



**Cityscape Schools’
Teacher Incentive Allotment
Handbook**

2020-2021

Many thanks to the Cityscape Schools' **TIA Steering Committee**, who dedicated many hours to the program's development and design on behalf of the district's teachers and students:

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Mr. Leonard Brannon, Superintendent

Ms. Gabriela Camacho, Literacy/Biliteracy Director

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Introduction

On June 2019, the 86th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 3 (HB3), which was signed into law by Governor Abbott, establishing the optional Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) program. TIA is a Texas Education Agency program, “dedicated to recruiting, supporting, and retaining highly effective teachers in all schools, with particular emphasis on high-needs and rural schools” (Texas Education Agency, 2019).

Why TIA? Because of its positive impact on both *recruitment* and *retention* of **high-performing** teachers. Two goals of the TIA are to provide incentive pay to highly effective teachers and to attract and retain effective teachers especially in rural and high-poverty level schools.

Districts and charter schools that *choose* to participate are required to develop a local teacher designation system that is designed to measure teacher’s effectiveness on student academic performance. This system is designed to differentiate compensation to pay higher salaries to the strongest teachers, based on their performance on specific measured components.

Districts can receive additional funding of \$3000 - \$32,000 – per teacher, per school year – for every designated teacher they employ. Districts must spend at least 90 percent of TIA funds on teacher compensation.

District Rationale

Cityscape Schools is an open-enrollment, public charter school district that operates two campuses in Dallas, Texas: East Grand Preparatory (Pre-kindergarten 3 through 8th grade) and Buckner Preparatory (Pre-kindergarten 3 through 4th grade). Cityscape is a Title 1 (schoolwide) district, whose initial charter was granted in December 2007. For the past several years, Cityscape stakeholders have had much discussion about a teacher recognition program that would assist the district both in retaining high-performing teachers as well as attracting new teachers consider a smaller charter school district when determining where to teach in the Dallas – Fort Worth Metroplex. From these early discussions, the district implemented an active teacher retention plan, a teaching mentoring program, and a formal teacher recruitment program. Despite these enhancements, Cityscape stakeholders continued to develop the recruitment plan, as they believed providing a monetary stipend tied directly to teacher performance and student growth would be of great benefit to our students.

In the fall of 2019, superintendent Leonard Brannon formed an exploratory committee to study a new program from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) titled, the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA). This program would assist districts in teacher recruitment, teacher retention, and rewarding high-performing teachers with additional compensation. The exploratory committee’s recommendation was to move forward in the application process with the TIA, as it would be a valuable tool to assist the district in recruiting, retaining, and rewarding highly effective and qualified teachers.

After the exploratory committee’s approval to proceed, Mr. Brannon invited the members of the committee to present their findings to the district’s board of directors in January 2020. The board unanimously approved the district to develop an official teacher incentive program and make application with TEA at the appropriate time. A steering committee of 15 district and campus administrators, teachers, and community members was formed to develop the program, and agreed that the plan would be comprised of the following measurements with their respective weighting: Student Growth (NWEA MAP) at 50 percent and Teacher Observation (T-TESS) at 50 percent.

For the first year (Cohort C), the program includes all certified teachers who teach ELAR and/or Math in grades Kindergarten through the 8th grade. The steering committee determined that since the district has used the MAP assessment system for several years, its continued utilization would allow more teachers to be included in the first cohort. Future plans include making application with TEA so that Pre-kindergarten, SPED, Science and History teachers can be included in the program by the 2021-2022 academic school year.

Cityscape’s TIA Plan

The law (HB3) requires that system to contain at least one valid and reliable teacher observation system (e.g., T-TESS), and at least one valid and reliable measurement of student growth for each identified teacher (e.g., MAP data). The application guidelines require schools to have ongoing communication and “stakeholder engagement” in the development of their local teacher designation programs.

