



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
RICHARDSON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
Where all students connect, learn, grow and succeed

September 29, 2020

To: House Public Education Committee, Chairman Huberty and Vice Chairman Bernal

Re: Request for Information, Interim Charge 1, Question 1

Chairman Huberty, Vice Chairman Bernal, and members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a response to Interim Charge 1: *Can the state delay implementation of the teacher incentive pay program to push it out to the next biennium? If so, what would be the impact on the current budget, as well as budget implications for the 2022- 23 biennium?*

This letter is submitted on behalf of Richardson Independent School District, home to 2,600 educators and 39,000 students. We strongly urge the Texas Legislature to continue the Teacher Incentive Allotment's current and projected funding levels as-is, without any deferment. Though we are not receiving funds this biennium, we have invested time, money and resources to developing a fair and rigorous local designation system that enables us to fund increased compensation for our top teachers while providing them incentives to teach on more low-income campuses.

The mission of Richardson Independent School District is to ensure that ALL connect, learn, grow and succeed. This mission applies to both our students and staff. To support this mission, we are committed to implementing best practices that support our goals to recruit, retain, and reward quality personnel. This includes the best educator talent in the state of Texas. Compensating teachers based on their personal and student growth as well as student and parent feedback aligns and supports this vision.

Richardson ISD introduced the Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) model to four elementary campuses during the 2018-2019 school year. We have provided additional compensation for the staff at those four campuses recognizing that we were recruiting our district's highest growth educators and leaders, asking them to work an extended day and invest in campuses with almost 100% poverty. These campuses have experienced tremendous growth by both educators, leaders and students. To continue to foster and promote outcomes for students, the administrative team began to investigate the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) and identified it as a critical strategy with the implementation of the ACE model in our district. In collaboration with all four ACE campuses, the district has worked for a year to study the TIA program. We have engaged with campus principals and teachers through study sessions and presentations to share information and discuss how TIA could impact teacher performance in our district. We have invested a significant amount of time and resources to create artifacts and tools to use to support our communication goals about the program both internally with teachers and staff and with external stakeholders, including parents and the community. As a result of this time and effort, RISD is committed to implementing TIA to provide a differentiated compensation model at our ACE campuses. The district's vision is to use this as a pilot and if executed as designed, expand the implementation district-wide to support our goals for teacher recruitment and retention. For Richardson ISD, the loss of

TIA funding would possibly mean an end to our ACE program which has shown proven results for some of our most vulnerable students in closing the achievement and opportunity gap.

The impact on the current budget, as well as budget implications for the 2022-23 biennium are great. Richardson ISD implemented the ACE program in 2018 and teacher salaries were paid with grant funds in the amount of \$2,000,000. In order to continue the program for 2020-2021, we are using \$1,000,000 in anticipated funds from the Teacher Incentive Allotment since some grant funds have ended. Current RISD plans include the continuation of the ACE program for the foreseeable future with funding provided by the Teacher Incentive Allotment. Expanding the ACE program is a budget priority and as a result, other important programs or staff will be reduced by at least \$3 million, or the ACE program could be reduced or eliminated altogether. This jeopardizes the investment and impact that this program is having with our most high need campuses and students.

As we continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to recruit, retain and reward quality teachers is more important than ever. Teachers are serving as essential workers by delivering quality instruction, either face to face or virtually. Compensating and retaining strong educators is vital to ensuring our students continue to learn and grow and that any learning gaps as a result of the current health crisis are minimized.

The Teacher Incentive Allotment provides pathways for our district's educators to make significantly more money sooner in their careers, and it focuses attention on a more equitable distribution of our talent. We greatly appreciate the Legislature's recognition of attracting and retaining the very best educators, and we ask you to follow through on your commitment by funding the Teacher Incentive Allotment in full.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeannie Stone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeannie" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Stone".

Jeannie Stone, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools