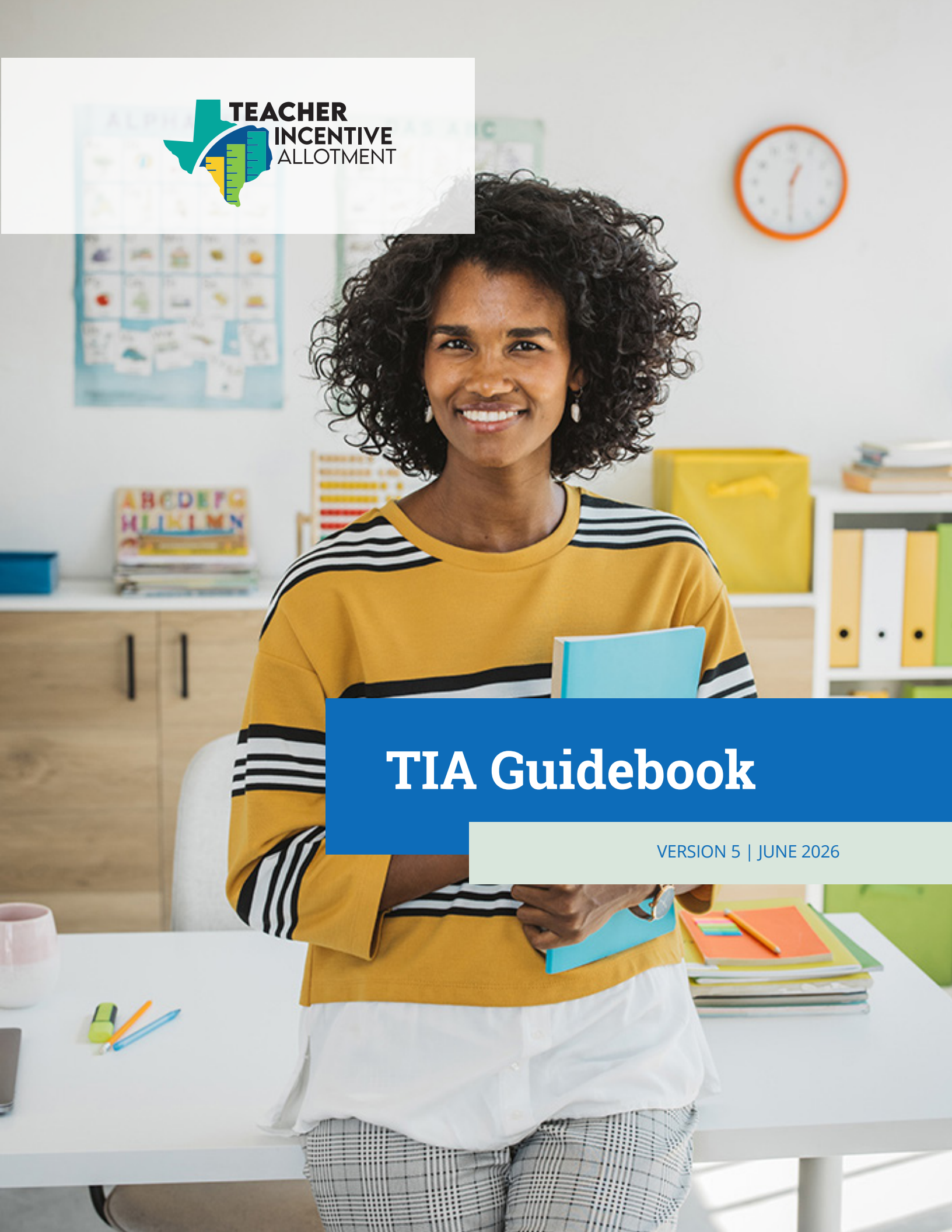

TEACHER INCENTIVE ALLOTMENT

# TIA Guidebook

VERSION 5 | JUNE 2026

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# What is the Teacher Incentive Allotment?

The Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) was established in 2019 to provide outstanding teachers with an accessible pathway to a six-figure salary. Unlike previous education programs, TIA is grounded in statute and embedded in the Foundation School Program (FSP), providing a sustainable, long-term funding structure for recognizing and retaining effective educators across Texas.

At its core, TIA enables districts to identify effective teaching through locally designed systems, called local optional teacher designation systems or local designation systems, that incorporate teacher observation and student growth. Teachers who earn a designation generate annual allotment funding for their district, with higher funding directed to high needs and rural campuses. Districts use these funds to compensate teachers and support staffing and retention priorities in alignment with district goals.

By 2025, TIA had demonstrated a strong impact on teacher retention and teacher performance. In response, Texas leaders invested further in TIA by expanding funding for district supports, increasing teacher eligibility and allotments, and introduced Enhanced TIA for districts implementing advanced compensation systems.

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

# The Local Optional Teacher Designation System

As authorized under the Texas Education Cod (TEC) **§§21.3521** and **48.112**, TIA enables districts to identify and reward effective teachers through a local designation system that incorporates single or multi-year teacher performance data. Districts develop local criteria for meeting teacher performance data benchmarks, using teacher observation and student growth data, with the ability to include additional components.

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

## Teacher Designations

Teacher designations are an official state recognition awarded to teachers who demonstrate exceptional performance according to their district's local designation system. These designations—Acknowledged, 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). Alternatively, 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) are approved to use with their corresponding T-TESS crosswalk. 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**
Acknowledged designations represent the top 50% of Texas teachers

**$5K-$15K**
Recognized designations represent the top 33% of Texas teachers

**$9K-$25K**
Exemplary designations represent the top 20% of Texas teachers

**$12K-$36K**
Master designations represent the top 5% of Texas teachers

## Allotment Funding

TIA is a Tier 1 allotment through FSP, the system through which the state provides funding to districts. This system creates a sustainable funding source for districts implementing TIA. The **allotment funding map** shows the allotment values for each district and campus.

**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 it employs 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.

Districts receive notification of the annual allotment amount in April and must spend TIA funds by August 31 of the same year. **Districts are required to spend at least 90% of its 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 districts are eligible to receive TIA funds for designated teachers whom it employs.