The TIA requires schools to identify qualifying teachers into the following three designations:

RECOGNIZED

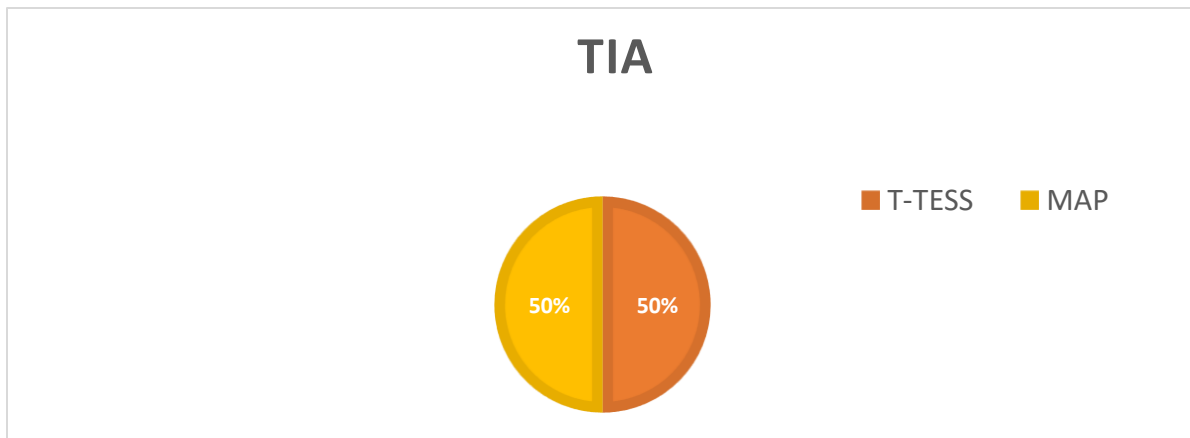
EXEMPLARY

MASTER

Who will qualify for Cityscape's TIA program?

- Only **certified teachers** are eligible
- Year 1: teachers in grades K through 8 (ELAR & Math)
- Year 2: all teachers in the district (including Pre-K, SPED, Middle School Science & Social Studies)

**Proposed Weighting Components for Cityscape's TIA program
for Teachers Grades K-8**



T-TESS Performance Levels (weighted at 50 percent)

What is T-TESS?

T-TESS is the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System. It is a teacher appraisal system for the state of Texas designed to support teachers in their professional development and help them grow and improve as educators. It became the state recommended system starting with the 2016-2017 school year. Cityscape Schools adopted it as their teacher appraisal system in 2019.

What are the components of T-TESS evaluation and on what are teachers rated?

T-TESS has 2 components: 1) 4 domain/16-dimension rubric and 2) student growth.

T-TESS 4 Domains/16 Dimensions

- Planning
- **Instruction (5 dimensions: Achieving Expectations; Content Knowledge & Expertise; Communication; Differentiation; and Monitor & Adjust)***
- **Learning environment (3 dimensions: Classroom Environment, Routines, & Procedures; Managing Student Behavior; and Classroom Culture)***
- Professional practices & responsibilities

**Only these 8 dimensions will count toward a teacher's TIA designation*

T-TESS 5 Ratings

DISTINGUISHED	ACCOMPLISHED	PROFICIENT	DEVELOPING	IMPROVEMENT NEEDED
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)

What does a teacher have to score on T-TESS to qualify for a TIA distinction?

Teacher Observation Minimum Average Ratings

Designation Level	Minimum Average Score Across Domain 2 and 3	Minimum Rating Required for each Dimension in Domain 2 and 3
Recognized	3.7 (74% of possible points)	At least 3 (proficient) on all dimensions
Exemplary	3.9 (78% of possible points)	At least 3 (proficient) on all dimensions
Master	4.5 (90% of possible points)	At least 3 (proficient) on all dimensions

Student Growth Performance Standards (weighted at 50 percent)

To ensure valid and reliable student growth measures have been adopted for our TIA program, Cityscape will utilize NWEA's nationally normed MAP assessments to measure student growth. Presently, Cityscape utilizes the MAP assessments three times during the school year (beginning, middle, and end) for students in grades Kindergarten through 8 in ELAR, Math, and Science. NWEA's test and re-test studies, which evaluate scores from the same students after several months, produce reliability indices that are considered statistically significant. Further, the literature is replete with numerous peer-reviewed journal articles demonstrating strong evidence of reliability and validity in NWEA's portfolio of MAP assessments and NWEA operates the largest repository of student growth data in the country (Cronin, 2007).

What percentage of student growth does a teacher have to attain in order to qualify for a TIA distinction?

The percentages below are the statewide performance standards for student growth in each of the three teacher designation levels, ***regardless of the student growth measure used.***

Recognized Teacher	Exemplary Teacher	Master Teacher
55% of students meet or exceed expected growth	60% of students meet or exceed expected growth	70% of students meet or exceed expected growth

The district has adopted TEA's performance standards for student growth objectives, which ensure that teachers meet the statewide performance standards for their impact on student academic growth. 55% of students must meet or exceed student growth targets for a teacher to be designated as Recognized; 60% of students must meet or exceed student growth targets to be Exemplary; and 70% must meet or exceed student growth targets to be a Master teacher (Texas Education Agency, 2020). Thus, Cityscape's calculation for the teacher's student growth metric matches exactly to TEA's recommendation: the number of students who meet or exceed growth expectations divided by the total number of students with an expected growth score.

Prerequisite to Qualify for Cityscape’s TIA Program

Teacher Attendance

There are numerous studies on the negative effects of teacher absenteeism, including a 2014 study by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), that reveal poor teacher attendance can be a significant challenge for a school district. Many studies have pointed to a significant correlation between poor teacher attendance and low student achievement, even when teachers miss as few as 10 days a year.

Therefore, Cityscape’s TIA steering committee discussed placing teacher attendance as a third weighted measure in the district’s TIA formula for earning a distinction. Arguments were made on both sides of the issue, until it was determined that placing teacher attendance as a weighted measure along with the T-TESS and MAP scores would skew the student growth data we were attempting to determine. Nonetheless, many committee members were adamant that they wanted teacher attendance included in the district TIA plan as a best practice to deter and reduce absences among the instructional staff. All agreed on the subject’s importance in creating a school climate where attendance is valued by students and teachers, alike.

The committee discussed various strategies to promote teacher attendance, such as paying teachers for unused leave, rewarding them with extra time off, restricting leave on specific dates and, as preciously mentioned, considering attendance as a metric in teacher evaluation programs. The committee agreed that investing in a system that keeps effective teachers in the classroom should be a priority for the district. A key part of that effort is creating a school climate in which consistent teacher attendance is the norm.

Therefore, the decision was made to use teacher attendance as a prerequisite to qualify for a TIA distinction. If a teacher misses more than the allotment outlined below, they will not qualify for a TIA distinction, no matter their T-TESS and MAP student growth scores.

The attendance standards listed below represent the district requirements for a Cityscape teacher to earn one of the three teacher designation levels:

Recognized Teacher	Exemplary Teacher	Master Teacher
No more than 8 absences*	No more than 5 absences*	No more than 3 absences*

**These absences do not include legally protected days (e.g., FMLA, bereavement days).*

Spending Plan

While each district makes its own determination on how to distribute TIA funds to teachers, Texas Education Code 48.112 specifies “at least 90 percent of each allotment be used for compensation of teachers employed at the campus at which the teacher for whom the district received the allotment is employed.” The remaining 10% may be used by the district for “costs associated with implementing (TIA), including efforts to support teachers in obtaining designations.” Districts will make individual decisions regarding how the TIA funds will be distributed between the teacher earning the designation and the other teachers assigned to his or her campus.

