

Mentor Program Allotment Guidelines

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Mentor Program Allotment At a Glance

Authorizing Legislation

House Bill 3 (HB 3), passed by the 86th Texas Legislature in 2019, amended statute that previously existed on new teacher mentoring and created the Mentor Program Allotment (MPA).

The Mentor Program Allotment (MPA) is a new, optional program for LEAs and open-enrollment charter schools. If LEAs and open-enrollment charter schools choose to follow the best practices in TEC [§48.114](#), TEC [§21.458](#) and proposed new 19 TAC [§153.1011](#), they could qualify for MPA funds. Please see the Application and Review Process sections of this document for more information.

Purpose of Program

The MPA provides LEAs and open-enrollment charter schools the opportunity to build or sustain beginning teacher mentor programs with the primary goals of increasing beginning teacher retention and effectiveness.

Eligible Applicants

Texas LEAs and open-enrollment charter schools who are committed to meeting the requirements in TEC §21.458, TEC §48.114, and proposed new 19 TAC §153.1011 are eligible applicants. The term “LEA” in this document includes both districts and open-enrollment charter schools.

Application Requirements

There will be an annual application window for the MPA. In the MPA application, LEAs must provide attestations or rationale statements indicating how the LEA will comply with TEC §48.114 (Appendix C), TEC §21.458 (Appendix D) and the proposed new 19 TAC §153.1011 (Appendix E) to be effective starting June 21, 2020.

Where and By When to Submit the Application

To apply for MPA funding for the 2020-21 school year, LEAs must submit an application through [Qualtrics](#) by 5:00 p.m. (CST) on June 8, 2020. LEAs can download application documents at tea.texas.gov/MPA.

Program Contact

Please contact MPA@texas.tea.gov with any questions related to the Mentor Program Allotment.

Timeline

There will be an annual application window, and TEA will post similar timelines for each school year.

Application Timeline	
April 20, 2020	MPA application window opens, and LEAs may apply.
June 8, 2020	MPA applications due by 5:00 p.m. (CST).
Early July, 2020	TEA notifies LEAs of MPA application approval.
September 2020	MPA funding begins flowing to LEAs for the 2020-21 school year.
SY 2020-21	LEAs implement mentor programs during the 2020-21 school year.
Summer 2021	Deadline for LEAs to submit end-of-year compliance report.
September 2021	Funding is reconciled during September settle-up.
Fall 2020	Application window opens for school year 2021-22.

Definition of Beginning Teachers

If awarded an allotment, LEAs may use those funds to implement a program for classroom teachers who have less than two years of teaching experience in the subject or grade level to which the teacher is assigned. Please see the definition of terms in Appendix A and TEC §21.458 in Appendix D.

LEA and Campus Implementation

Participating LEAs have the option to use the MPA funds to implement a mentor program at all schools or at a subset of schools within the LEA. If an LEA opts to implement the mentor program at a subset of schools, the LEA must indicate on the application on which campuses it intends to use MPA funds. For example, an LEA may choose to pilot a new mentoring program that meets the requirements of MPA on only its highest-needs campuses. Or, another LEA that anticipates it will hit the funding cap for MPA (\$99,000, see the funding section for more information), may choose to use MPA funds on a subset of campuses.

If an LEA chooses to use MPA funds on only some of its campuses, the average percentage of economically disadvantaged students across that subset of campuses will be used when assigning priority points. In this case, an LEA must complete a **Campus Implementation List (Attachment C)**. See below for more information on priority points.

Priority Point Assignment

If LEA interest and eligibility exceeds the state funding amount of \$3 million, priority points will be assigned based on LEA need. Priority will be given based on three factors, using the most recent data TEA has available: (1) the LEA’s size based on student enrollment, (2) the LEA’s rural status, and (3) the percentage of the LEA’s students qualifying as economically disadvantaged. There are a few cases in which an LEA has no reported data on economically disadvantaged students. In these instances, TEA will assign the LEA the point value of the state’s economically disadvantaged student average. The [LEA Priority Point List](#) shows the points available for each LEA.