# 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.

| BASE ALLOTMENT | + | MULTIPLIER RATE | × | AVERAGE CAMPUS STUDENT POINT VALUE | = | ALLOTMENT PER DESIGNATED TEACHER |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

## Teacher Designation Level

A base allotment and multiplier rate are 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 |
|---|---|---|
| Acknowledged | $3,000 | $1,500 |
| Recognized | $5,000 | $2,500 |
| Exemplary | $9,000 | $4,000 |
| Master | $12,000 | $6,000 |

## Campus Average Student Point Value

The campus average student point value is calculated from a campus's 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.

| Socioeconomic Tier | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student 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.

| Socioeconomic Tier with Rural Boost | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student Point Value | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 |

**What is the definition of a rural campus?**

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

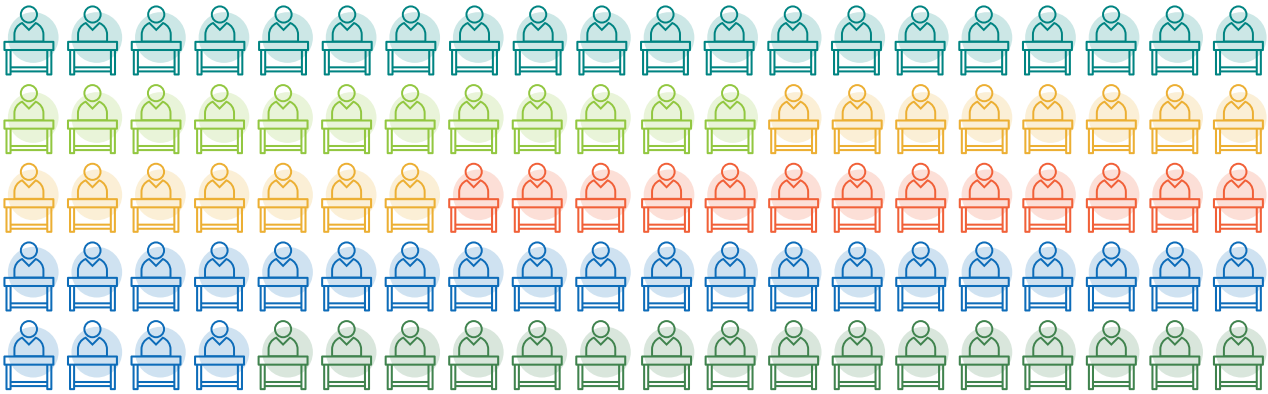
Designation allotment amounts will vary per campus based on their student population and the campus' rural status. After the point values are assigned to each student, an average point value is calculated for each campus by adding all student point value numbers within the campus and then dividing by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

## 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.

**Acknowledged**
**$5,760**
$3,000 + ($1,500 x 1.84)

**Recognized**
**$9,600**
$5,000 + ($2,500 x 1.84)

**Exemplary**
**$16,360**
$9,000 + ($4,000 x 1.84)

**Master**
**$23,040**
$12,000 + ($6,000 x 1.84)

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**

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

**Acknowledged**
**$7,350**
$3,000 + ($1,500 x 2.9)

**Recognized**
**$12,250**
$5,000 + ($2,500 x 2.9)

**Exemplary**
**$20,600**
$9,000 + ($4,000 x 2.9)

**Master**
**$29,400**
$12,000 + ($6,000 x 2.9)

## Statewide Performance Standards

TEA 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 represent statewide average proportions of teacher performance and should not be interpreted as required or fixed proportions for individual districts. Each level of designation represents teacher performance relative to all Texas teachers and serve as guidelines for districts when evaluating teacher effectiveness and setting designation criteria. For example, a district's top 5% of teachers may align with, exceed, or fall below the statewide observation and student growth performance standards.

Designation criteria and cut points for each level of designation are determined by the district. Prior to approving local designation systems, TEA studies the overall alignment of district designations to the statewide performance standards. Exact alignment is not required. TEA does not select which teachers qualify nor reject individual teacher designations but evaluates the system as a whole.

## Statewide Performance Standards

| Designation Level | Statewide Percentages | Teacher Observation Performance Standards* | Student Growth Performance Standards |
|---|---|---|---|
| Acknowledged | Top 50% | 3.5 or 70% of possible points | 50% met or exceeded |
| 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.*

### Percentages may vary.

Statewide percentages represent the proportion of teachers across Texas who met each designation level based on statewide performance data. A district's cumulative proportion of designated teachers will vary based on local performance and may be higher or lower than the numbers represented. Any teacher that meets a local designation system's eligibility requirements may be submitted for designation.

Districts are encouraged to review local data in relation to statewide performance standards to understand how many teachers could qualify for a designation based on statewide benchmarks. This can inform local adjustments to designation criteria, which may result in district designation outcomes that differ from statewide performance standards. Districts should remain mindful of the potential impact of these decisions on data validation.

# Local Designation System Framework

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

Decisions to develop or modify each component require time, investment of personnel and stakeholders, and thoughtful consideration of current systems and practices regardless.

# 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 its 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 the 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]), are evaluated using the district's teacher observation appraisal rubric, 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 and II | STAAR |
| | Geometry, pre-calculus, chemistry, and physics | District-created pre-test and post-tests |
| **Year 3 Expansion and Modification Application** | Grades 6-12 science and social studies | District-created pre-test and post-tests |
| | Grades K-8 music<br>Grades 9-12 theater, art and music, levels I and II world languages | SLOs |
| | Career and Technical Education | Portfolios |

In the System Application, districts confirm its 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 it applies 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, it 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, it can help increase scoring accuracy by providing appraisers opportunities to practice collecting defensible evidence for ratings. It also helps 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 it is evaluating teachers. The System Application requires districts to narrate how it 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

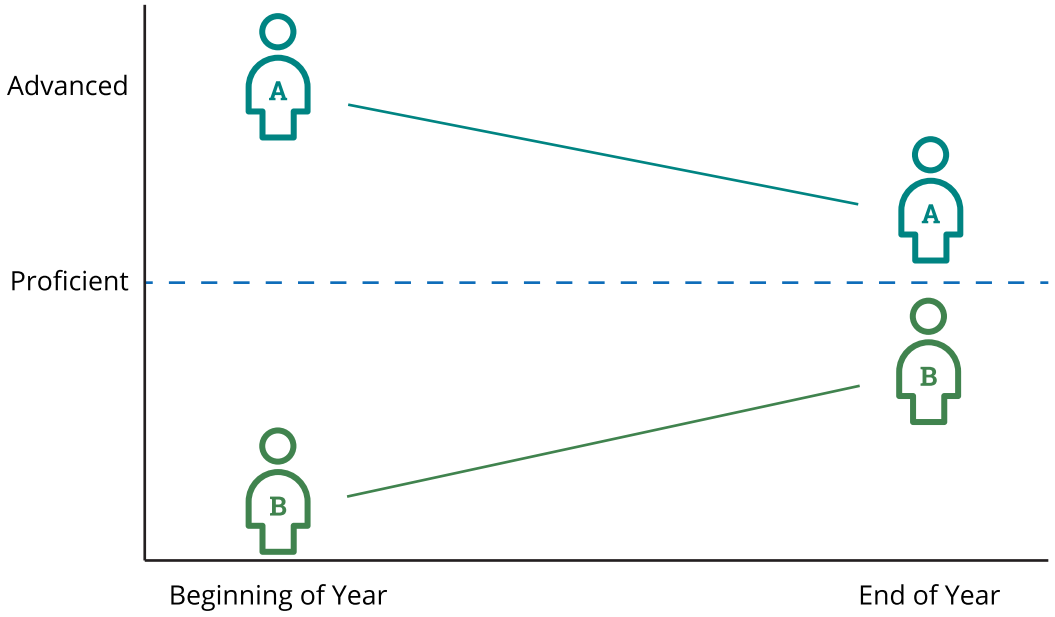
The statewide performance standards for each designation level align with teacher effectiveness based on the teacher's percentage of students who meet or exceed an expected growth target over the course of a single school year. Rather than using the magnitude of growth, effectiveness is measured by the 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 its eligible teaching assignments and select different student growth measures, or combinations of growth measures, for each assignment. 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 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 (SLOs)
2. Pre-tests and post-tests, with either third-party or district-created expected growth targets
3. Portfolios
4. Value-Added Models (VAMs)

