

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Texas High Performance Schools Consortium

Posted May 23, 2012

Eligibility

Question 1.1: Is there an eligibility list for participation in this program?

No, there is not an eligibility list. Eligibility criteria are outlined in the “Eligibility for Participation” section of the Program Guidelines.

Question 1.2: Can districts submit joint applications with other districts?

No. Each eligible district wishing to participate must submit its own application.

Question 1.3: Can an eligible district apply if some of its campuses are ineligible?

In its application, a district must designate which campuses will participate in the consortium, should the district be selected. An applicant district is not required to include all campuses and may include only campuses that meet the outlined eligibility requirements.

Question 1.4: Can you clarify the distinction between a district applying, as opposed to one campus applying with respect to the difference in application fee and responsibilities?

Districts may apply on behalf of one or more of their eligible campuses. Campuses are not eligible to apply independently. The application fee is \$500 for each district applicant, regardless of the number of participating campuses.

Expectations of Participating Districts

Question 2.1: What are the requirements and expectations of the selected districts?

The requirements and expectations of selected districts are outlined in the Program Guidelines for the Request for Application (RFA) to Participate in the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium, as well as in Texas Education Code (TEC) §7.0561 and Texas Administrative Code §102.1201. Generally-speaking, selected districts are expected to attend consortium meetings and collaborate on the development and subsequent implementation of a legislative proposal for submission to the Governor and legislature.

Question 2.2: What is the project period?

Applicant districts are expected, at a minimum, to participate in the Consortium from the date of district selection, scheduled for August 2012, through the second statutory reporting deadline (December 2014). The legislation authorizing the Consortium expires in January 2018.

Question 2.3: Will districts need to reapply each year, and, if so, may we modify the campuses participating at reapplication?

Currently, there are no plans for requiring districts to reapply each year. Requests to change participating campuses will be subject to Commissioner's approval and will be limited by statutory requirements to maintain diverse representation.

Application Requirements

Question 3.1: Can you provide clarification on the requirement that a school district or its participating campus(es) have received either national, statewide, or regional public acknowledgement? What are acceptable acknowledgements? Is there a limitation on the award date of the public recognition?

The requirement for national, state, or regional public acknowledgement should conform to the following specifications:

- Be awarded by an organization that relies on expertise in the education field
- Reflect district or campus accomplishments for academic excellence or innovative practices in the consortium principles

There is no comprehensive list of such awards or public acknowledgements. This requirement was written broadly in order to allow a district to demonstrate its experience and expertise with the work to be performed by the consortium; however, examples of such awards or public acknowledgements may include, **but are not limited to:**

- Broad Prize
 - Awarded each year to honor urban school districts that demonstrate the greatest overall performance and improvement in student achievement that reduces achievement gaps among low-income and minority students
- Texas Business and Education Coalition Honor Roll Middle and High Schools
 - TBEC Honor Roll schools must have performed at a high level of achievement for at least three consecutive years on all subjects tested
- Sylva Charp Award for District Innovation in Technology
 - International Society for Technology in Education recognizes a school district nationwide that has shown effectiveness and innovation in the application of technology district-wide
- Magma award by American School Journal
 - The Magma Awards recognize districts across the country for outstanding programs that advance student learning and encourage community involvement in schools
- Quality Texas Foundation's Award for Performance Excellence
 - Using the Malcolm Baldrige criteria for excellence in education, the Quality Texas Foundation reviews and evaluates Texas school districts, at their request, to identify performance excellence
- Blue Ribbon School designation

There is no limitation on the award date for any public recognition the applicant wishes to include. However, acknowledgements reflecting recent achievements are stronger evidence of the applicant's suitability for participation in the consortium.

Question 3.2: Are curricular goals limited to the core content areas?

Neither legislation nor rule limits curricular goals to the core content areas.

Question 3.3: Are the learning outcomes for the curricular goals to be based on the high priority learning standards a district has worked on, or are they to be based on the next generation learning standards described in section 2a of the program guidelines?

Curricular goals recommended by the applicant to be considered for inclusion in Consortium's legislative proposal should be grounded in research and based on the applicant's experience and outcomes. Curricular goals may address both high priority learning standards as well as next-generation learning standards.

Exemptions

Question 4.1: Please clarify the request and receipt of assessment and accountability waivers for Consortium participants.

Each applicant's plan must include a description of any waiver(s) of existing prohibitions, requirements, or restrictions that the district believes is needed in order to successfully implement innovative practices that address those consortium principles designed to form the basis for a next-generation assessment and accountability system. The Consortium will consider these waiver recommendations for inclusion in the legislative proposal to be presented to the legislature in December 2012.

Funding

Question 5.1: Will selected districts receive grant funding for participating in the Consortium?

The statute creating the Consortium was not designed to provide funding to districts. However, the statute does allow districts to accept gifts, grants, or donations from any source, including a private or public entity.

Question 5.2: Will smaller districts be required to pay the same amount of fees to participate as larger districts?

All districts must pay the \$500 application fee to submit an application. In addition, districts that are selected to participate in the consortium will be required to pay a participation fee of from \$2,500 to \$10,000 (minus the application fee) depending upon size factors such as the number of campuses participating.