lead to dismissal or non-renewal.
- **Ineffective Teachers:** Ineffective teachers will have increased coaching and a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). If significant improvement is not made aligned with the timing articulated in the PIP, the teacher will either be dismissed or non-renewed for the following school year.

Teachers hold a Stage Conversation with their principal annually to learn the outcome of their evaluation (see Appendix C for the protocol for this conversation, for which principals are trained and prepared). This conversation occurs privately and in a supportive setting in the event that teachers are disappointed or surprised if and when they do not meet the criteria for advancement. Following these individual conversations, the principal or his delegate makes a school-wide announcement of all teachers advancing to Stages 4 and 5 during a Friday staff



meeting. At the network level, advancing teachers are announced in a network-wide message from our co-CEOs, attend a recognition dinner and receive an appreciation award (small plaque/paperweight). Additional rewards beyond recognition are described below.

2012-13 was our first year advancing teachers to Stage 4 based on their performance during 2011-12. Therefore, we invested heavily in supporting principals and leaders to prepare for the potential implications for adult culture of advancement. The *Guide to Stage Advancement Conversations* included in Appendix C provides an overview of the planning and preparations in which school leaders engaged to ensure that Stage Advancement was positive and motivating for all staff.

In addition to the recognition of individual educators, groups of educators are recognized via our school-wide bonus. Schools who meet specific thresholds of performance on the AF Report Card receive a bonus as a percent of their salary. These schools are celebrated at an annual network-wide event.

AF believes that, like professionals in other fields, great teachers deserve increased compensation and recognition as they increase their effectiveness. In order to retain and motivate our strongest teachers, AF has developed a set of rewards tied to stage advancement in the Pathway.

As teachers progress through the career pathway, they experience a significant salary increase with each stage advancement. Teachers are still eligible for the stipends associated with being a grade level chair, coach, special education coordinator, Saturday academy director, or other positions that require extra work for which stipends are available. Upon advancement, Stage 4 teachers receive a compensation increase and retroactive pay for the elapsed school year.

Team Incentive: In recognition of the fact that our scholars' success is dependent on the success of the entire school team, in 2012-2013, the Teacher Career Pathway also includes a school-wide bonus of up to 10% determined by the school's performance on the AF School Report Card, a collection of over 200 metrics of school performance collected annually. Due to shifting economic conditions and potential changes to funding, there may be reductions to the bonus amounts in the future. Team members who have earned the bonus will receive it in winter of the following school year due to the timing of state test results release and the time required to analyze the data. The bonus is a percentage of the salary earned the year the achievement occurred, not the year of payment. For example, in December 2012, teachers earned their bonus based on a percentage of their 2011-2012 salary. Bonus percentages are determined by base salary, not including any stipends (coach, GLC, network support work) or hourly work (Encore, Saturday tutoring). While stage advancement will result in permanent

403 James Street
New Haven, CT 06513
T 203 773 3223 F 203 773 3221



510 Waverly Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11238
T 718 623 2660 F 718 622 5998

changes to base salary, the percentage of the school-wide bonus earned by a school is re-evaluated each year and does not represent permanent changes to compensation.

Additional rewards for Stage 4 and 5 teachers:

- Self-directed professional development budget
- Participation in a network-wide Distinguished Teacher Cohort (2013-2014) and Master Teacher Cohort (2015-2016)
- Opportunities to observe high performing schools and teachers regionally or nationally
- Preferred access to special PD experiences (ex: Jon Saphier, Marcy Cook, Understanding by Design, etc)
- Opportunity to formally partner with Team Teaching and Learning on curriculum and professional development
- Opportunity to serve as a coach and receive coach training

Individual Teacher Improvement and Remediation plans

Minimally effective educators receive intensive, targeted coaching to help them improve their practice and meet expectations. If the teacher’s performance remains the same, he is placed on a Performance Improvement Plan. Following the administration of this plan, the manager determines whether the employee has improved his performance such that he will continue with Achievement First or, alternatively, terminates his employment. See the Appendix G for detailed documentation of this process, including sample Performance Improvement Plans and related communications.

After 4 weeks have elapsed on the Performance Improvement Plan, the principal reviews progress to date to determine whether there has been sufficient improvement. If the staff member has shown no improvement, the principal ends the PIP and moves to termination. As noted above, Achievement First teachers are at-will employees so the Teacher Career Pathway evaluation measures are not directly tied to non-renewal or dismissal (i.e. there is not a defined evaluation score that leads to non-renewal or dismissal). However, the principal will holistically consider all of the Teacher Career Pathway evaluation components as well as other informal observations in and out of the classroom to make these talent decisions.

Dispute Resolution Process

In the spirit of Teacher Career Pathway transparency and fairness, teachers will have the ability to request a review of the decisions related to their eligibility, evaluations and stage advancement. Requests for review should be very rare occurrences that only occur after a teacher has communicated any questions or concerns with his or her principal and that communication has not resolved the issue.

- a. Decisions that a teacher can request are reviewed/reconsidered:

- Teacher eligibility
- Stage placement/advancement
- If a lesson observation is deemed “observable”
- Process concern for surveys or observations
- Student Achievement Measure results

b. Decisions that cannot be reviewed/reconsidered:

- Lesson observation ratings
- Survey results

If any teacher feels that a component of his or evaluation was not completed according to policy, he has the option to request a review of that component. For more information on the Request for Review process, please see pages 69-72 in the *2012-2013 Teacher Career Pathway School Leader Guidebook*.

The Dispute Process is summarized in the table below:

Reason for Review Request	Step 1	Step 2	Decision-maker	Action if Review is Accepted
Teacher eligibility	Talk to your principal	Submit a written request for review within 2 weeks of receiving eligibility	TCP Director, in consultation with your principal	Teacher becomes eligible for the TCP evaluations and rewards
Stage placement / advancement	Talk to your principal	Submit a written request for review within 2 weeks of being informed about your stage placement	TCP Director reviews first, decides whether to advance to committee, and, if so, makes a recommendation to committee; final review committee will include your principal, regional sup, TCP Director, and Co-CEO	Teacher advances to the appropriate stage
If a lesson is observable	Talk to the observer	Submit a written request for review within 2	Principal, in consultation with TCP Director	A new observation replaces the unobservable

		weeks of receiving the observation scores		lesson ratings
Process concern for surveys or observations	Talk to your principal	Submit a written request for review within 2 weeks of receiving survey results or receiving the observation scores.	TCP Director, in consultation with your principal	A new observation replaces the observation OR survey scores are removed from the overall evaluation (survey score is replaced by principal evaluation score for that component)

Additionally, The Teacher Advisory Panel provides a level of systematic review. While this body does not directly resolve disputes, it reviews teacher investment data, such as the results of our post-lesson observation feedback survey and annual network support survey. The panel provides commentary on the results available, helping the network team understand how teachers are feeling and make recommendations for policy adjustments to support teacher investment in the evaluation process. This process also serves to reduce the likelihood of disputes, by ensuring that the process is responsive to teacher input.

Orientation Programs

The extensive orientation program for the Teacher Career Pathway is described above under the section, “Orientation to the Process.” All teachers receive this orientation during their mandatory summer training.

Addendum – Alternative Measures of Student Growth, 2014-2016

Achievement First’s Connecticut schools will measure growth for principals and teachers of tested grades and subjects using approved alternative measures of student learning and performance. The educator evaluation system will continue to improve the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement. Instead of using the Connecticut Mastery Test (Connecticut’s state exam), Achievement First Connecticut will begin using the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBAC) in the 2013-14 school year because it is more rigorous assessment that is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. However, the SBAC data in the first and second years of testing (2013-14 and 2014-15) will not be suitable for the evaluation of teachers given that the assessment is new and questions are still undergoing evaluation. Therefore, we will be using Achievement First Connecticut’s interim assessments (which are created in-house, in partnership with other schools in our charter school network) for Math and ELA as the measure by which we will evaluate our teachers. We believe this is an effective solution because:

- (1) These internal assessments are more rigorous than the Connecticut Mastery Test and are a more accurate assessment of our student’s progress in relation to a Common Core-aligned curriculum.
- (2) Achievement First has already been using interim assessments to evaluate our students and teachers in other subjects (e.g., science and social studies) for the past two years with success.
- (3) By using more rigorous assessments to evaluate progress, teachers will push students to a higher bar, using the same skills that those teachers learned in training and coaching.

Our student achievement measure for our Connecticut teachers will be impacted in the following ways.

