

TIA Guidebook

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What is the Teacher Incentive Allotment?

The Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) was established in 2019 with the goal of providing outstanding teachers with an accessible pathway to a six-figure salary. Unlike previous education programs, TIA is not a grant. Based in the Texas Education Code (TEC) **§§21.3521** and **48.112**, TIA is built to provide lasting funds for outstanding Texas teachers to remain in the classroom, especially in high-needs and rural areas.

Through approved local designation systems, districts can reward and compensate their teachers based on teacher performance. Now in the sixth year of its enactment, TIA has proven to have a strong impact on teacher retention and teacher performance. Building on the success of TIA, House Bill 2 (HB 2) was enacted by the 89th Texas Legislature and signed into law by Governor Abbott on June 4, 2025. HB 2 has expanded funding for TIA district supports, increased teacher eligibility and allotments, and introduced Enhanced TIA for districts implementing advanced compensation systems.

This investment in the teaching profession provides greater resources for districts to recognize, reward, and retain outstanding educators ensuring continued progress and student success across Texas.

The Local Optional Teacher Designation System

A local optional teacher designation system (local designation system), as authorized under **TEC §21.3521**, enables school systems to formally recognize and compensate exceptional teachers through a structured evaluation process. This system allows districts to develop their own criteria for identifying high-performing educators based on single or multi-year teacher performance data to issue TIA designations.

To establish a local designation system, districts must first go through a three-year approval process. In year one, the application year, districts attend Texas Education Agency (TEA) approved technical assistance sessions and submit their System Application. If the application is accepted, districts go through a Data Capture Year in year two, implementing their system and collecting teacher performance data based on their System of Record (the accepted System Application). In the third year, districts submit the data they collected to Texas Tech University (Texas Tech) for data validation. TEA then studies the data validation results and conducts a holistic system review before issuing full system approval, enabling the district to issue the designations submitted.

Once a district is fully approved, they may continue to submit teachers for new or higher designations annually for review by Texas Tech and TEA. Districts that wish to continue to issue designations after their fifth year of approval must submit a renewal application in their fourth year after the system application was accepted.

Teacher Designations

Teacher designations are an official recognition awarded to teachers who demonstrate exceptional performance according to their district's local designation system. These designations—Recognized, Exemplary, and Master—identify teachers who meet specific standards of excellence and impact rooted in teacher performance and determine the level of additional compensation they generate for their district.

Teacher designations must align with the performance and validity standards outlined in **Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §150.1012**. At minimum, teacher performance data must include:

- ➔ Teacher observation based on the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) or one third-party rubric, such as the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching TAP System for Teacher and Student Advancement (NIET TAP), Marzano's Teacher Evaluation Model (Marzano), or the Danielson Group rubric (Danielson). Locally developed rubrics must comply with TEC **§§21.351** and **21.352**, and TAC **§149.1001**.
- ➔ Student growth measures determined by the district. Districts are not required to use **approved standardized assessments** for purposes of designation. Districts may use third-party or district-created pre-tests and post-tests, Value-Added Model (VAM), Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), and/or portfolios.

Teacher-Generated Allotments

Teacher-generated allotment(s) refers to the annual funding that districts receive for each eligible teacher who holds a TIA designation. The specific amount of an allotment generated is determined by the teacher's designation level and the type of campus where they work, with higher funding directed to high-needs and rural schools. Districts use these allotments to incentivize and retain effective teachers in classroom positions and to strengthen staffing at campuses that need additional support.



\$3K-\$9K

Recognized designations represent the top 33% of Texas teachers



\$6K-\$18K

Exemplary designations represent the top 20% of Texas teachers



\$12K-\$32K

Master designations represent the top 5% of Texas teachers

Allotment Funding

TIA is a Tier 1 allotment through the Foundation School Program (FSP), the system through which the state provides funding to districts. This system, grounded in the Texas Education Code, creates a sustainable funding source for districts implementing TIA. The allotment formula is campus-based, with increased allotments for high-needs and rural campuses.

There are no funding or designation caps.

Unlike previous state incentive programs, there is no cap on TIA allotment funds or the number of teachers who may earn a designation.

Districts receive annual allotment funds when they employ eligible designated teachers. These funds must then be used for teacher compensation on the campus where the designated teacher works. All TIA teacher compensation is TRS eligible.

The **allotment funding map** shows the allotment values for each district and campus.

Districts receive notification of the annual allotment amount in April and must spend the funds by August 31 of the same year. **Districts are required to spend at least 90% of their allotment funds on teacher compensation on the campus where the designated teacher works.** Districts may use up to 10% for costs associated with implementing a local designation system or supporting teachers in earning a designation. All Texas school systems are eligible to receive TIA funds for designated teachers whom they employ.



For all districts that are approved to issue designations, annual spending must be reported in the Annual Program Submission to stay in compliance. The Annual Program Submission is an important, statutorily required process that all fully and provisionally approved districts must complete by August 31 of each year. For more information on the Annual Program Submission, review **Annual Program Submission** and other relevant guidance resources.

Allotment Formula

The allotment formula is based on the teacher designation level and the campus average student point value. The formula is tied to student level data and changes yearly.

Teacher Designation Level

$$\text{BASE ALLOTMENT} + \text{MULTIPLIER RATE} \times \text{AVERAGE CAMPUS STUDENT POINT VALUE} = \text{ALLOTMENT PER DESIGNATED TEACHER}$$

A base allotment and multiplier rate is assigned to each designation level. The base allotment is the minimum a designated teacher will generate if their campus has no high-need students and is not defined as rural. The multiplier rate given per designation is used in the formula to calculate further funding for designated teachers working in high-needs and rural campuses.

Designation Level	Base Allotment	Multiplier Rate
Recognized	\$3,000	\$1,500
Exemplary	\$6,000	\$3,000
Master	\$12,000	\$5,000

Campus Average Student Point Value

The campus average student point value is calculated from a campus' socioeconomic level and rural status.

Campus Socioeconomic Level

Students are assigned a socioeconomic tier value based on the census block group in which the student resides. Every student is given a point value based on the tier they are in.

Tier	0	1	2	3	4	5
Point Value	0	.5	1	2	3	4

Student's socioeconomic tiers are calculated from the **State Compensatory Education (SCE) program**. SCE provides funding to reduce disparity in performance on assessment instruments or disparity in the rates of high school completion between educationally disadvantaged students, at-risk students, and all other students.

Campus Rural Status

Students at a campus defined as rural receive a two-tier boost with a maximum value of Tier 5. This may increase the student point value assigned per student.

Base Tier	0	1	2	3	4	5
Tier with Rural Boost	2	3	4	5	5	5
Point Value	1	2	3	4	4	4

Rural Campus Status Definition

For the purposes of TIA, TEC §48.112 and TAC §150.101 defines a rural campus as:

- a** A campus within a school district with fewer than 5,000 enrolled students in an area that is not designated as an urbanized area or urban cluster by the United States Census Bureau; or
- b** A campus within a school district with fewer than 5,000 enrolled students that is categorized as a rural, non-metropolitan: stable, or non-metropolitan: fast growing district type by TEA; or
- c** A campus within a school district with fewer than 5,000 enrolled students categorized as rural by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Calculating Campus Allotment Values

Designation allotment amounts will vary per campus based on their student population and the campus' rural status. After the point values are assigned to each student, an average point value is calculated for each campus by adding all student point value numbers within the campus and then dividing by the total number of students.

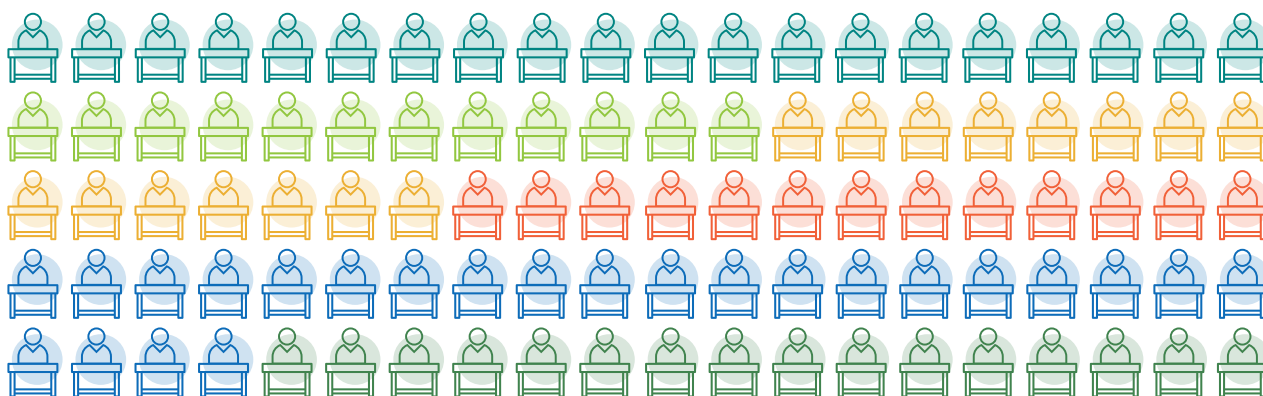
The campus' average student point value is multiplied by the designation's multiplier rate. That value is added to the designation's base allotment, resulting in the total incentive allotment per designation on that campus.

Since the allotment value of each designation is based on student population, allotment values are recalculated annually in April. Districts may see an increase or decrease in campus allotment values due to student population changes from year to year. Changes in allotment payouts typically stay within a 5% margin of change. Campuses that see a larger margin of decrease in their allotment payouts are those that experience a change in their rurality status (which increases the allotment value).



Example Campus Funding

Flowers ISD has a non-rural campus, Flowers High School, with a student population of 100. The student's point values are as follows:



20 Students at Tier 0



12 Students at Tier 1



15 Students at Tier 2



13 Students at Tier 3



24 Students at Tier 4



16 Students at Tier 5

Using the base tier point value, the campus average student point value can be calculated.

Base Tier	0	1	2	3	4	5
Point Value	0	.5	1	2	3	4
Number of Students	20	12	15	13	24	16
Total Student Point Value	0	6	15	26	73	64

Campus Avg. Student Point Value = 1.84

Notice that the more students that have high-needs on a campus, the higher the campus' student point value will be, providing greater funding for high-needs campuses.

Next, the campus student point value is plugged into the allotment formula, **base allotment** + (**multiplier** x **avg. student point value**), to get each designation's allotment funding amount.

Recognized: \$5,745
 $\$3,000 + (\$1,500 \times 1.83)$

Exemplary: \$11,490
 $\$6,000 + (\$3,000 \times 1.83)$

Master: \$21,150
 $\$12,000 + (\$5,000 \times 1.83)$

Now let's look at that same campus as if it were defined as rural.

Base Tier	0	1	2	3	4	5
Tier with Rural Boost	2	3	4	5	5	5
Point Value	1	2	3	4	4	4
Number of Students	20	12	15	13	24	16
Total Student Point Value	20	24	34	52	96	64

Campus Avg. Student Point Value = 2.9

Recognized: \$7,350
 $\$3,000 + (\$1,500 \times 2.9)$

Exemplary: \$14,700
 $\$6,000 + (\$3,000 \times 2.9)$

Master: \$26,500
 $\$12,000 + (\$5,000 \times 2.9)$

Since the rural status of a campus gives a boost to most student's point values, greater funding is provided per designation per rural campus.

Statewide Performance Standards

The Teacher Incentive Allotment established performance standards for teacher observation and student growth ratings for each level of designation using statewide teacher performance data. For teacher observation, the performance standards were determined using statewide T-TESS observation data. Student growth performance standards were determined through a value-added model using State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) data across five years (2014–2019).

These performance standards serve as guidelines for districts when evaluating teacher effectiveness and setting designation criteria. Each level of designation represents teacher performance relative to all Texas teachers. Prior to approving local designation systems, TEA studies the overall alignment of district designations to the statewide performance standards. Exact alignment is not required.

Designation criteria and cut points for each level of designation are determined by the district; TEA does not select which teachers qualify nor reject individual teacher designations.



Statewide Performance Standards

Designation Level	Statewide Percentages	Teacher Observation Performance Standards*	Student Growth Performance Standards
Recognized	Top 33%	3.7 or 74% of possible points	55% met or exceeded
Exemplary	Top 20%	3.9 or 78% of possible points	60% met or exceeded
Master	Top 5%	4.5 or 90% of possible points	70% met or exceeded

Represents average of all dimensions in T-TESS Domains 2 and 3. **Teachers must have a minimum score of Proficient in all observable dimensions to be eligible for a new designation.*

Note: exact performance standards for Acknowledged are pending rule updates and will be confirmed by April.

Percentages may vary.

While designations represent the top-performing teachers in the state of Texas, districts that submit teachers for designations through their local designation system may find that they have more or less than the numbers represented. Any teacher that meets a local designation system's eligibility requirements and the minimum proficiency observation ratings may be submitted for designation.

As districts design their local designation system, they must consider how they will incorporate the statewide performance standards when determining designation criteria. *Note that performance standards represent statewide percentages. A district's top 5% of teachers*

may align, exceed, or fall below the observation and student growth performance standards. Before establishing designation cut points, districts may study how their teachers perform in comparison to teachers across the state. Designated teachers may perform above or below the performance standards, and designation levels may not align for each teacher's observation and student growth data.