### Student Learning Objectives

**TIA Requirements for Student Learning Objectives**

*TIA requires district SLOs align with all guidelines from* **texasslo.org**.

Student Learning Objectives 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 ensure alignment. Districts must update its SLO process to align with the Texas SLO framework by the start of the 2026-27 school year.

## SLOs Contain Three Phases

### Phase 1
Create the SLO

- Create a skill statement
- Create a Targeted Skill Profile (TSP)
- Match current students to 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 Portfolios**

*The portfolio 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 woodwork.

**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 resources for implementation**.

## Pre-Tests and Post-Tests

Pre-tests and post-tests involve the administration of a BOY pre-test and an 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 4th grade end-of-year STAAR math score may be used as a pre-test data point for their 5th grade math course.

## Pre-Test and Post-Test Timeline

| Administer BOY Pre-Test | Set Expected Growth | Administer EOY Post-Test | Determine Growth |
|---|---|---|---|
| Administer the pre-test, or use the previous EOY test from a corresponding course; i.e., grade 4 to grade 5 math. | Determine expected growth targets for individual students. | Administer the post-test. | Determine if students hit their expected growth targets. |
| First 9 weeks or 6 weeks for semester-long courses | | Last 12 weeks or 6 weeks for semester-long courses | |

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. 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.

Common assessments used with VAM include:

- STAAR
- mCLASS
- iStation
- NWEA MAP

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<br>High teacher engagement<br>Based on a body of student work | Training for all participating staff is required<br>Appraiser is heavily involved<br>Time required to evaluate the BOE |
| District-created pre-tests and post-tests | Can be used for all teaching assignments<br>Local control<br>TEA issued guidance on building quality assessments | Content and assessment design expertise required to build and approve assessments<br>Requires multiple levels of review |
| Third-party-created pre-tests and post-tests | Demonstrated validity and reliability<br>Districts may already use third-party vendor tests | May not work for all content areas<br>May require purchasing |
| Portfolios | Recommended for performance-based classes such as fine arts | Heavy planning at BOY<br>Appraiser may be heavily involved |
| Value-Added Models (VAM)s | Demonstrated validity and reliability<br>Statewide protocols for administration and scoring (if using STAAR)<br>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.

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

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.

Percent of students who met or exceeded growth targets = total number of students who met or exceeded growth target/ total number of students with an expected growth score who completed the final assessment.

## Optional Performance Components

Districts have the option to incorporate data from other sources into its 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:** 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 its 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

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).

Statewide performance standards represent statewide average proportions of teacher performance and should not be interpreted as required or fixed proportions for individual districts. For example, a district's top 5% of teachers may align with, exceed, or fall below the statewide observation and student growth performance standards. Districts are encouraged to review local data in relation to statewide performance standards to understand how many teachers could qualify for a designation based on statewide benchmarks. This can inform local adjustments to designation criteria, which may result in district designation outcomes that differ from statewide performance standards. Districts should remain mindful of the potential impact of these decisions on data validation.

### Statewide Performance Standards

| Designation Level | Statewide Percentages | Teacher Observation Performance Standards* | Student Growth Performance Standards |
|---|---|---|---|
| Acknowledged | Top 50% | 3.5 or 70% of possible points | 50% met or exceeded |
| 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.*

## Percentages may vary.

Statewide percentages represent the proportion of teachers across Texas who met each designation level based on statewide performance data. A district's cumulative proportion of designated teachers will vary based on local performance and may be higher or lower than the numbers represented. Any teacher that meets a local designation system's eligibility requirements may be submitted for designation. TEA does not require exact alignment with the performance standards.

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 its 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 **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:** 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. Acknowledge, 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 who qualify for a 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 Nationally Board Certified designation becomes inactive.

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

**Same-Level Early Redesignation Pathway.** Teachers in their final year of designation (year 5) may be submitted for a **same-level redesignation** if their performance from the prior school year (year 4 of designation) qualifies.

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 Requirements for 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 its annual allotment amount in late April and must spend all funds by August 31 of the same calendar year.* ***Note:*** *spending requirements and timelines do not apply to fees reimbursed through TIA.*

Strong local designation systems use goal-oriented spending plans developed with input from district- and campus-level stakeholders. These plans connect TIA funds to district priorities such as teacher retention, teacher recruitment, and staffing high-needs campuses with strong teachers.

As part of the spending plan districts must outline how and when it 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.

## Methods of Compensation

When developing a TIA spending plan, districts select from three levels of strategic compensation identified by TEA: base stipend, salary add-ons, and high-quality strategic compensation. Each approach reflects different styles of structure and long-term planning for how compensation is delivered with a variety of options within to tailor to district needs.

Districts may use TIA funds in different ways over time. In early years, some districts choose stipends to allow for flexibility while systems are maturing. As systems progress, districts may shift to salary based approaches that embed compensation into ongoing pay structures. Timing, available data, and local readiness often influence these decisions.

**What is strategic compensation?**

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

## Base Stipend

Base stipend plans maintain the traditional base salary schedule and utilize stipends to payout TIA funds in one or more lump sums. If a district chooses to adopt a stipend plan, it must decide if the stipend is paid in a single lump-sum payment or in multiple payments over several weeks or months.