- (1) Since we will not be able to run TVA calculations on internal assessments, Achievement First will reduce the weight of the measure in the overall teacher evaluation to 20% for these teachers (previously, it was weighted at 40% because we could calculate TVA using the Connecticut Mastery Test data set and comparing to Hartford Public Schools).
- (2) To ensure norming and a fair process, Achievement First will compare our results on internal assessments in Connecticut with the results in New York and add a third comparison to the New York State ELA and Math exams, which we believe to be rigorously Common-Core aligned as well. This “triangulation” will ensure that teachers across the entire AF network are evaluated consistently.
- (3) In addition, we are instituting a more structured norming process to ensure consistent grading from school to school and grade to grade.



- (4) Finally, we will continue to incorporate professional review into the evaluation, with principals coming together to evaluate student achievement results and calibrate their expectations and final performance management decisions.

Achievement First believes that affording it this flexibility in the definition of student growth will allow principals and teachers to continue to participate in the evaluation system as well as continue to be eligible to receive compensation for effectiveness, through incentives and/or placement into career ladder positions, ensuring Achievement First continues implementing its TIF project as closely to the aligned application and TIF rules as possible.

[Return to Student Measures of Achievement](#)

403 James Street
New Haven, CT 06513
T 203 773 3223 F 203 773 3221



510 Waverly Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11238
T 718 623 2660 F 718 622 5998



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

TEACHER INCENTIVE FUND COHORT 3 MONITORING PROTOCOL

Grantee Name: Achievement First	Site Visit Date: June 5-6, 2013
Project Director: Sarah Coon	ED Program Officer: Kristie Barber

Attachments to include with monitoring protocol:

1. Employee Organizational Chart
2. Revised Management plan (see your application for your original plan)
3. Communication Plan for current school year
4. Current evidence of educator support for your TIF project
5. Professional Development Plan for the current school year
6. If applicable, most current independent evaluator report

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

PERSONNEL

How is your TIF project managed?

One of the greatest benefits of Achievement First's network approach, the cornerstone of which is an interconnected team of school leaders, teachers, students and parents supported by a Network Support team of professionals, is the ability to codify and disseminate successful practices for the benefit of the entire Achievement First network and the sector as a whole. Given the scope of Achievement First's Teacher Career Pathway, which is currently impacting 560 eligible teachers, 44 teaching interns, 22 principals, 75 deans, and other 244 operations and support team members in a new, high-stakes manner, the centralization and systemization of our network approach is well suited to manage this cross-cutting initiative. There is involvement at all levels of the organization in managing the Teacher Career Pathway, as follows:

- The Teacher Career Pathway is managed and executed at the Network Support level. Achievement First Network Support's Team Talent Development is the principal manager of the Teacher Career Pathway, with significant execution by a working group of other Network

Support teams based on expertise. In addition to ongoing coordination and a bi-weekly email update, on a monthly basis, Team Talent Development formally convenes this working group in order to review progress toward milestones and align around upcoming activities.

- At the organizational level, the Teacher Career Pathway has been elevated as one of five priorities that will guide Achievement First in providing more students with access to the door-opening power of a great public education. As a result, Achievement First’s C-level leaders (co-CEOs, CAO, CFO / COO, CIO and CXO) play a critical advisory and decisionmaking role for of all aspects of the Teacher Career Pathway.
- At the school level, point people act as liaisons between school sites and Network Support related to the communication, implementation and evaluation of the Teacher Career Pathway. In particular, our Teacher Advisory Panel, Principal Cohort and Director of School Operations cohort are regular advisors on policies and communications.

Is there a management team? Please describe the roles and responsibilities of key players involved in your TIF work.

Achievement First Network Support’s Team Talent Development serves as the management team for the Teacher Career Pathway, and the chart below briefly describes their roles and responsibilities.

Team Talent Development	Roles and Responsibilities
Senior Director, Talent Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Overall management and coordination of Team Talent Development and the Teacher Career Pathway ✓ Policy leadership for the Teacher Career Pathway ✓ Lead school leader training and support around the implementation of the Teacher Career Pathway at school sites ✓ Represent Achievement First in external and funder communications related to the Teacher Career Pathway, including managing the federal TIF grant
Director, Teacher Career Pathway Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Overall management of the Teacher Career Pathway operations planning and implementation ✓ Project manager and lead designer / executor of the AF Essentials Rubric and classroom observations ✓ Lead the Teacher Career Pathway stage advancement decisionmaking process ✓ Coordinate the functionality of AF Platinum with Team Business Information Systems
Associate, Talent Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Manage school leader and teacher communications and investment related to the Teacher Career Pathway ✓ Oversee training and support for comprehensive lesson observation and survey debrief conversations, Student Achievement Measure (SAM) conversations, and stage advancement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ conversations ✓ Cross-team coordination and planning related to the Teacher Career Pathway ✓ Support the Teacher Career Pathway operations related to teacher eligibility and student and family surveys ✓ Management of school-wide bonus and recognition for Stage 4 Distinguished Teachers ✓ Liaison / support for external and funder communications related to the Teacher Career Pathway
Associate, Talent Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Support the Teacher Career Pathway operations related to classroom observations and school leader and peer surveys ✓ Data capture, analysis and reporting to inform process, communication and content improvements to the Teacher Career Pathway ✓ Develop and maintain the classroom observation video library ✓ Provide support and quality control for AF Platinum ✓ Develop and maintain knowledge management practices for Team Talent Development
If applicable, list and describe your management/coordination of public or private entities involved in the implementation of your TIF project?	
Not applicable.	

CONTRACTS

Does your project include contracts supported by TIF funds? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Please complete the following chart to include details regarding contracts in place for the current school year (Insert rows as necessary).		
Name of Contractor	Goods or services provided (2 -3 word description)	Type of Procurement (e.g., sole source, competitive, etc.)
True North Logic	Product and project support for AF Platinum, Achievement First's customized Talent Management System, including web development, web-site hosting, maintenance services and technical support	Competitive: Achievement First conducted a five-step process to select a vendor for AF Platinum: 1. Initial research—Identified 25 initial vendors, and reviewed online information and feedback to reduce the list of vendors to nine

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. System demos—Reviewed nine online demos and reduced the list of vendors to six 3. RFI—Sent a RFI to six vendors and reduced the list of vendors to four based on responses 4. In-person interviews—Interviewed four vendors identified through the RFI process 5. Final vetting and selection—Selected True North Logic based on their ability to customize AF Platinum to meet the needs of the complete Teacher Career Pathway system
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FISCAL AND PROGRAMMATIC SUSTAINABILITY

What steps have you taken, or do you plan to take, to ensure that your TIF project is financially sustainable throughout the 5 project years and beyond?

The primary ongoing financial burden introduced by the Teacher Career Pathway, and currently supported by TIF, is increased compensation in the form of individual salary increases for teachers and school-wide bonuses for teachers, school leaders and support staff who achieve excellence. As projected in our original grant application, both the individual salary increases and school-wide bonuses will approach sustainability by the conclusion of this five-year TIF grant through school-based cost savings, such as reducing non-personnel costs, slightly reducing staffing levels as a result of the additional capacity created by increased effectiveness, and slightly increasing the number of students served. Beginning with the current 2012-13 school year, Achievement First is phasing in these school-based cost savings to enable gradual, multi-year shifts in program, staffing and/or enrollment, as needed.

Please briefly describe the steps you have taken, or plan to take, to ensure programmatic sustainability. For example, are you considering making your TIF supported evaluation system the official evaluation system for all educators? Or, have you considered modifying your salary schedule to incorporate educator performance?

The Teacher Career Pathway, Achievement First's TIF-supported evaluation system, is in implementation across Achievement First's growing network of 22 public charter schools and is the official evaluation system for all 560 eligible teachers. To that end, throughout the grant period,

Achievement First has comprehensively revamped our network talent strategy, including our evaluation procedures, professional development, data management systems and compensation model, In order to support programmatic sustainability.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

If applicable, who is the evaluator for your grant?

Achievement First has a collaboration with Benjamin Master, Stanford University Graduate School of Education, to provide formative feedback to help inform the Teacher Career Pathway design.

Does your evaluator do both a summative and formative evaluation? Yes No

Describe what is included in your formative and summative evaluations and how you have or will use results to improve your work?

The purpose of this research collaboration is to understand the implications of the use of diverse performance measures and objective performance data in teacher evaluation systems, as exemplified by emerging practices at Achievement First. The use of new, more objective performance measures is examined in contrast to Achievement First's historical use of more subjective performance evaluations by teachers' managers. In addition, alignment and disagreement across different types of objective performance data are analyzed.

