

## District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE) Supplemental Planning Tool

To assist schools in preparing for the development of the  
Standard Application System (SAS)

The DATE RFA and corresponding SAS are not available at this time. However, the following information has been provided as a technical assistance tool to assist districts and campuses in preparing to develop the application once the RFA/SAS is released. This tool outlines DATE: 1) program requirements; 2) required application components; and 2) acceptable uses for program funds.

***Please Note:*** This document neither takes the place of the RFA nor supersedes it, and in no way does using this technical assistance planning tool usurp the applicant's requirement to submit an SAS in response to the RFA. **All eligible grant applicants are still required to submit the completed SAS by the date specified.** In the event that any information in this supplemental planning tool is inconsistent with the information in the RFA/SAS, the RFA/SAS will supersede this planning tool.

## Table of Contents

<b>I. <u>General Information</u></b>	
<b>A. Statute.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>B. Rules.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>C. Program Overview.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>D. Program Description.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>II. <u>Eligibility</u></b>	
<b>A. Program Eligibility.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>B. Eligible Applicants.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>III. <u>Technical Assistance</u>.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>IV. <u>Programmatic Requirements</u></b>	
<b>A. General Program Requirements.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>B. District Award Plan Requirements.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>C. Part I Funds.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>D. Part II Funds.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>IV. <u>Funding</u>.....</b>	<b>6</b>

# District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE) Supplemental Planning Tool

To assist schools in preparing for the development of the  
Standard Application System (SAS)

## I. General Information

### A. Statute

[http://wwwdev.tea.state.tx.us/ed\\_init/eeg/datex/statute.pdf](http://wwwdev.tea.state.tx.us/ed_init/eeg/datex/statute.pdf)

### B. Rules

To be posted on September 21, 2007 - <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/rules/home/coeprop.html>

### C. Program Overview

Financial award programs for educators have been shown to increase student performance provided the plan reflects appropriate performance measures and significant award amounts for teachers. The purpose of District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE) is to allow districts to target campuses and educators by providing awards for success in improving student achievement. The grant program also allows districts the opportunity to implement the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP). Districts level planning committees will establish district goals for their district award plans that are consistent with their local district improvement strategic plan. Once the district goals have been determined, district level planning committees will create an awards plan either district-wide or for select target campuses and other campuses. The purpose of DATE is to provide the most effective teachers in the district a meaningful award. The grant allows districts to target their most in-need campuses to improve teacher quality.

### D. Program Description

DATE requires districts to develop and implement local financial award plans either district-wide or with a selection of specified campuses. DATE plans should award teachers who are the most effective at improving student performance in Texas school districts. School district planning committees will develop district goals through a strategic planning process that will establish the foundation for the district award plans.

The intention of DATE is to serve as a start-up grant to a district awards program. During the planning year districts should explore sustainability strategies including how to best meet the mandatory matching requirement to assure the continuity of the district plan after grant funding has ceased. Applications must reflect:

1. Plans for sustainability;
2. Alignment with overall district goals; and
3. Strategies to improve student achievement within the district especially within low and under-performing campuses.

Depending on the number and size of the districts that choose to participate in the grant program, there may not be sufficient funds available to provide meaningful award amounts to each and every teacher and/or every campus. Districts may have to make difficult decisions in order to develop high-quality award plans that reflect significant and appropriate teacher award amounts that directly relate to meaningful, objective, and measurable criteria. Award plans,

created after careful, thoughtful planning, should aim to increase teacher performance and student achievement.

Eligible districts will be announced in the fall 2007. Districts must participate in an unfunded planning year prior to the implementation year. During the planning year, districts are required to participate in technical assistance activities to create a district award plan consistent with the district level goals. A list of required technical assistance can be found at: [www.tea.state.tx.us/ed\\_init/eeg/datex/techassist.html](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/ed_init/eeg/datex/techassist.html). The planning year, which will occur during the 2007-2008 school year, will also assist districts in selecting appropriate performance measures for teachers. Funding will only be provided for the implementation year, beginning with the 2008-2009 school year.

## **II. Eligibility**

### **A. Program Eligibility**

All public school districts and open enrollment charter schools in Texas are eligible to opt into the DATE program. Districts determine which campuses are eligible to participate.

### **B. Eligible Applicants**

School districts remain eligible for the 2008-2009 DATE grant cycle only if it:

1. Submits the Required Notice of Intent (NOI) to apply as required in the RFA;
2. Participates in the required technical assistance activities as established by the Commissioner and published in the RFA;
3. Agrees to participate for at least two consecutive grant cycles, including budgeting for matching funds; and
4. Completes target activities as described by the established timelines set forth in the program requirements in the RFA.

## **III. Required Technical Assistance**

Applicants will be required to participate in technical assistance administered by the TEA.

The TEA is planning to provide at least six working sessions for participating districts to support the implementation of the DATE grant program. The sessions will discuss the following:

1. modeling and program components;
2. data capacity building;
3. outreach & communications; and
4. program implementation support.

Districts will be required to send a team of 3 to 5 individuals that may include members from their district planning committee and school board, an instructional leader, teacher, principal, grant writer, and or staff responsible for data or research.

The primary goal of this technical assistance will be to provide Texas school districts and charter schools with ongoing applied guidance in developing and implementing successful, research-based educator performance pay systems and to build capacity for long term support of these programs. A completed schedule of required technical assistance will be posted on the agency website at: [http://wwwdev.tea.state.tx.us/ed\\_init/eeg/datex/techassist.html](http://wwwdev.tea.state.tx.us/ed_init/eeg/datex/techassist.html).

#### **IV. Programmatic Requirements**

Applicants will be required to meet each of the requirements identified below in the application in order to be considered for funding.

##### **General Program Requirements:**

1. The district-level planning and decision-making committee must develop a district award plan to be implemented for either the entire district or specified Target Campuses selected by the district.
2. If districts do not choose to implement their local award plans district-wide and choose to select certain campuses to participate, more than half of the selected campuses must be Target Campuses. Target Campuses are selected by the district based on criteria laid out by the agency in the application (additional detail on Target Campuses - see below).
3. If the district award plan is not implemented district-wide, participation of selected campuses in DATE must be approved by a majority of classroom teachers assigned to the selected campus by vote of simple majority.
4. At least 60 percent of the grant allocation must be used for Part I activities and up to 40 percent of the grant can be used for Part II activities (additional detail on Part I & Part II - below).
5. Districts developing award plans must agree to participate in the grant program for no less than two consecutive grant cycles.
6. Districts must provide matching funds of no less than 15% in year one, 25% in year two, and 35% in year three. Matching funds can be cash or in kind.

##### **District Award Plan Requirements:**

1. If district award plans are not implemented district-wide, districts must explain how the criteria used to select target campuses relates to the goals of the local award plans.
2. Teacher and campus eligibility requirements should be consistent for no less than two years (i.e. the same types of teachers and campuses should be targeted).
3. Districts must identify meaningful, objective, goals and performance measures, consistent with the district improvement strategic plan, to award classroom teachers.
4. Districts must identify performance measures for the success of the grant in their application. Districts will have two school years from the start of the first implementation year to meet performance targets. For each year thereafter, the participating district must meet increased performance targets.
5. Performance measures must incorporate improvement at the district level and for each Target Campus and must relate to the criteria used to select the campuses as a Target Campus and grant performance measures. At least two measures must relate directly to student academic achievement or improvement. Other measures may relate to improved teacher attrition, migration, quality and other academic and non-academic indicators.
6. Districts must include Part I and Part II contingency plans designed to redistribute any remaining un-awarded Part I and/or Part II program funds.
7. Must address plans for sustaining appropriate levels of funding after all grant funding has ended.
8. District award plans must be approved by the district-level planning and/or decision-making committee prior to submittal of the application and award plan to the TEA.
9. Plans must be approved by the school district superintendent and local school board prior to submitting to the TEA.
10. Districts must conduct stakeholder meetings.
11. Districts must make a copy of their award plan accessible to the public no later than the start of the 2008-2009 school year.

### **Part I funds**

At least 60 percent of the grant funds must be used to award classroom teachers who positively impact student academic improvement and/or growth. Annual award amounts must be equal to or greater than \$3,000 unless otherwise determined by the local school board. Minimum awards must be no less than \$1,000 per teacher.

Funds should:

1. Incorporate meaningful, objective, goals and performance measures, used to identify which eligible teachers will receive awards. At least 50% of the criteria used must be quantifiable and address one or both of the following:
  - o Student academic improvement and/or
  - o Student academic growth
  
2. If districts do not choose to implement their local award plans district-wide, and choose to select certain campuses to participate, more than half of the selected campuses selected to participate must be Target Campuses. Districts must identify Target Campuses, consistent with district goals, for participation. Districts may set criteria for establishing Target Campuses that are consistent with district goals and rules set by the commissioner. Target Campuses are those that are, at least two of the following:
  - o Currently rated academically unacceptable (2007 accountability ratings); or
  - o Performing lower than the district average proficiency on TAKS (by subject, by grade, and/or by campus to be determined by the district); or
  - o Receiving comparable improvement (CI) ratings in the bottom quartile relative to other campus types in the district; or
  - o Experiencing above average dropout/non-completion rates relative to other campus types in the district; or
  - o Ranking within the top quartile of campuses enrolling high percentages of economically disadvantaged students.

In addition to adopting at least two of the measures above, districts may use other academic or non-academic indicators, such as experiencing high rates of teacher migration and attrition, free and reduced lunch, etc.

### **Part II funds**

School districts can use up to 40 percent of the grant funds on other allowable activities, including stipends and awards for:

1. Recruitment and retention of teachers:
  - o In critical shortage subject areas;
  - o In subject areas with high percentages of out-of-field assignments;
  - o Certified and teaching in their main subject area; and/or
  - o With postgraduate degrees in their teaching area.
2. Career, mentor, and master teachers;
3. On-going applied professional growth;
4. Increasing local data capabilities to support instruction and accountability;
5. Awards for principals who increase student performance; and
6. Other campus employees who demonstrate excellence.

## **V. Funding**

DATE funding is designed to be awarded in two parts. Part I funds must be used on teacher awards and must make up at least 60 percent of the total grant allocation. Part II funds can be used for other incentives and can make up the remaining amount (no more than 40 percent) of the total grant allocation. If districts choose not to implement their district award plans district-wide, more than half of participating campuses must be prioritized towards Targeted Campuses. District grant award amounts will be based on the average daily attendance (ADA) of the 2007-2008 school year calculated among the total number of districts opting into the grant program.

**Matching Funds**

The district grant award requires a cash or in-kind match. from federal, state and/or local sources. Districts must explain how they plan to provide matching funds and how those funds will be used to supplement or support activities identified in the district grant application. The grant will require districts to provide a 15% match in the first year, a 25% match in the second year, and 35% in the third year. If a district fails to adhere to matching requirements, the TEA may suspend, in whole or in part grant funds, terminate the district's participation in the grant program or impose other sanctions as determined by the commissioner.