The Future of TIA with HB 2 Implementation

Key Changes

- ➔ Increased TEA technical assistance.
- ➔ Increased district support from regional education service centers (ESCs).
- ➔ An independent designation for National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs), nationally board certified, dependent on review by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC)
- ➔ New level of designation, Acknowledged, awarded to teachers performing in the top 50% statewide at the current Recognized level of funding.
- ➔ Significant increase to Recognized, Exemplary, and Master designation base allotments and multiplier amounts.
- ➔ Established an Enhanced TIA district designation



New Designation Levels and Allotment Funding Amounts

Current									
				Non Eco-Dis	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5
	Performance Standards	Base	Multiplier	0	0.5	1	2	3	4
Recognized	Top 33%	3,000	1,500	3,000	3,750	4,500	6,000	7,500	9,000
Exemplary	Top 20%	6,000	3,000	6,000	7,500	9,000	12,000	15,000	18,000
Master	Top 5%	12,000	5,000	12,000	14,500	17,000	22,000	27,000	32,000
Updated									
	Performance Standards	Base	Multiplier	0	0.5	1	2	3	4
Acknowledged	Top 50%	3,000	1,500	3,000	3,750	4,500	6,000	7,500	9,000
Recognized	Top 33%	5,000	2,500	5,000	6,250	7,000	10,000	12,500	15,000
Exemplary	Top 20%	9,000	4,000	9,000	11,000	13,000	17,000	21,000	25,000
Master	Top 5%	12,000	6,000	12,000	15,000	18,000	24,000	30,000	36,000



Timeline of HB 2 Implementation

September 2025

- Increased TEA technical support
- Increased regional support from ESCs
- Districts may submit an Enhanced TIA Letter of Intent

Spring 2026

- Districts finalize cut points for Acknowledged designations
- Districts may apply for Enhanced TIA if they meet the criteria in the 2025-26 or 2026-27 school year
- Exact performance standards for Acknowledged designations finalized in rule updates.

Fall 2026

- Districts may submit teachers for Acknowledged designation
- Districts receive increased allotment funds for Recognized, Exemplary, and Master designations
- Districts that met Enhanced TIA criteria for 2025-26 receive 10% increase in funds
- Approved NBCTs given nationally board certified designations

Fall 2027

- Districts that met Enhanced TIA criteria for 2026-27 receive 10% increase in funds

The Local Designation System Design

As with most new initiatives, districts need time to engage stakeholders, make key decisions, and plan for documenting and communicating changes to existing systems. Prior to engaging stakeholders, the TIA planning committee should develop a clear understanding of key decisions regarding the local designation system.

There are three main components to a local designation system: eligible teaching assignments and campuses, teacher performance data and designation criteria, and a TIA spending plan.

Decisions for each component require time, investment of personnel and stakeholders, and thoughtful consideration of current systems and practices.

Eligible Teaching Assignments and Campuses

While all teachers may be included in a local designation system, districts may choose which specific teaching assignments and/or campuses are eligible in the system. Each eligible teaching assignment must be appraised using an approved teacher appraisal rubric and have a valid and reliable student growth measure.

The timeline for implementing student growth measures is often a top consideration when determining eligible teaching assignments and readiness to apply for a local designation system. Some districts begin with a subset of teaching assignments or campuses, and then create plans to expand their system after initial approval. Other districts will start with all teaching assignments and campuses. The goal, over time, is for districts to include all teaching assignments in their local designation system.

Best Practice

When deciding which eligible teaching assignments to include, a best practice is to start with assignments that already have known valid and reliable student growth measures and then expand the system to include more assignments in subsequent years.

TEA does not limit designations to teachers of record. Districts may include support teachers such as interventionists, student-facing instructional specialists, **special education inclusion teachers**, and dyslexia teachers if they are employed as a teacher (087 Staff Classification in the Public Education Information Management System [PEIMS]) and have a valid and reliable student growth measure.

Best Practice

Consider eligible teaching assignments in tandem with the possible performance data. This requires careful analysis of student growth measure options available for each teaching assignment and historical appraisal data to determine if the existing performance data is valid and reliable.



Sample District Expansion Plan

Timeline	Teaching Assignments	Student Growth Measures
Initial System Application	Grades 3-8 math, reading, and science; high school biology	MAP
	Grades K-2 reading	mClass
Year 2 Expansion and Modification Application	Algebra I, English I & II	STAAR Transition Tables
	Algebra II, geometry, pre-calculus, chemistry, and physics	District-created pre-test and post-test
Year 3 Expansion and Modification Application	Grades 6-12 science and social studies	District-created pre-test and post-test
	Grades K-8 music; grades 9-12 theater, art, music, levels I & II world languages	SLOs
	Career and Technical Education	Portfolios

In the System Application, districts confirm their eligible teaching assignments with **Texas Student Data Systems (TSDS) Course Codes (formerly Service IDs)**. A Course Code is an eight-digit number tied to a course. Teachers are linked to the Course Code for the courses they teach and may have more than one Course Code. In these cases, the district may select the course(s) and Course Code(s) that are used for data collection and determining designations.

During data submission and validation, TEA uses Course Codes and PEIMS data to ensure the district captured data for all eligible teachers. *Note that some atypical teaching assignments, such as dyslexia instructors or interventionists, may not have a Course Code. These teachers may still be eligible under the local designation system if their content aligns with an eligible Course Code.*

Teacher Performance Data and Designation Criteria

For TIA, teacher performance data consists of data from teacher observation, student growth measures, and any additional performance components if included by the district. Designation criteria refer to both the teacher performance data and the mathematical method a district uses to determine which teachers meet the requirements for each designation level.

Districts are required to describe how they apply teacher performance data in accordance with statewide performance standards to establish business rules and cut points for each designation level. Districts also need to set designation criteria for every teacher category.

Teacher Performance Data

Teacher Observation

TIA Requirements for Teacher Observation

One or more observations of a teacher instructing students for a minimum of 45 minutes or multiple observations that aggregate to at least 45 minutes.

Districts must use one approved appraisal rubric and implement observation protocols to ensure valid and reliable data. This data must be based on one or more observations of a teacher instructing students for a minimum of 45 minutes or multiple observations that aggregate to at least 45 minutes. All teachers in eligible teaching assignments must receive a complete observation and full appraisal during the Data Capture Year. Teachers with incomplete observation data or without a summative appraisal are not eligible to earn a designation.

Report observable domains for TIA data validation.

Districts will report dimension-level appraisal data from all observable domains (domains 2 and 3 for T-TESS, or the equivalent for a third party or district-created rubric).

While districts can utilize existing teacher evaluation plans to meet these criteria, they must use an approved appraisal rubric and implement observation protocols to ensure valid and reliable data. The T-TESS appraisal system incorporates all the requirements needed for appraiser certification, recertification, and calibration. Districts using Danielson, Marzano, or NIET TAP may use the corresponding T-TESS crosswalk. Districts using a locally developed rubric must ensure that it aligns to TEC §§21.351 or 21.352 prior to developing a local designation system and submitting a System Application.

District designation systems must provide fair and consistent evaluations to ensure highly effective teachers have equitable access to a designation. **Calibration protocols** are procedures used to increase alignment between appraisers and between campuses throughout the year. When used strategically, they can help increase scoring accuracy by providing appraisers opportunities to practice collecting defensible evidence for ratings. They also help appraisers develop a deeper understanding of what effective instruction looks like across a variety of contexts and ensure that each appraiser in the district is aligned in how they are evaluating teachers. The System Application requires districts to narrate how they will adhere to and implement each protocol.

Use of AI assistance in teacher observations.

Districts participating in TIA must ensure that teacher observation ratings are valid, accurate, and aligned with student growth outcomes. To maintain the integrity of the observation process, it is essential that appraisers are calibrated on ratings and aligned on evidence, enabling them to effectively support educators through meaningful feedback and coaching.

While AI assistance can be a valuable tool to supplement the observation process, it must not replace the professional judgment of the assigned appraiser. The final authority on observation ratings, coaching recommendations, and instructional feedback must always rest with the human appraiser based on their direct observations and contextual understanding.

Districts should establish clear guidelines for the appropriate use of AI tools, ensuring that:

- ➔ Appraisers remain the primary decision-makers in all aspects of the observation process.
- ➔ AI-generated insights are used only to enhance, not determine, ratings or feedback.

Calibration practices are in place to ensure consistency and reliability across all appraisers. By maintaining a balance between technological support and professional oversight, districts can uphold the rigor and fairness of the TIA observation system.

Student Growth Measures

! TIA Requirement for Student Growth Measures

Districts must establish growth targets at the individual student level that can be linked to the applicable teacher and are content and standards-aligned. The district's application must show evidence of validity and reliability of assessment development, administration, and scoring.

For eligible teaching assignments, districts must use a valid and reliable student growth measure and implement protocols for secure administration and scoring. Unlike previous incentive programs based on achievement data, TIA requires districts to identify effective teachers using student growth data. Districts are not required to use STAAR data or other standardized assessments for the local designation system. Ultimately, districts need to ensure:

- 1 Validity of the content
- 2 The student growth measure can be used to set expected growth targets
- 3 Valid and reliable administration protocols and scoring
- 4 Security protocols are in place

The statewide performance standards for each designation level align with teacher effectiveness based on the teacher's percentage of students who meet or exceed an expected growth target over the course of a single school year. Rather than using the magnitude of growth, effectiveness is measured by the impact teachers have on all students by setting growth at the individualized student level. This method allows more equitable access to a designation for effective teachers, regardless of their student population.

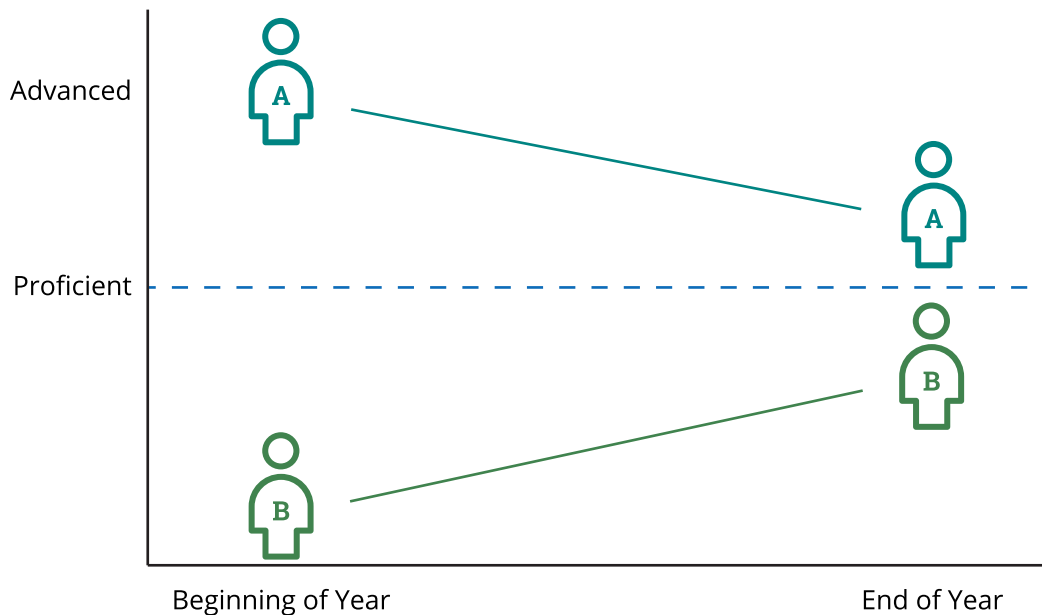
Key consideration when selecting student growth measures.

When selecting growth measures for TIA, consider how accurately the resulting data will delineate teacher effectiveness for a particular teaching assignment.

Districts can use a variety of student growth measures for their eligible teaching assignments and select different student growth measures, or combinations of growth measures, for each. For example, a district may choose to use advanced placement (AP) exams as the student growth measure for AP teachers but use both Student Learning Objectives and portfolios as the student growth measures for fine arts teachers.



Growth vs Achievement



In the graph to the above, student A starts the year Advanced in their growth measure and ends Proficient. While they still scored high enough for achievement goals, they would not meet or exceed their expected growth target. Student B starts out the year less than Proficient and still ends the year less than Proficient. However, the student has shown considerable growth moving toward Proficient and therefore would meet or exceed their expected growth target.

Districts may choose from any of the four TIA-recognized student growth measures, or a combination thereof, for each eligible teaching assignment.

- 1 Student Learning Objectives
- 2 Pre-tests and post-tests, with either third-party or district-created expected growth targets
- 3 Portfolios
- 4 Value-Added Models

Student Learning Objectives

! TIA Requirements for Student Learning Objectives

TIA requires district SLOs align with all guidelines from [texasslo.org](https://www.texasstate.com/texasstate.org).

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) focus on a foundational skill that is developed throughout the course curriculum and tailored to the context of individual students. SLOs measure student growth through a body of evidence (BOE) with a minimum of five pieces of student work. Teachers set expected growth targets for each student. They evaluate their students individually using the BOE.

Stay up to date.

TexasSLO.org was established in 2018 and updated in 2025. Districts using a previous version of SLOs should review the current Texas SLO process to determine alignment. Districts may either update their processes to align with TexasSLO.org or continue with their current system for the 2025-26 school year, with plans to update it for the 2026–27 school year.



SLOs Contain Three Phases

Phase 1

Create the SLO

- Create a skill statement
- Create an ISP
- Match current students to ISP
- Create a TSP
- Set expected growth targets for each student

Phase 2

Monitor Progress

- Monitor student work
- Define what counts as a quality task, assessment, or project
- Set a minimum of five or more data points
- BOE check-ins at mid-year with teacher and appraiser

Phase 3

Evaluate Success

- Evaluate student progress at EOY
- Ground student mastery levels to their BOE
- Require SLO evidence review as part of end-of-year teacher appraisal

Using the *Student Growth Tracker*, found on texasslo.org, teachers regularly review each student's BOE against the Targeted Skill Profile. At the end of the year, teachers work with their appraiser to determine which students met or exceeded their expected growth target, based on their respective BOE. Students who met or exceeded the expected growth target are then divided by the total number of students with a complete BOE. This provides each eligible teacher with the percentage of students who met or exceeded their expected growth target.