In brief, the key components of the research are:

- 1. An investigation of Achievement First's personnel management priorities prior to the adoption of new objective teacher performance metrics**—This project examines the relationship between high-stakes personnel decisions, subjective evaluations by principals of teachers and future ratings of teachers according to objective performance measures.
- 2. An investigation of several new objective performance measures implemented by Achievement First as part of the Teacher Career Pathway, with a focus on their comparative and predictive validity, relative alignment, and areas of overlap**—This project focuses, in particular, on parent ratings of teachers, as surveys of their perspectives are relatively un-examined in current research.
- 3. An investigation of the implications for staff and for Achievement First as a whole of alternative methodologies in the development of teacher performance measures (including, but not limited to, value-added measures), and in the rules regarding the weight placed upon different performance measures**—This project would attend, in particular, to the impacts of different evaluation system design decisions on particular subgroups of teachers.

Collectively, this research agenda provides valuable and timely insights to peer districts that are actively engaged in teacher evaluation system reforms, while also providing practical information and formative guidance to Achievement First as we continue to refine our approach. The first two components of the research are largely complete, and draft reports have been shared with Achievement First and submitted for publication

in peer-reviewed research journals. The third component is expected to be complete by fall 2013.

FEDERAL AND STATE COORDINATION

Has your district (or TIF project districts) received Race to the Top (RTT) funds from your state? Yes No

Please describe your relationship with the RTT program staff in your state/district.

Although Achievement First previously provided all requested information and received Race to the Top funds from New York State, the grant period has concluded, and we do not have a current relationship with the Race to the Top program staff.

Has your state been awarded an ESEA flexibility Waiver? Yes No Pending Approval

Please describe any implications this may have on your TIF project work.

In August 2013, Achievement First will expand to Providence, Rhode Island, where we are pending approval of an ESEA Flexibility Waiver in order to administer the Teacher Career Pathway in our schools.

Is your teacher or principal evaluation system aligned with another federally or state mandated program, such as RTT, SIG, ESEA Flexibility Waiver, TIF 4, or other statute or policy? Yes No

How does/will this impact your TIF work?

While Achievement First's evaluation system is not explicitly aligned with another federally or state mandated program, we were able to receive Race to the Top funds in New York State because our evaluation system is essentially in compliance with this federally mandated program. We anticipate that the same will be true in Rhode Island in 2013-14.

Are you facing any challenges related to coordinating your TIF project with another federally or state mandated program, such as RTT, SIG, TIF 4, ESEA Flexibility Waiver, or other statute or policy? Yes No

Please explain.

In Rhode Island, Achievement First's Teacher Career Pathway is not fully aligned with the state's federally mandated Race to the Top grant, and we are working with the appropriate authorizers to secure an ESEA Flexibility Waiver in order to administer the existing Teacher Career Pathway in our schools.

BUDGET AND FINANCES

Please follow the directions provided in the site visit notification letter regarding the necessary documentation to have on hand to evidence the selected G5 draw. Please be prepared to walk through this documentation and your draw down procedures with the site visit team. Please also be ready to share your time and effort record keeping documentation; the site visit team will ask you to walk through one example.

Drawdowns

Describe the general frequency with which you draw down TIF funds in G5.

During the 2012-13 school year, Achievement First has drawn down TIF funds in G5 on an approximately quarterly basis, which is well timed with our project costs, particularly performance-based compensation payments, which occurred in December 2012 (school-wide bonus) and March 2012 (individual compensation increases).

Were all of your drawdowns reimbursing your project for costs already expended? (If some of them were to provide advance funds for you to pay expenses, please answer "No.") Yes No (if no please explain)

During the 2012-13 school year, Achievement First drew down TIF funds in G5 in order to provide advance funds to make performance-based compensation payments in December 2012 (school-wide bonus) and March 2013 (individual compensation increases). In both cases, we expended the TIF funds within three days of the draw down in G5. Meanwhile, for all other project costs, we have typically drawn down TIF funds in G5 to reimburse project costs already expended.

Describe how the funds expenditure process works for your project: who is responsible for approving and/or processing expenditure requests? What is the role of the TIF Project Director in this process?

Achievement First's Director of Finance is responsible for using Achievement First's financial accounting software to identify project expenditures and for processing expenditure requests in G5, with approval by Achievement First's TIF Project Director.

Please discuss any challenges that delayed timely expenditure of funds, if applicable. Are there any state, district, or school policy requirements related to the use and expenditure of grant funds that have impacted grant expenditures?

On occasion, the need to revise our TIF project budget, particularly with regard to personnel changes, has delayed the timely expenditure of funds. We have worked with our TIF Program Officer to gain approval when revisions have been necessary.

Have you made any alterations to your increasing share commitments or your general match funds (ED 524B)? Yes No

Recordkeeping

Describe your process to track the time and effort of TIF funded personnel.

Each TIF funded team member tracks their time and effort on a monthly basis. This information is recorded in a shared Excel document and is reviewed by Achievement First's Director of Finance and the TIF Project Director to ensure completion.

CORE ELEMENTS

CORE ELEMENT A: COMMUNICATION PLAN

Please submit each unique TIF program communication plan for the current school year as an attachment to this protocol.

Please respond to the following questions **for each unique communication plan** (i.e. if your TIF project includes multiple LEAs, each with their own communication plan). Copy/paste this chart as needed.

Communication Plan: Teacher Evaluation

<p>Please note key milestones proposed in your communication plan and timelines. (You do not need to go into great detail here, as you will submit your plan as an attachment, but please draw attention to significant activities completed.)</p>	<p>Discuss progress toward meeting key milestones to date. Note any significant changes from your plan.</p>
<p>The following highlights the key milestones included in Achievement First’s 2012-13 Communication Plan related to teacher evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Career Pathway Overview Presentations to provide all school leaders and teachers with an overview of the teacher evaluation process for the 2012-13 school year • Teacher Career Pathway Guidebooks to provide all school leaders and teachers with a reference for all Teacher Career Pathway-related policies, implementation requirements and best practices for the 2012-13 school year • Announcement of School-wide Bonuses to recognize and celebrate, as a network, school teams that earned a school-wide bonus for excellence in the 2011-12 school year through TIF • Network-wide announcement of Stage 4 Distinguished Teachers to recognize and celebrate, as a network, teachers named as Stage 4 Distinguished Teachers for excellence in the 2011-12 school year 	<p>The Teacher Career Pathway represents a significant shift in how teachers are developed, evaluated and rewarded at Achievement First. This shift is an exciting opportunity for teachers and for the network; however, we recognize that the change can be difficult for some. The Teacher Career Pathway is most successful when school leaders feel ownership over the success of the system in their schools and are intentional about how to best communicate and implement it in a way that best meets the unique needs of their school. To that end, the attached 2012-13 Communication Plan positions school leaders, with support from Network Support, as responsible for ensuring the successful communication and implementation of the Teacher Career Pathway at their schools.</p> <p>During the current school year (2012-13), we have successfully met all of our communication milestones, and we have not made any significant changes from our Communication Plan. During year one of implementation (the 2011-12 school year), several best practices were identified to promote positive teacher communication related to the Teacher Career Pathway, and the 2013-13 Communication Plan reflects these key ideas, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Talent Development creates presentations that are then delivered to teachers by their own principals or peer teachers (from the Teacher Advisory Panel). While leveraging the templates provided, school leaders / peer teachers should

	<p>personalize all communications to their schools in order to align with school priorities and address any unique challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leaders should repeatedly communicate the rationale for the Teacher Career Pathway to teachers, so that they understand the what, the why and the how. • School leaders should be transparent with teachers about upcoming activities, including potential kinks in this new system, and should create opportunities for teachers to ask questions and give their feedback on the Teacher Career Pathway. • School leaders should ground the Teacher Career Pathway in the AF Essentials Rubric, so that the Teacher Career Pathway becomes synonymous with ongoing teacher development, rather than focused on career stages or rewards. • In order to ensure the successful announcement of career stage decisions, school leaders should clarify how stage decisions are calculated, set expectations for the high bar of excellence for Stage 4 Distinguished Teachers, and have a strong plan for communication of stage decisions to individual teachers and to the school as a whole.
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Communication Plan: Principal Evaluation

<p>Please note key milestones proposed in your communication plan and timelines. (You do not need to go into great detail here, as you will submit your plan as an attachment, but please draw attention to significant activities completed.)</p>	<p>Discuss progress toward meeting key milestones to date. Note any significant changes from your plan.</p>
<p>The following highlights the key milestones included in Achievement</p>	<p>During the current school year (2012-13), we have successfully met all of our communication milestones, and we have not made any</p>

<p>First's 2012-13 Communication Plan related to principal evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2012-2013 School-wide Bonus and AF Report Card Overview to provide all principals with an overview of the policies and practices related to the 2012-13 AF Report Card and school-wide bonus process • Professional Growth Plan Handbook to provide all principals with an overview of the policies and practices related to their 2012-13 Professional Growth Plan process • Announcement of School-wide Bonuses to recognize and celebrate, as a network, school teams that earned a school-wide bonus for excellence in the 2011-12 school year through TIF 	<p>significant changes from our Communication Plan.</p>
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Note: During the site visit please be prepared to share a sample of evidence that such key activities described have been completed or are underway. (E.g., presentation slides at faculty meetings; brochures describing PBCS; agendas of meetings with key stakeholder groups). You **do not** need to **submit** any of these documents with the email submission of this protocol.

