

September 11, 2025

Prekindergarten Eligibility

1. Who is considered a teacher under the new prekindergarten eligibility criterion? Are the children of paraprofessionals, classroom assistants, and instructional coaches eligible?

A classroom teacher is an educator who is employed by a school district and who, not less than an average of four hours each day, teaches in an academic instructional setting or a career and technology instructional setting. The term does not include a teacher's aide or a full-time administrator [Texas Education Code (TEC), §5.001].

2. Are the children of teachers eligible for prekindergarten in the district where the teacher/parent teaches or the district where the teacher/parent lives?

The child of a classroom teacher who works at a school in a school district that offers prekindergarten is eligible for prekindergarten in the district where the teacher/parent is employed.

3. Are three-year-old children of teachers eligible for prekindergarten, or is eligibility limited to four-year-old children?

School systems are permitted but not required to offer prekindergarten for three-year-old children. While prekindergarten eligibility criteria apply to children who are at least three years of age, prekindergarten 3 programs are not required, and offering prekindergarten to eligible three-year-olds remains a local school system decision.

4. When will children of classroom teachers first be eligible for free prekindergarten?

The new prekindergarten eligibility criterion for the children of classroom teachers applies beginning with the 2025-2026 school year.

5. Can a school district request a waiver of the requirement to offer free prekindergarten to children of classroom teachers if a district offers prekindergarten but does not have available seats?

The commissioner of education does not have the authority to waive requirements relating to prekindergarten programs under TEC, Chapter 29, Subchapter E [TEC, §7.056(e)(3)(I)].

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Reading and Math Academies Stipends

1). What is the protocol or expectation for stipends if Texas Reading Academies learners spend time revising and resubmitting artifacts outside of contract hours? Is time spent completing artifacts eligible for a stipend? If so, how many hours are allocated per artifact, since the facilitator guides state that artifacts are not completed during sessions?

Learners may be allotted up to **three hours of stipend-eligible time** for artifact submission work completed outside of contract hours with district approval. This time allotment encompasses both artifacts (1.5 hours per artifact) and includes all components: draft development, draft submission, draft revisions (if needed), final submission, and any resubmissions should a learner not pass on the first attempt.

2. Are learners eligible for stipends if they attend make-up sessions outside of contract hours? For example, if a participant misses an on-contract session and chooses to attend a make-up session off-contract, does that trigger stipend eligibility?

Learners must receive district approval to attend the Texas Reading Academies or Mathematics Achievement Academies outside of contract hours, and this includes make-up sessions. Any academy-related learning completed off-contract requires district approval in order to qualify for a stipend.

3. Where can legislative guidance on the use of “trade days” be found?

TEA’s guidance does not explicitly address the use of trade days as an alternative to stipends. Districts should ensure compliance by either:

- Scheduling training during contract hours, or
- Providing the required stipend if training occurs outside those hours.

Some districts may consider using trade days (i.e., exchanging a professional development day for a workday later in the year). Because implementation practices vary, districts should consult their local legal counsel to confirm whether this approach meets statutory requirements.

4. Are teachers who are approved by the district to attend, but who are not required under HB 3, stipend-eligible?

For the Texas Reading Academies, stipends are required for classroom teachers in grades K–3 who are mandated and approved to attend outside of contract hours. In addition, districts may choose to provide stipends for teachers in grade levels above 3rd grade who are approved to attend outside of contract hours, including other classroom teachers as defined in TEC §5.001(2), provided that funds have been appropriated for that purpose, or if the district chooses to fund the stipends directly.

5. What are the stipend requirements for attending the Mathematics Achievement Academies?

Beginning with academies starting after September 1, 2025, all districts must implement stipend provisions in alignment with HB 2. For the Mathematics Achievement Academies, a classroom teacher who attends is entitled to receive a stipend from the school district, regardless of the grade level they teach, provided they have been directed or received district approval to attend outside of contract hours.

6. If a district does not approve a teacher’s attendance outside of contract hours, is a stipend still required?

No. Classroom teachers must request and receive district approval to attend the Texas Reading Academies or Mathematics Achievement Academies outside of contract hours. If a teacher does not receive prior approval, they

are not eligible for a stipend.

7. Will the Mathematics Achievement Academies be offered during contract hours, or only in the summer?

Further details regarding the HB 2 K–3 Mathematics Achievement Academies and Grades 4–5 Mathematics Achievement Academies Deep Dives will be released in upcoming TEA guidance.

8. Are stipends now paid from district funds?

Districts are responsible for stipend disbursement and may utilize Early Education Allotment (EEA) funds under TEC §48.108 for this purpose, as well as other available funds.