Below is a chart used by TEA in early communication on TIA to show the different levels of potential compensation, depending on rural and Title 1 status:



Teacher Incentive Allotment Funding

Designation	Base	Multiplier	Tier	Non Eco-Dis	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5
			Student Point Value	X 0	X 0.5	X 1.0	X 2.0	X 3.0	X 4.0
Recognized	\$3,000	\$1,500	Non-rural	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,750	\$ 4,500	\$ 6,000	\$ 7,500	\$ 9,000
			Rural	\$ 4,500	\$ 6,000	\$ 7,500	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000
Exemplary	\$6,000	\$3,000	Non-rural	\$ 6,000	\$ 7,500	\$ 9,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 18,000
			Rural	\$ 9,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000
Master	\$12,000	\$5,000	Non-rural	\$ 12,000	\$ 14,500	\$ 17,000	\$ 22,000	\$ 27,000	\$ 32,000
			Rural	\$ 17,000	\$ 22,000	\$ 27,000	\$ 32,000	\$ 32,000	\$ 32,000

Max funding amount = \$32,000

Texas Education Agency, 2020

Cityscape's TIA steering committee determined that the maximum allotment should be provided directly to the teacher of record, who will earn their TIA distinction through a

rigorous formula of excellence in the classroom combined with excellence in student achievement.

As the law dictates, district TIA funds will only be used for costs associated with implementing the TIA, including efforts to support teachers in obtaining designations. The steering committee wanted to utilize the entire 10 percent to financially support appropriate training, professional development, measurement tools, and all other necessary components to assist teachers in reaching a TIA level of distinction.

Distribution of Allotment Funds for Cityscape Schools		
Allotment Going to Designated Teachers	Allotment going to other teachers on the campus	Allotment going to District (Max 10%)
90%	0%	10%

Resources

To learn more about Teacher Incentive Allotment, see the Texas Education Agency Resources (<https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/educator-initiatives-and-performance/educator-initiatives/teacher-incentive-allotment>)

Teacher Incentive Allotment FAQ's (https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/tia_faq.pdf)

Video Explanation of Teacher Designations (<https://youtu.be/Q1no6VQ6a2A?t=376>)

Two Paths to Earning a Designation (<https://youtu.be/Q1no6VQ6a2A?t=670>)

T-TESS Evaluation Rubric (https://www.teachfortexas.org/Resource_Files/Guides/T-TESS_Rubric.pdf)

TIA Quiz Cityscape Staff

1. The initials T.I.A. stand for:
 - a. Texas Innovation Agency
 - b. Teacher Incentive Allotment
 - c. Teaching Initiative Allowance
 - d. Texas Instructors Allocation

2. The teacher observation system the district will use in the 2020-2021 school year to evaluate instruction is T-TESS.
 - a. True
 - b. False

3. The assessment tool the district's TIA plan will use to measure student growth (throughout the coming school year) is:
 - a. Achieve3000
 - b. Fast ForWord
 - c. Istation
 - d. MAP (Measures of Academic Progress)

4. The district's TIA plan weights the teacher observation score evenly with the student growth measure at 50/50.
 - a. True
 - b. False

5. Teachers comprise _____ of Cityscape's TIA steering committee.
 - a. 10 percent
 - b. 15 percent
 - c. 20 percent
 - d. 25 percent

6. Teacher attendance will be used a prerequisite to qualify for a TIA distinction.
 - a. True
 - b. False

7. Which of the following is NOT a TIA distinction as recognized by the state of Texas?
 - a. Distinguished
 - b. Exemplary
 - c. Master
 - d. Recognized

8. Only certified teachers can qualify for a TIA distinction.
 - a. True
 - b. False

9. To obtain the first level of distinction, a Cityscape teacher cannot miss more than eight days during the school year. These days do not include legally protected days (e.g., FMLA, bereavement). In order to obtain the second level of distinction, a Cityscape teacher cannot miss more than five days. How many days are allowed for a Cityscape teacher to miss during the school year and still achieve the highest level of TIA distinction?
 - a. None
 - b. One
 - c. Two
 - d. Three

10. Cityscape's TIA plan designates that 90 percent of the funding goes directly to the teacher of record who earns his or her distinction.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Quiz Answers:

1. B
2. A
3. D
4. A
5. C
6. A
7. A
8. A
9. D
10. A

*Please contact Dr. Billy Ferrell, Chief Officer of Culture and Climate, with any questions or comments at 214-714-8060 or bferrell@cityscapeschools.org