

# 2018-19 Evaluation of Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI)

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## At-a-Glance

The Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI) was a Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) initiative started in 2014-15 to improve student learning by improving teacher effectiveness. TEI replaced the previous tenure-based compensation system with an integrated system that defines, supports, and rewards teacher excellence. Teachers are evaluated each year based on teacher performance, student achievement, and student experience surveys. Effective teachers are provided the opportunity to significantly increase their salaries in a shorter period compared to a traditional tenure-based compensation system. In 2018-19, the TEI administrative budget was \$440,000, and the budget for 2018-19 teacher salaries, teacher benefits, and expert stipends based on 2018-19 TEI results totaled \$553,563,586, an increase from \$548,568,735 in 2017-18. A total of 9,585 teachers received TEI scorecards for the 2018-19 school year, compared to 9,907 teachers in 2017-18.

### Purpose and Methodology

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of TEI to define, support, and reward teacher excellence. To examine spot observation scores and teacher summative performance evaluation scores, the evaluators used the Cornerstone data file from Human Capital Management dated October 15, 2019. In addition, Human Capital Management provided the scorecard data file from September 24, 2019, which included data for total student achievement, teacher-level student achievement, student learning objective points, distinguished teacher review (DTR) points, and compensation. To determine teacher retention rates, the scorecard data file was merged with the Dallas ISD personnel file dated April 11, 2019. Furthermore, the evaluators received the student survey data file from Office of Institutional Research dated June 19, 2019.

When applicable, each section of the evaluation also includes a comparison of the 2018-19 TEI results to the results from 2016-17 (Barton & Palladino, 2018) and 2017-18 (Barton & Featherston, 2019).

### TEI Outcomes

#### What were the results of the teacher performance component of defining excellence?

##### Spot Observations

Spot observation scores statistically and practically improved from the beginning (1.73-2.07) to the end of the 2018-19 academic year (2.00-2.37).

##### Summative Performance Evaluation

The mean (80.3) and median (83.1) summative performance evaluation scores for the 2018-19 school year were almost identical, indicating teachers were performing better on average than proficient. The overall summative performance evaluation score for middle school teachers (76.1) was significantly lower than for high school teachers (80.3) and elementary school teachers (81.4), but the practical differences were relatively weak. First-year teachers received the lowest average summative performance evaluation scores (60.6), and scores gradually trended upward with service years and plateaued between six and seven creditable years of service.

##### Relation Between Spot and Summative Scores

Spot observation scores and summative performance evaluation scores were highly correlated ( $r = .68$  to  $.74$ ). This result indicated summative scores were generally aligned with classroom observations.

#### What were the results of the total student achievement component of defining excellence?

##### Total Student Achievement

For TEI, teachers were classified into one of four categories (i.e., Category A, B, C, or D) based on which components were available for each teacher. Average total student achievement scores ranged between 20.9-21.1 for Category A/B teachers (out of 35 points) and between 14.3-14.4 for Category C/D teachers (out of 20 points). First-year Category A/B and C/D teachers earned the lowest average total student achievement scores. Scores for Category A/B teachers started to plateau between three and five creditable years of service, and scores for Category C/D teachers started to plateau with two or more creditable years of service. This indicated that more years of service did not

necessarily result in higher total student achievement scores.

## Teacher-Level Student Achievement

The average teacher-level student achievement scores were 13.8 for Category A and 13.8 for Category B teachers, out of a possible 25 points.

## Student Learning Objective (SLO) Points

In 2018-19, 81 percent of teachers received the maximum number of SLO points (five), which was consistent with 2017-18 (81%).

## What were the results of the student experience component of defining excellence?

While statistically significant differences were found among the average percentage of positive student survey responses for elementary core teachers (88%), elementary non-core (81%), middle school (70%), and high school (72%) teachers, the practical differences were relatively small. The lowest average percentage of positive responses was earned by teachers with zero creditable years of service (i.e., first-year teachers; 74%) and teachers with at least 26 creditable years of service (73%). The average percentage of positive responses peaked at six to seven creditable years of service.

## What were the correlations among the defining excellence components?

Teachers with higher summative performance evaluation scores tended to have higher total student achievement scores (Category A/B:  $r = .49$ ; Category C/D:  $r = .38$ ). Teachers with a higher percentage of positive responses on the student survey tended to have slightly higher total student achievement scores (Category A:  $r = .28$ ; Category C:  $r = .22$ ). Lastly, teachers with higher summative performance evaluation scores tended to have a higher percentage of positive responses on the student survey ( $r = .38$ ).