CORE ELEMENT B: INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT OF TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, AND OTHER PERSONNEL

Please submit all evidence of educator support for the current year of your TIF project as an attachment to this protocol. (If you work with more than 15 LEAs, please ask your Program Officer if she would prefer that you email all documents as attachments or just a subset and have the rest available on site.)

Are unions designated as the exclusive representative for teachers, principals, or other personnel for the purpose of collective bargaining?
 Yes No

How have you demonstrated evidence that your TIF-funded PBCS has the continuing support of the teachers and principals in your participating schools? Describe any challenges you may be having in regard to maintaining educator support for your TIF project?

The Teacher Career Pathway enjoys strong support from Achievement First teachers and principals. Exit surveys administered after the August 2012 Teacher Career Pathway Overview Presentations at all Achievement First schools revealed the following strong rates of initial investment:

Exit ticket question	Percentage of teachers who responded "extremely," "very" or "somewhat"	Percentage of teachers who responded "extremely" or "very"
The AF Teacher Career Pathway helps to recognize, develop and reward great teaching.	96%	88%
How clearly do you understand how you will be evaluated this year as part of Teacher Career Pathway?	97%	70%
At this point in the school year, how clearly has your school defined great teaching and painted a clear picture of excellence?	97%	67%
How fair are the evaluation criteria for measuring teacher effectiveness (student achievement measures, lesson observations and surveys)?	98%	74%
In addition to our greatest motivator of student achievement, the salary increases, differentiated development, recognition and bonus opportunities associated with the Teacher Career Pathway help make me feel valued as a teacher and contribute to my desire to continue teaching at AF.	99%	85%

Meanwhile, the following feedback survey reports are attached as evidence that the Teacher Career Pathway has the continuing support of Achievement First teachers and principals throughout the 2012-2013 school year:

Description of Survey Instrument	Stakeholder Group	Date
Lesson Observation Window #1 Feedback Survey	Teachers	Fall 2012
Lesson Observation Window #2 Feedback Survey	Teachers	Spring 2013
Lesson Observation Window #1 Feedback Survey (note that the Window #2 feedback survey for observers is not yet closed and	Observers	Fall 2012

therefore not included)		
Student Achievement Measures (SAMs) and Stages Feedback Survey	Teachers	March 2013
2012 Fall Network Support Survey	Principals	Fall 2012
2013 Spring Network Support Survey	Principals and Teachers	Spring 2013

How are you continuing to involve teachers, principals, and other personnel in your TIF project?

Continuing teacher involvement occurs through our Teacher Advisory Panel, which is comprised of two teacher representatives from each Achievement First school who serve as liaisons to the network for the Teacher Career Pathway. Teacher Advisory Panel members communicate questions, concerns and feedback from their school sites to Team Talent Development, as well as communicating updates and announcements from Team Talent Development to their schools, including delivering turnkey trainings for their school teams on Teacher Career Pathway-related topics. Throughout the current school year (2012-13), Teacher Advisory Panel members attend bi-monthly, in-person meetings facilitated by Team Talent Development in order to provide input on the design and implementation of the Teacher Career Pathway. To review the content of these meetings during the 2012-13 school year, please refer to the attached Communication Plan.

Continuing principal involvement occurs during bi-monthly Principal Cohort workshops. Team Talent Development reserves time on the agenda at each cohort workshop to provide updates to principals on both teacher and school leader evaluations, solicit input on key upcoming processes or decisions, and hear feedback directly from school leaders.

CORE ELEMENT C: RIGOROUS, TRANSPARENT, AND FAIR EDUCATOR EVALUATIONS SYSTEMS

Please note: Do not attach templates of your teacher and principal observation tools or blank evaluation forms. On site the site visit team will ask you to exhibit completed teacher and principal evaluation documentation to evidence implementation and completion. You may redact personally identifying information, but be prepared to evidence your described evaluation system for both teachers and principals. Please have at least one artifact for each unique evaluation system (teachers & principals).

Please respond to the following questions for each LEA with a unique evaluation system (copy/paste this chart as needed).

District Name: Achievement First

TEACHERS	
What assessments do you use for measuring	Achievement First has designed robust student achievement measures (SAMs) for each grade

student growth?

and subject. The attached 2012-13 Student Achievement Measure Tables list the SAM assessments that will be used to calculate student achievement for the 2012-13 school year. In order to contextualize student growth, an anchor assessment has been identified for each grade and subject. In some cases, there is a direct correlation between the end-of-course assessment and the anchor assessment. In other cases, it is our best proxy for prior academic achievement levels.

We have tried to ensure that each SAM holds true to the following principles:

- **Growth-Based:** Whenever possible, we define success by student growth, not attainment.
- **Comprehensive:** A great teacher will demonstrate growth consistently for an entire class.
- **Non-Competitive:** We want to set-up a situation where all teachers could be successful, so we need a bar that everyone has the opportunity to meet and/or we need to compare an individual teacher's impact to a very large non-Achievement First data set (e.g. all New York City public school classrooms).
- **Differentiated:** We know that growth is different based on where a student starts, so we need to factor that in.

How is student growth measured? (Do you use a value-added system?)

There are three different methods by which we measure student growth for the Teacher Career Pathway:

1. **Teacher Value-Added:** This method can be applied when we have a standardized assessment, a large sample size and multiple years of data. Teacher value-added is a statistical method used to calculate a teacher's impact on the academic growth of a group of students. It represents the difference between the growth that actually occurred and the growth that we would typically observe for the classroom. It takes into account where the student started, student attributes (such as SPED, ELL, gender, FRL, ethnicity), fluctuations in tests from year to year, differing rates of growth based on a student's reading level, measurement error and the percent of time spent with a teacher.

	<p>2. Matrix Model: In other courses, a matrix model is used to measure a teacher’s impact on student growth. Using the matrix model, we are able to identify a student’s starting and ending proficiency, and then aggregate student results to determine a teacher’s impact on student performance.</p> <p>3. Portfolio Review: In specials courses, a portfolio review is used. The portfolio includes an individual skills assessment for a representative sample of students. The portfolio is reviewed by an expert in the content area and by Achievement First’s Director of Specials Achievement.</p>
<p>Do you measure growth at the classroom level, team level, school level, or some combination of each?</p>	<p>Each teacher has a Student Achievement Measure (SAM) for each course they teach, and growth is measured at the classroom level for individual compensation increases through the Teacher Career Pathway.</p> <p>Meanwhile, growth is calculated at the grade level for our school-wide bonuses through the AF Report Card. As a part of the AF Report Card, there are clear attainment and growth targets for each grade level. A school earns points on the AF Report Card for either meeting the attainment or the growth targets for the grade level.</p>
<p>What weight is given to student growth in your evaluation system? (If half of a teacher’s evaluation rating is based on student growth, the weight is 50%.)</p> <p>If your system does not weigh student growth on a percentage basis, please explain how it is weighed and how it is “a significant factor” of the overall evaluation.</p>	<p>Student achievement comprises a significant percentage of a teacher’s overall evaluation. In courses with a standardized and robust Student Achievement Measure (SAM), student achievement is weighted as 40 percent. In courses where the SAM is less robust, student achievement is weighted as 20 percent, and the remaining 20 percent of the evaluation comes from observations.</p>
<p>For each teacher in your program, who conducts evaluations and how many classroom observations are conducted each year?</p>	<p>All Teacher Career Pathway-eligible teachers have two formal classroom observations and one comprehensive observation in the 2012-13 school year. Observations are completed by internal school leaders (principals and deans) and observers outside of the school (regional superintendents, achievement directors and other instructional experts). They are structured</p>

as follows:

- First- and second-year teachers (total years of teaching, not just teaching in the Achievement First network):
 - Two school leader observations
 - One comprehensive observation
- Teachers in their third or higher year of teaching (total years of teaching, not just teaching in the Achievement First network):
 - One school leader observation
 - One co-observation with an external observer
 - One comprehensive observation

All observations are unannounced in order to provide the most accurate view of a teacher's instruction possible. There are three types of observations, as follows:

- **School Leader Observations:** 45 minutes, conducted by a principal or dean accompanied by another principal, dean, special education coordinator or coach
- **Co-Observations:** 45 minutes, conducted by an external observer accompanied by a principal, dean, special education coordinator or coach
- **Comprehensive Observations:** The comprehensive observation provides the principal, dean, special education coordinator or coach with an opportunity to rate each teacher's overall performance based on all of the informal, non-evaluative observations that have occurred throughout the school year.

