

August 19, 2009

To: DATE Cycle 1 Year 1 and TEEG Districts

From: Michael Vriesenga, Program Manager

Subject: Academic Excellence Indicator System, District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE), Texas Educator Excellence Grant (TEEG) and Texas Projection Measure

Recently you may have received e-mail guidance from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) indicating that districts should not use the 2009 Accountability Ratings to provide performance incentive awards for district personnel. TEA repeated this message at a recent workshop for DATE Cycle 1 grantees. This message was prompted by our concern about the influence of the Texas Projection Measures (TPM) upon school and district ratings and our desire to keep awards consistent with district plans as originally designed.

Since the release of the DATE guidance on campus ratings, the new accountability ratings for 2009 have been published and serve as the official accountability rating for campuses and districts in Texas. Subsequently, some districts may have paid out awards from the TEEG or DATE grant based on the 2009 accountability ratings. Although TEA still recognizes that the TPM is a predictor of future student performance, not a measurement of actual achievement, and that TPM has had a positive effect on campus and district ratings, we anticipate that not using the accountability ratings as published may have a negative effect in districts and on campuses.

Consequently, although TEA discourages the use of TPM-based school and district accountability ratings for providing incentive awards in accordance with TEEG and DATE grant applications, we respect and rely upon the best judgment of district and school officials to reward staff performance with fairness and fidelity to their local plans. If you believe the accountability ratings as influenced by TPM are the fairest and most accurate way of providing awards to your staff, the agency will allow its usage. This is a district decision. Please note, TEA is not recommending the use of TPM for the 2008-09 awards because local performance targets were generally developed on percent passing, not on percent passing plus TPM.

If you have any additional questions or specific concerns, please contact me at (512) 463-8911 or michael.vriesenga@tea.state.tx.us.

Sincerely,
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