Portfolios

TIA Requirements for District Portfolio Process

The process should demonstrate student work aligned to the standards of the course, demonstrate mastery of standards, utilize a skills proficiency rubric, and include criteria for scoring various artifacts.

Using a collection of standards-aligned artifacts, portfolios assess student growth over the course of a year by measuring a student's movement along a skill progression rubric. Portfolios are well-suited for courses that have skill standards in creation and production as opposed to demonstration of knowledge and problem-solving.

With portfolios, students' beginning-of-year (BOY) skill levels are determined using a skill progression rubric, and an expected growth target is set for the students' end-of-year (EOY) skill levels that demonstrates movement along the skill progression rubric. An assessment of student work products is grounded in the specific skill details of the rubric. Best practice is to collect a minimum of five artifacts valid and specific to the evaluated content. The type of artifact will vary by content area, such as audio and video of a student musical, choir, or theatrical performance; student artwork either scanned digitally, submitted as a hard copy, or both; or student-created products such as welding or woodworking.

When are portfolios used for TIA?

Portfolios are most often used for eligible teaching assignments such as career and technical education, fine arts/performance arts, and early childhood special education.

Districts interested in using portfolios as a student growth measure may refer to the **Portfolio Suite of Resources**.

Pre-Tests and Post-Tests

Pre-tests and post-tests involve the administration of a BOY pre-test and an end-of-year EOY post-test. Districts must select or create pre-tests and post-tests aligned directly with the standards of the course in which the teacher is providing instruction. Districts may opt to use the EOY test from the previous year in lieu of a BOY pre-test. For example, a student's grade 4 end-of-year STAAR math score may be used as a pre-test data point for their grade 4 math course.



Pre-Test and Post-Test Timeline



Standards can be based on Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the College Board AP standards (for AP courses), or other approved state or national standards such as National Council on the Teaching of Mathematics (NCTM) standards, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) standards, or career and technical education (CTE) industry standards. The instrument must assess student proficiency in the standards of the course with questions that represent an appropriate level or range of levels of rigor for the course.

Districts can choose to use the expected growth targets that come with a third-party test (when available) or set expected growth targets locally at the district level. If using the expected growth targets from a third-party test, districts must ensure the third party uses a valid and reliable method for calculating expected growth.

How do districts use pre-tests and post-tests?

Most districts use nationally normed or criterion-referenced tests. Some use district-created or teacher-created tests. Some use a combination: district-created test for the pre-test (BOY) and third-party tests for post-test (EOY).



The Four Pre-Test Post-Test Options

Option	Pre-Test Creator	Who Sets Growth Targets	Post-Test Creator	Examples
1	Third Party	Third Party	Third Party	STAAR Transition Tables, NWEA RIT Goals
2	Third Party	District	Third Party	Released STAAR pre-test, district growth targets, spring STAAR post-test
3	District	District	District	District pre-test, district growth targets, district post-test
4	District	District	Third Party	District pre-test from item bank, district growth targets, spring IBC post-test

! TIA Requirements for Pre-Tests and Post-Tests

For all options, districts are required to ensure each assessment:

- ➔ *Aligns with the standards of the course tied to the eligible teacher.*
- ➔ *Allows for setting an individual student growth target between the pre-test and the post-test.*
- ➔ *Follows state and district guidelines for administration and scoring security.*
- ➔ *Contains questions representing an appropriate level of rigor and range of question levels.*
- ➔ *Accurately measures what is taught over the course of the year.*

Pre-tests and post-tests must have a set administration window and standardized guidelines to ensure validity and reliability. All tests must be kept secure prior to administration, while testing is taking place, and during the scoring process. Annual training should be provided to all test administrators and proctors.

Value-Added Models

Value-added models (VAMs) set predicted scores based on multiple years of historical testing data across multiple contents using statistical modeling. VAM is widely recognized as a valid and reliable method to determine student growth. It is based on an accurate underlying statistical model that predicts future performance based on past ability. In a VAM, when a student performs at, above, or below their expected score, it correlates with the teacher's effectiveness.

A value-added model looks at how much progress students make from year to year. It compares the combination of a student's current and prior assessments with a student's achievement on a quality, normed assessment such as STAAR. By looking at a student's prior data together with data from other students who have similar testing histories, a predicted or expected score can be calculated for that group of students with similar testing histories. Growth is calculated by looking at expected progress to actual progress of a student to see if more than, less than, or an expected amount of growth occurred.

Details of the VAM process involve complex statistical analyses that are often conducted by independent researchers. Districts have the option to contract with an external provider or use the Texas VAM data made available mid-September prior to data submission.

TEA provides Texas VAM at no cost to districts.

TEA provides Texas VAM as a standardized, statewide model developed in collaboration with SAS and Texas Tech University. This model uses STAAR assessment data to estimate student growth and teacher impact. In contrast, external providers may use customized models, alternative assessments, or locally defined growth targets. These externally developed models may vary in methodology, cost, and alignment with TEA's statewide performance standards.

Please visit the [Texas VAM web page](#) for more information on this option and additional use cases for this data.



Common Assessments Used with VAM

→ STAAR

→ NWEA MAP

→ mCLASS

→ IACT

→ Istation

→ Iowa Tests (SAT/PSAT)

VAM can be used with any nationally normed or criterion-referenced test. The assessment must meet three main criteria to be used in growth models:

- 1 Sufficient scale stretch.** The test can distinguish student performance for both high- and low-achieving students and differentiate growth across all achievement levels. The test must have questions at various difficulty levels to accurately discern a student's ability, including those on the edges.
- 2 Demonstrated relevance and validity.** The test must align to state or national standards of what students are expected to know and do.
- 3 Sufficient reliability.** The assessment provides consistent results within and across administrations to make comparisons and establish a predictive relationship. The scales must be reliable from year to year.



Student Growth Measures Considerations

Growth Measure	Benefits	Possible Challenges
Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)	Can be used for all teaching assignments High teacher engagement Based on a body of student work	Training for all participating staff is required Appraiser is heavily involved Time required to evaluate the BOE
District-created pre-tests and post-tests	Can be used for all teaching assignments Local control TEA issued guidance on building quality assessments	Content and assessment design expertise required to build and approve assessments Requires multiple levels of review
Third-party-created pre-tests and post-tests	Demonstrated validity and reliability Districts may already use third-party vendor tests	May not work for all content areas May require purchasing
Portfolio	Recommended for performance-based classes such as fine arts	Heavy planning at BOY Appraiser may be heavily involved
Value-Added Models (VAM)s	Demonstrated validity and reliability Statewide protocols for administration and scoring (if using STAAR) No associated costs if using Texas VAM	Often requires contracting with a third party, unless using Texas VAM

Selecting Student Growth Measures

When selecting a growth measure for TIA, districts must consider the capacity of district and campus personnel to consistently implement each growth measure with fidelity across campuses and teaching assignments.

Key questions when discussing and selecting student growth measures for different teaching assignments:

- Is the district currently using any growth measures that are approved for TIA?
- What growth measures are best for each subject area/grade level?
- How will the district set individual growth targets for each measure and track student progress?
- What role will teachers have in setting student growth goals?
- What is the current capacity for implementing different growth measures with fidelity?

Calculating Student Growth

To calculate the percentage of a teacher's students who met or exceeded expected growth, districts divide the number of students who met or exceeded their expected growth target by the total number of students with an expected growth score who completed the final assessment.

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{percent of students} \\ \text{who met or exceeded} \\ \text{growth targets} \end{array} = \frac{\text{total number of students who met or exceeded growth target}}{\text{total number of students with an expected growth score who completed the final assessment}}$$

To be included in a teacher's total number of students, the student must have an expected growth target set at the beginning of the year and must complete the assessment, portfolio, or BOE at the end of the year.

Districts may implement business rules for determining which students will count toward a teacher's total number of students. Some districts institute a minimum number of days a student must have attended class to factor into a teacher's student growth rating. For teachers with multiple course sections or assignments, the district may combine growth data for all students in the same course or select a section or course most reflective of the teacher's student population.

Districts have wide flexibility in determining growth targets and methods to calculate student growth for all populations. Districts may attribute student growth data to more than one teacher if multiple teachers provide the student with instruction. For example, an inclusion teacher providing reading support services to a student may use growth data from the same reading assessment that is used for student's teacher of record.

Optional Performance Components

Districts have the option to incorporate data from other sources into their evaluations to align with district goals and values. Examples may include results from student and parent surveys, leadership within the school community, or mentorship.

Districts may also choose to establish local eligibility prerequisites, such as certification, years of experience, attendance, or campus leadership roles. These prerequisites may exclude teachers from designation consideration, even if their performance otherwise qualifies them. *Note that districts must still collect and submit data for all teachers in eligible assignments, even if they do not meet local prerequisites for designation.*

Designation Criteria

Designation criteria refer to the mathematical procedures that a district uses for each eligible teacher category to achieve valid and reliable designation results. An eligible teacher category includes teaching assignments that utilize the same assessment, appraisal rubric, and designation criteria.

Districts determine a “weight” or percentage for each component of their system within an eligible teacher category, based on statewide performance standards and historical performance data. These weights are specified in the district’s System of Record and may be adjusted by the district prior to submitting data. The TEA provides yearly training and guidance regarding component weighting and the designation determination process.

Statewide Performance Standards

TIA Requirements for Statewide Performance

TEA requires a minimum score of proficient for all observable dimensions to qualify for a designation. Outside the observation proficiency requirement, TEA does not require exact alignment with the performance standards.

Using statewide teacher performance data, TEA established performance standards to serve as guidelines for districts when evaluating teacher effectiveness and setting designation criteria. For teacher observation, the performance standards were determined using statewide T-TESS observation data. Student growth performance standards were determined through a value-added model using STAAR data across five years (2014–2019).

Performance standards represent statewide percentages of teacher performance relative to all Texas teachers. A district’s top 5% of teachers may align, exceed, or fall below the observation and student growth performance standards. Before establishing designation cut points, districts may study how their teachers perform in comparison to teachers across the state. Designated teachers may perform above or below the performance standards, and designation levels may not align for each teacher’s observation and student growth data.



Statewide Performance Standards

Designation Level	Statewide Percentages	Teacher Observation Performance Standards*	Student Growth Performance Standards
Recognized	Top 33%	3.7 or 74% of possible points	55% met or exceeded
Exemplary	Top 20%	3.9 or 78% of possible points	60% met or exceeded
Master	Top 5%	4.5 or 90% of possible points	70% met or exceeded

Represents average of all dimensions in T-TESS Domains 2 and 3. **Teachers must have a minimum score of Proficient in all observable dimensions to be eligible for a new designation.*

Note: exact performance standards for Acknowledged are pending rule updates and will be confirmed by April.

Percentages may vary.

While designations represent the top-performing teachers in the state of Texas, districts that submit teachers for designations through their local designation system may find that they have more or less than the numbers represented. Any teacher that meets a local designation system's eligibility requirements and the minimum proficiency observation ratings may be submitted for designation.

Prior to approving local designation systems, TEA studies the overall alignment of district designations to the statewide performance standards. Exact alignment is not required. During the data validation process, Texas Tech reviews how closely a district's system aligns their designations to the statewide performance standards for both student growth measures and teacher observations. Teachers in each designation category will generally exceed minimum averages; however, the overall holistic review may allow for ratings that are lower than the stated minimums in some cases.

How do districts capture data for teachers in multiple assignments?

This is a local decision. Best practice is to communicate with teachers and campus administrators early in the year. For teachers who work across assignments in the same eligible teacher category, the district can choose to combine data from multiple assignments or use a single assignment. For more guidance, see our **system implementation and data capture** section on the website and review the provided resources.

Example A: A self-contained third grade teacher's students take MAP reading and math. If third-grade math and reading fall under the same eligible teacher category, the district may choose to either collect both reading and math data for TIA or only use one set of data. *Note that teachers may not belong to more than one eligible teaching category.*

Example B: An eighth-grade math teacher also teaches sections of US history, for which the district uses two different growth measures. In this case, the district and campus administrator would determine one assignment to be used for capturing statewide performance data.

Designation Policies

For certified teachers, TEA will display the designation in the top right-hand corner of the State Board of Education Certification (SBEC) teaching certificate. Designated teachers are assigned a Designated Teacher ID and listed in the **Designated Teacher Public Search Registry**.

Teachers may only have one active designation at a time. Recognized and Exemplary teachers who meet an approved district's performance criteria may be submitted for a higher level of designation. In these cases, the five-year clock restarts, and the lower designation becomes inactive.

National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) who qualify for designation through their district's local designation system may be put forth for any level of designation. TEA defaults to the higher designation, and the NBCT designation becomes inactive. In the case of NBCTs with two Recognized designations, the later expiry date applies.

Teachers may not be submitted for an equal or lower designation. Once a teacher's designation expires, an approved district may submit them for a new or higher designation if they meet the local performance criteria.

Approval of individual teacher designations are voidable by TEA for one or more of the following reasons:

- ➔ A teacher has not fulfilled all designation requirements.
- ➔ The teacher is listed in the Texas Do Not Hire registry.
- ➔ The designated teacher's certificate issued by the SBEC is in a sanction status.
Note: Certificate sanctions result in automatic designation revocation. If the sanction is lifted, the designation may be reinstated to the original expiry date.
- ➔ The designating district or charter school's designation system was voided.
- ➔ The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards revokes a National Board Certification that provided the basis for a teacher's designation.

