

School-wide Performance Bonus Program (SPBP) 2008 – 09

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

October 22, 2008

- 1. When must the school complete its voting?** The school must complete its voting and forward the results (including “yes” and “no” vote totals) to both the DOE (tbowman@schools.nyc.gov) and the UFT (mmendel@uft.org) by the close of business **Thursday November 6, 2008**.
- 2. Since we participated last year, are we required to vote again this year?**
Yes. Each school must vote to participate every year and at least 55% of the UFT-represented staff currently at the school this year must vote “yes” in order for the school to participate.
- 3. Will the criteria for determining the bonus be the same as last year?** It will be very similar. However, because the DOE has eliminated Progress Report targets for 08-09, the DOE, in consultation with the UFT, is currently developing targets based on Progress Reports specifically for those schools in the SPBP that will be used to determine bonus recipients. We will discuss this year’s targets more at the informational sessions and later in the school year.
- 4. Will we be penalized if we did not qualify for the bonus last year or be given special consideration if we did qualify last year?** No. Schools begin this year with a completely clean slate and there is no connection at all to last year.
- 5. Our school worked very hard last year and yet we did not qualify for the bonus; what can we do to increase the odds of qualifying for the bonus this year?** The principal should contact your Network Leader and/or your Senior Achievement Facilitator (SAF from the Office of Accountability) to discuss your school’s target and strategies to improve student achievement and qualify for the bonus. You may also contact the UFT District Representative and, if your school has a Teacher Center, the Teacher Center Specialist.
- 6. How was our school chosen to participate in the Program?** All schools that participated in and completed the program last year are being invited to participate again this year. All participating schools were rated “high need” based on the same factors used in creating the progress report peer groups: for high schools, average proficiency ratings for actively enrolled students on 8th grade ELA and math exams; for middle schools, average proficiency ratings for actively enrolled students on 4th grade State ELA and mathematics exams; and, for elementary schools, poverty rate, student demographic characteristics, percent of English Language Learners and Special Education students. A list of

approximately 430 schools was generated using these criteria and about half were randomly selected to be invited to be part of the program.

7. **If our school votes to participate this year, are we committed to the program beyond this one year?** No. The vote by the faculty and approval by the principal for participation is for this year only. If eligible and invited to participate in future years, the faculty must vote again to approve and the principal must give his/her assent. This is the second year of a two year pilot program. The DOE and the UFT will meet at the end of this school year to decide if the program will continue beyond this year and in what form.
8. **Explain what is meant by “55% of the UFT staff must vote “yes” in order to participate in the Program.”** The vote must be approved by 55% of the full-time UFT-represented staff at the school this year, not *only* 55% of those who show up to vote. Therefore, Chapter Leaders need to make every effort to obtain the votes of *all* members working at the school this year.
9. **How is the total amount in the bonus pool determined?** The Compensation Committee will receive an initial pool that is equivalent to \$3,000 per full-time UFT-represented member on the school’s Table of Organization (TO) as of October 31, 2008. Later in the school year, the Compensation Committee will enter in Galaxy the amount from this pool that it has allocated to each member. If the school then meets or exceeds its target (results will be known in the fall of 2009) it qualifies for the *full* bonus and individual employees will receive the amount the Compensation Committee has previously entered. If the school meets at least 75% of its target, members will receive *half* the amount the Compensation Committee indicated (all bonus amounts entered will simply be cut to 50%). If the school does not meet at least 75% of its target, no one will receive a bonus.
10. **Is the Compensation Committee required to provide a bonus to every person on the school’s October 31 Table of Organization?** No. There may be employees on the TO who are not working at the school this year (sabbaticals, leaves, etc.) and the Compensation Committee is under no obligation to award a bonus to them, though it can do so. The school receives \$3,000 for the *presence* of these employees on the TO but the Compensation Committee can distribute the available pool as it sees fit. Additionally, the agreement between the UFT and the DOE states: “the compensation committee shall presume that all UFT-represented staff employed at a school that meets the targets for the bonus have contributed to the school’s achievement to some extent and therefore should share in the bonus.”
11. **Is the Compensation Committee required to give every member \$3,000 and/or the same amount?** No. The Compensation Committee can designate any employee to receive any amount it wishes that employee to receive.

