



The **Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI)** is Dallas ISD's performance-based compensation system that started in 2014-15 to increase student learning by improving teacher effectiveness. It rewards effective teaching using multiple measures, including classroom observations, student achievement, and student surveys. TEI aims to support high-quality instruction, retain highly effective teachers, and ensure that students across the district have access to excellent teaching.

Key Findings

Implementation

- Summative appraisal scores were statistically lower for middle school teachers than for elementary and high school teachers.
- The percentage of positive responses on the student experience survey was highest for elementary school core teachers and lowest for middle school teachers.
- The rate at which teachers achieve Distinguished Teacher Review is closely linked to experience, with the highest percentage of DTR teachers found in the mid-career group with 14 to 18 years of service. This achievement rate has remained consistent across the district over the last three years.
- Evaluation scores were lowest for first-year teachers, demonstrating a clear improvement with experience until scores plateaued after approximately eight to 10 years of service.
- Proficient I effectiveness level accounted for the largest percentage of teachers, followed by Progressing II.
- The majority of teachers leaving the district cited career-based reasons such as, "Career Change," "Employment in Another District," or "Relocation," which together accounted for over half of all separations.
- Teachers with an Unsatisfactory rating left the district at a substantially higher rate than those in any other category. The percentage of teachers who left the district consistently decreased as evaluation rating and effectiveness level increased.
- There was a wide difference in performance across the district's regions, with Region V consistently achieving the highest average scores in all core TEI metrics.
- Teachers representing alternative and entry-level pathways, specifically First-Year, Strategic Pipeline, District of Innovation, and Dallas Alternative Certification teachers, generally scored below the district average across all TEI performance measures.

Stakeholder Feedback

- Most teachers (76%) and nearly all administrators (98%) reported intermediate to advanced knowledge of TEI in 2024-25.
- Although the majority of administrators reported high levels of satisfaction with TEI, this view was expressed by less than half of teachers. However, teacher satisfaction showed a positive upward trend, increasing by eight percentage points from 2022-23 to 2024-25.
- Teacher perception of TEI fairness showed substantial improvement, increasing from 39 percent in 2022-23 to 51 percent in 2024-25.
- The shifts in evaluation rating cut points was the top-ranked reason for perceived unfairness by administrators and higher-effectiveness teachers. Persistent concerns about challenges facing lower-performing schools and inequity of the size of the raise were consistently high across most groups.
- Perceptions of the three formal evaluation activities (spot, extended, and summative observations) remained consistent from 2022-23 to 2024-25. Administrators consistently rated the helpfulness of these activities as extremely high, significantly exceeding the rating of all teachers combined.
- Campus-level professional development was consistently rated by both teachers and administrators as the most helpful type of training compared to district-sponsored sessions, with its helpfulness rating showing a notable upward trend for both groups over a three-year period.
- Administrators prioritized the need for additional training in pedagogy and classroom management, while teachers primarily sought training in technology/digital integration and classroom management. Teachers with highest effectiveness levels were the only group to show a strong preference for selecting PD related to the Distinguished Teacher Review.
- Across all compensation statements, teachers with a Proficient II or higher effectiveness level consistently expressed greater agreement than teachers with lower effectiveness level, suggesting the compensation model is better valued by the highest-rated teachers.
- Favorable perceptions of the TEI compensation system's benefits, including support for recruitment, retention, and salary differentiation, showed a strong upward trend for both teachers and administrators from 2023-24 to 2024-25.



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Recommendations

- **Enhance support and resources for early-career and alternative pathways.**

Develop and resource a structured, intensive support program specifically for first-year teachers and those in alternative pathways. Focus on foundational skills most frequently identified by lower-effectiveness teachers to help accelerate their growth toward district-level performance and sustain effectiveness over time. Across all TEI measures, these teacher groups demonstrated outcomes below district averages, particularly in summative appraisal results and the percentage earning a Proficient I or higher rating. Providing targeted, early support will help these educators build a stronger foundation for success and progress more quickly toward consistent, high-quality instruction.

- **Provide targeted support for middle school instruction.**

Develop specialized professional development for middle school educators, with an emphasis on pedagogy and classroom management as identified by both teachers and administrators as top priorities. Training should be designed to reflect specific instructional challenges and developmental needs of middle school students. Middle school teachers' summative appraisal scores were statistically lower than both elementary and high school teachers, and they also recorded the lowest percentage of positive student survey responses. Strengthening professional support at this level will help improve instructional quality and the overall student experience in middle school classrooms.

- **Improve alignment of professional development with teacher needs.**

Differentiate professional development opportunities to reflect priorities identified by teachers and administrators, such as technology and digital integration as indicated by teachers, and pedagogy and classroom management as suggested by administrators. Tailor offerings by effectiveness levels, emphasizing classroom management, lesson planning, and social-emotional learning for early-career teachers, and advanced technology and Distinguished Teacher Review (DTR)-aligned growth for higher-effectiveness teachers. Aligning PD content with these needs will increase its relevance, strengthen engagement, and better support teacher advancement through the DTR process.