Mentor Program Allotment: Cycle 3 LEA Application Guidelines

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Mentor Program Allotment at a Glance

Authorizing Legislation

House Bill 3 (HB 3), passed by the 86th Texas Legislature in 2019, created the Mentor Program Allotment (MPA). HB 3 includes both funding for the MPA (§48.114) and requirements to access those funds (§21.458).

The MPA is an optional program for local education agencies (LEAs), which refers to both school districts and open-enrollment charter schools. If LEAs choose to meet the requirements in TEC §48.114, TEC §21.458 and 19 TAC §153.1011, they could qualify for MPA funds. Refer to the Application and Review Process section of this document for more information.

Purpose of MPA

The MPA provides LEAs the opportunity to build or sustain beginning teacher mentor programs with the primary goals of increasing beginning teacher retention and effectiveness.

Data shows that beginning teachers make up the greatest share of the Texas teacher workforce, with year 0 and year 1 teachers making up approximately 6-7% percent each while year 7 and above make up about 3% or less each (PEIMS, 2018-19). Research from The New Teacher Project has found that, on average, beginning teachers are less effective than their more tenured/experienced peers (TNTP, 2015). Additionally, reports have found that beginning teachers are placed on Title I campuses more often than non-Title I campuses, and are more likely to teach on Title I campuses in the upper quartile of economic disadvantage (Texas Equity Toolkit, 2016-19). The high number of beginning teachers, their relative effectiveness, and their disproportionate placement in high poverty schools suggests that supporting this group of educators should be a top priority.

In the effort to support beginning teachers, research indicates that multi-year mentoring programs lead to improvement in student performance, teacher effectiveness, and teacher retention (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011) demonstrating great promise in implementing mentoring programs. However, teachers who teach in a high poverty school are less likely to be assigned a formal mentor and work with a mentor in the same school, grade, or subject (Kardos & Johnson, 2009). The MPA is intentionally structured to address some of these issues.

Context for MPA

In 2015, the Texas Teacher Mentoring Advisory Committee created a set of 10 recommendations anchored in best practices for teacher mentorship. These recommendations were largely adopted into legislation to incentivize implementation of mentorship best practices in Texas and are reflected in MPA statute and rule.

To be eligible for the MPA, LEAs must abide by requirements and will submit applications describing their process for the best practices listed below:

1. Mentor selection
2. Mentor assignment
3. Mentor training
4. Mentor roles and responsibilities
5. Program design and delivery
6. Funding

Timeline

The chart below indicates relevant MPA deadlines and dates for Cycle 3. Application documents can be downloaded from the MPA website.

Date	Timeline Item
January 10, 2022	MPA application window opens, and LEAs may apply
January 24, 2022	Deadline to submit written questions by 11:59 p.m. (CST)
February 2, 2022	Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) responses posted to the MPA website
February 18, 2022	MPA applications due by 5:00 p.m. (CST)
March 2022	TEA notifies LEAs of MPA application approval
Spring 2022	LEAs submit a Verification of Participation form with superintendent's signature

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Submission

All questions about the MPA Application must be submitted in writing to the MPA email inbox via mpa@tea.texas.gov by January 24, 2022. This ensures that no prospective applicant obtains a competitive advantage by acquiring information unknown to other prospective applicants. The questions and their answers (in the form of FAQs) will be published on the MPA website on February 2, 2022. Any questions received after the specified date will not be answered by TEA so that all applicants have equal opportunity to review all FAQs before submitting their application.

Program Contact

The following TEA staff member may be contacted via MPA@tea.texas.gov with questions related to the Mentor Program Allotment:

Ruth Ye, Teacher Mentorship and Leadership Specialist
Educator Support

BTs and the provider of mentor training in their application.

Priority Points Table:

LEAs may be assigned a maximum total of 22 priority points. The *LEA Priority Point List* can be found on the MPA website.

LEA-Specific Data	Priority Points Breakdown	Possible Priority Points
Student Enrollment	<1,599 = 7 points 1,600-2,999 = 6 points 3,000-4,999 = 5 points 5,000-9,999 = 4 points 10,000-24,999 = 3 points 25,000-49,999 = 2 points 50,000 and over = 1 points	1 to 7 points If no data is available for an LEA, it will receive 0 points
Rural Status*	LEAs that qualify as rural = 5 points LEAs that do not qualify as rural = 0 points	0 or 5 points If no data is available for an LEA, it will receive 0 points
Percentage of Students that are Economically Disadvantaged**	0.1 point for each percentage point of the LEA's average of economically disadvantaged students For example, 5.47 points would be assigned to an LEA with an average economically disadvantaged student population of 54.7%.	0 to 10 points If no data is available for an LEA, it will receive 0 points

* LEAs categorized as a rural type by TEA with fewer than 5,000 enrolled students or LEAs categorized as rural by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) with fewer than 5,000 enrolled students. This definition of rural is used to calculate priority points.
** TEA will average the percentage of economically disadvantaged student demographics from the schools listed on Attachment B of the application if the applying LEA will only use MPA on a subset of campuses within the LEA.

LEAs that are not awarded in Cycle 3 will be eligible for additional priority points in Cycle 4.

Uses of Funding

Approved LEAs will be funded an allotment for each beginning teacher who participates in a mentor program and whose mentor teacher meets the requirements of TEC §48.114, TEC §21.458 and 19 TAC §153.1011. Per TEC §48.114, the allotment may only be used for mentor teacher stipends, scheduled release time for the mentor and beginning teacher to engage in mentoring activities, and mentor support through providers of mentor training.

LEAs may consider other sources of funding, such as Title II A or School Improvement Grants, to further support their mentor program goals and implementation. When considering other sources of funds, LEAs must abide by the relevant supplement, not supplant rules for each source of funds.

must be provided on eight separate occasions throughout the year and may vary in length such as meetings or brief touchpoints, depending on the needs of the LEA. These may include supporting

(Paul Bambrick-Santoyo) framework briefly outlined below. Refer to Appendix E for a more detailed one-pager on the "Living the Learning PD Cycle."

See It, Name It, Do It framework

See it	Activities that lead participants to see what success looks like
Name it	Lead participants to identify keys to the action that led to what was observed in the "See it"
Do it	Opportunities to practice the actions identified in the "Name it"

Additionally, the scope and sequence must describe measures of success that (1) are specific to the training session, (2) occur in a timely manner, and (3) evaluate mentors' skill development. Each training session in the scope and sequence must demonstrate alignment across the training objectives, mentor teacher practice, and measures of success.

Application and Review Process

Application Overview
In the MPA application, LEAs will assure that they will abide by the requirements of TEC §21.458, TEC §48.114, and 19 TAC §153.1011. LEAs may re-apply for MPA funds in future cycles.

The following components of the application are due by 5:00 p.m. (CST) on February 18, 2022.

Component	File Type	File Name	Directions

The following table provides a timeline overview for funding, compliance reporting, and settle-up.

Cycle 3 Events	MPA funding begins flowing to LEAs for that school year	Cycle 3 LEAs submit end-of-year compliance report	TEA determines whether Cycle 3 LEAs met MPA requirements and funding is available for the following year	Funding is reconciled during September settle-up
Year 1 Implementation (2022-2023 SY)	September 2022	Spring 2023	Summer 2023	September 2023
Year 2 Implementation (2023-2024 SY)	September 2023	Spring 2024	Summer 2024	September 2024
Year 3 Implementation (2024-2025 SY)				

Appendix

Appendix B

Appendix C: Texas Education Code §21.458, Mentors

Sec. 21.458. MENTORS. (a) Each school district may assign a mentor teacher to each classroom teacher who has less than two years of teaching experience in the subject or grade level to which the teacher is assigned. A teacher assigned as a mentor must:

(1) to the extent practicable, teach in the same school;

(2) to the extent practicable, teach the same subject or grade level, as applicable; and

(3) meet the qualifications prescribed by commissioner rules adopted under Subsection (b).

(a-1) To be assigned as a mentor, a teacher must agree to serve as a mentor teacher for at least one school year. The assignment must begin not later than the 30th day of employment of the classroom teacher to whom the mentor teacher is assigned. A district must agree to assign a mentor to a new classroom teacher for at least two school years.

(b) The commissioner shall adopt rules necessary to administer this section, including rules concerning the duties and qualifications of a teacher who serves as a mentor and the number of classroom teachers that may be assigned to a mentor. The rules concerning qualifications must require that to serve as a mentor a teacher must:

(1) complete a research-based mentor and induction training program approved by the commissioner;

(2) complete a mentor training program provided by the district;

(3) have at least three complete years of teaching experience with a superior record of assisting students, as a whole, in achieving improvement in student performance; and

(4) demonstrate interpersonal skills, instructional effectiveness, and leadership skills.

(b-1) A school district must provide training to mentor teachers and any appropriate district and campus employees who work with the classroom teacher or supervise the classroom teacher. The

Appendix D: 19 Texas Administrative Code §153.1011, Mentor Program Allotment

Sec. 153.1011.

(C) have at least three complete years of teaching experience with a superior record of assisting students, as a whole, in achieving improvement in student performance. Districts may use the master, exemplary, or recognized designations under TEC, §21.3521, to fulfill this requirement; and

(D) demonstrate interpersonal skills, instructional effectiveness, and leadership skills.

(2) Mentor assignment. School districts must agree to assign no more than:

(A) two beginning teachers to a mentor who serves as a teacher of record for, on average, six hours per instructional day; or

(B) four beginning teachers to a mentor who serves as a teacher of record for, on average, less than six hours per instructional day.

(3) District mentor training program. A school district must:

(A) provide training to mentor teachers and any appropriate district and campus employees, such as principals, assistant principals, and instructional coaches, who work with a beginning teacher or supervise a beginning teacher;

(B) ensure that mentor teachers and any appropriate district and campus employees are trained before the beginning of the school year;

(C) provide supplemental training that includes best mentorship practices to mentor teachers and any appropriate district and campus employees throughout the school year, minimally once per semester; and

(B) address the following topics in mentoring sessions with the beginning teacher being mentored:

(i) orientation to the context, policies, and practices of the school district, including:

(I) campus-wide student culture routines;

(II) district and campus teacher evaluation systems;

(III) campus curriculum and curricular resources, including formative and summative assessments; and

(IV) campus policies and practices related to lesson planning;

(ii) data-driven instructional practices;

(iii) specific instructional coaching cycles, including coaching regarding conferences between parents and the beginning teacher;

(iv) professional development; and

(v) professional expectations.

(c) Application approval process. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) will provide an application and approval process for school districts to apply for mentor program allotment funding. Funding will be limited based on availability of funds, and, annually, the commissioner shall adopt a formula to determine the amount to which approved districts are entitled. The application shall address the requirements of TEC, §21.458, and include:

(1) the timeline for application and approval;

(2) approval criteria, including the minimum requirements necessary for an application to be eligible for approval; and

(B) an annual survey of the district's beginning teachers and mentor teachers for whom funds were used under TEC, §48.114. The survey will be used to gather data on program implementation and teacher perceptions.

(2) Failure to comply with TEC, §21.458, and this section after receiving an allotment may result in TEA rescinding eligibility of a district's current or future mentor program allotment funding.

(e) Allowable expenditures. Mentor program allotment funds may only be used for the following:

(1) mentor teacher stipends;

(2) release time for mentor teachers and beginning teachers limited to activities in accordance with this section; and

(3) mentoring support through providers of mentor training.

(f) District mentor program review. School districts awarded mentor program allotment funds must agree to submit all information requested by TEA through periodic activity/progress reports, which will occur at least once per year. Reports will be due no later than 45 calendar days after receipt of the information request and must contain all requested information in the format prescribed by the commissioner.

(g) Final decisions. Commissioner decisions regarding eligibility for mentor program allotment funds are final and appeals to the commissioner regarding such decisions will not be considered.

LIVING THE LEARNING PD CYCLE:

An Effective Approach to Leading Professional Development

Objective = Do it	**Determine your objective by what they will practice:** **Highest Leverage.** *Practice the gap:* do the most important skills to increase proficiency **Clear & Measurable**

Continuation of "See It, Name It, Do It" model

Do It (cont.)

Give feedback & do it again:
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Appendix F: Allowable Changes to Mentor Training Program

The following scenarios are allowable changes to the mentor training program that LEAs may make during Cycle 3 implementation. These changes do not affect the funding formula or a LEA's funding amount.

From	To	Review Process
Approved Mentor Training Provider	LEA-created mentor training	Commissioner approval is required. LEA must submit their mentor training scope and sequence to TEA by: • December 2022 for Year 2 implementation (2023-24 SY) • December 2023 for Year 3 implementation (2024-25 SY) Changes submitted after the deadlines will not be reviewed.
LEA-created mentor training	Approved Mentor Training Provider	LEA must notify the MPA Approved Provider(s) and TEA of this change by: • February 2023 for Year 2 implementation (2023-24 SY) • February 2024 for Year 3 implementation (2024-25 SY) Changes communicated after the deadlines will require TEA approval.
Approved Mentor Training Provider	Different Approved Provider OR Different Service Type	LEA must notify the MPA Approved Provider(s) and TEA of this change by: • February 2023 for Year 2 implem 2 i0 Tc 0 Tw 6.091 0 p16S0 1 Tf0.002-1

Appendix