## What were the results of the Distinguished Teacher Review (DTR) process?

A total of 2,259 teachers received DTR points. Most (93%) of these teachers successfully achieved a distinguished effectiveness level. These teachers represented 25 percent of all district teachers, an increase from 17 percent in 2016-17.

## What were the results of the rewarding excellence (compensation) component of TEI?

## Evaluation Scores

First-year teachers earned the lowest average evaluation score (60.6). Average evaluation scores gradually increased as years of service increased and plateaued after six and seven creditable years of service, compared to three to five years in 2016-17 and six and seven years in 2017-18.

## Salary Increases

Because of a districtwide pay increase, almost all (99%) of the 7,992 full-time teachers with a TEI scorecard received pay increases from 2018-19 to 2019-20. Teachers in every effectiveness level, on average, received a pay increase in 2018-19,<sup>1</sup> and, generally, teachers with higher effectiveness levels received higher salary increases.

## What were retention rates for teachers?

From 2016-17 to 2018-19, teachers with an effectiveness level below Proficient I left the district at higher rates than those at lower levels, indicating Dallas ISD retained effective teachers at higher rates than less effective teachers. At the same time, the overall teacher retention rate has remained steady.

Notably, by 2018-19, 93 percent of teachers who received an Unsatisfactory effectiveness rating in 2016-17 either left the district (74%) or improved their effectiveness level (19%). Similarly, 73 percent with an Unsatisfactory effectiveness rating in 2017-18 left the district (51%) or improved (22%) by 2018-19.

Table 1: 2018-19 Retention Status and Effectiveness Level of 2016-17 and 2017-18 Unsatisfactory Teachers

|                                        | 2017-18  |      | 2018-19  |      |
|----------------------------------------|----------|------|----------|------|
|                                        | <i>n</i> | %    | <i>n</i> | %    |
| <b>2016-17 Unsatisfactory Teachers</b> |          |      |          |      |
| Left District                          | 49       | 55.7 | 65       | 73.9 |
| Unsatisfactory                         | 16       | 18.2 | 6        | 6.8  |
| Progressing I                          | 23       | 26.1 | 6        | 6.8  |
| Progressing II                         | -        | -    | 11       | 12.5 |
| <b>2017-18 Unsatisfactory Teachers</b> |          |      |          |      |
| Left District                          | -        | -    | 42       | 51.2 |
| Unsatisfactory                         | -        | -    | 22       | 26.8 |
| Progressing I                          | -        | -    | 18       | 22.0 |
| Progressing II                         | -        | -    | -        | -    |

Source: 2016-17 and 2017-18 TEI results (Barton & Palladino, 2018; Barton & Featherston, 2019). Scorecard data file from Human Capital Management dated September 24, 2019.

Note: *n* = 88 Unsatisfactory teachers in 2016-17. *n* = 82 Unsatisfactory teachers in 2017-18.

<sup>1</sup> Teachers received a one-time stipend if they maintained their effectiveness level from 2017-18 to 2018-19. This stipend was not included in teacher salaries.

## What were the results of TEI by high school feeder pattern and by network?

The district average summative performance evaluation score was 80.3 (feeder pattern range: 74.6-89.5; network range: 76.9-88.9). The average total student achievement score for Category A/B teachers was 21.0 (feeder pattern range: 14.4-28.1; network range: 19.2-28.0), and for Category C/D teachers was 14.4 (feeder pattern range: 10.5-16.2; network range: 13.3-16.2). For Category A/C teachers, the district average student experience score was 8.2 (feeder pattern range: 6.4-9.4; network range: 7.5-9.8). The district percentage of teachers achieving DTR was 24.7 percent (feeder pattern range: 4.8%-59.9%; network range: 16.1%-60.6%).

## What were the results of TEI by teacher groups?

Teachers who remained in the district or moved to non-TEI positions performed better than those who left the district. First-year teachers and strategic pipeline teachers continued to perform notably below the district averages, indicating these teacher groups may need additional mentoring and support. Specialty campuses (i.e., ACE, choice, and magnet campuses) also performed above the district averages for almost all categories. Teachers who moved to a non-TEI position (e.g., campus instructional coach or campus administrator) generally scored higher than other retention groups. This indicated that strong teachers were promoted to leadership positions. While teachers with at least a bachelor's degree scored better on average than teachers who received an effectiveness level below Proficient I, they scored lower on average than those who received an effectiveness level at Proficient I and above.

Lastly, teachers at majority White campuses performed better than teachers at majority Hispanic and majority African American campuses; these teachers also performed higher than campuses with a failing accountability rating and the district average across all categories. The average scores for teachers at majority Hispanic campuses were nearly identical to the district scores because 83 percent of teachers taught at majority Hispanic campuses. Teachers at majority African American campuses tended to score below the district average, but their summative performance evaluation scores were less than three points below teachers at majority Hispanic campuses. These results were similar to 2016-17 (Barton & Palladino, 2018) and 2017-18 (Barton & Featherston, 2019).