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 | Acknowledged | Recognized | Exemplary | Master |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Payment 1: May | $1,500 | $2,500 | $6,000 | $12,000 |
| Payment 2: August | $3,000 | $4,500 | $9,000 | $18,000 |

## Salary Add-Ons

Salary add-on plans maintain the traditional base salary schedule then roll TIA funds into a teacher's base salary to be paid out in each paycheck. Districts adopting this 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, lanes are added to the district's standard teacher salary schedule for designated teachers.

| TIA Designation | TIA Funds Added On to Total Base Pay |
|---|---|
| Acknowledged | $4,500 |
| Recognized | $7,000 |
| Exemplary | $13,000 |
| Master | $18,000 |

| Years of Experience | Base Salary w/o TIA designation | Base Salary w/ TIA Designation | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total Teacher Pay | Total Acknowledged Designated Teacher Pay | Total Recognized Designated Teacher Pay | Total Exemplary Designated Teacher Pay | Total Master Designated Teacher Pay |
| **0** | $58,500 | $63,000 | $65,500 | $71,500 | $76,500 |
| **1** | $58,800 | $63,300 | $65,800 | $71,800 | $76,800 |
| **2** | $59,100 | $63,600 | $66,100 | $72,100 | $77,100 |
| **3** | $59,500 | $63,900 | $66,600 | $72,500 | $77,500 |
| **28** | $73,200 | $77,700 | $80,200 | $86,200 | $91,200 |
| **29** | $73,900 | $78,400 | $80,900 | $86,900 | $91,900 |
| **30** | $74,600 | $79,100 | $81,600 | $87,600 | $92,600 |

## High-Quality Strategic Compensation

High-quality strategic compensation plans replace the traditional salary schedule with one based solely on performance. It also determines salary increases by performance and other strategic factors, and do not provide across the board raises. For districts to adopt a high-quality strategic compensation plan, it needs to:

- Determine how to approach raises,
- Include all teachers in its local designation system for TIA designation eligibility,
- Blend TIA, district, and other funding sources to ensure financial sustainability, and
- Develop plans to abandon the traditional step and ladder pay system and transition to one based on bands of effectiveness.

Districts 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, retention bonuses, or staffing for hard-to-staff schools and subject areas.

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.

| Performance Level | Base Salary |
|---|---|
| **Master** | $109,000 |
| **Exemplary** | $94,000 |
| **Recognized** | $89,000 |
| **Acknowledged** | $86,000 |
| **Proficient II** | $78,000 |
| **Proficient I** | $75,000 |
| **Progressing II** | $66,000 |
| **Progressing I** | $65,500 |
| **Novice** | $55,000 |

| Stipend | Amount |
|---|---|
| Hard to Staff School | $3,000 |
| Hard to Staff Subject | $3,000 |

## 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 |

## 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
- ✔ Designated teacher recognition costs, such as placards or certificates of designation
- ✔ Recruitment and retention, such as job fairs and targeted pay incentives for teachers

- ✔ 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

## 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% | 30% | 10% |
|---|---|---|
| DESIGNATED TEACHER | SUPPORT TEACHERS | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT |

## 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.

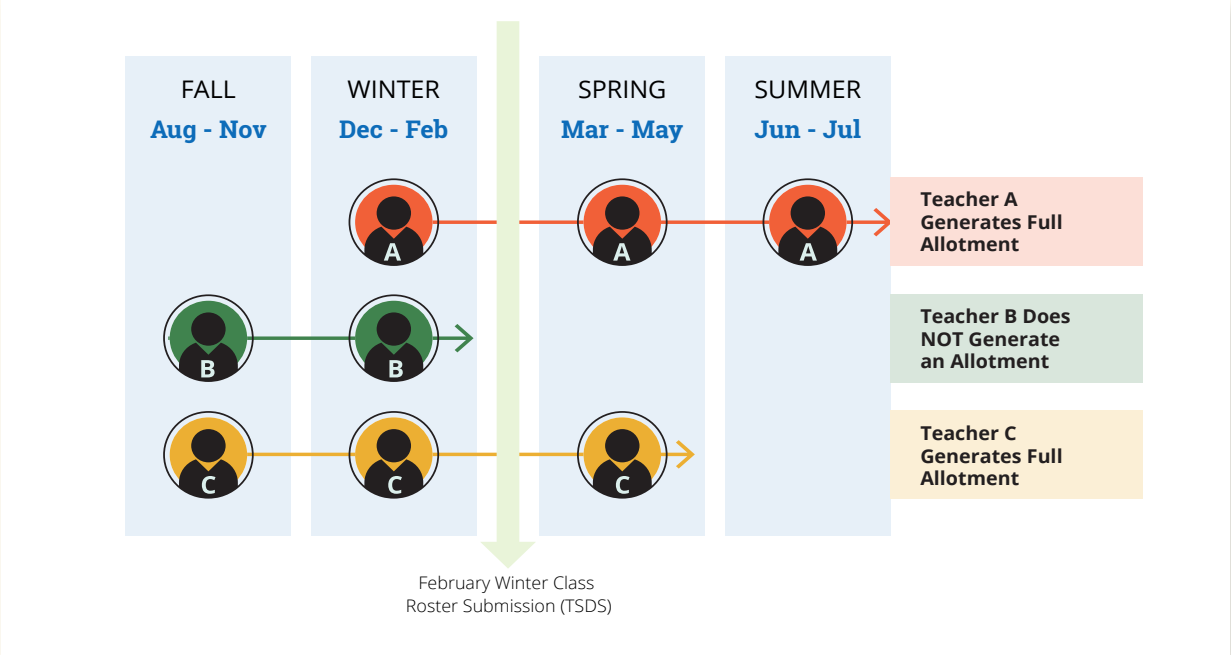
Districts must outline how the spending plan will be adjusted when teachers move into or out of the district before and after the February snapshot date. **Note:** districts can create spending plans that reward designated teachers across the school year. For example, some districts implement a quarterly 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 its 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.

## How Teacher Resignations Affect Funding




# 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.

## 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 its local compensation plan and/or budget through its normal local procedures.

**Best Practice**

Obtain school board approval of the proposed spending plan. Most districts choose to either do this annually or the summer before it anticipates designating and compensating TIA teachers.

**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. Requires TEA approval.

**Best Practice**

Communicate and make the spending plan accessible to teachers and stakeholders once the application is accepted.

# Establishing a Local Designation System

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 0-1: Develop a Local Designation System

Districts work with stakeholders to design a local designation system.

### Year 1: Application Year

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

### Year 2: Data Capture Year

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

### Year 3 Fall & Winter: Data Submission & Validation

Districts identify which teachers qualify for each level of designation using prior year performance data. It submits 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.

### 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.

### 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. It submits 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.

### When can districts begin modifying their systems?

Districts may submit Expansion and Modification Applications the school year after its System Application is accepted. See Modifying a Local Designation System for more information.

# Year 0-1: Develop a Local Designation System

## District Supports

Districts can find support from Regional education service centers (ESCs), technical assistance providers (TAPs), and TEA.

### Regional Education Service Centers

ESCs receive grant funding from TEA to assist districts in developing and implementing local designation systems and provide opportunities to collaborate with other districts. ESC Specialized hubs provide additional support for stakeholder engagement, data collection, Texas SLOs and Portfolios, rural cohorts, and strategic compensation. Learn more about **ESC support for TIA** on our website.

### Technical Assistance Providers

Districts may choose to receive additional support from third-party technical assistance providers (TAPs) to develop, implement, and expand its local designation systems, including support for managing student growth and 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 it develop and implement its system. 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.

## 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 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 its 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. Developing a local designation system takes thoughtful planning and stakeholder engagement. As with most new and ongoing 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.

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.

**Best Practice**

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

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.

## Submit an Online Letter of Intent

All newly applying districts must submit a letter of intent (LOI) indicating its application year and establishing its point(s) of contact. Completing the LOI grants access to the TIA 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 its 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 its 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 its 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 its 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 its local designation systems, positioning itself 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 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 its system the following school 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 its 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," it has the opportunity to revise and resubmit its 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 | ➔ District contact information<br>➔ Technical Assistance Provider details<br>➔ Texas Tech University data sharing agreement |
| Weighting | ➔ Clear summary of the system<br>➔ Organizes eligible teaching assignments into categories<br>➔ Outlines designation criteria and teacher performance data used for each eligible teacher category<br>➔ Component weighting for observation data, student growth, and optional factors |
| Eligible Teachers and Campuses | ➔ Identify which campuses are included in the local designation system<br>➔ Identify which courses/Course Codes are eligible to earn a designation under the local system |
| Teacher Observation | ➔ District explanation of the appraisal system, certification requirements, and training<br>➔ Calibration practices<br>➔ Data analysis<br>➔ Observation protocols, including walkthroughs and annual appraisal requirement |
| Student Growth Measures<br>*Portfolios, Pre-test Post-test (4 options), Student Learning Objectives, Value-Added Models* | ➔ Ensure each growth measure aligns to the content of the course<br>➔ Ensure validity of administration, training, security, and scoring<br>➔ Verify how each growth measure are used to set expected growth targets and calculate a student growth rating for each eligible teacher |
| Spending | ➔ Outline the spending plan for allotment funds<br>➔ Ensure compliance with 90/10 rule<br>➔ Ensure planning for teacher movement |

| Application Tab | Tab Description |
| --- | --- |
| Stakeholder Engagement | ➔ Explain process of developing the local designation system<br>➔ Provide examples of stakeholder engagement practices<br>➔ Provide examples of collection and implementation of feedback<br>➔ Explain district communication plan |
| District Support | ➔ Describe systems and process for system support<br>➔ Ensure the district is prepared for successful data capture and submission<br>➔ 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, it may update its 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 its system in subsequent years with the goal of eventually including all teachers. This gives an opportunity to build a foundation for a strong local designation system and then add to its 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 its 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 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 its 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.

### System Amendments

TEA may exercise administrative discretion to allow districts to modify its accepted System of Record outside of the standard approval timeline through a system amendment process. The system amendment process allows limited flexibility to ensure districts can consistently award teacher designations, while maintaining system integrity and high-quality implementation.

An amendment may be requested when a rare circumstance outside the district's control requires a change to the teacher appraisal instrument, student growth assessments, or eligible campuses and teaching assignments after the system modification window has passed.

TEA has the authority to approve a system amendment if the request from the district meets both of the following criteria:

- The circumstances for the change being made outside of the approval timeline are beyond the district's control, meaning the situation could not be changed or influenced by the district.
  - Examples may include budgetary constraints, school board policy decisions, discontinued assessments, or leadership turnover that resulted in large barriers to system implementation.
  - Each circumstance is evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- The district would otherwise be unable to implement its current system without the change.

Requests are evaluated by TEA on a case-by-case basis to determine if the system amendment is approved. Districts may email **tia@tea.texas.gov** to request a system amendment.

# 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, 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.

## 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.

**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.

Outside of the allowable exceptions, if a district fails to collect complete data in alignment with its System of Record, the data file may not be accepted, and the district would repeat the Data Capture Year.

## 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 its 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 Acknowledged, Recognized, Exemplary, and Master designations. Most districts choose to determine designations in the summer or early fall following the Data Capture Year.

### Using 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 its 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.

**Step 1: For every category, determine the weights for each component.**

⇒ Tool Tab: Weights

Districts can establish any weights for its components that total to 100% when combined. Weights are determined by districts' priorities, alignment to strategic plans, among other determining factors.

For example:

- District Z is prioritizing accurate appraisal ratings and investing more time in its calibration protocols. It has decided to weigh teacher observation at 60% and student growth at 40%.
- District Y has heard overwhelmingly from its stakeholders that student growth is more demonstrative of a teachers' performance as opposed to appraisal ratings. It has decided to weigh teacher observation at 40% and student growth at 60%.
- District X believes that some growth measures hold stronger weight than others, so there is a mix of weights in each category. Category 1 weigh teacher observation and student growth at 50% while Category 2 and 3 weigh teacher observation at 45% and student growth at 55%.

### Step 2: Establish performance standards

⇒ Tool Tab: Designation Decisions

Districts set the performance standards that determine what level of performance earns each designation level for each component. Districts may use statewide performance standards or create its own local standards.

⇒ Tool Tab: Analysis

The Analysis tab will provide a table breaking down the designated teacher proportions by teacher observation performance standards and student growth performance standards. **These are not final designations.**

### Step 3: Determine the approach and if the district will use minimum cut points

Districts often use one of the following three decision-making approaches.

- **Non-compensatory:** This approach sets minimum cut points for specific measures, and any teacher who does not meet those minimums is not eligible for a designation.
- **Compensatory:** This approach values high performance, allowing strengths in one area to offset weaker performance in another.
- **Hybrid:** This approach combines both non-compensatory and compensatory methods. For example, teachers must first meet the minimum criteria to be considered. Then, a compensatory method is then used to weigh multiple data points and determine the final designation level.

| | Non-Compensatory | Compensatory | Hybrid |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Benefits** | Forces alignment with statewide performance standards<br><br>Simple to communicate | More inclusive of high teacher performance (don't need to meet minimums in both components) | Has some safeguards to meet statewide performance standards<br><br>More flexible for nuanced performance |
| **Considerations** | Teachers who perform high in one component but lack in another may be awarded no/lower designation | Possibly misalign with statewide performance standards on one component if data is inflated<br><br>Possibly misalign teachers' performance across campuses and across assignments<br><br>Standards are less transparent | Possibly misalign with statewide performance standards on one component if data is inflated<br><br>Standards are less transparent |
| **Tool Notes** | Uses performance standards and cut points | Only uses performance standards | Uses performance standards and cut points |

## ⇒ Tool Tabs: Designation Results and Analysis

Examine each approach using the Designation Determination tool, and determine how it would impact the proportions of designations. The Designation Results tab will display which teachers received a designation. The Analysis tab will provide a dashboard that will breakdown designation proportions by campuses and categories.

