

MICHAEL HINOJOSA, ED.D.
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS



September 16, 2020

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 the Dallas Independent School District, a Cohort A Teacher Incentive Allotment district, and home to 10,000 educators and 150,000 students.

In 2014-15, our district adopted the [Teacher Excellence Initiative](#) (TEI), which has fundamentally transformed how we define, support, and reward teacher effectiveness in Dallas ISD. As one of the Dallas ISD strategic initiatives, the impact of TEI on student and teacher growth cannot be overstated. Since implementation, our district has experienced an overall drop in teacher attrition while retaining our most effective teachers at a rate exceeding 95% annually. As a result, Dallas ISD has outpaced peers in closing student achievement gaps, resulting in a 90% decrease in improvement-required campuses over the past six years.

We have seen firsthand the success in transforming traditional teacher evaluation and compensation and looked eagerly to the Teacher Incentive Allotment this year as an opportunity to sustain and expand TEI in Dallas ISD.

We strongly urge the Texas Legislature to continue the Teacher Incentive Allotment's current and projected funding levels as-is, without any deferment. Our district is the proud home of 284 Master, 717 Exemplary, and 1,797 Recognized teachers, and we received \$28 Million in TIA funding to help sustain and expand teacher compensation under TEI. We developed a rigorous, fair, and accurate crosswalk between TEI and the TIA designation system that enables us to fund increased compensation for our top teachers while providing them incentives to teach at our District's high-priority campuses.

In Dallas ISD, we believe it a disservice to our students when effective teachers must leave the classroom to advance in their career. Through TEI, and now expanded through new TIA funds, our district has led the charge statewide in providing teachers a pathway to a six-figure salary without leaving the classroom.

It is through Dallas ISD's commitment to racial equity, though, that the TIA has the most potential for sustained positive impact in our district. With TIA-funded stipends ranging up to \$18,000 annually, our designated teachers are now choosing to teach in our most challenged campuses. For example, Truett Elementary, a Dallas ISD ACE campus, increased access to highly effective teachers from 9% to 51% in just one recruitment season, supported in large part due to TIA-expanded compensation options. Now,

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more than half of the teachers at that campus have capacity not only to grow students academically but also to serve as mentors and leaders for their peers.

It is undeniable that you will soon be tasked with many difficult decisions. **As you prepare to open a truly unprecedented legislative session, it is critical that focus remain on investments in education that support economic growth and success in our great state.** This success cannot be ensured without consideration of initiatives like the Teacher Incentive Allotment to recognize and reward the state's best educators. Our students, teachers, and community, in Dallas and beyond, deserve nothing less.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Michael Hinojosa, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools