

December 15, 2017

**TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:**

**SUBJECT: Texas Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate Incentive Program - State Exam Fee Subsidies for the 2017-2018 School Year**

The Texas Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB) Incentive Program was enacted in 1993 by the 73<sup>rd</sup> Texas Legislature to emphasize the state's commitment to high academic performance. This initiative, coupled with local education agencies (LEAs) efforts to ensure student participation, drove impressive growth in AP and IB academic programs across Texas. The Texas AP/IB Incentive Program historically funded exam subsidies for low-income students taking AP or IB exams each school year at a rate of \$30 per eligible public-school student.

Given the increased number of students accessing exams and changes in available state funding, TEA will no longer be able to support test fees at the rate of \$30 per eligible student exam. **Beginning in the 2017-18 school year, the state subsidy provided through the AP/IB Incentive Program will decrease from \$30 to \$24 per AP or IB exam taken by eligible students.** TEA may increase the subsidy fee for each eligible exam to the highest amount possible if additional funding becomes available. However, at this time, districts should plan accordingly for the decreased state subsidy amount.

Further, the state subsidy was historically augmented by the U.S. Department of Education's AP Test Fee Grant Program, which provided an additional \$16 for each AP exam, \$65 for each AP Capstone exam, and \$65 for each IB exam taken by an eligible student. With the passage of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the AP Test Fee Grant Program was not renewed, removing the federal exam subsidy portion for eligible students. To ensure that districts and students were not adversely affected during the first year of the change, TEA used its Title IV state-level funds to offset the gap in funding during the 2016-17 school year to continue supporting eligible students to the greatest extent possible. **Beginning in the 2017-18 school year, the agency will not be able to fill the federal gap in funding so the \$16-\$65-dollar subsidies will not continue.** Districts may allocate local ESSA funds for this purpose, as there are no longer federal funds set aside specifically earmarked for this purpose. LEAs should consider locating other funds to offset these funding gaps.

To ensure low-income students are not adversely affected by legislative changes, TEA recommends that LEAs use part of their Title IV funds for exam subsidies for low-income students, as was intended by the changes made to ESSA (please see attached [Recommended use of ESSA Funds: AP and IB Exam Fee Reimbursements](#)). Annual exam costs vary depending on the level of exam subsidies that schools and districts offer and the number of eligible students taking exams. LEAs should consult their AP or IB coordinators for data on the number of eligible test-takers from year to year. If districts and schools choose to offset the decrease in state subsidy amounts, they should plan on funding \$6 per exam per eligible student.

In addition, if districts and schools choose to fully replace the federal exam subsidy amount, they should plan on the following amounts:

- \$16 for each eligible AP exam
- \$65 for each eligible AP Capstone exam
- \$65 for each eligible IB exam

TEA is committed to ensuring AP and IB exams remain affordable to low-income students and recommends that LEAs determine whether they have available funding to offset the decreased subsidy amount. For information or assistance, please contact Lauren Dwiggin at [AP-IB@tea.texas.gov](mailto:AP-IB@tea.texas.gov).

Sincerely,

Lily Laux, Executive Director  
School Programs

Attachments:

[Recommended use of ESSA Funds: AP and IB Exam Fee Reimbursements](#)