Districts that use different weights for categories will need to examine each category separately. However, only one decision making approach should be used for an entire system. Districts can decide which decision-making approach best fits itself by analyzing the data and considering the following questions:

- ➔ Which approach is identifying my most effective teachers?
- ➔ Which approach aligns with previous stakeholder engagement?
- ➔ Am I using cut point minimums?
- ➔ Do my performance standards, weights, or cut points need to be adjusted?
- ➔ How do these designations align with implied Texas VAM designations?
- ➔ What are the data validation and stakeholder engagement impacts of adjustments to my system?
- ➔ Can I justify any changes from what has been previously shared with stakeholders?
- ➔ Is this a change I can make now, or do I need this for next year?

## 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 | | ✔ |
| | | |

**Can uncertified teachers earn designations?**

Yes. 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 Prior to Submission

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 Portal to analyze its teacher-level data before submitting it to Texas Tech. This tool may assist districts in identifying strengths and areas of concern in its 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 its current system, it may adjust its designation determinations in accordance with TEA guidelines.

**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.

## 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

## Data Submission

Annually, once designations are determined, districts submit data and proposed designations to Texas Tech for validation through the TIA Portal. 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 its 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 should 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.

**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 its data.

Prior to the System Alignment Review, districts will receive the Submitted Teacher Report, a snapshot of submitted data. Districts can use this report to verify accuracy and make corrections as needed.

**Technical review:** This happens through the TIA Portal after districts submit its 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. Most error flags require resolution while others require confirmation of accuracy.

**Submitted teachers checkpoint:** After the data submission deadline, districts will receive a snapshot of its submitted data. Upon receipt of this report, districts have one final opportunity to verify that the data submitted matches its intended submission. If discrepancies are found (e.g. missing teachers, incorrect performance data, unintended designations, etc.), districts can make corrections before the Technical Review deadline. 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 page.

## Submit via the TIA Portal

Districts are required to complete the following actions through the TIA Portal:

1. Complete the District Information page
2. Complete the Weighting page
3. Complete 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 TIA Portal provides features for checking submission files for formatting errors, offers a page 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. Districts only submit fees based on the number of new or higher designations in the final data submission file. No fees are required to maintain existing teacher designations. For example, a district submitting 12 teachers for a new or higher designation would submit a fee of $6,000.

TEA provides districts with the final fee amount in mid-November. Instructions for online fee payment are provided to districts once its data submission file is accepted.

All designation fees are paid online in the SCOMS application via ACH or credit card and 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 its system implementation and/or request limited modifications to its original data. This may result in revised data validation outcomes.

Only districts identified by TEA as eligible may participate in the appeals process. TEA will notify districts if its 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 its 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 results, TEA will provide feedback and questions with the data validation results, along with instructions for submitting the appeal. TEA will assess whether the district demonstrates a clear understanding of its data validation results and has developed an effective plan for improvement.

### 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 and/or new designations will not be approved. The district may continue collecting data for submission 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, it may choose to submit data in the subsequent year or revise its 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 its 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.

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.

### TEA Requirements for Designation Eligibility

*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.* ***Exception:*** *teachers entering their final year (year 5) of designation may be submitted at the same level if the prior year's performance qualifies*
- *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.*

### 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 of less than 180 working days may use the semester equivalents to determine year of service.

# Fully Approved Systems

Once a district passes data validation and full system review after its Data Capture Year, it is 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.

### Data Collection Exceptions

**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, it 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 an **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 its results in early July and are expected to analyze and address these findings within its 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 it is 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 it employs 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

**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

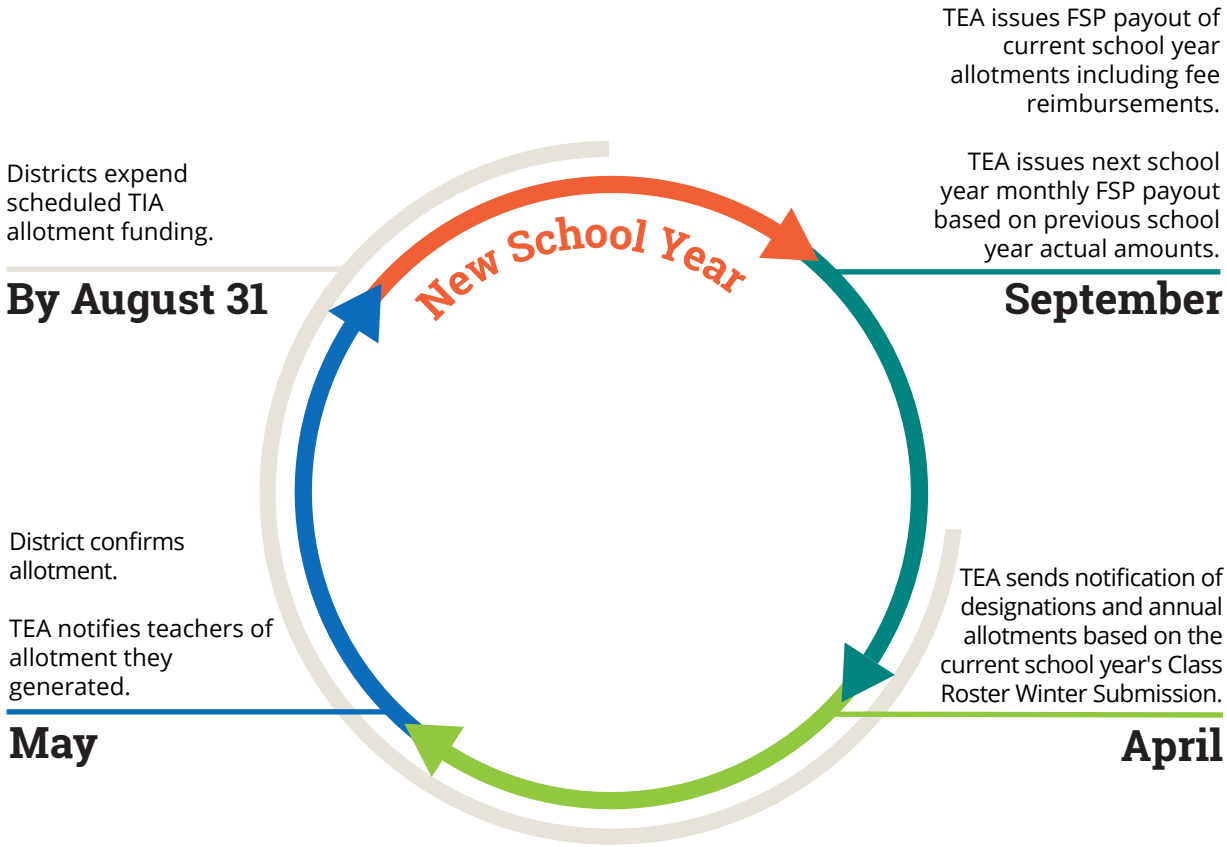
Districts employing eligible designated teachers verify and confirm its annual allotment in the Strategic Compensation Operations Management System (SCOMS). SCOMS is a TEA Login (TEAL)-based web application used for TIA. SCOMS allows district users to view, sort, filter, and export annual allotment data 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 it uses 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




## Sample First-Year Settle-Up FSP Report

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 33. | Teacher Incentive Allotment 48.112 Detail Report | $0 | $79,581 |

| # | Funding Elements | LPE # OF TEACHERS | LPE Allotment | NF # OF TEACHERS | NF 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. **Note:** districts receiving funds for the first time must be spend them prior to the September reimbursement.

Districts without a local designation system must work with its 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 it employs 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 its 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 and compliance verification 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 Identified districts may be asked to provide additional documentation or participate in progress monitoring calls with TEA. 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 its local designation system is still set up to provide the best value to its 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

System applications are valid for five school years. In the final year (year five) of application acceptance, districts must submit a Renewal Application to extend its system and continue designating teachers. For example, a district that submitted its original application in April 2023 would submit a Renewal Application in April 2028. In the summer prior to a district's Renewal application year, it will be notified by TEA of its need to begin the renewal process.

Submitting an Expansion and Modification Application during the four-year implementation 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.

## Renewal Data Capture Year

Following acceptance of the Renewal Application, the district must complete a Renewal Data Capture Year and collect data for all teachers in eligible assignments. 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 and non-rural districts with student enrollment under 1,000: $2,500 fee
- ➔ Non-rural designated districts with student enrollment over 1,000: $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 its local designation system on the required timeline will have an expired system, thereby causing the district to lose the ability to submit data and put teachers forth for designation. Districts that decide to continue its local designation system after a formal system expiration will need to complete a new TIA application.

# What is Enhanced TIA?

Enhanced TIA is a district-level designation that districts may apply for to access additional funding by meeting the criteria within TEC §21.3521 and §48.112. Districts must have a fully approved high-quality strategic compensation system to earn an Enhanced TIA designation. Once obtained, this designation allows districts to receive an additional 10% on top of its TIA funds to support this new system.

# High-Quality Strategic Compensation System Framework

To establish a high-quality strategic compensation system, districts must intentionally align on the definition of effectiveness, evaluation of performance, and compensation structure across both teacher and administrator roles. Systems must be coherent and grounded in consistent performance expectations while accounting for role-specific responsibilities.

### Differentiating high-quality strategic compensation system and Enhanced TIA

**High-quality strategic compensation system:** A performance-based compensation plan strategically aligned with district objectives and culture across the entire district that meets criteria based in TEC §21.3521 that require districts to implement:

- An approved TIA local designation system which includes substantially all teachers,
- A strategic evaluation system based on the local designation system for principals and assistant principals,
- High-quality strategic compensation plans for all classroom teachers and campus administrators, and
- Staffing plans that place effective teachers at high needs campuses and/or classrooms.

**Enhanced TIA:** A designation a district may apply for and receive after establishing a high-quality strategic compensation system. Once obtained, this designation allows districts to access an additional 10% of its TIA funds to support this new system.

For districts considering developing a high-quality strategic compensation system, the first steps are to designate a district strategic compensation lead (DSCL) and establish a district design team responsible for coordinating system design, implementation, and alignment with statutory requirements.

Refer to the "Review TIA Requirements and Establish a TIA Lead" and "Recruit a TIA Planning Committee" sections for guidance on personnel identification and governance structures.

## Teacher Evaluation System

**Teacher Evaluation Requirement**

*Ensure that under the district's teacher designation system substantially all classroom teachers, regardless of the grade level or subject area to which the teacher is assigned, are eligible to earn a designation.*

**Substantially all teachers must be included** in a district's local designation system as well as its strategic compensation system. Each eligible teaching assignment must be appraised using an approved teacher appraisal rubric and have a valid and reliable student growth measure, as listed under "Eligible Teaching Assignments and Campuses." As best practice, districts should include additional components in its evaluation systems as well to provide a robust way to evaluate effectiveness.

## District-Wide Performance-Based Compensation Systems

**District-Wide Performance-Based Compensation System Requirements**

1. *Implement for all classroom teachers a compensation plan based on performance that:*
   - A. *Uses a salary schedule that differentiates among classroom teachers based on staff appraisals; and*
   - B. *Does not include across-the-board salary increases for classroom teachers except for periodic changes to the district's or school's salary schedule to adjust for significant inflation.*
2. *For principals and assistant principals, implement a compensation system based on performance.*

## Campus Administrator Evaluation

**Campus Administrator Evaluation Requirements**

*A strategic evaluation system aligned with the district's teacher designation system.*

Districts must include evaluations for principals and assistant principals (or role equivalent). Observation and student growth are required components of the evaluation system, and the system must align with the district's local teacher designation system.

Each eligible role must be appraised using either the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS) or an aligned district-created rubric that meets statutory requirements. Districts may choose to include additional components in its evaluation systems as well.

## Strategic Teacher Assignment

**Strategic Teacher Assignment Requirements**

*Implement a locally designed plan to place highly effective teachers at high needs campuses and in accordance with TEC 28.0062(a)(3).*

Districts must implement a strategic staffing plan that demonstrates an approach to teacher and administrator assignment based on student need. Considerations may include, but are not limited to:

- Strategic scheduling for early grades and high-needs campuses and students
- New hire placement within the strategic compensation system.

## Applying for an Enhanced TIA Designation

Once the high-quality strategic compensation system is designed and ready to implement, districts may apply for an Enhanced TIA designation. The Enhanced TIA application process largely mirrors the TIA application cycle. After submitting a letter of intent, districts gain access to the Enhanced TIA tab in the portal. Districts apply by mid-April.

Districts with an accepted Enhanced TIA application are granted Designation Pending status and are required to demonstrate implementation through the Enhanced TIA verification process.