Are all teachers in your participating schools observed?

All Teacher Career Pathway-eligible teachers across all Achievement First schools are observed. Teachers are eligible for the Teacher Career Pathway if they:

- Teach students a minimum of 120 minutes per day (Monday through Thursday)
- Begin teaching on or before November 15
- Are not a principal, dean or Principal-in-Residence
- Teach a minimum of 18 students during a typical day and have at least one group that

	<p>includes at least six students</p> <p>In rare cases, such as the unique teaching responsibilities of special education coordinators or other teachers working in special situations, a teacher may be ineligible to participate in the Teacher Career Pathway evaluations and will not receive formal classroom observations. They will, however, continue to participate in informal observation and coaching.</p>
<p>On what model, if any, is your observation tool based?</p>	<p>The Teacher Career Pathway lesson observation rubric (AF Essentials Rubric) is based on “The 10 Essentials of Great Instruction,” which was developed in 2007 based on the work of Doug Lemov, Jon Saphier and our own observations of great teachers. The rubric was also influenced by a review of the D.C. Public School’s IMPACT rubric and the Teach For America TAL rubric.</p> <p>The AF Essentials Rubric was tested and revised during both the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years, and we expect this rubric to be revised slightly each summer following an analysis of the prior year’s network-wide results and feedback from teachers and school leaders.</p> <p>The AF Essentials Rubric is designed to measure “The 10 Essentials of Great Instruction” and the overall effect of a lesson on student achievement outcomes. The AF Essentials Rubric includes four key domains of instruction: Domain 1: A Clear and High Bar for Student Achievement; Domain 2: Design and Delivery of an Effective Lesson; Domain 3: Classroom Culture; and Domain 4: Ensures Achievement for all Students. These domains have been broken down into essentials of great instruction, which, in some cases, have been further broken down into sub-essentials in order to define a category more clearly.</p>
<p>How do you incorporate observation results into evaluation ratings?</p>	<p>Teachers receive three classroom observation ratings—two formal classroom observations and one comprehensive observation data point—which cumulatively account for 30 percent of a teacher’s evaluation, if teaching a course with a standardized Student Achievement Measure (SAM), or 50 percent of a teacher’s evaluation, if the course does not have a standardized SAM.</p>
<p>What additional forms of evidence (aside from student growth and classroom observations) do you use for teacher evaluation?</p>	<p>Achievement First’s Teaching Excellence Framework was developed to evaluate teachers holistically. Therefore, in addition to student growth and classroom observations, the Teacher Career Pathway also includes input from students, parents, peers and school leaders through surveys. The student and family surveys are designed to assess a teacher’s contribution to student character development through their relationships and communications. The peer survey and school leader surveys are designed to evaluate a teacher’s core values and</p>

	<p>contributions to team achievement. Teachers receive four survey ratings—students, parents, peers and school leaders—which cumulatively account for 30 percent of a teacher’s evaluation.</p>
<p>How do you inform teachers of their effectiveness rating?</p>	<p>Teachers receive their observation ratings within 72 hours after an observation via a debrief with their observer(s). They receive their survey ratings in late May or June, approximately one month after surveys are complete, via a debrief conversation with their coach. Finally, each winter (exact timing is dependent on the availability of state test data), teachers are informed of their cumulative effectiveness ratings from the previous school year via an in-person Student Achievement Measure (SAM) and Stage Advancement Conversation with their principal or dean. This conversation includes a review of the teacher’s student achievement results (SAMs), as well as his or her stage advancement results.</p> <p>In addition to these important debrief conversations, teachers have current and longitudinal evaluation data readily accessible to them through AF Platinum, our customized Talent Management System.</p>
<p>Do you have an appeals process in place?</p>	<p>In the spirit of transparency and fairness, Achievement First teachers have the ability to request a review of the Teacher Career Pathway decisions related to their eligibility, evaluations and stage advancement. Requests for review should be very rare occurrences that only occur after a teacher has communicated any questions or concerns with his or her principal and that communication has not resolved the issue.</p> <p>Teachers can request review / reconsideration of decisions regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher eligibility • Stage placement / advancement • If a lesson is deemed “observable” • Process concerns for surveys or observations • Student Achievement Measure (SAM) results <p>Teachers cannot request review / reconsideration of decisions regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation ratings • Survey results

The process to request review / reconsideration of a decision, as articulated in Achievement First's Human Capital Policies & Practices, is as follows:

Reason for Review Request	Step 1	Step 2	Decision-maker	Action if Review is Accepted
Teacher eligibility	Talk to your principal	Submit a written request for review within 2 weeks of receiving eligibility	TCP Director, in consultation with your principal	Teacher becomes eligible for the TCP evaluations and rewards
Stage placement / advancement	Talk to your principal	Submit a written request for review within 2 weeks of being informed about your stage placement	TCP Director reviews first, decides whether to advance to committee, and, if so, makes a recommendation to committee; final review committee will include your principal, regional sup, TCP Director, and Co-CEO	Teacher advances to the appropriate stage
If a lesson is observable	Talk to the observer	Submit a written request for review within 2 weeks of receiving the	Principal, in consultation with TCP Director	A new observation replaces the unobservable

		observation scores		lesson ratings
Process concern for surveys or observations	Talk to your principal	Submit a written request for review within 2 weeks of receiving survey results or receiving the observation scores.	TCP Director, in consultation with your principal	A new observation replaces the observation OR survey scores are removed from the overall evaluation (survey score is replaced by principal evaluation score for that component)

District Name: Achievement First

PRINCIPALS

What assessments do you use for measuring student growth?

The AF Report Card captures a holistic view of the performance of a school and is the core internal performance management tool that Achievement First uses to define excellence for schools and principals. The AF Report Card evaluates the performance of a school based on over 100 pre-defined academic and non-academic metrics. The following assessments are used to calculate student achievement and growth for the purposes of the AF School Report Card:

- Grades K-2
 - Fountas & Pinnell reading assessment
 - TerraNova math assessment

- Grades 3-8
 - State tests

- Grades 9-12
 - State tests
 - Achievement First Interim Assessments (IAs)
 - College entrance exams (SAT, Advanced Placement)

How is student growth measured? (Do you use a value-added system?)

For student achievement in every grade and subject, the AF Report Card has a corresponding number of possible points that would be awarded if the school meets the goal. There is a four-step process by which student achievement in every grade and subject is measured by the AF Report Card:

- **Compare actual v. target performance:** We start by comparing school performance on a metric with the target for that metric. If actual performance is at or above the target, a school can receive points for that metric.

- **Compare to growth metric to determine highest possible points:** In some cases, we measure school performance through both absolute and growth metrics. In general, the metric with the highest points will determine the points attributed to a school.

- **Evaluate whether the school qualifies based on testing requirements:** However, for a school to receive points, they need to show that this represents the true performance for an entire cohort. If the school meets the performance target, but there are a number of students absent from the calculation, the school does not receive points for that metric.

- **Scale-up points:** If a school is not yet fully enrolled, points are scaled up to enable comparison between Achievement First schools that are fully enrolled and Achievement First schools that are still growing.

Do you measure growth at the whole school level in all subjects that are tested by the state? If not, please describe how you

As described above, as a part of the AF Report Card, there are clear attainment and growth targets for each grade level. A school earns points on the AF Report Card for either meeting the attainment or the growth targets for the grade level, and these points are rolled up into a

measure growth for purposes of principal evaluation.

score that represents the overall performance of the school in regard to student achievement.

What weight is given to student growth in your evaluation system? (If half of a principal's evaluation rating is based on student growth, the weight is 50%.)

For all principals, student achievement is a significant factor in their evaluation. Out of 550 total possible points, the table below shows the significant number of possible points (approximately 70 to 85 percent of the total) for student achievement in the AF Report Card:

If your system does not weigh student growth on a percentage basis, please explain how it is weighed and how it is "a significant factor" of the overall principal evaluation.

Elementary and Middle Schools	High School
Student achievement 460 points	Student achievement 380 points
Student attendance 40 points	Student attendance 24 points
Non-academic measures 50 points	Program implementation 96 points
	Non-academic measures 50 points

How many observations are conducted each year, what events are observed, and who conducts the evaluation?

Achievement First principals are regularly observed by their regional superintendent, who is in their school on a bi-weekly basis, at a minimum. Among other activities, regional superintendents may observe principals completing classroom observations and providing instructional coaching for teachers, delivering professional development to staff, and/or conducting school leadership team meetings.

On what model, if any, is your observation tool based?

Our principal observation rubric was created internally by a small working group that included our Chief Academic Officer, Vice President of Teaching and Learning, Regional Superintendents and achievement directors. It is partially based on the work of Paul Bambrick.