Priority Points		
LEA’s Student Enrollment	LEA’s Rural Status *	LEA’s Percentage of Students that are Economically Disadvantaged **
<1,599 = 7 points 1,600-2,999 = 6 points 3,000-4,999 = 5 points 5,000-9,999 = 4 points 10,000-24,999 = 3 points 25,000-49,999 = 2 points 50,000 and over = 1 points	LEAs that qualify as rural = 5 points LEAs that do not qualify as rural = 0 points	0.1 point for each percentage point of the LEA’s average of economically disadvantaged students For example, 5.47 points would be assigned to an LEA with an average economically disadvantaged student population of 54.7%.
1 to 7 points	0 or 5 points	0 to 10 points

** See appendix for definitions of rural status.*

*** TEA will average the percentage of economically disadvantaged student demographics from the schools listed on Attachment C of the application if the applying LEA will only use MPA on a subset of campuses within the LEA.*

Funding

Approved LEAs will be funded \$1,800 for each beginning teacher who participates in a mentor program and whose mentor teacher meets the requirements of TEC §48.114, TEC §21.458 and proposed new 19 TAC §153.1011. The allotment may be used for mentor stipends, scheduled release time for mentoring activities, and mentor training. Total funding per LEA may not exceed \$99,000 with a maximum number of 55 beginning teachers per LEA. In the application, LEAs will submit how many beginning teachers it anticipates having in the 2020-21 school year. Funding will begin in the 2020-21 school year and interested LEAs may apply for the allotment annually.

Funding is intended to reduce LEAs costs for building or sustaining effective research-based beginning teacher mentor programs. LEAs may consider other sources of funding, such as Title II A or School Improvement Grants, to further support their mentor program goals and implementation. When considering other sources of funds, LEAs must abide by the relevant supplement, not supplant rules for each source of funds.

Retired Teachers as Mentors

LEAs may choose to hire retired teachers to mentor beginning teachers. However, beginning teachers mentored by retired teachers would not be eligible for funding through the Mentor Program Allotment.

Commissioner-Approved Mentor & Induction Training Programs

As stated in TEC §21.458, mentor teachers must complete a research-based mentor and induction training program approved by the commissioner. This training program could be one that was created internally by an LEA (i.e., by LEA staff) or developed externally (e.g., by an education service center or vendor). Regardless of which entity created the research-based mentor and induction training program, it will require commissioner approval through the MPA application.

TEA has previously approved two external providers of mentor and induction training as part of the School Improvement Provider vetting process: The New Teacher Center and the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching. LEAs that use either of these two providers for mentor and induction training must still complete the full MPA application and would likely want to collaborate with these entities on relevant parts of the application.

Organizations looking to join TEA's list of commissioner-approved, research-based mentor and induction training programs may visit TEA's MPA website in late spring 2020 for more information on the approval process.

Application and Review Process

Application Overview

In the MPA application, LEAs will describe how they will abide by the requirements of TEC §21.458, TEC §48.114, and proposed new 19 TAC §153.1011. LEAs may reapply for MPA funds yearly.

The following parts of the application are due by 5:00 p.m. (CST) on June 8, 2020.

Part	Title	Document	Directions
Part I	Application	Attachment A (PDF)	Complete and upload Attachment A to Qualtrics.
Part II	Scope & Sequence	Attachment B (Word document)	Complete and upload Attachment B to Qualtrics.
Part III	*Campus Implementation List	Attachment C (Excel document)	*Only required for LEAs intending to implement MPA on a subset of campuses: Complete and upload Attachment C to Qualtrics.
Part IV	Qualtrics	Qualtrics Link	LEAs will use this link to answer a few questions and upload the required attachments.

Application Steps

LEAs interested in submitting an MPA application will follow the steps below.

- Step 1: Download attachments for parts I-III at tea.texas.gov/MPA.
- Step 2: Complete parts I-III of the application and previews the Qualtrics questions.
- Step 3: Respond to the questions in [Qualtrics](#) and uploads necessary attachments.