TIA Teacher Spending Plan

TIA Statutory Requirements for Spending Allotment Funds

Districts must spend 90% or more of the allotment on teacher compensation on the campus where the designated teacher works. Up to 10% of the allotment may be used by the district to support the local designation system or to support teachers in earning designations.

Districts are notified of their annual allotment amount in late April and must spend all funds by August 31 of the same calendar year. Please note spending requirements and timelines do not apply to fees reimbursed through TIA.

Strong local designation systems have goal-oriented spending plans based on engagement with district- and campus-level stakeholders. There are a variety of options for using TIA funds to support district goals for teacher retention, teacher recruitment, and prioritization of high-needs campuses. Districts must outline how and when they will spend the allotment, plan for contingencies when designated teachers move, and set a timeline for school board approval.

Teacher Definition for the Purposes of TIA Compensation

Teacher is defined as student-facing instructional staff. This may include instructional aides and paraprofessionals, classroom inclusion support teachers, and other staff members who primarily work directly with students in an instructional setting.

Funding Distribution

Within the parameters of the spending requirements, districts may choose to split the allotment funding in several ways. Some districts choose to give the full 100% of funding to the designated teachers. Other districts choose to split the funding to reward other educators on the campus who contribute to student success, such as other teachers, interventionists, and instructional paraprofessionals. Districts may use funds from the 10% to provide additional professional development opportunities to designated teachers and teachers who may be eligible for designation in the future.



Example Funding Distribution

60%

DESIGNATED TEACHER

30%

SUPPORT TEACHERS

10%

PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT



Permitted vs. Prohibited Spending of TIA Funds

Permitted Spending of Teacher Compensation (Minimum 90% of Funds)

- ✓ Stipends or salary increases for designated teachers
- ✓ Stipends or salary increases for other teachers at the campus of the designated teacher(s)
- ✓ Compensation for other staff at the campus of the designated teacher(s) whose primary responsibility is instructing students

Permitted Spending of District Retained Funds (Maximum 10% of Funds)

- ✓ Professional development for teachers
- ✓ Central supports such as funding for TIA coordinator or HR needs
- ✓ Compensation for district or campus staff with additional TIA or professional development responsibilities outside the normal scope of work for their role, such as school leaders or instructional coaches (*note: these duties must be in addition to the regular duties of their job*)
- ✓ Rubric costs, appraiser rater training, or certification
- ✓ Other student growth costs
- ✓ TIA assessment costs
- ✓ Recruitment, such as job fairs

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

Prohibited Spending of Teacher Compensation (Minimum 90% of Funds)

- ✗ Compensation for school leaders
- ✗ Compensation for non-instructional staff (including instructional coaches that do not teach)
- ✗ Compensation for central staff or staff at a different campus from the designated teacher(s)

Prohibited Spending of District Retained Funds (Maximum 10% of Funds)

- ✗ General administrative expenses
- ✗ Compensation for staff not associated with TIA needs or with professional development



Methods of Compensation

Spending plans can take many forms. The two main types of plans are those based on stipends or raises to base salaries, with some districts combining both approaches.

Stipends

Stipends are a simple method for targeting additional pay aligned with district priorities such as recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers or providing incentives for teaching in high-needs schools. Since stipends are extra payments outside of a teacher’s base salary, the stipend payment is lost if a teacher is no longer eligible.

In the example below, the stipends are paid out in two payments, with a larger final stipend paid in August as a retention bonus for those educators returning to the school.

Payment Schedule	Recognized	Exemplary	Master
Payment 1: May	\$1,500	\$9,000	\$12,000
Payment 2: August	\$3,000	\$6,000	\$18,000

Base Salary Raises

Salary-based plans provide a raise to a teacher’s base salary. Districts adopting a base salary raise plan need to consider:

- ➔ Adding performance-based lanes to the existing salary schedule
- ➔ Creating a new salary schedule based on performance
- ➔ Providing performance-based raises—either fixed amounts or percentages—for designated teachers or other eligible educators

In the example below, the statewide performance raise for designated teachers is created by adding lanes to the district’s standard teacher salary schedule. The amounts in the Recognized, Exemplary, and Master lanes are added to the designated teacher’s salary based on where they fall within the standard steps and lanes.

Steps	BA	MA	PH.D..	Recognized	Exemplary	Master
1	\$32,000	\$38,000	\$45,000	\$4,500	\$9,000	\$18,000
2	\$32,800	\$38,950	\$46,125	\$4,500	\$9,000	\$18,000
3	\$33,620	\$39,924	\$47,278	\$4,500	\$9,000	\$18,000
30	\$65,485	\$77,763	\$92,088	\$4,500	\$9,000	\$18,000

Combination Plans

The district can combine salary raises with stipends to align compensation with The district can combine salary raises with stipends to align compensation with additional district goals. For example, the district could develop a salary schedule and offer stipends for signing bonuses or retention bonuses. Timing may direct the choices a district makes. Some districts pay out stipends in the first year and then change to salary schedules in subsequent years.

If a district chooses to adopt a stipend plan, they must decide if the stipend is paid in a single lump-sum payment or in multiple payments over several weeks or months. For districts to adopt a base salary raise plan, they need to decide how the raise is added.

In the example below, a salary-based raise is created by ranging from a novice base salary for new teachers to master for the highest performing teachers. It includes stipends of \$3,000 as an incentive for teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools and subject areas.

Salary Step	Base Salary	Stipend	Amount
Master	\$105,000	Hard to Staff School	\$3,000
Exemplary	\$90,000	Hard to Staff Subject	\$3,000
Recognized	\$70,000		
Proficient	\$60,000		
Progressing	\$55,000		
Novice	\$45,000		



Using TIA Funds to Reach District Goals

District Goal	TIA Funding Possibilities
Recruit Effective Teachers	Signing bonuses, higher starting salaries, opportunities for pay increases within the first few years
Support Educator Development	Stipends to acquire specific knowledge and pedagogical skills, increased compensation for serving in leadership roles or mentoring new teachers
Improve Retention	Annual retention bonuses, career pathways that increase compensation and provide growth opportunities within the classroom

Planning for Teacher Movement

Allotment values are determined by each designated teacher's campus as of the last Friday in February. Funds do not follow designated teachers in real time, and allotments are not prorated between campuses or school districts. If a designated teacher moves districts midyear, the timing is paramount to determining which district, if any, receives funds.

Districts must outline how the spending plan will be adjusted when teachers move into or out of the district before and after the February snapshot date. *Note that districts can create spending plans that reward designated teachers across the school year. For example, some districts implement a quarterly payment system. As a best practice, districts should have a plan to adjust or account for actual allotments received, which are finalized in April each year.*

Districts need a plan for teachers who resign or retire prior to the scheduled payout date. Some districts may choose to give the full or remaining payment to the designated teacher who earned the funding in one lump stipend payment. Other districts may choose to use funds for supporting teachers who remain on campus to help their retention goals.

If the district chooses not to forward allotment funds, the district must still spend at least 90% on teacher compensation on the campus where the designated teacher worked by August 31 of the same calendar year.

Districts' spending plans should consider National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) and designated teachers who move into a district. Some districts differentiate spending plans if the designation was earned outside the local designation system. Most districts apply the same spending plan to all designated teachers.

Teacher Retirement System Considerations

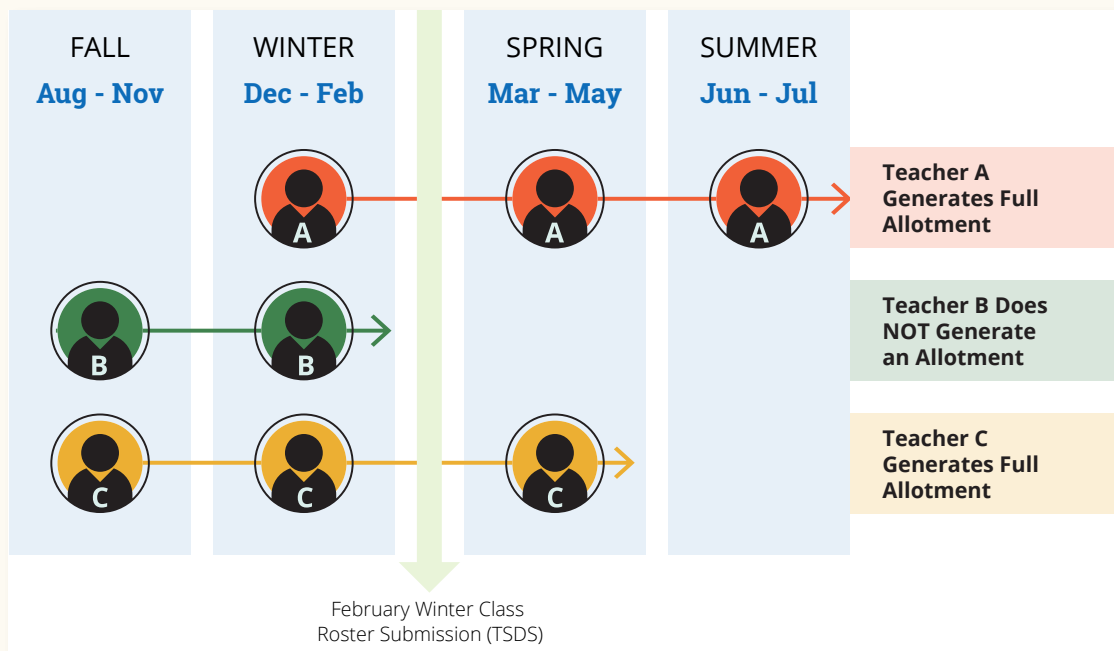
All TIA compensation is Teacher Retirement System (TRS) eligible. TRS has limits of 10% or \$10,000 increase per year on eligible salary increases in the last 3 or 5 years prior to retirement. This could limit the extent to which the TIA compensation paid in those years is TRS eligible. A member can "work out of the limit"– the member will need to contact a TRS benefit counselor when they are ready to retire to determine if this limit will impact their retirement annuity calculation. Districts should be prepared to assist teachers with a TRS creditable compensation determination. Districts may pay employee and employer contributions from the 90% portion of the allotment or the 10% since those benefit payments are considered included in overall compensation.

*Note: TIA compensation is subject to the statutory minimum contribution, or state contribution, in addition to other **TRS contributions**. The reporting employer payment of the state contribution is due for salary paid above the state minimum salary. See the **TRS Payroll Manual** for more information.*





How Teacher Resignations Affect Funding



Formalizing the Spending Plan

Once a district has narrowed down spending plan options, the TIA lead(s) may work with the district business office to examine the feasibility of each option and consult with impacted departments. Teacher spending plans often require additional support from the district chief financial officer (CFO), payroll department, or human resources. Prior to completing the System Application, the district must finalize decisions on the timing, amount, and mode of compensation, and ensure district departments have the capacity to implement the spending plan. Once the district's System Application is accepted, the district may amend their local compensation plan and/or budget through their normal local procedures.

Districts should obtain school board approval of the proposed spending plan. Most districts choose to either do this annually or the summer before they anticipate designating and compensating TIA teachers, which is often the year after the Data Capture Year. Once the district's System Application is accepted, best practice is to communicate the spending plan to teachers and stakeholders and make it accessible.

What is the difference between a TIA spending plan and a local compensation plan?

Local compensation plan: a plan outlining staff compensation including income and benefits package. Locally approved by the school board. Districts without a local designation system may need to include language regarding TIA payouts.

TIA spending plan: districts with local designation systems must draft spending plan that details how they will spend the allotment according to statutory requirements and best practices.

Establishing a Local Designation System

Developing a local designation system takes thoughtful planning and stakeholder engagement. TEA allows flexibility in system design to align with each district's goals for retention, recruitment, and staffing.

The guidance in this section outlines timelines, key considerations, and foundational steps prior to applying for a system with TEA. Review the initial steps recommended for creating a local designation system, including establishing a TIA lead and planning committee before beginning to build the local designation system.



System Approval Timeline

Year 1: Application Year

Districts attend TEA technical assistance sessions and work with their ESC as they continue to outline details of their proposed designation system and submit a formal application.

Year 3 Fall & Winter: Data Submission & Validation

Districts identify which teachers qualify for each level of designation using prior year performance data. They submit teacher designations and performance data for all teachers in eligible assignments to Texas Tech for data validation. TEA conducts a final holistic review of systems for approval.

Fully Approved Systems: Issue New & Higher Designations & Monitor System Implementation

Districts identify which teachers qualify for each level of designation using prior year performance data. They submit teacher designations and performance data for all teachers in eligible assignments to Texas Tech for data validation. TEA conducts a holistic review of systems for approval.

Year 0-1: Develop a Local Designation System

Districts work with stakeholders to design a local designation system.

Year 2: Data Capture Year

Districts implement their system as outlined in their System of Record (established in their accepted application), collect teacher performance data, and conduct the Teacher Buy-In Survey.

Year 3 Spring: System Approval & Award Designations

Districts are notified if the system and designations are approved or denied. TEA processes new and higher designations for approved districts and notifies districts of the annual allotment.

When can districts begin modifying their systems?

Districts may begin submitting Expansion and Modification Applications once their System Applications have been accepted.

Year 0-1: Develop a Local Designation System

District Supports

Districts can find support from Regional education service centers (ESCs), technical assistance providers, and the Texas Education Agency.

Regional Education Service Centers

ESCs receive grant funding from TEA to assist districts in developing and implementing local designation systems, and opportunities to collaborate with other districts.

ESC Specialized hubs provide additional support for stakeholder engagement, data collection, implementing SLOs and portfolios, rural cohorts, and strategic compensation can be accessed through the local ESC TIA leads. Learn more about **ESC supports with TIA** on our website.

Technical Assistance Providers

Districts may choose to receive additional support from third-party vendors and technical assistance providers (TAPs) to develop their local designation systems and manage teacher performance data. Learn more about **working with TAPs** on our website.

Texas Education Agency

TEA provides regular technical assistance and resources for all districts as they develop and implement their systems. TEA also provides support via the TIA inbox, **tia@tea.texas.gov**, with timely responses for all questions and concerns. To receive the TIA technical assistance calendar and regular updates, districts must submit an online Letter of Intent. Learn more about the Letter of Intent below.

Initial Steps

Review TIA Requirements and Establish a TIA Lead

For districts just getting started, the first step is to build a general understanding of TIA and designate a TIA lead or leads. The TIA lead(s) drive the work of creating the local designation system and serve as a point of contact for TEA. TIA leads coordinate with district departments and key stakeholders to complete the System Application and oversee system implementation.

Best Practice

District TIA leads often work in human resources, teacher appraisal, or curriculum and instruction and have clearance to access confidential teacher identifiers and performance data. A best practice for larger districts is to select two or more TIA leads working in different departments.

The TIA lead must have the expertise, capacity, and high-level support to lead the work. While some districts may create a position specific to leading their TIA local designation system development, most designate existing personnel to lead TIA while performing other essential functions. The TIA lead should have regular access to district leadership to ensure key decisions are made in alignment with district goals and strategic planning.

Recruit a TIA Planning Committee

A TIA planning committee is recommended. The committee should understand the mechanics of TIA as well as key dates and timelines. Guided by the TIA lead(s), the planning committee oversees the creation of the local designation system in alignment with district goals and core values.

The committee should include key personnel such as human resources, finance, curriculum and instruction, appraisal leads, administrators, and teachers. The size of the committee is often determined by the size of the district.

Districts may consider who will be most impacted at each stage of implementing the local designation system and include those personnel at various points in the planning process.

Best Practice

Teachers and campus-based staff make up 50% or more of the committee membership.

Submit an Online Letter of Intent

All newly applying districts must submit a letter of intent (LOI) indicating their application year and establishing their point(s) of contact. Completing the LOI grants access to the TIA Online Portal, the upcoming district technical assistance trainings, recordings and resources not found on the website, and ensures the district receives timely updates throughout the year.

To submit an LOI, districts should email the TIA inbox at tia@tea.texas.gov. Once received, TEA verifies the requestor email and sends the LOI link.

Develop a Documentation Plan

Another key initial step is determining where and how district plans will be documented, stored, and shared. The creation of a local designation system is a multi-year process and must be sustainable despite turnover or role changes. If a district changes the TIA lead(s) or members of their committee, proper documentation and shared access will allow the new lead to successfully transition and take over.

Best Practice

Maintain both digital and hard-copy records of meeting minutes, decisions, timelines, and involved personnel.

If the TIA lead retires, resigns, or moves into a new role, districts should update their points of contact by emailing the TIA inbox. TEA encourages districts to have at least one backup point of contact who is aware of the district's TIA plans and can access documentation.

Year 1: Application Year

Districts often begin the application year at different points in developing their local designation systems, with some having foundational elements in place and others just starting the design process. Over the course of the year, these districts continue to refine and expand their systems, leveraging available resources and collaborating across departments to address gaps.

Attend TEA Technical Assistance

Participation in TEA's technical assistance sessions is crucial during this phase, as it enables district TIA leads and planning committees to gain critical insight into system components, statutory requirements, and best practices. Through ongoing engagement with TEA support and internal stakeholders, districts build capacity and systematically strengthen their local designation systems, positioning themselves to submit a comprehensive and compliant application in the spring.

Submit the Application

! The application contains statutory sections districts need to understand.

Statutory sections of the application include the Weighting, Teacher Observation, Student Growth, and Spending (Part A) tabs. Districts must meet "Full Readiness" in each of these areas in order for TEA to accept their application.

Once the local designation system is fully designed and prepared to implement, districts apply in the TIA Online Portal with the TIA System Application. The System Application allows TEA to assess the district's readiness for implementing a successful local designation system. Districts apply by mid-April and begin implementing their system the following year.

After initial submission, TEA reviews and scores applications to confirm that systems comply with statute and are structured to support the validity and reliability of teacher performance data within the local designation system. TEA informs districts if their application is accepted. Accepted System Applications become the district's official System of Record.

Districts must demonstrate "Full Readiness" in all statutory categories for acceptance. If a district does not achieve "Full Readiness," they have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their application for review. Districts whose System Application is denied may reapply the following year.



What is a System of Record?

The System of Record is a district's current local designation system design used to collect data for data submission. If a district updates their system with an Expansion and Modification application, then they will implement their new System of Record the school year after the application is accepted.



System Application Tabs

Application Tab	Tab Description
District Information tab	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ District contact information→ Technical Assistance Provider details→ Texas Tech University data sharing agreement
Weighting tab	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Clear summary of the system→ Organizes eligible teaching assignments into categories→ Outlines designation criteria and teacher performance data used for each eligible teacher category→ Component weighting for observation data, student growth, and optional factors
Eligible Teachers and Campuses tabs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Identify which campuses are included in the local designation system→ Identify which courses/Course Codes are eligible to earn a designation under the local system
Teacher Observation tab	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ District explanation of the appraisal system, certification requirements, and training→ Calibration practices→ Data analysis→ Observation protocols, including walkthroughs and annual appraisal requirement

Application Tab	Tab Description
Student Growth Measure tabs <i>Portfolios, Pre-test Post-test (4 options), Student Learning Objectives, Value-Added Models</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ensure each growth measure aligns to the content of the course → Ensure validity of administration, training, security, and scoring → Verify how each growth measure are used to set expected growth targets and calculate a student growth rating for each eligible teacher
Spending tab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Outline the spending plan for allotment funds → Ensure compliance with 90/10 rule → Ensure planning for teacher movement
Stakeholder Engagement tab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Explain process of developing the local designation system → Provide examples of stakeholder engagement practices → Provide examples of collection and implementation of feedback → Explain district communication plan
District Support tab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Describe systems and process for system support → Ensure the district is prepared for successful data capture and submission → Explain plans for retention and recruitment, supporting designated teachers, and strategic staffing of designated teachers



Modifying a System of Record

Once a district establishes a System of Record, they may update their system through an Expansion and Modification Application.

System changes that require an Expansion and Modification include:

- Adding or modifying eligible teaching assignments or eligible teacher categories
- Adding or removing eligible campuses

- Changing or adding student growth measures including adding or changing the assessments being used
- Changing the teacher observation rubric

System changes that do not require an Expansion and Modification Application include:

- Changes to component weighting
- Removing or adding optional system components
- Changes to the process for setting expected student growth targets
- Changes to district local performance standards and designation cut points
- Adding newly built campuses to the eligible campus list, if the system already includes all campuses

Why do districts choose to expand their systems in later years?

Many districts choose to begin with a subset of eligible campuses or teaching assignments and expand their system in subsequent years with the goal of eventually including all teachers. This gives them an opportunity to build a foundation for a strong local designation system and then add to their system.

Applying for System Modifications

The annual window for system modifications mirrors the original application process. Changes to statutory components are subject to TEA review and must be accepted prior to implementation. TEA does not require the district to administer a new Teacher Buy-In Survey after modifying their system. If a district changes its system, the original five-year approval period remains in effect.

All district applications are hosted online, and any changes are completed through the TIA Online Portal during the application window. Like the initial application, TEA scores Expansion and Modification Applications and allows an opportunity for revision and resubmission if needed.

If accepted, the System of Record is updated according to the Expansion and Modification Application beginning at the start of the following school year—the system cannot be changed retroactively.

Districts begin to collect teacher observation and student growth data in accordance with the newly modified System of Record in the following school year; however, the fall

data submission must still reflect the previous System of Record. **Newly added teaching assignments will not be eligible for designation until the updated system has been implemented for a full school year.**

If a district's Expansion and Modification Application is denied, the district may continue implementing their current System of Record.

Note: Because spending plans can be directly tied to district priorities, TEA may use administrative discretion to allow spending plan adjustments outside the application window. Districts who want to use this option should reach out via email to tia@tea.texas.gov.

Do districts have to repeat a Data Capture Year if they modify their system?

Districts must collect teacher performance data annually to propose new and higher designations. After full system approval, a formal Data Capture Year is not required. To prevent issues during data validation, it is best to limit appraisal waivers and collect teacher performance data for the majority, if not all, teachers within eligible teaching assignments.

Year 2: Data Capture Year

During the initial year of system implementation, referred to as the "Data Capture Year," districts carry out calibration exercises, collect and analyze data, administer assessments, and coordinate across departments to monitor teacher performance. The system must be implemented in accordance with each district's System of Record. Additionally, a Teacher Buy-In Survey is administered early in the year to assess teacher understanding and support for the local designation system

Administer the TIA Teacher Buy-In Survey

The Teacher Buy-In Survey is administered at the start of the Data Capture Year following acceptance of the district's application. TEA provides instructions and timelines for submitting teacher email information to Texas Tech after the application is accepted. Texas Tech administers the survey to all teachers and issues weekly reminders to those who have not yet responded. After the survey window closes, districts receive aggregated results, a comprehensive report, and statewide averages.

Developed by Texas Tech University, the survey assesses teachers' awareness and level of support for their district's local designation system before its implementation. Districts may use the findings as part of ongoing efforts to improve the fairness, accuracy, and reliability of the local designation system.

Collect Data for Every Teacher in an Eligible Assignment

! TEA Requirements for the Data Capture Year

To validate the system, districts must collect teacher observation and student growth data for all teachers in eligible teaching assignments. This means that TEA does not allow appraisal waivers for any teacher within a system's eligible teaching assignment, even if they do not wish to be designated. Uncertified teachers working in eligible assignments must also be included.

During the Data Capture Year, all teachers in an eligible teaching assignment must have:

- ➔ A formal appraisal with complete observation data
 - Appraisal waivers are not permitted during the Data Capture Year.
 - Districts report one numeric score for each observable dimension.
- ➔ A final student growth rating
 - Districts report the percentage of the teacher's students who met or exceeded their individual expected growth target.

Eligible teaching assignments are tied to a course and not individual teachers. If a teacher moves out of an eligible assignment prior to the Data Capture Year, the district must collect observation and student growth data for the teacher who fills the eligible position. If a teacher moves from an eligible assignment to a non-eligible assignment before or during the Data Capture Year, they are no longer eligible to earn a designation. TEA tracks eligible teaching assignments using **service IDs/Course Codes** linked to annual Fall PEIMS and TSDS Class Roster Winter Submissions.

Best Practice

Closely monitor and track data collection for all teachers in eligible assignments throughout the year. Ensure campus leaders understand how to track eligible teachers and assignments. Allow them to review and confirm teacher and student rosters, as well as teacher performance data.

Data Capture Year Policies

Failure to capture a teacher's performance data for any reason during the Data Capture Year will impact the district's data validation results. In rare cases, circumstances outside of the district's control may prevent the district from capturing data for one or more teachers.

Outside of the allowable exceptions, if a district fails to collect complete data in alignment with their System of Record, TEA will not grant full approval status and the district will need to submit data in the next data submission and validation cycle to receive full approval



Data Collection Exceptions

Allowable Exceptions

- ✓ Teacher moved out of the eligible teaching assignment prior to administration of EOY growth data
- ✓ Teacher was hired or moved to an eligible assignment after BOY growth data was collected
- ✓ Teacher was on FMLA, bereavement leave, or special circumstances which resulted in significant absences

Prohibited Exceptions

- ✗ Teachers in eligible assignments were granted appraisal waivers
- ✗ Teacher or teacher group failed to administer or score student growth measures with fidelity
- ✗ Administrator(s) failed to conduct or complete formal appraisals
- ✗ Unfavorable teacher data was removed
- ✗ District or campus failed to monitor data collection for a particular teaching assignment or exempted eligible teacher groups from data capture
- ✗ District allowed teachers to opt-out of administering student growth measures or opt-out of appraisal
- ✗ District administered assessment for student growth that was not aligned to its approved student growth measures

**Failing to submit data due to prohibited exceptions may result in the suspension of data validation.*

Align Observation and Student Growth Measures

Districts must ensure that teacher performance data is captured accurately and consistently. When a teacher is responsible for multiple TIA-eligible courses, there is no requirement that both observation ratings and student growth data be collected from the same course. However, aligning the course used for both measures is strongly encouraged, as it enhances the reliability and validity of the data used to determine teacher effectiveness.

Aligning observation and student growth measures:

- ➔ Promotes a clearer connection between instructional practices and student outcomes.
- ➔ Strengthens the validity of performance ratings, supporting fair and meaningful evaluation.
- ➔ Simplifies data analysis and interpretation for both district leaders and educators.

Implement Local Policies for Data Collection

To minimize the risk of incomplete data, the best practice is to institute clear policies for circumstances that may impact valid and reliable data capture.

Scenarios to plan for may include:

- ➔ What is the hiring deadline for a teacher to be eligible for data capture if they are hired after the first day of school? At what point after the BOY can the district confidently attribute student growth to the teacher's instruction?
- ➔ If a teacher moves to a non-eligible assignment very late in the school year, at what point will the district continue to collect student growth data for TIA purposes?
- ➔ Will teachers who take leave remain eligible for TIA? Should there be a minimum number of instructional days worked to be included in data capture?
- ➔ What rules are in place for student mobility and attendance in data capture? Should students who miss significant instructional days be included when calculating a teacher's student growth rating?
- ➔ By what date must a student be enrolled to factor into a teacher's growth rating?
- ➔ How will the district determine teacher categories and capture data for teachers in multiple assignments? Which students and sections will be included for the student growth rating?
- ➔ What is the minimum number of students required to determine a teacher's growth rating?
- ➔ If the system includes non-teachers of record, such as interventionists and inclusion teachers, how will the district track student-teacher linkages and use data to determine an overall growth rating?

