

Proactively Planning For D.A.T.E. Implementation

This document provides suggested activities that a district should complete prior to the beginning of the D.A.T.E. implementation school year. This document is meant to be a starting point for your planning and may not be inclusive of all the steps necessary for each unique D.A.T.E. program. The included tasks and activities are provided as a guide and are not required.

Program Management

- Determine who will serve as the “program manager” for the D.A.T.E. grant in your district. Communicate this information to campus administrators/campus contacts and relevant central office staff. Make sure that you maintain current D.A.T.E. contact information with TEA and update your primary D.A.T.E. contact when necessary.
- Create a timeline for implementation that includes relevant due dates and activities.
- Designate a campus “point of contact” at each participating campus for the plan. This is a person who can answer any questions about the plan and will meet monthly with the D.A.T.E. planning committee to discuss program progress.
- Educate and train campus principals on the plan and ensure that they will support the program on their campuses.

Communication

- Develop a strategic communication plan for the year. Include both internal and external stakeholders. Include specific information that you will communicate to each stakeholder, with what frequency, when, and who will be responsible for this communication (see <http://txeducatorawards.org/stakeholder.html> for sample communication plans).
- If program plan changes were made for Year 2 and/or during the grant negotiations process, communicate these changes to all stakeholders and update the publically available plan.
- Communicate any program qualifiers or eligibility requirements, such as the length of time a teacher must be on a campus to receive an award, clauses for retirement and leaves of absence, etc.

- Author and disseminate communication documents to include:
 - One-page informational documents for stakeholders that describe the plan. Include provisions that may exclude teachers or staff members from earning awards (i.e. too many absences, leave the district or campus, etc.).
 - “Frequently Asked Questions” document specific to the district’s local plan.
 - Powerpoint presentation outlining the plan (present at beginning of the year faculty meetings).
 - Teacher and Staff Understanding Forms and other documentation to verify teacher and staff participation and understanding of the plan.

- Present plan to all teachers and staff members. Communicate program goals, award criteria, timelines, and support structures. This can be done by training principals to give the presentation on their campuses, for example.

- Ensure that teachers understand that taxes and benefits will be removed from the award amount and that the award will be counted as part of their net annual salary.

- Have teachers and staff members sign Teacher Understanding Forms and Job Title Verification (position under which they are included in the plan) to ensure that teachers understand the plan, understand how they will earn an award, and have committed to participation.

- Make approved award plan publically available.

Program Monitoring

- Designate district-level program monitors to track and monitor the program throughout the year, including data collection and management processes.

- Assign plan-related program monitoring/documentation/tracking tasks to specific individuals or groups who have authority and resources to complete tasks.

- Develop standard forms that teachers and staff will be required to submit throughout the year to track Part I and/or Part II activities, including collaboration, completion of professional development, observations, mentoring hours, etc.

- Regularly gather all paperwork, documentation, and data needed to determine criteria within the plan. Determine and communicate due dates for documentation.

- Submit necessary program and/or budget amendments based on teacher and staff feedback and current monitoring findings, etc.

- Convene principals and teacher focus group to discuss feedback and determine areas for improvement and/or change in the plan.

Campus-level Implementation

- Ensure all teachers and staff understand the plan and its requirements.
- Communicate with campus administrators to identify support needs to meet program goals, such as recruitment/retention stipends, professional development funds, mentor training and support, etc. Provide such supports.
- Designate grade level, subject area, or staff “team leads” to maintain program momentum throughout the year. Schedule regular meetings to communicate with team leads, remind of program goals, track progress, and provide support in meeting goals.
- Talk to internal departments and/or regional service centers about the services they may have to help meet the goals of the plan. Schedule trainings accordingly.
- Administer baseline or benchmark assessments (if using growth or benchmarks in plan) and document/record results.
- Determine how teachers and staff will track and monitor activities. Communicate this to teachers and staff, provide documentation forms with due dates.
- Provide professional development to teachers and staff included in the plan.
- Task principals with asking teachers and staff for feedback about the plan during faculty meetings.

Data Management and Analysis

- Verify that the district is currently collecting the necessary data to determine awards for all personnel identified under both Part I and Part II of the plan.
- Ensure all data systems are in place to adequately determine teacher eligibility and award amounts.
- Develop a data tracking system (can be something simple in a excel sheet) to track teacher, staff, and student progress toward meeting the goals and criteria included in the approved program plan.
- Develop a data verification system where teachers can verify their proper grade level/subject area and class roster.
- Set timelines for data collection and gather any data needed to determine baselines and benchmarks for growth or pre-assessments used to determine payout calculations.
- If necessary data are not being collected, seek help through the Technical Assistance Center or your Regional ESC.