How do you incorporate observation results into evaluation ratings?

Observation results are incorporated into a principal's annual Professional Growth Plan (PGP), which also considers the available academic and non-academic results and feedback from other school leaders and teachers to facilitate a process of self-reflection and goal setting for principals.

<p>What additional forms of evidence (aside from student growth and observation) do you use for principal evaluation?</p>	<p>The AF School Report Card aims to capture a holistic view of the performance of a school, and in addition to student growth, the AF School Report Card evaluates each school’s performance in the areas of student demographics, student attendance, student and staff retention, college acceptance, matriculation and persistence and financial sustainability.</p> <p>Also, as described above, in addition to observation, the principal Professional Growth Plan (PGP) process includes input from other school leaders and teachers through feedback surveys.</p>
<p>How do you inform principals of their effectiveness rating?</p>	<p>Achievement First principals are informed of their effectiveness ratings in two phases, due to the timing of the availability of some of the school’s academic and non-academic results. Each winter, all Achievement First principals take part in the Professional Growth Plan (PGP), at which time they receive an evaluation from their regional superintendent based upon the available academic and non-academic results, feedback from other school leaders and teachers, and observation. The PGP initiates a process of self-reflection and goal setting for principals, which culminates with the release of the AF Report Card the following fall.</p>
<p>Do you have an appeals process in place?</p>	<p>Yes, we have an appeal process for the AF Report Card. This is an iterative process to ensure that the AF Report Card accurately represents the school-wide performance for the year. This process has two components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AF Report Card Review is a data accuracy review, meant for principals and schools operations teams to look for potential errors in the data. Schools have three weeks to review the AF Report Card and notify Team Data Strategy if an error in the data is found. 2. Mitigating points requests acknowledge that although the data is accurate, it tells an insufficient story and the school strongly believes that it achieved the spirit of the metric even if the data alone does not convey that fact. These requests should be discussed and approved by the regional superintendent and sent to Team Data Strategy.

Inter-rater Reliability: Please briefly describe the steps you have taken to ensure that teacher and principal observers have been trained to

understand the observation tool and to ensure inter-rater reliability and/or agreement during the current school year.

Inter-rater reliability is achieved through a few different strategies:

1. Achievement First's teacher and principal observers participate in twice annual calibration assessments administered by Team Talent Development to determine the areas of the AF Essentials Rubric on which they are aligned and the areas on which they need to improve calibration.
2. Observers also participate in three to four observation trainings per year to ensure that there is a consistently high bar of excellence across the network.
3. Our observation structure includes a "co-observation" model, where two observers observe a class alongside each other. Those observers then debrief the lesson together, thus building a common vision of instructional excellence. In some cases, these two observers are both leaders from within the same school. In other cases, it is a school leader with a network leader who has the advantage of frequently observing teachers across schools.
4. Additionally, regional superintendents are available to provide ongoing coaching around rating observations.

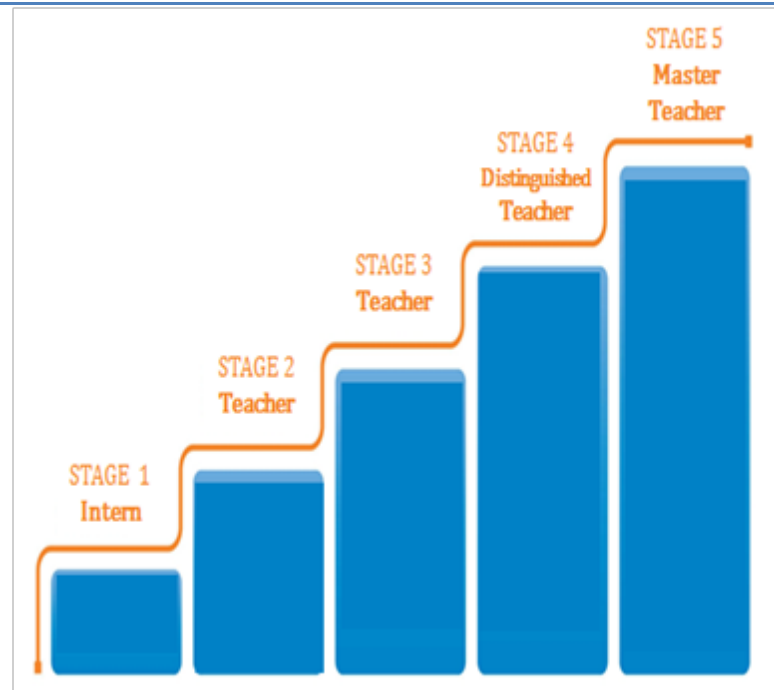
Human Capital Management: Are the educator evaluation systems described above the official evaluation systems for educators participating in your PBCS? (In other words, is that evaluation system the only one in use, or is there one for the TIF-funded PBCS and another for general purposes?) Yes No

Yes, the educator evaluation systems described above are the official evaluation systems for educators participating in Achievement First's PBCS.

Are the educator evaluation systems described above used for human capital decisions other than compensation? For example, is it used to make tenure decisions or decisions related to teacher career advancement? Yes No

If yes, please briefly summarize all the personnel decisions to which the teacher/principal evaluation system is tied.

Achievement First does not have a tenure system. However, in addition to increased compensation, the Teacher Career Pathway gives teachers the opportunity to advance through five career stages, as follows:



There are three factors that are considered in determining a teacher's eligibility to advance to the next career stage. They are listed below, in the order of consideration:

- 1. Two years of experience within a stage:** We are expecting our teachers to show sustained excellence, so a minimum of two years of experience in one stage is required before a teacher can advance to the next stage. Additionally, teachers cannot skip a stage.
- 2. Total years of teaching experience:** All Stage 3 Teachers must be in their third year of teaching or more, all Stage 4 Distinguished Teachers must be in their fifth year of teaching or more, and all Stage 5 Master Teachers must be in their seventh year of teaching or more.
- 3. Teacher effectiveness:** Excellent teachers excel on all measures of the Teacher Career Pathway. They have an overall evaluation score that meets or exceeds the required standard for that stage and also meets or exceeds the minimum expectations for each of the measures of the Teacher Career Pathway. While advancing to the next stage requires a teacher to consistently meet a high bar of excellence, advancement is not limited to a set number of teachers; therefore Achievement First teachers are not competing with one

another for a limited number of spots.

PERFORMANCE-BASED COMPENSATION SYSTEM (PBCS)

On site the site visit team will ask you to exhibit completed documentation as evidence of PBCS implementation and completion. You may redact personally identifying information, but be prepared to evidence the information you used to inform performance incentives made for both teachers and principals. Please have at least one artifact per unique PBCS (teacher & principal).

Please respond to the following questions for each LEA with a unique PBCS (copy/paste this chart as needed).

District Name: Achievement First	
TEACHERS	PRINCIPALS
How many individuals are eligible for awards?	
<p>During the 2012-13 school year, all returning Achievement First teachers were eligible for a school-wide bonus based on their school performance in 2011-12. In 2012-13, we had 342 returning teachers.</p> <p>In addition, teachers were eligible to advance through the Teacher Career Pathway's five career stage based on demonstrated consistent effectiveness. In 2012-13, 54 teachers were eligible to advance to Stage 3 Teacher and 154 teachers were eligible to advance to Stage 4 Distinguished Teacher based on their performance in 2011-12.</p>	<p>During the 2012-13 school year, all returning Achievement First principals were eligible for a school-wide bonus based on their school performance in 2011-12, who also met minimum requirements on their individual Professional Growth Plan (PGP). In 2012-13, we had 20 returning principals.</p>
What types of awards are offered and how are they earned?	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> School-Wide Bonus: An annual performance bonus is available to all members of a school team based on the results of the AF Report Card. The AF Report Card is a comprehensive measure of a school's performance (primarily academic measures with some operational measures). Individual Compensation Increases: Teachers can also earn a substantial salary increase as they advance through five career 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> School-Wide Bonus: An annual performance bonus is available to all members of a school team based on the results of the AF Report Card. The AF Report Card is a comprehensive measure of a school's performance (primarily academic measures with some operational measures).

stages. Individual compensation increases are earned by teachers who meet both an overall score and a minimum thresholds for each component of the Teacher Career Pathway for two consecutive years. (Note: Year one was based on only 2011-12 results, but it will be based on two years going forward).

How is growth factored into your incentives?

1. **School-Wide Bonus:** Student growth is factored into our school-wide bonus. Our growth calculation evaluates a cohort’s increase in the percent of students who are proficient over the course of the year. For each student achievement measure, a school can meet either the absolute measure or the growth measure. The school gets credit for the higher of the two (growth or absolute).
2. **Individual Compensation Increases:** Student growth is also factored into our individual teacher advancement through the career stages. Each teacher has a Student Achievement Measure (SAM) for each course they teach. When possible, we use a value-added model to determine a teacher’s impact on student growth. When it is not possible due to the assessments and/or sample size, then we use an alternative growth model to determine the teacher’s impact.