Year 3 Fall & Winter: Data Submission & Validation

Following the Data Capture Year, districts determine designations using the teacher performance data outlined in their System of Record and submit proposed teacher designations along with the teacher performance data for all teachers in eligible assignments. Texas Tech runs data validation checks which are used by TEA as part of a holistic system review to determine final approval of the district's system.

Review Data for Accuracy

Before finalizing designation decisions, districts must ensure all data has been collected and checked for accuracy and completion. Using multiple teacher identifiers (like a local or unique ID and date of birth) in district data management systems reduces errors in tracking teacher identification, student linkages, as well as observation and student growth data. Once the file is accepted, TEA cannot modify district's data submission. Many districts consult with a data analyst or technology systems manager for assistance with data compilation and analysis.

Best Practice

Once teacher performance data are compiled and reviewed at the district level, establish a window for campus administrators and teachers to verify the data. Many districts distribute teacher score cards with the individual teacher's appraisal rating, student growth or assessment scores, student roster verification, and a final growth rating. This allows the opportunity for correction of inaccuracies before data submission.

Determine Designations

Districts review teacher performance data and designation criteria to determine which teachers will qualify for Recognized, Exemplary, and Master designations. Most districts choose to determine designations in the summer or early fall following the Data Capture Year.

Use the TIA Designation Determination Tool to assist with calculations.

The TIA Designation Determination Tool provides mathematical calculations for assistance in determining designations. Districts input decisions about their local designation system such as application weights, performance standards, and minimum requirements. These inputs are then used in conjunction with teacher performance data to output designation results.

Establish System Cut Points

Districts must establish performance cut points for each designation level—the absolute minimum a teacher receives on their performance data for each designation level. For some districts, this may involve complex calculations and support from a data analyst. Some districts establish minimum requirements for earning a designation for each teacher performance component used. This is typically done by using the statewide performance standards as a guide. TEA provides annual training and guidance related to determining cut points and determining designations.

Verify TEA Teacher Designation Criteria

In addition to meeting the local designation system cut points, districts must confirm if teachers meet TEA designation criteria.



TEA Teacher Designation Criteria

Criteria	Data Capture Year	Designation Year
Employed by the district	✓	✓
Employed as a teacher	✓	✓
Employed in an eligible teaching assignment	✓	
Creditable year of service in a teaching role		✓
Minimum score of “Proficient” or equivalent for all observable dimensions	✓	

Can uncertified teachers earn designations?

Yes. With the passage of HB 1525 in 2021, uncertified teachers who meet their district’s performance criteria may earn designations. Districts must capture data for all teachers in eligible assignments, including uncertified teachers.

Analyze Data

Assessing data after designation decisions have been made, but before data submission, allows for system evaluation, development, and modification. It also offers an opportunity to consult with stakeholders and implement adjustments as needed prior to the following school year. TEA offers annual training on addressing skew and correlation and analyzing systems with the TIA Data Analysis Tool.

Data analysis at your fingertips with the TIA Data Analysis Tool.

Districts can access the TIA Data Analysis Tool through the TIA Online Portal to analyze their teacher-level data before submitting it to Texas Tech. This tool may assist districts in identifying strengths and areas of concern in their local designation systems, supporting system review before data submission.

When conducting data analysis, districts examine:

- ➔ The correlation between student growth data and observation data
- ➔ Skew across campuses, grade levels, content areas, and other variables
- ➔ Root causes of skew or limited correlation
- ➔ Appropriate next steps to address identified root causes

If a district identifies a lack of correlation or uneven distribution in their current system, they may adjust their designation determinations in accordance with TEA guidelines.



Designation Determination Adjustment Guidelines

Allowable Exceptions

- ✓ Changes to component weighting
- ✓ Removing optional local system components, such as attendance or student surveys
- ✓ Consolidating eligible teaching assignments with the same student growth measures and weighting into a single category

Prohibited Exceptions

- ✗ Removing observation or student growth as weighted components
- ✗ Adding or removing a student growth measure
- ✗ Administrator(s) failed to conduct or complete formal appraisals
- ✗ Removing eligible teaching assignments or categories

Why are some modifications allowed to the Weighting tab but not others?

TEA recognizes that when a district begins creating their local designation system, they must outline a process to determine designation cut points without actual teacher performance data. These allowances provide flexibility in the designation determination process while maintaining fidelity of the captured data.

Data Submission

Once designations are determined, districts submit data and proposed designations to Texas Tech for validation. TEA then studies the data validation results and conducts a holistic system review before issuing Full System Approval. If approved, TEA then processes the district's designations. If a district system is not approved, the district may use feedback from the data validation process to make improvements to their system before reattempting data validation in subsequent years.

Can teachers earn a designation if they leave after data capture?

Districts may not designate teachers who have resigned, retired, or moved to a full-time non-teaching role before data submission. Additionally, teachers may not earn a designation if they leave after a district submits them for designation but prior to the last Friday in February of the designation year.

Enter Data in the Correct File Template

The data submission file templates are updated annually and posted in May. These may be customized for each teacher appraisal rubric. Districts using a locally-developed appraisal rubric must request a custom file template from Texas Tech.

The data submission file represents a performance data snapshot for each teacher employed in an eligible assignment for the prior school year. Using the template and directions, districts compile data for all teachers in an eligible assignment during the Data Capture Year. Teachers who have since resigned, retired, or moved to a non-eligible role or assignment must still be reported.

Districts are limited to one line of data per teacher. Districts use the instructions provided on the **Data Submission web page** to report the following:

- ➔ Identifying information (name, date of birth [DOB], county district campus number [CDCN], TEA ID, unique ID)
- ➔ Proposed designation level, if applicable

- ➔ Eligible teacher category
- ➔ Service ID/Course Code, subject, grade level
- ➔ Indicator if still employed by the district
- ➔ Appraiser information
- ➔ Observation and student growth data

Note: Districts may not designate teachers who are no longer employed by the district in a teaching role or did not meet the minimum score of Proficient in all observable dimensions.

Refine before the deadline.

Districts are expected to carefully verify all data prior to submission to confirm that every teacher is included in the file, teacher and student information is consistent, teacher performance outcomes are accurate, and designation decisions are correct. After the review deadline, districts are not permitted to modify teacher performance data or add or remove teachers for designation purposes.

Before Texas Tech can validate district data, Texas Tech and TEA complete two different reviews: a technical review and a system alignment review. The technical and system alignment reviews are designed to ensure the submitted data are aligned with the district's System of Record and the Texas Administrative Code. Failure to address this review process may lead to districts not being able to submit their data.

Prior to the system alignment review, districts will have a submitted teacher's checkpoint—an opportunity to review a snapshot of submitted data to verify accuracy and make corrections.

Technical review: This happens through the TIA Online Portal after districts submit their file. If there are technical or data formatting errors, the portal generates a report, and districts need to address the feedback and resubmit through the portal. Once all feedback is addressed, the file is accepted through the portal.

Submitted teachers checkpoint: After the data submission deadline, districts will receive a snapshot of their submitted data. This checkpoint provides one final opportunity for districts to verify that the data submitted matches their intended submission. Between the data submission deadline and the Technical Review deadline, districts should carefully review their snapshot and identify any remaining errors. If discrepancies are found (e.g. missing teachers, incorrect performance data, unintended designations, etc.), this is the window to make corrections. If no errors are identified, no further action is needed.

System alignment review: After the district's submission passes the technical review,

TEA reviews for alignment to the accepted System of Record. This review looks at eligible teacher categories, system components (observation and student growth), and any context provided on the District Information tab.

Submit via the TIA Online Portal

Districts are required to complete the District Information tab then the Weighting tab through the TIA Online Portal. Afterward, districts collate teacher data in the Data Entry tab of the data submission file and upload it via the portal. Data submission files uploaded to the portal are sent directly to Texas Tech. The portal provides features for checking submission files for formatting errors, offers a tab containing district reference files, and includes a progress bar to indicate the district's status in the submission process.

Pay Teacher Designation Fees

Once data are submitted, districts must submit \$500 per designation fee to TEA. For example, a district submitting 12 teachers for a new or higher designation would submit a fee of \$6,000. Instructions for fee payment are provided to districts once their data submission file is accepted.

Districts submit fees based on the number of new or higher designations in the final data submission file. TEA will provide districts with the final fee amount in mid November. Designation fees only apply to teachers submitted for a new or higher designation. No fees are required to maintain existing teacher designations.

All designation fees are reimbursed in the following year's Foundation School Program's September Settle-Up, regardless of data validation results.

Data Validation

Data validation provides TEA with insight to approve or reject local designation systems and/or annual designations by examining:

- ➔ The validity and reliability of the district's teacher performance data
 - Observation data for all teachers in eligible assignments
 - Student growth data for all teachers in eligible assignments
- ➔ The fairness and accuracy of the district's proposed designation decisions, including:
 - Alignment with statewide performance standards
 - Alignment with value-added data
 - Alignment with campus performance data
 - Consistency across campuses and eligible teaching categories

Data Validation Checks and Scoring

Texas Tech provides TEA with data validation results based on the scoring of ten different checks across five domains. Texas Tech also conducts three unscored supplemental checks. Texas Tech provides each district with a report of the results by late February.

Scores are established by dividing the points earned by the total possible points to create a percentage score. In some cases, checks cannot be conducted, and the total possible point value is reduced. A detailed statistical analysis and scoring rubric can be found on the website.

Domain A. Correlation Between Teacher Observation Ratings and Student Performance Ratings

- **Check 1:** The correlation coefficient between observation and growth among all eligible teachers is within the range of expected magnitude reported in the research literature.

Domain B. Confirm Relation Between District Designations and Student Growth Calculations

- **Check 2:** District designations of teachers in tested subjects are found in similar proportion to designations as determined by the statewide VAM.
- **Check 3:** District designation decisions in tested subjects are in proximity to designations as determined by the statewide VAM.

Domain C. Degree of Reliability for Observation and Growth Judgments

- **Check 4:** Across campuses, observation scores are similar across teachers in each designation level.
- **Check 5:** Across campuses, percentages of student growth are similar for teachers in each designation level.
- **Check 6:** Across assignments, observation scores are similar for teachers in REM groups.
- **Check 7:** Across assignments, percentages of student growth are similar for teachers in each designation level.

Domain D. Comparison of District Designation Percentage to Statewide Performance Standards

- **Check 8:** Percentage of students who meet or exceed expected growth in the district is approximately equal to the statewide performance standards for student growth in each of the teacher designation levels.

- ➔ **Check 9:** Observation ratings in the district are approximately equal to the statewide performance standards for teaching proficiency in each of the teacher-designation levels.
- ➔ **Check 10:** The proportion of teachers on district campuses who are designated as Recognized, Exemplary, or Master is roughly equivalent to other campuses with the same Domain 2A rating.

Domain E. Supplemental System Checks (Not Scored)

- ➔ **Check 11:** The variability in observation ratings among all eligible teachers is within the range of historical magnitude.
- ➔ **Check 12:** The ranking of teachers based on observation scores closely aligns with their ranking on statewide performance standards for teaching proficiency.
- ➔ **Check 13:** The ranking of teachers based on percentages of student growth closely aligns with their ranking on statewide performance standards for teaching proficiency.

Data Validation Appeals

TEA provides select districts that did not meet data validation requirements with an opportunity to provide additional context regarding their system implementation and/or request limited modifications to their original data. This may result in revised data validation outcomes. Participation in the appeal process is restricted to districts identified by TEA. These districts will be notified by TEA if their data validation outcomes qualify for appeal and subsequent review.

Only districts identified by TEA as eligible may participate in the appeals process. TEA will notify districts if their data validation results qualify for appeal and re-review.

Appeal Pathways

Districts may pursue one of two appeal pathways:

- 1 Exclusion of a teacher category or campus.** Districts may choose to exclude one eligible teacher category or one campus from their submission. This option requires a narrative that:
 - Identifies system implementation issues
 - Describes a plan to address those issues
 - Explains the rationale for the exclusion

Important: Any proposed designations within the excluded category or campus will also be excluded, making teachers in that category ineligible for designation.

- 2 Narrative-only appeal.** Districts may opt to submit a narrative response without excluding any teachers. This narrative must:

- Identify specific areas for improvement
- Describe the issues in detail
- Present a comprehensive plan to address the issues
- Explain the rationale for the appeal

Appeal Submission and Review

If a district qualifies to appeal data validation, TEA will provide feedback and questions with the data validation results. These districts then complete a Qualtrics survey addressing all feedback provided by TEA. TEA will assess whether the district demonstrates a clear understanding of its data validation results and has developed an effective plan for improvement. TEA will notify districts of the appeal decision in mid-March.

Appeal Outcomes

If the appeal is approved: TEA will process proposed teacher designations, excluding any that are ineligible due to appeal adjustments. Districts without full system approval will receive provisional approval. These districts must earn full approval in the following year and will not be eligible to appeal the next year's data validation results.

If the appeal is denied and the system is not yet approved: The local designation system will not be approved. The district may continue collecting data for submission the following year. TEA will provide guidance on next steps.

If the Appeal is denied and the system is already fully approved: Proposed new and higher designations will not be approved, but prior approved designations will remain valid. The district may continue collecting data and submit new or additional designations the following year. TEA will provide guidance on next steps.

Year 3 Spring: System Approval & Awarding Designations

Districts receive formal notification of approval or denial by early February. TEA shares data validation reports and provides technical assistance for system improvement.