Review & Scoring Process

The MPA application will be reviewed using a criterion scoring process, based on requirements in both statute and proposed rule. Before completing an application, LEAs are encouraged to consult the Scoring Guide, found on the MPA website, for specific item requirements and examples of content LEAs may include in their responses.

For each item scored, an LEA will receive zero points for a response that is either incomplete or does not meet requirements. One point will be awarded for a response that is complete and meets requirements. To be considered for funding, the applying LEA must score a total of 16 out of the possible 16 points.

Compliance Reporting

LEAs will submit an end-of-year compliance report annually. In this report, LEAs must assure that they have met all the requirements of TEC §21.458, TEC §48.114, and TAC §153.1011. To reconcile funding, LEAs will also be asked to indicate the final number of beginning teachers that were matched with a mentor teacher who met the requirements of the MPA.

Additionally, the LEA must administer an end-of-year survey, provided by TEA, to beginning teachers and mentor teachers. The survey will be used as part of the LEA's annual compliance report and will include questions related to MPA requirements, along with the mentor and beginning teachers' perceptions of the LEA's mentor program. The LEA must ensure a high completion rate for this survey.

Appendix

Appendix A: Definition of Terms

Beginning Teacher: A new 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.

Classroom Teacher: 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.

Rural Status: LEAs categorized as a rural type by TEA with fewer than 5,000 enrolled students or LEAs categorized as rural by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) with fewer than 5,000 enrolled students. This definition of rural is used to calculate priority points. A List of districts qualifying as rural can be found on the [LEA Priority Point List](#).

Mentor Teacher: A classroom teacher in Texas who provides effective support to help beginning teachers successfully transition into the teaching assignment.

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.

Appendix B: Texas Teach Like a Champion Online (Free Resource)

Texas TLAC Online Overview

TEA offers a free, optional resource for all educators in Texas. Texas TLAC Online is available at no cost to all to educators and education students in Texas. Texas TLAC Online may provide mentor and beginning teachers opportunities to observe specific teaching techniques being modeled and how to practice the technique. Through Texas TLAC Online, mentor teachers and beginning teachers can video record their teaching to share and review with one another.

Texas TLAC Online provides 24 self-study modules to accelerate teachers' mastery of key Teach Like a Champion techniques. Each 15-minute module provides:

- A brief description of the technique;
- Analysis of the technique through classroom video;
- Opportunities to record oneself engaged in a carefully designed practice; and
- The option to send one's final practice to a mentor, coach, or peer for feedback.

Leveraging Texas TLAC Online in Mentoring Programs

The following list provides a few optional ways in which LEAs could leverage Texas TLAC Online in its beginning teacher mentor program.

- **Mentor Training:** LEAs can train mentor teachers on how to use Texas TLAC Online with beginning teachers during their summer training session. LEAs may also choose to revisit how this tool has been used during its follow-up training throughout the school year.
- **Beginning Teacher Induction:** LEAs can preview this resource with beginning teachers during their induction meetings.
- **Mentor Coaching:** LEAs can encourage mentor teachers to use this resource as a coaching tool.
- **Self-Directed Professional Learning:** TLAC Online may be used as a resource for the mentor and beginning teachers who seek to direct their own professional development.

It's free to sign up and access the resources available at texastlaonline.org/. Please contact support@TexasTLAConline.org with questions specific to this resource.

Appendix C: Texas Education Code §48.114, Mentor Program Allotment

Sec. [48.114](#). MENTOR PROGRAM ALLOTMENT. (a) A school district that has implemented a mentoring program for classroom teachers who have less than two years of teaching experience under Section 21.458 is entitled to an allotment as determined under Subsection (b) to fund the mentoring program and to provide stipends for mentor teachers.

(b) The commissioner shall adopt a formula to determine the amount to which each district described by Subsection (a) is entitled.

(c) Funding provided to districts under this section may be used only for providing:

- (1) mentor teacher stipends;
- (2) scheduled release time for mentor teachers and the classroom teachers to whom they are assigned for meeting and engaging in mentoring activities; and
- (3) mentoring support through providers of mentor training.

