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NEWS BRIEFLY

### **AISD faculty receive \$1 million as program completes trial**

A total of \$1 million was awarded to 410 teachers and principals in the Austin Independent School District Wednesday, marking the end of the district's first year of a pilot program that rewards staff based on skills and student progress.

David Lussier, director of AISD Reach, said the concept for the program began four years ago with the idea of compensating faculty for their work rather than distributing a flat rate according to length of stay at a school. The program, currently in use by nine schools, will eventually extend to all AISD schools, but the pilot program was implemented first in order to work out kinks, Lussier said.

The program's goals include improving staff teaching skills and increasing teacher retention rates, Lussier said. The board wanted to create a "better equilibrium" by balancing school curriculum with a range of subjects and TAKS preparation, he said.

The payout process begins with objectives set by teachers at the beginning of the school year. Progress toward these goals is evaluated at the end of the year. If the principal confirms that the objectives have been met, a payout will be given to the teacher.

The city's one-penny tax to the AISD school district funds the payout, although next year, additional funding will come from a state grant awarded to AISD for its initiative.

The participating nine schools are Barton Hills Elementary, Dobie Middle School, Hart Elementary, Lanier High School, Menchaca Elementary, O. Henry Middle School, Rodriquez Elementary, Sims Elementary and Sunset Valley Elementary. Two more schools will join next year, one of which is Jordan Elementary. The other has not yet been confirmed.

- Ines Min