

# Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### COVID-19

**Q: Will the cohort timelines or requirements be adjusted?**

A: The Cohort A System Application deadline has been extended to May 15, 2020. The teacher buy-in survey for Cohort C applicants is now optional.

### Local Teacher Designation Systems Questions

**Q: Can a district phase in groups of teachers over time?**

A: Yes. Districts have local flexibility to develop their local designation systems. For example, a district may choose to include only math and reading teachers in year one, and then expand to include science and social studies teachers in year two, etc. System expansion will require the district to submit and be approved through the two-step application process.

**Q: Can a district apply for TIA only at specific campuses in their district and not others?**

A: Yes. Districts specify the campuses on which they want to designate teachers under TIA. However, any campus in the district that has designated teachers working on it will generate TIA funding to be spent on teacher compensation on that campus.

**Q: Will there be a clearing house of plans like Districts of Innovation?**

A: Once designations are approved for the 2019-2020 school year, TEA will likely post exemplar designation systems and strategic compensation plans.

**Q: Can 1882 partners apply for a local designation system?**

A: Yes, 1882 partners may apply for a local designation system. 1882 partners and their districts must work together to ensure that the funding is transferred from district to campus. All system applications will require the district superintendent's signature.

## Stakeholder Engagement Questions

**Q: When should districts begin communicating with teachers about their local designation system?**

A: Districts are encouraged to communicate with teachers early in the process and throughout the development and implementation of their local designation system. The TIA Readiness Checklist includes a section on community and teacher communication. This checklist and additional TIA resources can be found on [TEA's HB3 in 30 website](#). More resources will go live in early spring.

**Q: What stakeholder groups should be included in developing the local teacher designation system?**

A: Best practices indicate that including teachers, campus leaders, district leaders, and community members in planning and reviewing a local teacher designation system results in a stronger system with more buy-in. In addition, school board input and approval are recommended. Please refer to the TIA Readiness Checklist for additional best practices in stakeholder engagement.

## System & Data Submission Review

**Q: What is the timeframe to apply, and what happens after a district's local designation system is submitted for review?**

A: Timeframes to apply are based on the data capture year a district plans to use when submitting the teacher observation and student growth data for the purposes of TIA. Please note there will be a two-step review process: (1) local designation system review by TEA and (2) data submission review by Texas Tech University. For details on the timelines and next steps for each cohort, please review the Cohort Next Steps and Timelines documents on the TIA website.

**Q: What student growth measures can be used for teachers in non-tested subjects?**

A: Districts can use locally developed student growth measures, as long as they are valid and reliable. Examples include SLOs, pre- and post-tests, and student portfolios. Districts may find the [T-TESS Guidance on Student Growth Measures](#) helpful as they consider different student growth measures. For more information, visit [texasslo.org](http://texasslo.org).

**Q: How will TEA know if Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) are measuring growth effectively?**

A: During the System Review process, districts will be required to explain in detail their procedures and protocols for SLO implementation including procedures for setting student preparedness levels at the beginning of the year, protocols for collecting the body of evidence of student work, and rubrics/protocols used to approve SLOs at the end of the year. TTU will review SLO growth measure data during step two of the system approval process.

**Q: Many districts allow eligible teachers to waive an annual appraisal. Will an annual appraisal be required for teachers to earn a designation?**

A: Districts must have observation and student data from the data capture year for each teacher put forth for designation. Teachers not submitted for designation are not required to have an annual observation. Once a teacher has earned a designation, opting out of his/her annual appraisal will be a local decision. Appraisals must comply with §21.351 and §21.352.

**Q: Exactly what data will schools be required to submit for the data review process?**

A: At minimum, districts will be required to submit data on teacher effectiveness, which will include teacher observation data and the teacher's student growth rubric rating. TEA will communicate specifics around what other data might need to be submitted as part of the data review and approval process.

**Q: What will Texas Tech be checking during the data review process?**

A: Texas Tech University will be reviewing the data that districts provide to verify the validity and reliability of the data. More guidance on the data validation process can be found on the TIA website.

**Q: Will districts have to submit data every year?**

A: Districts will submit data for all teachers in eligible teaching assignments each year that they put forth new teachers for designation.

**Q: What if a system is not approved? Can a district resubmit the following year?**

TEA will work with districts throughout the step one system review with the goal of approving systems with a high likelihood of passing the step two data validation. Systems who fail to pass the system review or data validation may resubmit the following year.

## Teacher Designations and Eligibility

**Q: Who is eligible to earn a designation through a local designation system? What about charter school teachers who are not required to be SBEC certified?**

A: LEAs must verify that each teacher meet the following eligibility requirements before submitting them for a designation:

- The teacher must have a valid SBEC certificate. Eligible types of certificate include: Standard, Professional, Provisional. Eligible classes of certificates include: Classroom Teacher (Chapter 233), Reading Specialist (Chapter 239), Legacy Master Teacher <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/sbecrules/tac/index.html>
- The teacher must be coded as 087 (Teacher) per the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) description of codes for 90 days at 100% of the day (equivalent to four and one-half months or a full semester) or 180 days required at 50-99% of the day and compensated for that employment.

**Q: Can interventionists or inclusion teachers earn designations?**

A: This will depend on how a teacher is coded in district PEIMS reporting. Role ID 087 includes teachers of record, assistant teachers, and support teachers. Interventionists, reading specialists, inclusion teachers, etc. are generally coded as 087. Districts must check with their PEIMS specialists and payroll personnel to ensure that teachers meet eligibility requirements before submitting them for designation.