1. **School-Wide Bonus:** Student growth is factored into our school-wide bonus. Our growth calculation evaluates a cohort’s increase in the percent of students who are proficient over the course of the year. For each student achievement measure, a school can meet either the absolute measure or the growth measure. The school gets credit for the higher of the two (growth or absolute).

How are award amounts differentiated? (Are there varying levels of awards possible?)

1. **School-Wide Bonus:** School teams can earn 0%, 2.5%, 5% or 10% of their annual core salary as a bonus depending on the score they receive on the AF Report Card. For example, if a school earns a 5% bonus, then all teachers will receive a 5% bonus based on their salary in the year the results were achieved.
2. **Individual Compensation Increases:** Advancement from Stage 2 to Stage 3 is up to \$15,000 and advancement from Stage 3 to Stage 4 is up to a \$10,000 increase in annual salary.

1. **School-Wide Bonus:** School teams can earn 0%, 2.5%, 5% or 10% of their annual core salary as a bonus depending on the score they receive on the AF Report Card. For example, if a school earns a 5% bonus, then all teachers will receive a 5% bonus based on their salary in the year the results were achieved.

How many educators earned awards during your first year of implementation? (How many do you anticipate during the current year if no payouts have occurred yet?) What percentage does that represent?

- 415 Achievement First teachers (75% of eligible) earned a school-wide bonus of 2.5%, 5% or 10% in 2012-13 based on 2011-12 results.
- 273 Achievement First teachers (49% of eligible) earned a salary increase for their advancement to Stage 3 Teacher or Stage 4 Distinguished Teacher in 2012-13 based on 2011-12 results.

- 14 Achievement First principals (70% of eligible) earned a school-wide bonus in 2012-13 based on 2011-12 results.

Do you have an appeals process in place regarding performance incentive awards? If yes, please describe.

Yes, we have an appeals process in place for teachers. The appeal process is articulated in our Teacher Guidebook and in our Human Capital Policies & Practices. An excerpt is pasted below that describes the process.

In the spirit of transparency and fairness, Achievement First teachers have the ability to request a review of the Teacher Career Pathway decisions related to their eligibility, evaluations and stage advancement. Requests for review should be very rare occurrences that only occur after a teacher has communicated any questions or concerns with his or her principal and that communication has not resolved the issue.

Teachers can request review / reconsideration of decisions regarding:

- Teacher eligibility
- Stage placement / advancement
- If a lesson is deemed “observable”
- Process concerns for surveys or observations
- Student Achievement Measure (SAM) results

Teachers cannot request review / reconsideration of decisions regarding:

- Observation ratings
- Survey results

The process to request review / reconsideration of a decision is as follows:

Reason for Review	Step 1	Step 2	Decision-maker	Action if Review is
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Yes, we have an appeals process in place for principals. This is an iterative process to ensure that the AF Report Card accurately represents the school-wide performance for the year. This process has two components:

1. **AF Report Card Review** is a data accuracy review, meant for principals and schools operations teams to look for potential errors in the data. Schools have three weeks to review the AF Report Card and notify Team Data Strategy if an error in the data is found.
2. **Mitigating points requests** acknowledge that although the data is accurate, it tells an insufficient story and the school strongly believes that it achieved the spirit of the metric even if the data alone does not convey that fact. These requests should be discussed and approved by the Regional Superintendent and sent to Team Data Strategy.

Extreme circumstances that are outside the control of the school leadership will qualify for mitigating points requests. We have outlined some examples of circumstances that will and will not qualify for mitigating points for your reference:

Circumstances that would NOT qualify for mitigating points:

- Replacement of a low-performing teacher or losing a high-performing teacher in the middle of the school year

Request				Accepted
Teacher eligibility	Talk to your principal	Submit a written request for review within 2 weeks of receiving eligibility	TCP Director, in consultation with your principal	Teacher becomes eligible for the TCP evaluations and rewards
Stage placement / advancement	Talk to your principal	Submit a written request for review within 2 weeks of being informed about your stage placement	TCP Director reviews first, decides whether to advance to committee, and, if so, makes a recommendation to committee; final review committee will include your principal, regional sup, TCP Director, and Co-CEO	Teacher advances to the appropriate stage
If a lesson is observable	Talk to the observer	Submit a written request for review within 2	Principal, in consultation with TCP Director	A new observation replaces the unobservable lesson

- School that is close to hitting a target and would like to request partial credit or an increase of the final result
- School requesting mitigating points because it has non-feeder students in a feeder grade

Circumstances that may qualify for mitigating points:

- Epidemic episode of the flu that resulted in a period of low student attendance
- State policy change in the middle of the school year that resulted in “de-certification” of teachers who were no longer able to teach at the school

		weeks of receiving the observation scores		ratings	
Process concern for surveys or observations	Talk to your principal	Submit a written request for review within 2 weeks of receiving survey results or receiving the observation scores.	TCP Director, in consultation with your principal	A new observation replaces the observation OR survey scores are removed from the overall evaluation (survey score is replaced by principal evaluation score for that component)	

Does your PBCS include retention and/or recruitment awards for hard to staff grades and subjects for either teachers or principals?

Yes No

Please briefly describe:

No, we do not have retention or recruitment awards for hard to staff grades and subjects for either teachers or principals. All Achievement First schools are serving high-needs students.

Does your PBCS offer performance-based awards to "other personnel"? Yes No

If so, how many individuals are eligible? How many received awards?

Yes, all members of a school team are eligible to earn our school-wide bonus. In addition to teachers and principals, this includes operations team members, social workers and deans. In 2012-13, 260 “other personnel” were eligible based on 2011-12 outcomes and 146 (56%) received an award.

Does your TIF-funded project include instructional leader positions/career ladder positions/additional roles & responsibilities for teachers?

Yes No

Do these individuals have release time during the day? Yes No

What are the position titles and how many individuals serve per school? Briefly describe the responsibilities of each position.

While Achievement First does have grade-level chairs, teacher coaches, lead planners, Saturday Academy leaders and other leadership positions for our teachers, this is not part of our TIF-funded project. These roles are paid in a stipend, separate from our PBCS. This is an intentional design because we want to celebrate great teachers who have a significant impact on students, while not requiring them to take on additional responsibilities to receive this recognition.

Are such individuals required to demonstrate effectiveness before being selected to serve in these positions? Yes No

Briefly describe the training and supports available to instructional leaders to enable them to fulfill their role.

These teacher leader roles do require teachers to be effective in the classroom and they receive on-going training and support, but this is outside of our TIF-funded work.

CORE ELEMENT D: DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Please be prepared to present a brief overview of your data management system to the site visit team.

Does your data management system accurately link teachers with relevant student achievement data? Yes No

Briefly explain.

As a network, Achievement First’s data and operations teams have always had strong data integrity practices, and teacher/student links are the foundation for much of the data analysis for the Teacher Career Pathway. If teacher/student links are wrong, teacher evaluations will be inaccurate and unfair. Achievement First’s Team Business Information Systems is responsible for leading schools through initial course and roster set-up in our student data system, Infinite Campus (IC), during school-year readiness, as well as a Student-Teacher Links Review twice per year.

As a part of school-year readiness set-up, school leaders and operations teams assemble the teacher/student links during the course and roster creation process in IC. If teachers and students change classes, operations teams modify the teacher/student links as necessary. Tracking the changes to teacher/student links throughout the school year involves communication between operations teams, school leaders and teachers, who must communicate changing rosters and courses. This is especially relevant for small group Interventions, which often have more frequent

roster changes.

While school leaders and operations team members often have a generally accurate sense of teacher/student links, they do not always have the same nuanced, precise level of understanding as the teachers themselves. Because the integrity of teacher/student links is critical, all teachers also participate in a bi-annual Student-Teacher Links Review process, requiring their sign-off in order to ensure both the accuracy of this high-stakes data and teacher confidence in the evaluation measures. The teacher/student links in Infinite Campus are used as part of the Teacher Career Pathway in two ways: 1) to determine respondents for parent and student surveys; and 2) to analyze each teacher's impact on student achievement outcomes. Therefore, teachers review their teacher/student links in the winter (prior to the determination of survey responders) and again near the end of the school year (to ensure accurate data over the course of the school year for Student Achievement Measures).

Does your data management system use a unique identifier, linked to the state's student identifier system, for all students in participating schools? Yes No (If no, please briefly explain)

No explanation required.