12. **Can employees who are not on the Table of Organization as of October 31st, 2008 receive a share of the bonus?** Yes. As long as the employee is a UFT-represented member, s/he can be added to the distribution list. Last year in most schools a number of members were added, such as those staff members who left or arrived during the school year or who worked part-time. The final list that will be signed and submitted by all members of the Compensation Committee next spring is the “official” list that will be used to distribute funds to individual employees.
13. **Will there be any negative repercussions if we do not receive a bonus?** No. This Program exists independent from any other school accountability measures.
14. **When can the Compensation Committee first log on to the special Galaxy Program for the SPBP and view the Table of Organization and amount of the bonus pool?** We will email you as soon as the October 31 Table of Organization is ready to view and will ask all members of the Compensation Committee to log onto the system at that time. Each member will need a DOE email address (and their own password) to log on.
15. **What if the Compensation Committee cannot agree on the distribution formula for the award?** In order for the school to receive the bonus, the Compensation Committee *must* come to unanimous agreement regarding how to distribute the award. If this does not occur, the award won't be provided to the school. The Compensation Committee has until May 2009 to decide on the distribution of the award.
16. **Are RTR, ATR and or reassigned staff eligible for the bonus?** Yes. Even if a staff member does not appear on the October 31 Table of Organization, the Compensation Committee can add them to the distribution list regardless of their status, as long as they are a UFT-represented employee. It is up to the Compensation Committee alone to determine if these and other employees receive a share of the bonus.
17. **Can the award be donated back to the school?** Individual UFT members will be the recipients of the awards and they may choose to use the awards as they see fit.
18. **Is a U-rated staff member excluded from the bonus?** No. The only requirement to receive a share of the bonus is that the employee be a UFT-represented staff member.
19. **In sum, can the Compensation Committee choose to distribute the award in any way it deems appropriate?** No, the Compensation Committee may not distribute the award based on seniority. Otherwise, although the total bonus pool available to the Compensation Committee will be based on the number of

full-time UFT-members on the school's Table of Organization as of October 31, the *percentage* of the school award that each employee receives is determined by the Compensation Committee. Compensation Committees may elect to award each member equally, to differentiate by title, or to differentiate by individual, as long as all the recipients are UFT-represented employees.

- 20. If a staff member moves to another school next year, will they still receive the award?** Yes. They will receive the award at whatever level the Compensation Committee determines and it will appear in their paycheck next fall.
- 21. If an employee retires or leaves the system altogether, will s/he still receive his/her bonus share?** Yes. Their bonus check will be held in Check Management on 65 Court Street for two weeks after the bonus payments appear in paychecks, after which the check will be mailed to the employee's last known address.
- 22. Can employees with split assignments or who are part-time be included for purposes of calculating the award?** They won't be taken into account in determining the total pool of money available to the school to distribute, but the Compensation Committee can elect to make an award to them.
- 23. Can the Compensation Committee choose to give a share of the bonus to a non-UFT employee, like a Parent Coordinator?** No. All bonus recipients must be UFT-represented.
- 24. Will Principals and Assistant Principals receive a bonus if the school meets or exceeds its target?** Yes. If UFT-represented members qualify for the bonus due to the school meeting or exceeding its target, Principals and Assistant Principals will also receive a bonus. However, the Compensation Committee will not be involved in determining the amount of this bonus, which is instead determined by the DOE in consultation with the CSA. (Note that this bonus is governed by a completely separate agreement between the DOE and the CSA.)
- 25. How will employees actually receive their share of the bonus?** Employees will receive their share of the bonus either in a separate check or in their regular paycheck some time during the fall of 2009.
- 26. How is the program funded?** This year, the program is funded entirely using public dollars.