Added by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 943 (H.B. [3](#)), Sec. 1.031, eff. September 1, 2019.

Appendix D: Texas Education Code §21.458, Mentors

Sec. [21.458](#). MENTORS. (a) Each school district may assign a mentor teacher to each classroom teacher who has less than two years of teaching experience in the subject or grade level to which the teacher is assigned. A teacher assigned as a mentor must:

- (1) to the extent practicable, teach in the same school;
- (2) to the extent practicable, teach the same subject or grade level, as applicable; and
- (3) meet the qualifications prescribed by commissioner rules adopted under Subsection

(b).

(a-1) To be assigned as a mentor, a teacher must agree to serve as a mentor teacher for at least one school year. The assignment must begin not later than the 30th day of employment of the classroom teacher to whom the mentor teacher is assigned. A district must agree to assign a mentor to a new classroom teacher for at least two school years.

(b) The commissioner shall adopt rules necessary to administer this section, including rules concerning the duties and qualifications of a teacher who serves as a mentor and the number of classroom teachers that may be assigned to a mentor. The rules concerning qualifications must require that to serve as a mentor a teacher must:

- (1) complete a research-based mentor and induction training program approved by the commissioner;
- (2) complete a mentor training program provided by the district;
- (3) 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; and
- (4) demonstrate interpersonal skills, instructional effectiveness, and leadership skills.

(b-1) A school district must provide training to mentor teachers and any appropriate district and campus employees who work with the classroom teacher or supervise the classroom teacher. The training must be completed by the mentor teacher and the district and campus employees before the beginning of the school year. The district shall also provide supplemental training to mentor teachers and employees during the school year. The training must include content related to best mentorship practices.

(c) Repealed by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 943 (H.B. [3](#)), Sec. 4.001(a)(10), eff. September 1, 2019.

(d) In adopting rules under this section, the commissioner shall rely on research-based

mentoring programs that, through external evaluation, have demonstrated success.

(e) Each year the commissioner shall report to the legislature regarding the effectiveness of school district mentoring programs.

(f) A mentor teacher must meet with each classroom teacher assigned to the mentor not less than 12 hours each semester. Observations of the mentor by the classroom teacher being mentored or of the classroom teacher being mentored by the mentor may count toward the 12 hours of meeting time required for the semester. Except as provided by Subsection (f-1), the mentoring sessions must address the following topics:

- (1) orientation to the context, policies, and practices of the school district;
- (2) data-driven instructional practices;
- (3) specific instructional coaching cycles, including coaching regarding conferences between parents and the classroom teacher;
- (4) professional development; and
- (5) professional expectations.

(f-1) Subject to approval by the agency, in determining the topics to be addressed in the mentoring sessions, a school district may create an appropriate curriculum that meets the district needs.

(g) A school district must:

- (1) designate a specific time during the regularly contracted school day for meetings between mentor teachers and classroom teachers assigned to a mentor; and
- (2) schedule release time or a reduced teaching load for mentor teachers and classroom teachers under this section to facilitate mentoring activities, including classroom observations or participation in supportive coaching.

Added by Acts 2006, 79th Leg., 3rd C.S., Ch. 5 (H.B. [1](#)), Sec. 4.07, eff. May 31, 2006.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 796 (S.B. [1290](#)), Sec. 1, eff. June 19, 2009.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1282 (H.B. [2012](#)), Sec. 8, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 943 (H.B. [3](#)), Sec. 2.009, eff. June 12, 2019.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 943 (H.B. [3](#)), Sec. 4.001(a)(10), eff. September 1, 2019.

Appendix E: Proposed New 19 Texas Administrative Code §153.1011, Mentor Program Allotment

Proposed new 19 Texas Administrative Code §153.1011, Mentor Program Allotment:

tea.texas.gov/about-tea/laws-and-rules/commissioner-rules-tac/proposed-commissioner-of-education-rules

** Please note, based on public comment and a review of statute, the agency will update the definition of beginning teacher in the proposed rules linked above to match the definition in Appendix A.*