Does your data management system use a unique identifier, linked to the state's educator identifier system, for all educators in participating schools? Yes No (If no, please briefly explain)

No explanation required.

Does your data management system identify the courses offered in the grades and subjects that are assessed for purposes of measuring student growth? Yes No (If no, please briefly explain)

No explanation required.

Does your data system accurately link educators to payroll database(s)? Yes No **How do you ensure this link is accurate?**

Within AF Platinum, Achievement First's customized Talent Management System, each educator has a unique identifier, which is duplicated in HRIS, Achievement First's human capital data system serving as the source of record for all employees for payroll and other personnel purposes. This summer, we are introducing an automated reconciliation process to ensure that AF Platinum and HRIS remain in sync.

Did you have any problems with data quality in processing your initial teacher and principal evaluation ratings? Yes No (If yes, please briefly explain)

While we encountered some small glitches in processing our initial Teacher Career Pathway evaluation ratings in the 2012-13 school year, we were alert for potential anomalies based on our pilot and Year 1 experiences and were able to catch and fix any data quality problems prior to releasing our teacher evaluation ratings. As a result, there was a high degree of reliability in our initial Teacher Career Pathway ratings.

Describe how your data management system has been tested to ensure a high degree of reliability, particularly your verification system to ensure the accuracy of the student rosters associated with any relevant course.

All results from the Teacher Career Pathway (student achievement measures, observations, surveys) are imported from Achievement First's various data management systems into AF Platinum, our customized Talent Management System, to provide school leaders and teachers with one-stop access to the Teacher Career Pathway data and reporting. In order to ensure the reliability of the data in AF Platinum, we use the same unique identifier for each student and for each teacher across all of our data management systems, and upon importing 2011-12 data into AF Platinum, we conducted a manual reconciliation process in order to confirm clean links to the appropriate teacher and student. Additionally, we conducted a manual calculation process in order to check the accuracy of the evaluation scores calculated by AF Platinum. Going forward, we plan to automate these reconciliation and calculation checks to reduce the need for manual processes, while continuing to guarantee a high degree of reliability.

For particular information about how our data management system accurately links teachers with relevant student achievement data, please refer to the explanation at the top of this section.

CORE ELEMENT E: EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

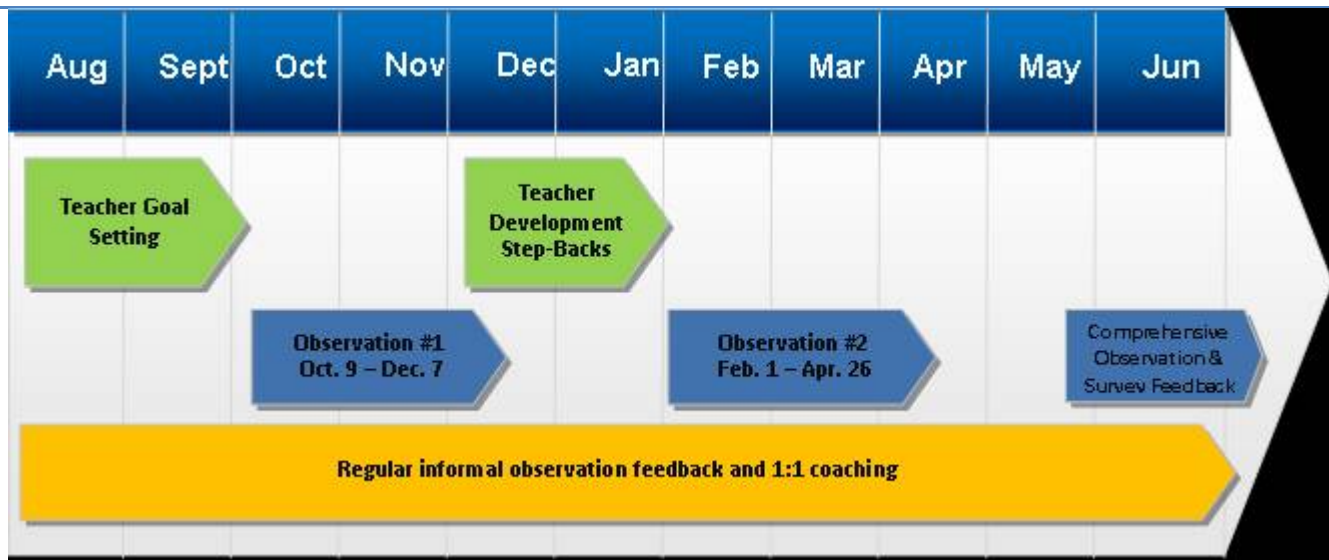
Please submit each unique professional development plan for the current school year as an attachment to this protocol.

Please respond to the following questions for each unique PD plan (i.e. if your TIF project includes multiple LEAs) (copy/paste this chart as needed).

District Name: Achievement First

Briefly describe how you have aligned your PD for the current program year with teacher and principal strengths and weaknesses revealed in your TIF-supported evaluation system.

Teachers: Teacher development and support are at the foundation of Achievement First's Teacher Career Pathway. The Teacher Career Pathway fosters teacher growth by providing nuanced, thoughtful, data-rich feedback from many more sources, and many of the Teacher Career Pathway's evaluation tools (AF Essentials Rubric, feedback surveys) are themselves opportunities for teacher development. The chart below shows the coordination of the Teacher Career Pathway (observations and survey feedback) with individualized teacher professional development opportunities (checkpoints on professional goals and regular informal observation feedback and 1:1 coaching). In addition to the individualized professional development opportunities depicted below, Achievement First also fosters ongoing learning and development for all teachers through frequent, targeted and high-impact group learning opportunities, as detailed in the attached Professional Development Plan. The topics of these group learning opportunities are often based on the results of school or network observation trends.



We individualize learning and development for teachers utilizing strengths and weaknesses revealed in our TIF-supported evaluation in two primary ways. First, teachers work with their coaches on individualized professional learning goals at the beginning of the school year. In August 2012, they utilized the observation and survey data from the 2011-12 school year to determine priority growth areas for the new school year. Second, on an on-going basis, coaches are working with teachers to target the specific short-term coaching areas based on the formal Teacher Career Pathway observations.

Principals: The AF School Report Card defines a vision for school excellence against which we align principal development. The attached Professional Development Plan outlines a monthly scope and sequence that develops and supports our Principal Cohort around the following five “power skills” (or competencies) necessary to achieve excellence on the AF School Report Card: 1) observation and feedback; 2) managing and developing deans; 3) facilitating strong data achievement meetings; 4) planning and facilitating high-quality teacher professional development; and 5) coaching teachers on instructional planning. Additionally, in order to meet individual principal development needs, portions of the Principal Cohort time allows for differentiated focus on “power skills,” and Achievement First’s regional superintendents concentrate their ongoing support of individual principals (regional superintendents are in each of their schools on a bi-weekly basis, at a minimum) on the “power skills” aligned to each principal’s strengths and areas for growth. Based on the data from the Teacher Career Pathway, observation and feedback was the “power skill” where we have spent the most time with our principal cohort in 2012-13.

Briefly describe how you will align your PD for the coming year with teacher and principal strengths and weaknesses revealed in your TIF-supported evaluation system.

We do not anticipate any significant changes in our approach to aligning professional development with teacher and principal evaluations in the

upcoming 2013-14 school year.

If applicable, please briefly describe the role that instructional leaders (such as master teachers) play in providing PD linked to evaluation results.

Stage 4 Distinguished Teachers and Stage 5 Master Teachers may also serve as coaches to provide high-quality, individualized support to every teacher on a weekly basis by employing the following instructional leadership practices: 1) informal observation, feedback and practice; 2) unit and lesson plan feedback; 3) analyzing student work and data; 4) support around both everyday, tactical work and long-term professional learning goals; and 5) targeted, quick walkthroughs to reinforce expectations, celebrate success and recalibrate when needed. Coaches receive regular professional development and training to help them become increasingly effective in their role. Stage 4 Distinguished Teachers and Stage 5 Master Teachers are very intentionally not required to play a coaching role in order to maintain their recognition or the associated rewards.

How do you inform educators of and connect them with professional development options that correlate with their individual needs? Who is responsible for coordinating this?

Achievement First's professional development supports are site-based, on-going and aligned to school and network strategies for increasing student achievement. While Network Support and school leaders are responsible for providing structured supports and opportunities for principals and teachers, respectively, to learn and grow, we also empower principals and teachers to be the primary drivers of their own learning and development through an individualized, annual goal-setting and self-reflection process, which is purely developmental and is not an evaluation component. Achievement First Network Support's Team Leadership Development and regional superintendents are the primary owners of principal development. Principals and deans, along with Achievement First Network Support's Team Teaching and Learning and regional superintendents, are the primary owners of teacher development.