

Chapter 153. School District Personnel

Subchapter BB. Commissioner's Rules Concerning Professional Development

§153.1011. Mentor Program Allotment.

- (a) Definitions. The following words and terms, when used in this section, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.
- (1) Beginning teacher--A classroom teacher in Texas who has less than two years of teaching experience in the subject or grade level to which the teacher is assigned.
 - (2) Classroom teacher--An educator who is employed by a school district in Texas and who, not less than an average of four hours each day, teaches in an academic instructional setting or a career and technical instructional setting. The term does not include a teacher's aide or a full-time administrator. For purposes of this section, a classroom teacher includes an educator who may not yet hold a certificate issued under Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 21, Subchapter B.
 - (3) Mentor teacher--An individual who serves or has served as a teacher in Texas who provides effective support to help beginning teachers successfully transition into the teaching assignment. The term does not include an appraiser as defined by TEC, §21.351.
 - (4) School district--For the purposes of this section, the definition of school district includes open-enrollment charter schools.
 - (5) Teacher--A superintendent, principal, supervisor, classroom teacher, school counselor, or other school district employee who provides direct instructional support to other teachers.
 - (6) Teacher of record--An educator who is employed by a school or district and who teaches in an academic instructional setting or a career and technical instructional setting and is responsible for evaluating student achievement and assigning grades.
- (b) Program requirements. In order for a district mentor program to receive funds through the mentor program allotment, as described in TEC, §48.114, the program must be approved by the commissioner of education using the application and approval process described in subsection (c) of this section. To be approved by the commissioner, district mentor programs must comply with TEC, §21.458, and commit to meet the following requirements.
- (1) Mentor selection. A district must:
 - (A) prioritize the selection of current classroom teachers as mentor teachers using clear selection criteria, protocols, and hiring processes that align with requirements of this paragraph and TEC, §21.458, and retain documentation of such processes locally; and
 - (B) select mentor teachers who:
 - (i) complete a research-based mentor and induction training program approved by the commissioner;
 - (ii) complete a mentor training program provided by the district;
 - (iii) have at least three complete years of teaching experience with a superior record of assisting students, as a whole, in achieving improvement in student performance. Districts may use the master, exemplary, or recognized designations under TEC, §21.3521, to fulfill this requirement;
 - (iv) demonstrate interpersonal skills, instructional effectiveness, and leadership skills;
 - (v) have expertise, to the extent practicable, in effective instructional practices specifically for the grade levels and subjects to which the beginning teacher is assigned; and

- (vi) have experience as a classroom teacher in the past three years.
- (2) Mentor assignment. School districts must agree to assign no more than:
 - (A) two beginning teachers to a mentor who serves as a teacher of record for, on average, four or more hours per instructional day;
 - (B) four beginning teachers to a mentor who serves as a teacher of record for, on average, less than four hours per instructional day; or
 - (C) fifteen beginning teachers to an individual who serves as a full-time mentor.
- (3) District mentor training program. A school district must:
 - (A) provide training to mentor teachers and any appropriate district and campus employees, including principals, assistant principals, and instructional coaches, who work with a beginning teacher or supervise a beginning teacher;
 - (B) ensure that mentor teachers and any appropriate district and campus employees are trained before the beginning of the school year;
 - (C) provide supplemental training that includes best mentorship practices to mentor teachers and any appropriate district and campus employees throughout the school year, minimally once per semester; and
 - (D) provide training for a mentor assigned to a beginning teacher who is hired after the beginning of the school year by the 45th day of employment of the beginning teacher.
- (4) District roles and responsibilities. A school district must designate a specific time during the regularly contracted school day for meetings between mentor teachers and the beginning teachers they mentor, which must abide by the mentor and beginning teachers' entitled planning and preparation requirements in TEC, §21.404, and the provisions of paragraph (5)(A) of this subsection.
- (5) Meetings between mentors and beginning teachers. A mentor teacher must:
 - (A) meet with each beginning teacher assigned to the mentor not less than 12 hours each semester, with observations of the mentor teacher or other highly effective teachers by the beginning teacher being mentored or observations of the beginning teacher being mentored by the mentor teacher counting toward the 12 hours each semester; and
 - (B) address the following topics in mentoring sessions with the beginning teacher being mentored:
 - (i) orientation to the context, policies, and practices of the school district, including:
 - (I) campus-wide student culture routines;
 - (II) district and campus teacher evaluation systems;
 - (III) campus curriculum and curricular resources, including formative and summative assessments; and
 - (IV) campus policies and practices related to lesson planning or lesson internalization;
 - (ii) data-driven instructional practices;
 - (iii) specific instructional coaching cycles, including coaching regarding conferences between parents and the beginning teacher;
 - (iv) professional development; and
 - (v) professional expectations.
- (c) Application approval process. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) will provide an application and approval process for school districts to apply for mentor program allotment funding. Funding will be