If a district's system does not receive approval, districts are not required to resubmit an application. Instead, they may choose to submit data in the subsequent year or revise their System of Record in the next application cycle prior to submitting new data. Since the system is not approved, no submitted designations will be processed.

For districts that pass data validation, TEA reviews their proposed designations and confirms teachers meet TEA designation criteria by referencing data from the Texas Student Data Systems (TSDS) Class Roster Winter Submission. TEA conducts annual training for districts employing designated teachers to support accurate reporting in the Class Roster Winter Submission.

TEA Requirements for Meeting Designation Criteria

Teachers who qualify for designations through an approved local optional teacher designation system are required to meet the following criteria:

- ➔ *Submitted for designation by the district based on prior-year teaching performance data and does not already have an active designation at the same level or higher.*
- ➔ *Employed as a teacher by the designating district (087 Staff Classification).*
- ➔ *Met or will meet the creditable year of service requirement by the end of the school year.*
- ➔ *Does not have a Texas teaching certificate in revoked, suspended, voluntary surrender, or permanent surrender status.*
- ➔ *Is not listed on the Texas Do Not Hire registry.*
- ➔ *Reported by the designating district in the Class Roster Winter Submission as meeting eligibility criteria:*
 - *Employed by the designating district in a 087-teacher role as of the last Friday in February.*
 - *Met or will meet the creditable year of service requirement by the end of the school year.*

What does creditable year of service mean?

The teacher was employed and compensated (or will be by the end of the school year) in a teaching role (087 Staff Classification) 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.
- ➔ Districts with a calendar of less than 180 working days may use the semester equivalents to determine year of service.

If a teacher leaves the designating district prior to the last Friday in February, they forfeit designation eligibility. TEA provides annual training to districts employing designated teachers to ensure they are properly reported in the Class Roster Winter Submission.

Teachers who meet the eligibility requirements are awarded the designation retroactively to the beginning of the school year. District-issued designations are valid for five school years.

Fully Approved Systems

Once a district passes data validation and full system review after their Data Capture Year, they are considered a fully approved district. Fully approved districts continue to conduct calibration exercises, collect and analyze data, administer assessments, and coordinate across departments to monitor teacher performance. The system must be implemented in accordance with each district's current System of Record.

Ongoing Implementation

Data Collection

Data collection for fully approved districts follows closely to the Data Capture Year guidelines with a few notable exceptions.

- ➔ Once a teacher has earned a designation, opting out of their annual appraisal is a local decision. Appraisals must comply with TEC §§21.351 and 21.352.
- ➔ For TEA and Texas Tech to verify data submission, best practice is to include teacher observation and student growth data for as many teachers as possible in eligible teaching assignments.

Appraisals are still required for all teachers put forth for a new or higher designation.

Best Practice

TEA encourages districts to continue capturing data for all teachers in eligible assignments following the initial Data Capture Year and cautions approved districts to issue appraisal waivers sparingly. TEA and Texas Tech may exercise administrative discretion to suspend annual data validation and designation approval if sufficient data are not reported.



Designation Determination Adjustment Guidelines

Allowable Exceptions

- ✓ Teacher(s) on an annual appraisal waiver
- ✓ Teacher moved out of the eligible teaching assignment prior to administration of EOY growth data
- ✓ Teacher was hired or moved to an eligible assignment after BOY growth data was collected
- ✓ Teacher was on FMLA, bereavement leave, or special circumstances which resulted in significant absences

Prohibited Exceptions

- ❌ Teacher or teacher group failed to administer or score student growth measures with fidelity
- ❌ Administrator(s) failed to conduct or complete formal appraisals
- ❌ Unfavorable teacher data was removed
- ❌ District or campus failed to monitor data collection for a particular teaching assignment or exempted eligible teacher groups from data capture
- ❌ District allowed teachers to opt-out of administering student growth measures or opt-out of appraisal
- ❌ District administered assessment for student growth that was not aligned to its approved student growth measures

Data Submission and Validation

Fully Approved Districts may submit new or higher designations annually for the next four years. However, they must continue to provide evidence that the designation system continues to be valid and reliable. Districts should continue to follow the guidelines provided in **Year 3 Fall & Winter: Data Submission & Validation** and **Year 3 Spring: System Approval and Award Designations**.

TEA annually reviews data validation results from Texas Tech and approves the district to issue new or higher designations. If data validation indicates the system is no longer valid and reliable, new designations are not processed for that year, and the district may submit data again the following year.

TEA provides holistic system approvals.

TEA approves district designation systems. TEA does not approve or reject individual teacher designations.

Annual Program Submission

Districts that issue designations must participate in the **TIA Annual Program Submission** to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. The Annual Program Submission requires districts to engage in analyzing the impact of the local designation system and focuses on continuous improvement. The submission consists of two parts and is due by August 31.

- 1 Annual Program Submission form.** This requires districts to:
 - Update contact information if needed; and
 - Reflect using multiple sources of data, such as the district data validation report, the TIA Annual Evaluation Survey, and human capital data around teacher vacancies and retention, to determine how they might adjust the system in future years.
 - Demonstrate how TIA funds were spent in alignment with statutes.
- 2 Attestations signed by the district superintendent** ensuring compliance with statutory components.

TIA Annual Evaluation Survey

The TIA Annual Evaluation Survey, developed by Texas Tech, is distributed each spring to teachers, administrators, and human resources personnel. Its purpose is to assess perceptions of, and support for, the local designation system following implementation. Completion of these surveys is required to maintain system approval.

Districts are encouraged to adopt strategies that achieve a response rate of at least 70%. Survey findings inform the continuous improvement process by monitoring stakeholder perspectives and the effectiveness of the local designation system. Districts receive their results in early July and are expected to analyze and address these findings within their Annual Program Submission during the subsequent fall. Consistent and meaningful stakeholder engagement is essential for fostering teacher buy-in and improving retention rates among designated teachers.

Annual Teacher-Generated Allotment Funding

Allotment Eligibility

TEA verifies allotment eligibility annually in April using data from the Class Roster Winter Submission. Districts employing teachers with active or pending designations must ensure they are reported accurately in the Class Roster Winter Submission. This requires coordination between district TIA leads, human resources personnel, and the district PEIMS designee. TEA hosts annual training for districts employing designated teachers.

Districts receive allotment funds when they employ designated teachers who meet the following criteria:

- ➔ Employed by the district as a teacher (087 Staff Classification) as of the last Friday in February
- ➔ Met or will meet the creditable year of service requirement by the end of the school year with the same district above

What is 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 Staff Classification) 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.
- ➔ Districts with a calendar less than 180 working days may use the semester equivalents to determine year of service.

For districts issuing designations, the district receives an allotment for all teachers in their first year of a new or higher designation.

Verifying Annual Allotments

Districts employing eligible designated teachers verify and confirm their annual allotment in the Strategic Compensation Operations Management System (SCOMS). SCOMS is a TEA Login (TEAL)-based web application used for TIA. SCOMS allows district users to view, sort, filter, and export annual allotment data and teacher designation records. TEA provides SCOMS user guides and training to all districts employing designated teachers. The SCOMS User Guide is updated annually, and districts should ensure they are using the most up-to-date guide.

Allotment Timeline and Spending Requirements

Receiving the Allotment

For districts receiving TIA funds for the first time, the allotment arrives as a lump-sum reimbursement in September settle-up. The district Summary of Finances (SOF) Report displays the total allotment (sum of designated teacher allotments + reimbursed fees, if applicable) near line 33. The display line may vary depending on which other allotments the district may have received. After the September settle-up process, the final SOF report matches the Payout by School Year values in SCOMS. Note: districts with no local designation system will not incur designation or renewal fees.



Funding and Spending Timeline

Districts expend
scheduled TIA
allotment funding.

By August 31

District confirms
allotment.

TEA notifies teachers of
allotment they
generated.

May

New School Year

TEA issues FSP payout of
current school year
allotments including fee
reimbursements.

TEA issues next school
year monthly FSP payout
based on previous school
year actual amounts.

September

TEA sends notification of
designations and annual
allotments based on the
current school year's Class
Roster Winter Submission.

April



Sample First-Year Settle-Up FSP Report

32.	Teacher Incentive Allotment 48.112 Detail Report	\$0	\$79,581
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#	Funding Elements	LPE # OF TEACHERS	LPE Allotment	DPE # OF TEACHERS	DPE Allotment
1.	Master Teacher Designation	0	\$0	0	\$0
2.	Exemplary Teacher Designation	0	\$0	3	\$41,226
3.	Recognized Teacher Designation	0	\$0	5	\$34,355
4.	Fee Reimbursement	N/A	\$0	N/A	\$4,000
5.	Teacher Incentive Allotment	N/A	\$0	N/A	\$79,581

Spending the Allotment

The statute requires 90% or more of the funds to be spent on teacher compensation on the campus where the designated teacher works. Up to 10% may be used by the district for costs associated with implementing a local designation system or supporting teachers in earning designations.

Best Practice

Consider spending plan options alongside district goals for retention and recruitment. Once the district has a clear spending plan, the district may update their spending plan to include expenditure of TIA funds. All TIA funds are TRS eligible.

Districts must expend all allotment funds for the given school year by August 31. For districts receiving funds for the first time, *please note that funds must be spent prior to the September reimbursement.*

Districts without a local designation system must work with their business office to develop a spending plan in compliance with the statute. Districts in the process of developing a local designation system may institute a tentative spending plan if they employ designated teachers before the system takes effect.

The spending plan should outline:

- ➔ The percentage of funds to be awarded to the designated teacher
- ➔ The percentage of funds to be awarded to other teachers on the campus, if applicable
- ➔ The anticipated payout date
- ➔ The policy for teachers who retire or resign prior to the scheduled payout date.

How do districts outline policies for teacher retirement or resignation?

Some districts choose to give the full or remaining payment to the designated teacher that earned the funding in one lump stipend payment. Other districts choose to keep the money for supporting other teachers that remain on campus to help their retention goals. Districts may reference **Designated Teacher Retirement Guidance** for more information.

Movement of Designated Teachers

Once awarded, designations remain active until the expiry date regardless of the teacher's district, role, or employment status. TEA checks designated teacher placement and allotment eligibility annually using data from the Class Roster Winter Submission.

If a teacher moves districts prior to the snapshot date in late February and works a creditable year of service with the new district, the new district is awarded the funds. If the designated teacher leaves after the snapshot date and worked a creditable year of service prior to leaving, then the previous district receives the funds. All funding updates are handled through the Foundation School Program (FSP). No funds are transferred between districts.

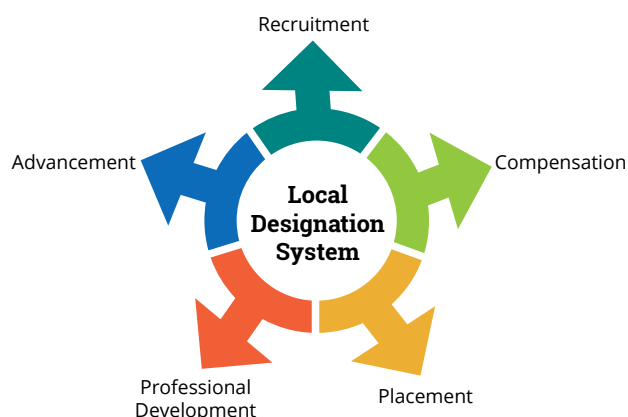
Timing matters.

Allotment values are determined by each designated teacher's campus as of the last Friday in February. Funds do not follow designated teachers in real time, and allotments are not prorated. For eligible teachers, allotment funding is awarded to the district where the designated teacher worked as of the last Friday in February. For designated teachers moving districts, the time that a teacher moves is paramount to determining which district will receive funds.

Districts may choose whether to forward funds to designated teachers who leave the district prior to the August 31 spending deadline. This depends on the district's local spending plan. Designated teachers are encouraged to reach out to their district prior to moving to determine if they still receive TIA compensation. If the district chooses not to forward allotment funds, the district must still spend at least 90% on teacher compensation on the campus where the designated teacher worked.

Maximizing the Impact of TIA

Districts with approved systems engage in ongoing reflection and continuous improvement. This includes leveraging the system, and other district initiatives, to grow and retain highly effective teachers and improve student outcomes. Successful local designation systems integrate a variety of teacher retention strategies, such as career advancement pathways, stay conversations and strategic placement.



Celebrate Designated Teachers

Districts may consider how leadership teams will celebrate and spotlight designated teachers and showcase the local designation system within the community. Ways to recognize designated teachers:

- ➔ Hold a district-wide or campus-wide ceremony.
- ➔ Recognize designated teachers at school board meetings.
- ➔ Provide informal, congratulatory classroom visits from district leadership.
- ➔ Distribute TIA merchandise using templates provided by TEA or creating district TIA swag.
- ➔ Work with the district communications team to publicize teacher celebrations and system benefits through local media outlets and social media.

Develop Career Advancement Pathways

Districts can promote designated teacher retention by creating career advancement pathways using local funds or up to 10% of the allotment funds. These opportunities can provide access to even higher compensation levels and allow teachers to grow their professional practice and leadership skills while remaining in the classroom serving students. Many districts provide opportunities for designated teachers to earn additional stipends through mentoring, providing tailored professional development, and teacher leadership positions.

Hold Mid- and End-of Year Stay Conversations

Stay conversations can be a powerful teacher retention tool for TIA school leaders. Districts with a local designation system collect strong evidence of teacher effectiveness for teachers working in eligible categories. Stay conversations should be held for all high-performing teachers. This includes designated teachers, undesignated teachers who are likely to qualify for a designation in the fall, or undesignated teachers in ineligible teacher categories that have proven to be an effective teacher by other means. Campus administrators can incorporate the key points below when planning stay conversations.