### Understanding the Enhanced TIA Tab Sections

| Section | Description |
|---|---|
| PART A: District Strategic Compensation Information | This section gathers foundational details about a district's strategic compensation structure, including key contacts, salary schedules, and policies for differentiating pay and placement. Completing this part ensures the district's compensation practices are clearly documented and ready for submission. |
| PART B: Teacher Strategic Compensation Information | This section documents how a district's strategic compensation structure supports teacher designation, eligibility, performance differentiation, and the components and subcategories used to evaluate and reward teachers. Completing Part B ensures the approach aligns with statutory requirements and best practices for Enhanced TIA |
| PART C: Administrator Strategic Compensation Information | This section documents the district's strategic compensation methodology for principals and assistant principals (or their equivalent roles). It ensures that the approach to cam-pus administrator compensation is clearly defined, aligns with statutory requirements, and supports effective leader-ship through measurable components and outcomes. |

| Section | Description |
|---|---|
| PART D: Administrator Appraisal | This section focuses on how the district evaluates principals and assistant principals (or their equivalent roles), ensuring that appraisal practices are rigorous, reliable, and aligned with statutory requirements. It covers the rubrics used, calibration and reliability processes, observation trends, data correlation, and required conferences for administrator appraisals. |
| PART E: Strategic Staffing | This section focuses on how the district strategically assigns teachers to meet student needs, especially in early grades and at high-needs campuses. It ensures compliance with TEC §21.3521 and §28.0062 which emphasizes accelerated instruction and the placement of highly effective teachers where they are most needed. |
| PART F: Stakeholder Engagement | This section documents how your district engaged various stakeholder groups in the design and implementation of the local strategic compensation system. It ensures that input from teachers, campus leaders, district leaders, and the school board is considered, and that feedback is used to strengthen and refine the system. |
| PART G: Attestation | This final section requires formal certification from the district's leadership to ensure compliance with state law. Specifically, the Superintendent and Board President must sign and upload the attestation form confirming that (1) the information contained in the Enhanced TIA tab of the TIA tab accurately reflects current policies and practices and (2) that it will implement a compliant strategic compensation system. |

## Enhanced TIA Verification

Enhanced TIA verification is the annual process that districts must undergo to verify the implementation of its strategic compensation structure. Districts must provide evidence of implementation prior to receiving the Enhanced TIA designation and payout.

- **For Enhanced TIA Designation Pending systems:** Enhanced TIA verification is required before ultimately being designated as an Enhanced TIA system. By passing this final phase, districts earn the Enhanced TIA designation which unlocks additional funding.
- TEA is exploring whether this verification will be an annual process or will occur once every five years. Future versions of this document along with additional correspondence will be sent to districts as more information becomes available.

## Enhanced TIA Data Analysis

For Enhanced TIA designated districts, TEA will conduct supplemental data checks to determine the fidelity of implementation for Enhanced TIA annually. Multi-year implementation flaws and/or system non-compliance could lead to additional requirements needed to maintain the Enhanced TIA designation status or possible revocation of the system and its associated funds.

The Data Analysis process is still being defined and may include, but are (is?) not limited to, the following:

- **Teacher compensation:** Evidence of alignment between teacher compensation and TIA performance measures, including student growth, teacher observation results, and value-added models.
- **Administrator compensation:** Relationships between school leader compensation and campus accountability ratings.
- **TIA eligibility:** The percent of teachers included during data submission to ensure substantially all teachers are evaluated.
- **Strategic staffing:** How TIA designated teachers are distributed across campuses and student assignment groups.
- **Retention:** Movement patterns of TIA designated teachers within the district.

Results of the supplemental Enhanced TIA data analysis will be provided to Enhanced TIA designated districts as an appendix item in the TIA Data Validation Report.

## Enhanced TIA Funding

Enhanced TIA districts must still meet the TIA statutory requirements and spend 90% or more of the base allotment amount on teacher compensation on the campus where the designated teacher works. The additional funds received for Enhanced TIA must be used to implement and/or maintain an Enhanced TIA designation.

Enhanced TIA districts must spend the additional Enhanced TIA funds by August 31 of the same calendar year. **Note:** there are no fees associated with Enhanced TIA.

**Best Practice**

Enhanced TIA district's spending plan outlines should align with a high-quality strategic compensation system.

## Permitted vs. Prohibited Spending of Enhanced TIA Funds

**Permitted Spending of Enhanced TIA Funds**

- ✔ Compensation to implement high-quality strategic compensation systems for teachers, principals and assistant principals
- ✔ Strategic stipends for hard-to-staff or high-need areas
- ✔ Benefits and retirement contributions for staff in high-quality strategic compensation systems
- ✔ School leader appraisal costs for certification, training, and calibration

**Prohibited Spending of Enhanced TIA Funds**

- ✘ Compensation for other staff within and outside of strategic compensation systems
- ✘ Stipends not based on effectiveness (Ex. tenure, degree attainment)
- ✘ General administrative expenses

## Receiving Enhanced TIA Funds

The funding and spending timeline for Enhanced TIA funds follows the same process as receiving the allotment for TIA. The SOF Report will display the total allotment (sum of designated teacher allotments + applicable reimbursed fees + Enhanced TIA allotment) near line 33. The display line may vary depending on which other allotments the district may have received.

# National Board Certification

# National Board Certification and TIA

NBCTs employed as Texas public school teachers may be designated as Nationally Board Certified 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 Designations

TEA oversees the designation process for Texas NBCTs; no application is required from the NBCT or their employing district. Prior to the passage of House Bill 2 in 2025, NBCTs were eligible for a Recognized designation. In fall 2026, NBCTs previously designated as Recognized will be redesignated as Nationally Board Certified.

NBCTs must meet the following criteria to earn a Nationally Board Certified 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 | ➔ January 31 deadline for NBCTs to update their directory listing<br>➔ New NBCT certifications issued by NBPTS<br>➔ Winter Class Roster snapshot of NBCT campus placement<br>➔ Districts submit reimbursement requests for NBPTS fees (optional) |
| April | ➔ New NCBTs receive Recognized designations and become designated teachers<br>➔ Designation placed on SBEC certificates retroactive to beginning of school year<br>➔ Allotment funds calculated based on designated teacher CDCNs reported in Winter Class Roster<br>➔ Districts notified of designated teacher allotment funding for that school year<br>➔ Designation expiry dates updated for NBCTs who successfully renewed or maintained certification |

# Allotments for Districts Employing NBCTs

Eligible Nationally Board Certified Teachers will generate the Acknowledged level allotment, between $3k-$9k.

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 contacts 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 its System Application.

NBCTs may also earn designations through a district's local designation system. In this case, the local designation will take precedence and display on their certificate. Teachers may only generate allotments for one designation.

## 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**.

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