

# Mentor Program Allotment

## Cycle 2 FAQ: Posted on December 2, 2020

### FAQ Overview

This document is a compilation of responses to Frequently Asked Questions that were submitted by the November 18<sup>th</sup> deadline about Cycle 2 of the Mentor Program Allotment (MPA). Districts are encouraged to review the following materials that are posted on the [MPA website](#) as they will be referenced throughout this document:

- [MPA Guidelines](#)
- [Scoring Guide](#)
- [Scope & Sequence Model](#)
- Texas Education Code [§21.458](#) and [§48.114](#)
- 19 Texas Administrative Code, [§153.1011](#), Mentor Program Allotment

### MPA Application Questions

**1. Is there an example or model of the application?**

*While there is no model of a completed application, districts are encouraged to review the reference materials as linked in the FAQ Overview when completing an application:*

- *The MPA Guidelines describe and explain the MPA requirements, updates from Cycle 1, and the application process.*
- *The Scoring Guide describes the required components and common pitfalls to avoid when completing the application.*
- *The Scope & Sequence model demonstrates Day 2 of a 3-day training and shows how districts using a district-created mentor training program can complete one row of the Scope & Sequence template (Attachment B).*

**2. Once districts submit their application, will they receive a confirmation?**

*When districts submit their application with all uploaded attachments on Qualtrics, they will receive a confirmation email with a summary of the responses submitted and directions on how changes or updates can be made to the application. As a reminder, the deadline to submit the application and any changes or updates is 5:00 p.m. (CST) on December 18, 2020.*

**3. Who does “they” refer to in question 4 of Attachment A of the application?**

*As continued from question 3 of Attachment A, “they” refers to whoever is centrally coordinating and monitoring the time spent on mentoring sessions.*

## Beginning Teachers Questions

### 1. Who is considered an eligible beginning teacher?

*According to 19 TAC §153.1011, beginning teachers are defined as teachers with less than two years of teaching experience in the grade or subject that they are assigned. Due to limited state funding and the high attrition rates of new teachers, the Cycle 2 funding formula is based on the number of beginning teachers who have less than two years of teaching experience overall.*

### 2. How do districts determine the estimated number of beginning teachers for the application?

*The number of beginning teachers for Cycle 2 must be estimated for the 2021-22 school year based on the number of teachers who have less than two years of teaching experience overall. Refer to question 1 of this section. This number may include beginning teachers who are currently being mentored for school year 2020-21. In addition to providing this estimate, districts will be asked to provide the number of beginning teachers from school years 2019-20 and 2020-21 in their Qualtrics submission.*

### 3. Are beginning teachers required to receive mentoring for at least two years?

*Since the Mentor Program Allotment is an optional program and district allotments are capped at 55 beginning teachers, MPA funding may not fully fund a district mentoring program. Given these circumstances, fulfilling this requirement from TEC §21.458(a) may not be applicable for some districts. For example, if a district participates in MPA for Cycle 1 in school year 2020-21, but not for Cycle 2 in school year 2021-22, they would not be required to provide mentoring in the school year 2021-22 to the beginning teachers who participated in Cycle 1 of MPA.*

## Mentor Teachers Questions

### 1. Who is considered an eligible mentor?

*Per TEC §21.458 and 19 TAC §153.1011, a mentor teacher must meet the following requirements:*

- *Must be current classroom teachers and teach at least four hours daily;*
- *Must have three years of teaching experience with a track record of improving student outcomes; and*
- *Must demonstrate strong interpersonal and leadership skills.*

*Additionally, under TEC §21.458(a), a teacher assigned as a mentor must to the extent practicable, teach in the same school, subject, or grade level, as applicable. In other words, if it is not possible or in the effort to best support a beginning teacher, the assigned mentor teacher is not required to teach in the same school, subject, or grade level as the beginning teacher.*

### 2. Can instructional coaches serve as mentors?

*As stated in the MPA Guidelines, any beginning teacher in Texas that generates an allotment through the MPA must be assigned a mentor that is a current classroom teacher and meets the other mentor teacher requirements of TEC §21.458 and 19 TAC §153.1011. If districts choose to assign instructional coaches to mentor beginning teachers, those beginning teachers will not generate funding through the Mentor Program Allotment.*

## Returning Mentors Questions

- 1. Are mentor teachers required to complete mentor training every year if they participate in MPA for multiple years?**

*Per TEC §21.458 and 19 TAC §153.1011, mentor teachers must complete a research-based mentor training program that occurs at a minimum before the beginning of the school year and once per semester.*

- 2. How should districts train mentor teachers who are returning as mentors from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2?**

*Districts only need to submit their mentor training Scope & Sequence (Attachment B) for first-time mentors and do not need to include any information on mentor training for returning mentor teachers who have already participated in the training captured in the mentor training Scope and Sequence. If the district's application is approved in February 2021, guidance with options regarding mentor training for returning mentors will be provided.*

## MPA Funding Questions

- 1. If a district chooses to partner with an MPA Approved Provider, can MPA funds be used to cover the costs associated with the Approved Provider?**

*According to TEC §48.114(c), funding may be used for providing mentor support through providers of mentor training, which includes costs associated with an MPA Approved Provider.*

- 2. If a district chooses to partner with an MPA Approved Provider, how much funding per beginning teacher would the district be eligible to receive?**