- 1** Celebrate Success: Highlight the teacher's successes based on their performance. Emphasize how much this means to the campus and students. Remain authentic and tie feedback to observation data and student outcomes.
- 2** Provide Opportunities for Feedback: Use this time to both check-in with the teacher about their experience on campus and as a key stakeholder in the local designation system.
- 3** Discuss Plans for the Following School Year: Use the conversation to guide the discussion for the future. Share what opportunities and career pathways the district has available for designated teachers. Ensure this discussion has reasonable actions that leadership can take.

For additional guidance, read **Stay Conversations with Designated Teachers**.

Consider Strategic Assignments

When planning master schedules and stay conversations, consider how designated teachers can further improve student outcomes and support growing other teachers on their campus. Many districts strategically place designated teachers at high-needs campuses or with students needing accelerated instruction. Designated teachers can be paired with student teachers in teacher residency programs or allocated release time to serve as mentors or instructional coaches during the school day.

System Monitoring

In accordance with Chapter 21 of the Texas Education Code—and to ensure the continued quality, sustainability, and oversight of TIA funding—approved districts may be subject to system monitoring by TEA.

TEA uses multiple data sources to identify districts for monitoring, including but not limited to:

- ➔ Systems of Record
- ➔ Data submission files
- ➔ Data validation reports
- ➔ District and teacher communications
- ➔ Annual Program Submissions

Districts may be selected for monitoring based on specific criteria or at random.

Purpose of System Monitoring

TIA System Monitoring is designed to support districts by:

- ➔ Identifying areas for improvement and recommending action steps to ensure local designation systems remain fair and accurate
- ➔ Detecting systems that do not meet statutory requirements and providing guidance and remediation opportunities
- ➔ Collecting data on TIA's impact to improve technical assistance and enhance resource development

Monitoring Process

Districts selected for monitoring will receive an email from the TIA team outlining the process and requesting an introductory call. If areas for improvement are identified, the district will:

- ➔ Use TEA-provided guidance and templates to develop an action plan
- ➔ Participate in progress monitoring check-in calls with TEA
- ➔ Complete additional action steps as assigned

Once the district meets the identified goals and exit criteria, it will exit the monitoring process. Throughout the process, districts will receive support from both TEA and their Education Service Center.

Note: If significant implementation or compliance issues are identified, the district may be required to develop and complete a Corrective Action Plan to maintain TIA approval status and continue designating teachers.

System Renewals

TIA offers five-year system approvals for local designation systems. If districts would like to continue issuing new designations, they will need to submit a renewal application with enough time to meet the data submission and system approval timelines before the expiration date of their current system.

The renewal process is a streamlined opportunity for districts to:

- 1 Meet current statutory requirements
- 2 Holistically review the existing system to identify strengths and areas for continuous improvement, and
- 3 Expand or modify a local designation system to include additional eligible teaching assignments.

District goals and needs may change significantly over five years. To ensure their local designation system is still set up to provide the best value to their teachers, and still follows the requirements set by TIA, districts take the following actions through the system renewal process:

- ➔ Check that the district's local designation system aligns with current TIA requirements, which may have been updated since their initial System Application
- ➔ Update their local designation system and spending plan to reflect the district's current goals and needs

- ➔ Reflect holistically on the district's system using data validation information and local district data to continuously improve the district system
- ➔ Work to include more teaching assignments in the local designation system to expand opportunities for teachers to earn designations
- ➔ Submit updated teacher observation and student growth data that demonstrates the positive impact the local designation system has had on the district

When to Apply for Renewal

Districts are required to submit a Renewal Application in the spring of their Renewal application year if they want to continue to designate teachers after their initial five-year system approval. In the summer prior to a district's Renewal application year, they will be notified by TEA of their need to begin the renewal process.

A district's renewal year is the fourth year after their initial Data Capture Year. For example, if a district's initial Data Capture Year was 2021-22, its renewal year would be 2025-26, with the Renewal Application being due on April 15, 2026.

To remain eligible to designate teachers, districts in their fourth year of implementation must submit a Renewal Application, regardless of whether they have previously passed data validation. Submitting an Expansion and Modification Application during the four-year period does not restart the district's renewal timeline. The district's Renewal application year is only tied to the initial System Application acceptance year, regardless of any expansions and/or modifications made to the System of Record during that period.

System Renewal Chronology

Initial System Application

The initial System Application is accepted, and the district has an accepted System of Record.

Initial Data Capture Year

This is the first school year after the application is accepted. District collects data for all teachers in eligible teaching assignments on the Weighting Tab of their accepted application. Note: no teacher appraisal waivers are allowed for teachers in eligible teaching assignments during this school year.

Data Submission and Validation

District submits the previous year's data and data is validated by Texas Tech and TEA. If district passes data validation, they become Fully Approved, and allotments are generated. If the district data is not validated, they are not Fully Approved and would need to submit data again until the district data is validated. Note: teacher appraisal waivers are not permitted until after a district receives full approval.

Continue to Implement the System

Districts continue to implement their System of Record and each year prior to the Renewal application year may submit additional teachers for designation based on the previous school year's data. Districts also may submit an Expansion & Modification Application each year, as needed, prior to the Renewal application year.

Renewal Application Year

The summer before the district's Renewal application year, district is notified of the upcoming renewal process. District is expected to renew to avoid a gap year in designating teachers after system expiration. District continues to implement their current System of Record and may submit teachers for designation from the previous school year's data. All districts that want to continue to be eligible to designate teachers must submit a Renewal Application, regardless of previous data validation results.

Renewal Data Capture Year

District collects data for all teachers in eligible assignments on the accepted renewed system. The district may submit teachers for designation from the previous school year's data. Initial System of Record expires and is replaced by the newly renewed System of Record.

District Fully Approved

District submits the previous year's data and data is validated by Texas Tech and TEA. If district passes data validation, they become a Fully Approved district, and new designations are awarded.

System Renewal Fees

The TIA System Renewal Application is subject to a reimbursable fee. The fee structure is defined by whether the district meets the definition of rural the year prior to submitting a renewal application:

- ➔ Rural designated districts: \$2,500 fee
- ➔ Non-rural designated districts: \$10,000 fee

All TIA fees for local designation system renewals are due at the time of application submission. Fees will be reimbursed through the Foundation School Program (FSP) the September following the application submission, regardless of application acceptance or denial.

System Expiration

Districts that do not renew their local designation system on the required timeline will cause system expiration, thereby causing the district to lose the ability to submit data and put teachers forth for designation. Districts that decide to continue their local designation system after a formal system expiration will need to complete a new TIA application, which if accepted, would require a new, full Data Capture Year before being able to submit data again.

Enhanced TIA

What is Enhanced TIA?

Enhanced TIA was established in 2025 with the passage of House Bill 2 during the 89th Texas Legislative Session with the goal of supporting school systems in developing and implementing a strategic compensation system based on performance instead of one based on years of service.

Strategic compensation is a performance-based human resource management technique that involves designing and implementing a compensation plan that is strategically aligned with district objectives and culture.

These strategic compensation plans are built to address the following five goals:

- Develop a refined administrator evaluation system for principals and assistant principals,
- Develop and adopt a TIA-compliant teacher evaluation system for all,
- Abandon the traditional step and ladder pay system and transition to one based on bands of effectiveness,
- Blend TIA, district and other funding sources to ensure financial sustainability, and
- Adopt an approach to teacher and administrator assignment based on student need.

By developing a strategic compensation plan based on the tenets of TIA (student growth, observation, and other district-determined categories), school systems utilize their strategic plan and definitions of teacher and administrator effectiveness to develop weighted system components that are utilized to provide an overall effectiveness level. It is then the effectiveness level that determines the teachers' and/or administrators' base salary that is tied to identified salary bands.

Once the strategic compensation plan is developed, school systems are eligible to submit their strategic compensation plan to TEA to earn an Enhanced TIA designation.

Enhanced TIA increases district funding.

Enhanced TIA is a designation a district can apply for and receive after establishing a compensation system based on performance. Once obtained, this designation allows districts to access an additional 10% of their TIA funds to support this new system.

TIA and Enhanced TIA elevate the education profession by providing districts with systems and funding to recruit promising new teachers, retain their best teachers, and incentivize teachers to work in high-needs schools and difficult to staff positions. Since Enhanced TIA is also based in TEC §§21.3521 and 48.112, it is built to provide lasting funds for school systems that have abandoned a traditional step and ladder pay scale and replaced it with one based on performance.

Earning Enhanced TIA and Funding

To earn an Enhanced TIA designation and access additional funding, school systems must have a fully approved local designation system and build evaluation systems and compensation plans for teachers, principals, and assistant principals based on performance.

For teachers, school systems must:

- ➔ Include all teacher types as eligible for designation in a TEA-approved local teacher designation system for TIA.
- ➔ Replace the step and ladder pay scale with a compensation plan based on performance and move away from across-the-board pay raises.
- ➔ Implement a targeted distribution model and other appropriate quality control systems.
- ➔ Adopt an approach to teacher assignment based on student needs that includes strategic scheduling for early grades and high-need campuses and students.

For principals and assistant principals, school systems must:

- ➔ Develop a refined principal and assistant principal evaluation system consistent with the TIA approach.
- ➔ Replace the step and ladder pay scale with a compensation plan based on performance.

For any school systems that currently meet the above criteria or anticipate meeting the criteria in the 2026-27 school year, TEA will publish a letter of intent to apply for an Enhanced TIA designation in September 2025 and an application in spring 2026. School systems that currently meet the above criteria and earn an Enhanced TIA designation during the 2025-26 school year will receive the increased TIA allotment for this school year. TEA anticipates confirming the increased amount in Spring of 2026.

School systems that apply in 2025-26 to be an Enhanced TIA system or earn this designation in subsequent years have the option to use funds generated from the Teacher Retention Allotment for compensation based on teacher performance and in line with the structures of the Teacher Incentive Allotment, as opposed to making the changes to their salary schedule based on years of service. As HB2 is recent legislation that has passed, TEA will continue to provide additional information as the year progresses.

National Board Certification

National Board Certification and TIA

National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) employed as Texas public school teachers may be designated as Recognized notwithstanding statewide performance standards. All districts employing eligible, designated NBCTs may receive TIA allotment funds. A local designation system is not required.

National Board Certification is a voluntary, advanced professional certification for Pre-K–12 educators that identifies teaching expertise through a performance-based, peer-reviewed assessment. Teachers are certified based on standards set by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). NBPTS requires teachers to have at least two years of experience as a certified teacher before registering as a candidate for National Board Certification. Some exceptions may apply.

Teachers may pursue National Board Certification independently or with the support of a district or regional cohort. On average, candidates who successfully certify take two to three school years to complete and pass all components.

NBCT Recognized Designations

TEA oversees the designation process for Texas NBCTs; no application is required from the NBCT or their employing district.

NBCTs must meet the following criteria to earn a Recognized designation in a given school year:

- ➔ Hold an active certificate issued by the NBPTS.
- ➔ Employed as a public-school teacher and reported with a 087 Staff Classification in the Class Roster Winter Submission. Alignment with the National Board certificate area is not required.
- ➔ Listed as a Texas teacher in the NBCT Directory as of January 31. NBCTs moving to Texas from out of state must update their information to reflect Texas employment.
- ➔ Does not have a Texas teaching certificate in revoked, suspended, or voluntary surrender status.
- ➔ Is not listed on the Texas Do Not Hire registry.

Designations for newly certified NBCTs who meet the eligibility criteria are awarded the same school year in which they certify. Designations are valid through July 31 following the expiry of the National Board certificate. TEA updates the designation expiry date for NBCTs who recertify.



NBCT Deadlines

Timeline	Deadline
November–March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ January 31 deadline for NBCTs to update their directory listing→ New NBCT certifications issued by NBPTS→ Winter Class Roster snapshot of NBCT campus placement→ Districts submit reimbursement requests for NBPTS fees (optional)
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ New NBCTs receive Recognized designations and become designated teachers→ Designation placed on SBEC certificates retroactive to beginning of school year→ Allotment funds calculated based on designated teacher CDCNs reported in Winter Class Roster→ Districts notified of designated teacher allotment funding for that school year→ Designation expiry dates updated for NBCTs who successfully renewed or maintained certification

Allotments for Districts Employing NBCTs

Districts employing a designated NBCT may receive allotment funds if the NBCT works a creditable year of service in a teaching role. A local designation system is not required to receive funds for designated NBCTs. TEA cross-references NBCT data provided by the NBPTS with teacher placement in Fall PEIMS and contact their employing districts with resources and next steps.

Districts receiving funds for designated NBCTs must comply with statutory spending requirements. If the NBCT works in a district with a local designation system, they must follow the spending plan for NBCTs outlined in their System Application.

National Board Certification Fee Reimbursement

TEA may reimburse districts for fees paid to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Districts may request fee reimbursement on behalf of Texas NBCTs who certified or recertified in 2019 or later. TEA reimburses up to:

- \$1,900 for initial certification
- \$495 for Maintenance of Certification (MOC).

Annual registration fees and retake fees are not eligible for reimbursement.

There is no statute of limitations for National Board fee reimbursement. TEA does not verify the NBCT's current role or employment status with the district. To request reimbursement, districts must submit a **reimbursement request form** and signed assurances. Districts must also provide documentation of fees paid directly to the National Board and/or reimbursed to the NBCT prior to the request. Fees paid by a third party other than the district, such as a grant or technical assistance provider, are not eligible for reimbursement. TEA may exercise administrative discretion if the NBCT has paid certification fees to NBPTS through a third party.

For more information, please visit **National Board Fees and Reimbursement**.