limited based on availability of funds. The application shall address the requirements of TEC, §21.458, and include:

- (1) the timeline for application and approval;
 - (2) approval criteria, including the minimum requirements necessary for an application to be eligible for approval; and
 - (3) criteria used to determine which districts would be eligible for funding.
- (d) Ongoing verification of compliance with program requirements.
- (1) Each year, participating districts will be required to submit or participate in a verification of compliance with program requirements through a process to be described in the application form. The verification of compliance will include:
 - (A) an annual compliance report, submitted by the district, attesting to compliance with authorizing statute and commissioner rule. The report is to include the number of beginning teachers for whom the district used funds received under TEC, §48.114; and
 - (B) surveys administered not more than twice yearly that may include the district's beginning teachers, mentor teachers, and any appropriate district and campus employees who work with beginning teachers for whom funds were used under TEC, §48.114. The surveys will be used to gather data on program implementation and teacher perceptions.
 - (2) Failure to comply with TEC, §21.458, and this section after receiving an allotment may result in TEA rescinding eligibility of a district's current or future mentor program allotment funding.
- (e) Allowable expenditures. Mentor program allotment funds may only be used for the following:
- (1) mentor teacher stipends;
 - (2) release time for mentor teachers and beginning teachers limited to activities in accordance with this section; and
 - (3) mentoring support through providers of mentor training.
- (f) District mentor program review. School districts awarded mentor program allotment funds must agree to submit all information requested by TEA through periodic activity/progress reports, which will occur at least once per year. Reports will be due no later than 45 calendar days after receipt of the information request and must contain all requested information in the format prescribed by the commissioner.
- (g) Final decisions. Commissioner decisions regarding eligibility for mentor program allotment funds are final and appeals to the commissioner regarding such decisions will not be considered.

Statutory Authority: The provisions of this §153.1011 issued under the Texas Education Code, §21.458 and §48.114.

Source: The provisions of this §153.1011 adopted to be effective June 28, 2020, 45 TexReg 4192; amended to be effective July 20, 2021, 46 TexReg 4301; amended to be effective February 6, 2024, 49 TexReg 545.

§153.1013. Suicide Prevention Training.

- (a) All school districts and open-enrollment charter schools shall provide suicide prevention training as required by the Texas Education Code (TEC), §21.451(d), to all new school district and open-enrollment charter school educators as a part of new employee orientation during the 2016-2017 school year.
- (b) Each subsequent school year, school districts and open-enrollment charter schools shall provide suicide prevention training as required by the TEC, §21.451(d), to all new school district and open-enrollment charter school educators as a part of new employee orientation.
- (c) All school districts and open-enrollment charter schools shall provide suicide prevention training as required by the TEC, §21.451(d), to all currently employed school district and open-enrollment charter school educators on or by September 30, 2016.

- (d) Suicide prevention training that is required by the TEC, §21.451(d), and was provided to existing educators by a school district or open-enrollment charter school on or after September 1, 2013, may be used to meet the requirements of this section if the training program is on the recommended best practice-based list maintained by the Department of State Health Services (DSHS), in coordination with the Texas Education Agency (TEA), or is an online program that meets the TEA guidelines for independent review.
- (e) In accordance with the Health and Safety Code, §161.325, school districts shall maintain records that include the name of each educator who participated in the suicide prevention training.
- (f) Open-enrollment charter schools are encouraged to maintain suicide prevention training records that include the name of each educator who participated in the suicide prevention training.

Statutory Authority: The provisions of this §153.1013 issued under the Texas Education Code, §21.451(d).

Source: The provisions of this §153.1013 adopted to be effective April 17, 2016, 41 TexReg 2748.