*As indicated in the MPA Guidelines through the table below, the Cycle 2 funding formula varies depending on the provider of mentor training. For instance, districts partnering with an MPA Approved Provider for mentor training purposes only are eligible to receive an allotment of \$2,000 per beginning teacher. If districts partner with an MPA Approved Provider for mentor training and coaching with implementation supports, they are eligible to receive an allotment for \$2,500 per beginning teacher.*

Provider of mentor training	District	MPA Approved Provider	MPA Approved Provider with coaching and implementation supports
Funding per BT	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$2,500
Number of BTs funded	55	55	55
Allotment cap per district or charter network	\$82,500	\$110,000	\$137,500

*Refer to the [Approved Mentor Training Programs](#) section of our website for more information regarding their service types. As a reminder, the number of beginning teachers is based on those who have less than two years of teaching experience overall and the allotment cap of 55 beginning teachers per district or charter network still apply.*

- 3. Which school year does MPA Cycle 2 funding apply to?**

*The awarded allotment for Cycle 2 is for one year of implementation, the 2021-22 school year.*

- 4. How will our district receive MPA funds and what code should we use to record the revenue?**  
*MPA funds will be issued through the district's Foundation School Program (FSP) payments, according to their monthly payment schedule. There is no program intent code for the MPA, and districts can use code 5812 to record the revenue. District-based finance staff should be able to answer questions about schedules and payments.*

## MPA Approved Mentor Training Providers Question

- 1. If a district has worked with an external partner before, but they are not an MPA Approved Provider, can the district continue working with the external partner? How can the external partner become an MPA Approved Provider?**  
*Districts have one of two options for providing mentor training: a district-created mentor training program or partnering with an MPA Approved Provider. Districts may work with a previous external partner on parts of the district mentor program but may not use MPA funds to pay for those services. The next cycle of applications for MPA Approved Providers will occur in the summer of 2021.*

## District-Created Mentor Training Questions

- 1. Can districts implement their own mentor training?**  
*Yes, districts may apply for MPA using a district-created mentor training by submitting their mentor training Scope & Sequence (Attachment B).*
- 2. When is mentor training required to occur?**  
*According to TEC §21.458 and 19 TAC §153.1011, mentor training must occur at a minimum before the beginning of the school year and once per semester. Before the "beginning of school year" refers to the first day of student instruction. Districts must indicate training dates that occur at these times of the year in their mentor training Scope & Sequence (Attachment B).*
- 3. Can districts include other district-created trainings in their Scope & Sequence as part of the minimum 18-hour requirement?**  
*The district-created mentor training Scope & Sequence (Attachment B) must meet the required components for approval as outlined in the Scoring Guide. Other district-created trainings may be included as part of the 18 hours of mentor training given that the required components are met.*
- 4. Are campus administrators required to attend all 18 hours of mentor training?**  
*Per TEC §21.458 and 19 TAC §153.1011, districts must provide training to mentor teachers and any appropriate district and campus employees, including campus administrators, who work with or supervise a beginning teacher at a minimum of before the beginning of the school year and once per semester. Given these sections of statute and rule, campus administrators must attend mentor training at those minimal occurrences but may vary in amount of time depending on which portions of training would be most applicable to their role in supporting beginning teachers. Mentor teachers must attend all 18 hours of mentor training in the effort to provide effective support to their beginning teacher(s).*

**5. What is the rationale for the 18 hours of mentor training requirement?**

*As mentioned in the MPA Guidelines, the minimum of 18 hours for mentor training is based on an analysis of high-quality training programs to meaningfully cover and practice knowledge, skills, and mindsets. This ensures that mentor training provides sufficient time to address the five required training topics and associated best mentorship practices as demonstrated through the Scope & Sequence Model. Districts may spread the 18 hours over the course of the year as they see fit, given that they meet all the required components outlined in the Scoring Guide.*

**6. If a district has worked with an external partner before, can they continue working with them to develop a district-created mentor training scope and sequence?**

*Districts must use a district-created mentor training program or partner with an MPA Approved Provider of mentor training. Districts may collaborate with an external partner, such as education service centers and non-profit organizations, to develop a district-created mentor training scope and sequence. As mentioned in the MPA Approved Mentor Training Providers section, MPA funds cannot be used to pay for the services of an external partner unless they are an MPA Approved Provider.*

### Time for Mentoring Sessions Questions

**1. What does “designate a specific time during the regularly contracted school day for meetings between mentors and classroom teachers” mean?**

*This refers to an assurance for Section 1 of Attachment A and is taken directly from TEC §21.458(g) and 19 TAC §153.1011(b)(4). As outlined in the Scoring Guide, this section requires districts to specify time for mentoring sessions outside of teacher planning time. For instance, scheduling mentoring sessions to occur only afterschool, during campus professional development days, or during a conference period that does not allow for teacher planning time of at least 45 minutes per instructional day (TEC §21.404) would not abide by this assurance.*

**2. For the requirement that mentor teachers meet with their assigned beginning teacher for at least 12 hours per semester, can the mentor teacher meet with multiple beginning teachers at the same time or do the meetings have to be one-on-one to satisfy this requirement?**

*As stated in 19 TAC §153.1011(b)(5), a mentor teacher must meet with each beginning teacher assigned to them for at least 12 hours per semester, including through observations, and must address specific topics in mentoring sessions with the assigned beginning teacher(s). Districts may indicate in their application that mentoring sessions occur between mentor teachers and multiple beginning teachers at the same time. However, some mentoring sessions may need one-on-one interactions to appropriately address the required topics.*