## Two-Year TEI Trends (2016-17 to 2018-19)

Key trends from 2016-17 to 2018-19 are included in Table 2.

Table 2: Two-Year TEI Trends (2016-17 to 2018-19)

| Trended Upward                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Remained Consistent                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Trended Downward                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average summative performance evaluation scores</li> <li>• Percentage of teachers who received the max number of SLO points</li> <li>• Average evaluation scores</li> <li>• Percentage of DTR teachers</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher rate of low performing teachers than high performing teachers leaving the district</li> <li>• Total and teacher-level student achievement scores</li> <li>• Rate of teachers who left the district</li> <li>• Correlations among the TEI components</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rate of Unsatisfactory and Progressing II teachers leaving the district</li> </ul> |

Source: 2016-17 TEI results (Barton & Palladino, 2018). Scorecard data file from Human Capital Management dated September 24, 2019.

## Recommendations

- **Determine whether the increase in TEI scores from 2016-17 to 2018-19 was primarily a result of improvements in teacher performance or due to administrator pressure to increase scores.** Summative evaluation performance scores, evaluation scores, the percentage of teachers who received the maximum number of SLO points, and the percentage of DTR teachers continued to trend upward from 2016-17 to 2018-19. Thus, TEI program staff members should determine whether improved teacher performance or administrator pressure to increase scores accounted for these increases. The answers could improve the ability of TEI to identify effective teachers.
- **Continue efforts to compensate teachers based on classroom effectiveness rather than a traditional tenure-based compensation system.** A larger percentage of low performing teachers have left the district compared to higher performing teachers from 2016-17 to 2018-19. Even so, from 2016-17 to 2018-19, the overall percentage of teachers who left the Dallas ISD has remained relatively consistent (range: 13-15%). Most notably, 93 percent of teachers who received an Unsatisfactory rating in 2016-17 either left the district (74%) or improved their effectiveness level (19%) by 2018-19. Similarly, 73 percent of teachers with an Unsatisfactory rating in 2017-18 left the district (51%) or improved (22%). Across the last three years, creditable years of service has not been associated with higher scores on summative

performance evaluation scores, total student achievement scores, rates of positive responses on the student survey, or evaluation scores.

- **Review TEI results to address possible inequities in the district.** Review of TEI data over the last three years has shown that first-year teachers and strategic pipeline teachers have performed below the district averages all three years. In addition, teachers at majority White campuses scored higher on average than majority Hispanic campuses, majority African American campuses, campuses with a failing accountability rating, and the district average on TEI-related measures, whereas majority African American campuses tended to score below the district average. Identifying the reasons that certain groups have performed below district averages on TEI-related measures may help address and remedy possible equity gaps.
- **Limit the number of first-year and strategic pipeline teachers at the lowest performing campuses and ensure the teachers receive adequate support and mentoring to improve their effectiveness levels.** As mentioned previously, first-year teachers and strategic pipeline teachers have performed below district averages the last three years. This highlights the need to limit placement of these teachers at the lowest performing schools and ensure that these teachers receive adequate mentoring and support to be effective in the classroom.
- **Review the following findings to determine whether additional professional development or rubric calibration is needed for TEI:** 1) middle school teachers earned lower summative evaluation ratings and a smaller percentage of positive responses on the student survey than elementary and high school teachers; 2) 81 percent of teachers received all five SLO points in 2018-19, an increase from 75 percent in 2016-17, and 3) weak to moderate correlations were found among the defining excellence components of TEI (i.e., summative performance evaluation, total student achievement, and student experience).
- **Use TEI data to determine which university and pipeline programs are producing the most effective teachers.** Now that the district has three years of TEI data, the data can be used to improve the screening process of possible new hires. Data should be reviewed by subject area and teacher type as much as possible. For example, some pipeline programs may be producing excellent mathematics teachers but may have mixed results for English teachers. Similarly, some may be producing excellent special education teachers but

have mixed results for bilingual teachers. Success rates may also vary by school level.

## References

Barton, M. & Featherston, L. (February 2019). 2017-18 Evaluation of Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI). Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District.

Barton, M. & Palladino, D. (February 2018). 2016-17 Evaluation of Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI). Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District.

An electronic version of this report as well as the full 2018-19 report can be found at [www.dallasisd.org/Page/888](http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/888). For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at [evaluation@dallasisd.org](mailto:evaluation@dallasisd.org).

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