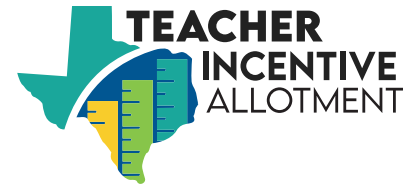


# Hiring and Employing Designated Teachers

Guidance for LEAs Without a Local Designation System



Established in 2019 with House Bill 3, the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) allows highly effective teachers to earn recognition and gain access to a higher salary.

Designations are distinctions awarded to highly effective teachers. TEA maintains a public **Designated Teacher Registry**. For certified teachers, the designation is also displayed on their Texas teaching certificate. TIA established three levels of designation: Recognized, Exemplary, and Master. Teachers may earn a designation either through a district local designation system or by being a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT).

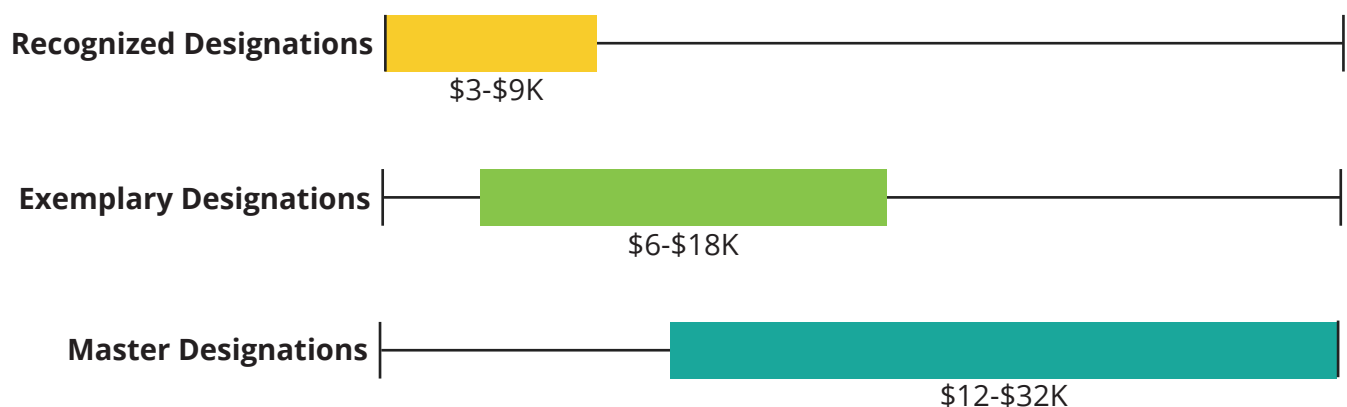
Once a designation is awarded, it remains active until the expiry date. Locally issued designations expire after five years. Designations issued to NBCTs are valid until the July following expiry of the National Board Certificate.

## ANNUAL ALLOTMENTS

Districts are entitled to an annual allotment when they employ eligible designated teachers. All Texas public school systems may employ designated teachers and receive allotment funds — a local designation system is not required. Note, all districts have spending requirements related to the allotment, which are discussed below.

Districts receive the TIA allotment funds through the Foundation School Program (FSP). Annual teacher allotments range from \$3K to \$32K. Campus allotment values are determined based on the campus' rural status and student socio-economic demographics. Allotment values are updated each year to reflect the current student demographics.

More information on allotments and funding can be found at [tiatexas.org/allotments](https://tiatexas.org/allotments).



TEA verifies allotment eligibility annually in April using data from the Class Roster Winter Submission. Designated teachers who meet the criteria below will generate an annual allotment for their employing school district:

- ✓ Holds an active TIA designation
- ✓ Employed as a Texas public school teacher
- ✓ Meets the **Creditable Year of Service**: the teacher was employed and compensated (or will be by the end of the school year) in a teaching role (087 role ID) for:
  - 50% or more of the day for a minimum of 180 days; or,
  - 100% of the day for a minimum of 90 days, or the equivalent of one semester

## HIRING BEST PRACTICES

Develop a TIA spending plan before hiring season begins, if possible. Districts in the process of applying for a local designation system may create a tentative spending plan for teachers hired with an existing designation.

Incorporate questions regarding TIA designations and NBCT status into employment applications and interviews.

If hiring an NBCT who has relocated from out of state, ensure the NBCT updates their **NBCT directory listing** to reflect Texas employment by January 31<sup>st</sup>.

Request proof of designation via the **Designated Teacher Registry** or displayed on the teacher's certificate. Confirm with TEA if needed by emailing [tia@tea.texas.gov](mailto:tia@tea.texas.gov).

If a candidate indicates they are pending a designation from their previous district, note that there are no pending designations between school years. Teachers who may have qualified for designation based on their prior year performance relinquish eligibility if they move to a new district before the designation is awarded.

Ensure campus administrators and hiring personnel are aware of TIA and can field general questions regarding the district's policies and TIA spending plan.

Communicate with the designated teacher(s); ensure understanding of allotment eligibility requirements and the district's TIA spending plan.

## SPENDING PLAN GUIDANCE

Districts employing designated teachers must prepare for the receipt and expenditure of allotment funds.

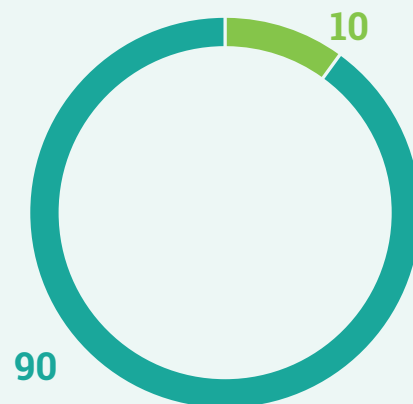
Districts must spend at least 90% or more of the allotment on teacher compensation on the campus where the designated teacher works. Up to 10% may be used for costs associated with implementing a local designation system or supporting teachers in earning designations. All allotment funds must be spent by August 31 of the same calendar year they are awarded.

Note, districts may choose to amend their board-approved compensation plan to address this new source of funds. Within those guidelines, districts decide:

- ✓ The percentage of the allotment to award the designated teacher or other teachers on the campus.
- ✓ How the district will cover surcharges, such as TRS. These can come from the allotment or local funds.
- ✓ Spending plan for 10% of funds, if retained by the district. Note that districts may not retain the 10% for general administrative costs.
- ✓ The anticipated payout date.
- ✓ The structure of payout (i.e., one stipend, multiple stipends, salary increase).
- ✓ The spending plan if the designated teacher leaves the district prior to the payout date.

At least 90% of the funds must be spent on student-facing instructional staff on the campus where the designated teacher works.

Up to 10% may be used to support the designation system or to support teachers in getting designated.



## Allowable and Prohibited Spending Examples

### 90% Allowable Spending

- ✓ Designated teacher stipends or salary increases
- ✓ Other teachers at the campuses stipends or salaries
- ✓ Other staff—whose primary responsibility is instructing students—compensation at the campus

### 10% Allowable Spending

- ✓ Any professional development for teachers
- ✓ TIA assessment costs
- ✓ Rubric costs, appraiser rater training, or certification
- ✓ Other student growth costs
- ✓ Central supports (funding for TIA coordinator or HR needs)
- ✓ Compensation for staff associated with TIA needs or with professional development (e.g. school leaders or instructional coaches)

- ✓ Benefits and retirement contributions for teachers may be taken from the 90% or 10%

### 90% Prohibited Spending

- ✗ School leader compensation
- ✗ Other non-instructional staff compensation (including Instructional coaches that do not teach)
- ✗ Central staff or staff at a different campus

### 10% Prohibited Spending

- ✗ General administrative expenses
- ✗ Compensation for staff not associated with TIA needs nor with professional development
- ✗ Recruitment, job fairs, or other costs

## Sample Compensation Plan Language

Districts that employ a designated teacher may need to update their compensation plan to include language on how they will spend the funds they receive for employing a designated teacher. For more information on compensation plans and language, [view our guidance deck](#) for districts receiving funds for the first time.

As an example, the compensation language below could be used to provide a part of the TIA allotment to teachers or other instructional staff who provide support to the designated teacher's classroom.

For any funds received by (\_\_\_\_\_) ISD for a designated teacher under the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA), (90) percent will be paid to the designated teacher. The remaining (10) percent will be used for (training and support of the system, expansion of the system, teacher professional development, district surcharges).

Should the district receive funding for a designated teacher who has resigned or retired, the district (will, will not) forward payment to the resigned or retired (designated teacher, other teachers on the designated teacher's campus) as soon as practicable.

Alternatively, a district could consider using the funds to support hiring incentives for hard to staff positions at the campus where the funds were generated.

For any funds received by (\_\_\_\_\_) ISD for a designated teacher under the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA), (70) percent will be paid to the designated teacher through 4 stipends of varying size. The other (20) will be paid to the other teachers on the designated teacher's campus. The remaining (10) percent will be used for (training and support of the system, expansion of the system, teacher professional development).

Should the district receive funding for a designated teacher who has resigned or retired, the district (will, will not) forward payment to the resigned or retired (designated teacher, other teachers on the designated teacher's campus) as soon as practicable.

## DISTRICT TIMELINES AND NEXT STEPS

| Time frame/Deadline | Action Step   |
|---------------------|---|
| Ongoing             | Confirm if candidates and new hires have an active TIA designation or National Board certification.   |
| By February         | If needed, establish TIA points of contact and submit contact information to TEA. Email <a href="mailto:tia@tea.texas.gov">tia@tea.texas.gov</a> to ensure you have contacts on file. Best practice is a point of contact from both human resources and finance.  |
| Ongoing             | <p>Monitor designated teacher assignments, campuses, and progress towards year of service. Note districts will only receive an allotment if the designated teacher(s) is employed in a teacher role.</p> <p>Develop or refine a TIA spending plan if needed.</p>  |
| February-March      | <p>TEA will contact districts employing a designated teacher with training invites.</p> <p>Class Roster Winter Submission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Attend training for Class Roster Winter Reporting.</li> <li>→ Ensure eligible designated teachers are accurately reported.</li> </ul> |
| By April            | Request access to the Strategic Compensation Operations Management System (SCOMS) and attend allotment verification training.   |
| April-May           | Verify and confirm annual allotment in SCOMS.   |
| August 31           | Deadline to spend allotment.  |
| September           | Allotment reflected in Summary of Finance (SOF) report.   |

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How can districts find out if they employ a designated teacher or NBCT?

Best practice: hiring managers and human resources incorporate designation status and National Board certification into employment applications and interview questions.

Check for candidates and new hires in the **Designated Teacher Registry**. Districts can email [tia@tea.texas.gov](mailto:tia@tea.texas.gov) if additional verification is needed.

Run an **ECOS certification report**. For certified teachers, the designation and expiry date will be listed in Columns AC and AD of the report. Designations are also displayed in the top right corner of the teacher's certificate.

Check the **National Board Certified Teacher directory**. Note that the information is self-reported.

By late February, TEA will notify districts if a designated teacher or NBCT was reported in their Fall PEIMS submission and ensure they receive training and resources. If there is no district TIA point of contact on file, TEA will contact the district business office.

### A candidate states they are designated or scheduled to receive a designation, but there is no designation on their certificate, and they are not listed in the Designated Teacher Registry.

For spring hires seeking employment for the following school year, new designations are awarded in May. Districts can check the **Designated Teacher Registry** on or around the last week of May to verify the designation. Note that the hiring district will not receive an allotment until the following spring.

For summer and fall hires, inquire if the teacher is certain they were submitted for designation by their prior district. Districts with local designation systems submit new designations in the fall based on effectiveness data from the prior school year. Teachers must remain employed with the designating district the following year to earn the designation. In some cases, a teacher may expect to earn a designation based on the prior year's performance, but has left the district and thus forfeited eligibility.

### When are designations issued to NBCTs? What about districts employing NBCT candidates?

NBCT candidates receive score reports annually in late November/early December. Those who successfully certify and are employed as teachers are eligible for designation the same school year. NBCTs and NBCT candidates who have moved to Texas from out of state must update their NBCT directory listing by January 31<sup>st</sup>.

TEA will access a list of all NBCTs reported in Texas as of January 31<sup>st</sup>. NBCTs who are employed as teachers will be awarded a Recognized designation in early May, which will be retroactive to the start of the school year.

### **Is a local designation system required to receive TIA funds?**

No. Any district can receive TIA funds if they employ a designated teacher who meets the allotment eligibility criteria.

### **What if a designated teacher moves into/out of a school district mid-year? Is the allotment prorated?**

Allotments are not prorated or split between districts if a teacher moves. The allotment will be awarded to the district employing the designated teacher as of the last Friday in February provided the teacher met or will meet the creditable year of service requirement by the end of the school year.

### **What if a district hires a designated teacher who did not yet receive compensation from their previous district?**

TEA awards funds to the district employing the designated teacher as of the last Friday in February. Districts must spend the funds by August 31<sup>st</sup>. Local spending plans vary. Districts are not required to forward funds to designated teachers who resign prior to the payout date.

### **How are allotment funds handled when teachers move?**

Allotments are distributed through FSP. For teachers who meet eligibility criteria, the full allotment is awarded to the district employing the teacher as of the last Friday in February. Funds are not transferred between districts or prorated. FSP will award new funds and adjust for differences in annual allotments at September settle-up.

### **What if our designated teacher leaves the district before our payout date?**

The district spending plan should address this. Districts may choose to forward the funds to the designated teacher or use the funds toward teacher compensation for other teachers on the campus where they worked.

### **When will the district receive allotment funds?**

For the first year, the district will receive their TIA allotment through FSP's September settle-up process. Note, districts are required to spend the funds by August 31<sup>st</sup>, before they are received. Thereafter, funds are issued over the course of the year based on projections from the previous allotment, with an annual settle-up in September to account for teacher movement and allotment recalculations.



**Does TEA require designated teachers to work in a particular assignment to remain allotment-eligible? Does their teaching assignment need to align with their SBEC or National Board certification?**

No. All teaching assignments are eligible. Designated teachers working in atypical positions, such as interventionists, dyslexia, and inclusion, are also eligible.

**Are districts required to align the spending plan with the designated teacher's prior district or match their prior year TIA compensation?**

No. Districts create their own spending plans for TIA funds. Allotment values are tied to the campus of employment and will change when a teacher moves campuses between school years.