**Q: What if a designated teacher moves to a non-teaching role, such as an instructional coach, counselor, or administrator?**

A: Designated teachers who move to a Role ID other than 087 will maintain their designation if their teacher SBEC certificate is valid, however they will not generate annual allotment funding if are not in a 087 teaching role for that year of service.

**Q: Are designations attached to a particular grade level or subject area?**

A: Unlike certificates, designations are general. The designation will be placed on the teacher's SBEC certificate and will not specify a certification area or subject/grade level. A teacher may change teaching assignments and will still generate allotment funding. The same applies to National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs).

**Q: What if a designated teacher's performance level changes within the five year period? Can their designation level change?**

A: Teacher designations are valid for five years. Within the five year period, teachers may be put forth for a higher designation if their performance qualifies them, but they cannot be submitted for a lower designation. Some district spending plans may include variability based on continued performance levels.

**Q: What happens after the five-year designation expires?**

A: Designated teachers who meet performance standards and district qualifications can be put forth for a new designation in their final year of designation. Once the designation expires, it will be removed from the SBEC certificate and allotment funding will no longer be generated.

## **Allotment & Spending Questions**

**Q: Is the allotment for the teacher or the campus?**

A: Funding for teachers designated as Recognized, Exemplary, and Master under TIA will flow to districts, which in turn must spend at least 90% of the funds on teacher compensation on the campuses where the designated teachers work. Statute states that allotment funds are not considered a property right. During the system review process, districts will submit their spending and communication plans for TEA review.

*TEC Section 48.114 (i)(1)(A): A district shall annually certify that funds received under this section were used as follows: At least 90% of each allotment received was used for the compensation of teachers employed at the campus at which the teacher for whom the district received the allotment is employed.*

**Q: What is the funding schedule?**

A: For the first year of a teacher's designation, districts will be notified of funding amounts by designation level and campus in the spring, and funds will arrive the following September in settle-up. Following the initial payment, districts will receive regular funds based on projections according to their regular FSP payment schedule, with settle-up each September.

**Q: Will there be spending codes for TIA funds?**

A: There will not be PIC codes for TIA funds. Funding and reimbursement of fees will each be a separate line item in FSP payments.

**Q: When do teachers get paid?**

For the first year of designations, districts may choose to compensate teachers in advance of September funding, or to wait until funds arrive. TEA will post timelines and sample spending scenarios on the TIA website in spring 2020. Spending plans are a local decision, provided they comply with the 90/10 requirements in statute. Some districts plan to change their salary schedule, and other districts plan to issue stipends.

**Q: If a district does not have a local designation system as part of the Teacher Incentive Allotment, but employs designated teachers, will the district receive allotment funds for those teachers?**

A: Yes. Districts that employ teachers who have earned designations will receive funding for those teachers based on the TIA formula, even if the district does not have an approved designation system in place. For example, a district that does not have a designation system in place could employ a teacher that earned a designation in another district or a teacher who automatically earned a Recognized designation for having achieved National Board Certification. Districts will need to develop a plan for how to spend allotment dollars that they receive, in accordance with the rules of HB3.

**Q: Will the campus socio-economic tier data be recalculated every year?**

A: Yes. Given that a school's student enrollment changes yearly, the campus' socio-economic tier will be recalculated annually. As a reminder, this calculation uses the home address of the student that attends a particular campus. Allotment funds for each designated teacher will be based on the campus, and not the individual students assigned to the designated teacher.

**Q: If a designated teacher moves campuses from one school year to the next, will the allotment that teacher generates be recalculated? What if a teacher leaves in the middle of the year?**

A: Yes. There will be set points in time at which TEA will calculate the allotment for a teacher based on the teacher's designation and school characteristics (socio-economic tiers and rural status). Designated teachers must be compensated for a creditable year of service as a teacher (PEIMS Role ID 087) to generate allotment funds. In rule, TEA defines a creditable year of service as a for 90 days at 100% of the day (equivalent to four and one-half months or a full semester) or 180 days required at 50-99% of the day and compensated for that employment.

**Q: Will the agency monitor district compliance?**

A: The agency will utilize authority found in TEC §48.004, §48.270, and §48.272 to audit districts in their compliance with Texas Education Code and Texas Administrative Code.

## **Fees & Reimbursements**

**Q: Will districts need to submit fees and how will those fees and reimbursements work?**

A: Yes. Districts will pay a \$500 fee per teacher put forth for designation at the time of data submission. Once the local designation system is approved, all fees will be reimbursed. TEC 21.3521(i) and TEC 48.114(g). Please visit the TIA website to learn more about National Board Certification fees & reimbursements.

**Q: Will districts be required to follow the 90/10 spending requirement for reimbursed fees?**

A: Fee reimbursements are not subject to the 90/10 spending requirements.

**Q: Will fees be reimbursed if a system is not approved after the data review?**

A: Fees will not be reimbursed until the system is approved, however fees paid will be “credited” when the district reapplies.

**Q: Can generated Teacher Incentive Allotment funds be used to pay for fees associated with the Teacher Incentive Allotment?**

A: Up to 10% of allotment funds can be used towards teachers earning designations. This may include fees for submitting new teachers for designation.

## **National Board Certification Questions**

Please visit the TIA website to learn more about National Board certification in Texas.