

2026-2027

Teacher Strategic Compensation System Guidebook

Marlin ISD



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INTRODUCTION

In alignment with our core values and commitment to a high-performance culture, Marlin ISD is implementing a strategic compensation system. This system puts student learning and instructional excellence at the center of our compensation philosophy. Effective with the 2026–2027 school year, base salary will be determined by a teacher's effectiveness, not by tenure, ensuring that high performance is acknowledged in real and tangible ways.

This guidebook is your roadmap. Inside, you'll find clear, practical information about how strategic compensation works, how your Effectiveness Level is determined, and what that means for your salary and career growth in Marlin ISD. While this is not an exhaustive policy document, it will serve as a reliable starting point—and we will continue to update and expand it as more questions arise and as implementation progresses.

STRATEGIC COMPENSATION: AT A GLANCE

Beginning in the 2025–2026 school year, all teachers will transition to the performance-based compensation plan, which recognizes and rewards excellence in education tied to effectiveness. Under this model, base salaries will be directly aligned with each teacher's demonstrated effectiveness, ensuring that outstanding performance is meaningfully compensated. The 2025-2026 school year will be a year of transition and data capture and resulting salary changes will be effective in the 2026-2027 school year.

IMPLEMENTATION: STRATEGIC COMPENSATION SYSTEM

DATA CAPTURE YEAR: SY 2025-2026

For the 2025–2026 school year, teacher compensation will align with existing salary structures. In this school year, teachers will receive an evaluation rating and corresponding effectiveness level. This will be the first year that all teachers will be rated under this new evaluation rating system. It is important to understand that this evaluation rating will determine the compensation for 2026-2027. This is the only year that a single evaluation rating will be used to determine the effectiveness level for compensation placement.

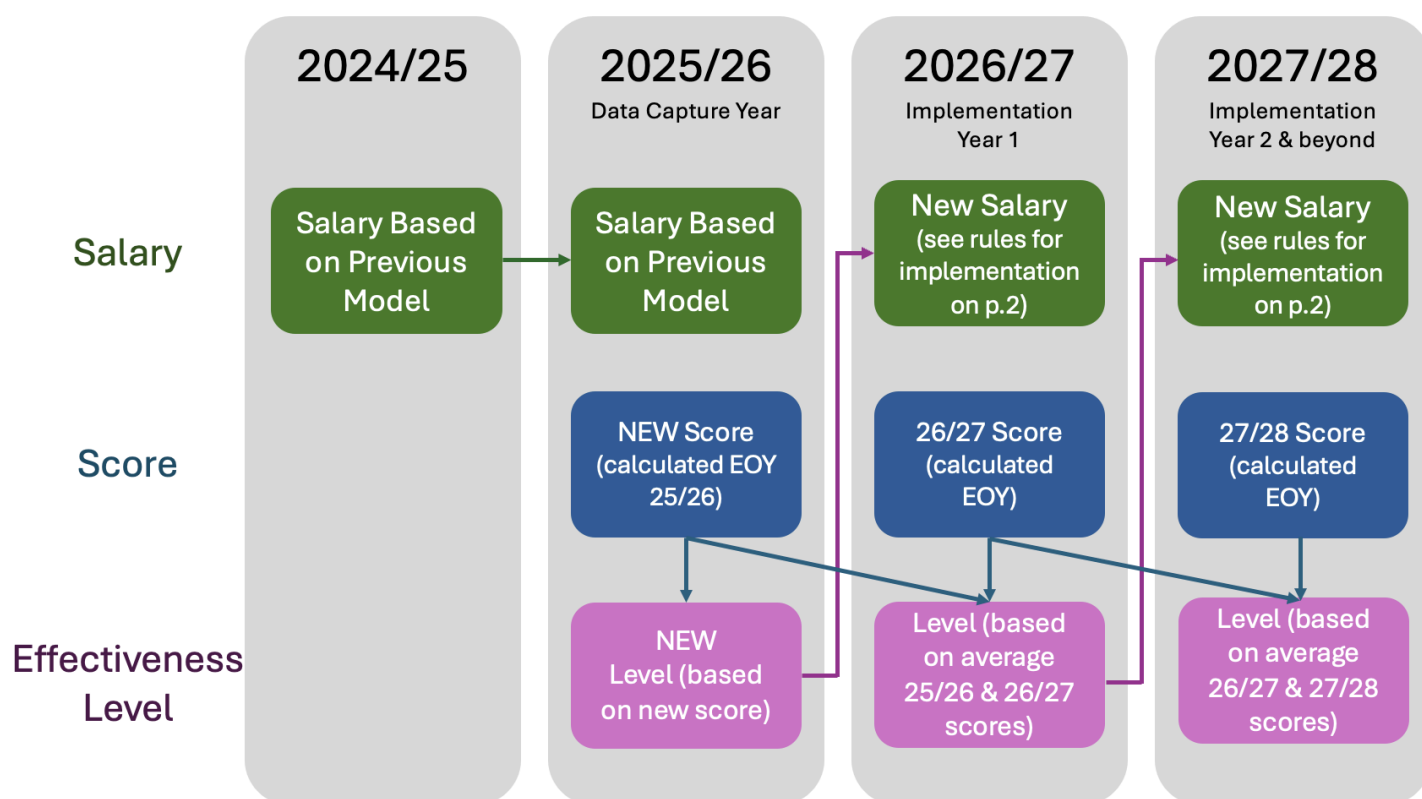
IMPLEMENTATION YEAR 1: SY 2026-2027

In the 2026-2027 school year, all teachers will be “held harmless” to the 2025–2026 Traditional Salary Schedule. This means that each teacher's salary for 2026–2027 will be at least equal to the salary they received or would have received on the Traditional Salary Schedule based on their creditable years of experience as of July 1, 2025. This means that in SY 2026-2027, a teacher's salary may be increased according to their effectiveness level, but it will not be decreased.

To support a gradual transition into the strategic compensation system, teachers whose effectiveness score qualifies them for a higher tier will receive at most an increase of \$7,500 to their base salary, in alignment with their effectiveness tier. Similarly, in SY 2027-2028, teachers whose effectiveness score qualifies them for a higher tier will receive at most an additional \$7,500 to their 2026-2027 pay, in alignment with their effectiveness tier. By SY 2028-2029, all teachers will be fully aligned to the pay of their effectiveness tier. This incremental step approach ensures fair, performance-based salary progression while building a stable foundation for long-term compensation.

IMPLEMENTATION YEAR 2 AND BEYOND

Beginning in 2027-2028, returning teachers eligible to have received evaluation ratings for 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 will have their compensation determined by a two-year average of their evaluation ratings. Each year after Year 2 in the CLASS compensation system, the effectiveness level will be calculated by the **two-year average** of the last two evaluation ratings. This average establishes each teacher's effectiveness level, which directly informs them of their salary placement for the year. The single effectiveness level received each year will not determine salary placement for future years. Each year, returning teachers will have a salary placeholder based on the current year salary until evaluation results are known later in the Summer. Once the evaluation ratings are known and the two-year average is calculated, teachers who improve an effectiveness level will receive the commensurate increase in compensation. Teachers who decrease in effectiveness level will receive the commensurate decrease in compensation.



UNDERSTANDING PERFORMANCE-BASED COMPENSATION: HOW YOUR PAY IS DETERMINED

SALARY BANDS

Marlin ISD's strategic compensation system will directly connect compensation to an effectiveness level. Below is the strategic compensation table:

Effectiveness Level	Compensation
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Unsatisfactory	\$40,000*
Progressing	\$52,000*
Proficient I	\$60,000
Proficient II	\$65,000
Exemplary	\$80,000
Master	\$100,000

**In cases where the state-mandated minimum salary is higher than the pay at the effectiveness level due to years of experience, the minimum salary will be paid.*

STRATEGIC COMPENSATION EFFECTIVENESS LEVEL CALCULATION

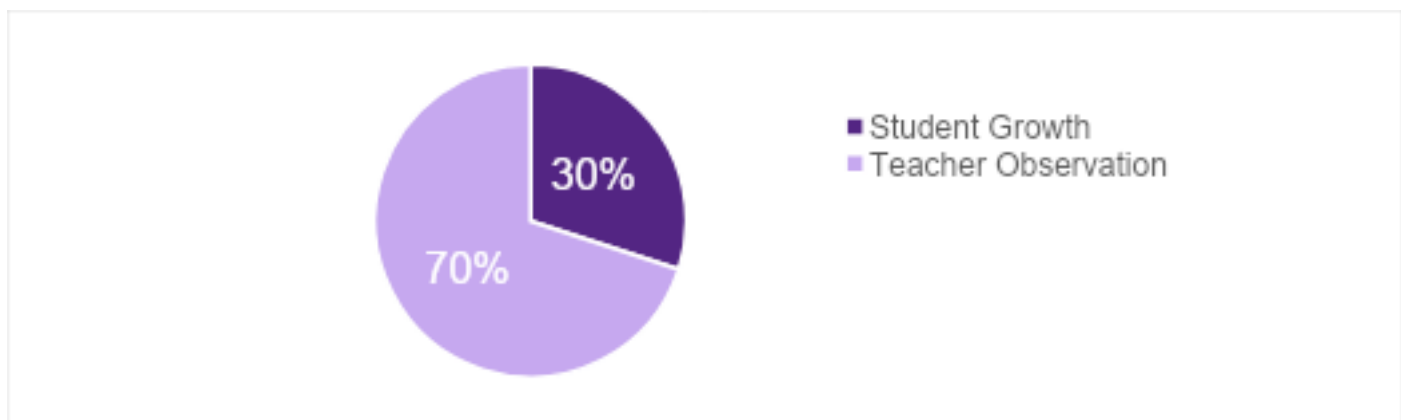
EFFECTIVENESS LEVEL INPUTS

The teacher's annual effectiveness level calculation consists of three components: student growth, teacher observation, and student experience. These components were set by Marlin ISD leadership and reflect the culture and values of Marlin ISD.

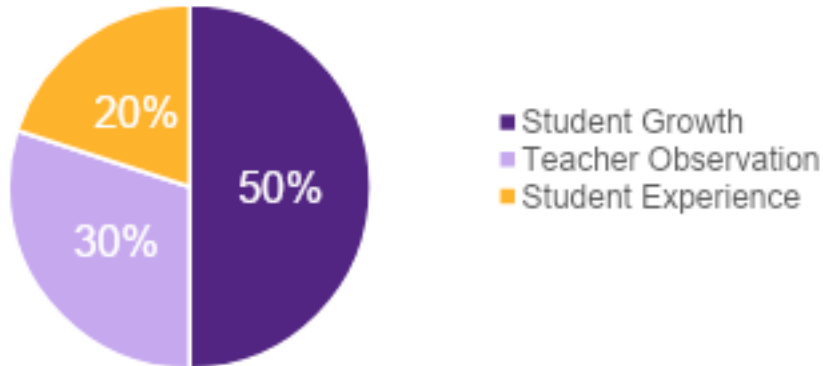
Most teachers will be evaluated using all three components. However, in order to ensure a fair, accurate, and rigorous evaluation for all teachers, adjustments are made for various categories of teachers. The table below outlines the components and weights for each category of teacher. Pie charts are also shown on the following page to visualize the components for each teacher category.

COMPONENT	MEASURE	Group A PreK-2	Group B Grades 3-12 Core Content	Group C Electives and CTE	Group D Lifeskills
Student Growth	Percent of Students Meeting or Exceeding Growth Targets	30	50	33	50
Teacher Observation	T-TESS Domains II and III Average	70	30	33	50
Student Experience	Student Survey Composite Score	0	20	33	0

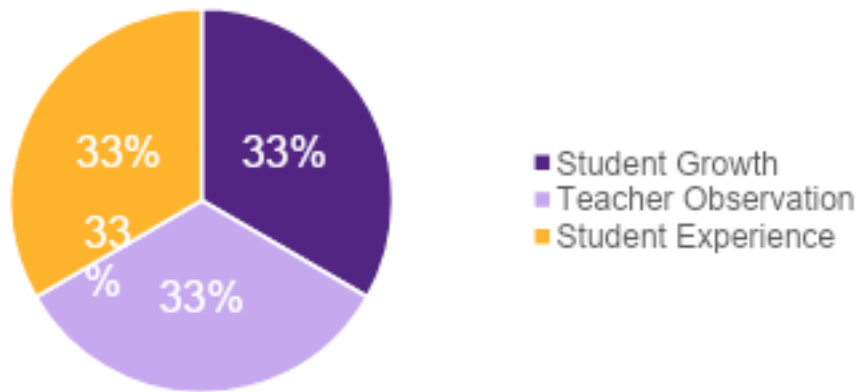
PreK-2



Grades 3-12 (Core Content)



Electives and CTE



STUDENT GROWTH COMPONENT MEASURES

Thirty to fifty percent of a teacher's effectiveness level rating is based on student growth. Student growth is measured by the percentage of students who met their individual growth target on the appropriate assessment based on grade level and content area. The assessments used for each grade level and content area are as follows:

Eligible Teaching Assignment	Classroom Student Growth Measure(s)
Pre-Kindergarten Reading	% of students who met or exceeded expected growth using Circle
K-2 nd Grade Reading	% of students who met or exceeded expected growth using mClass

2 nd Grade Math 3 rd Grade Reading and Math	% of students who met or exceeded expected growth using iReady
4 th -8 th Grade Reading & Math, Algebra I, English I, English II	% of students who met or exceeded expected growth using STAAR
5 th Grade Science, 8 th Grade Science, 8 th Grade Social Studies, Biology, US History	% of students who met or exceeded expected growth using STAAR/EOC
2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th & 7th Grade Science, Chemistry, IPC, Environmental Systems, ELA III, ELA IV, 2nd-7th Grade Social Studies, World Geography, World History, U.S. Gov't., Economics, Health, Cosmetology I & II, Spanish I & II	% of students who met or exceeded expected growth using DMAC TEKS Ready assessments
Principles of Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources, Principles of Construction, and Livestock Production	% of students who met or exceeded expected growth using iCEV pre/post tests
PE 3rd - 8th & 9th - 12th PE Substitute Athletics	% of students who met or exceeded expected growth using Fitnessgram Pacer & the mile run for HS
Lifeskills and Resource Classes	% of students who met or exceeded expected growth using Unique Learning pre/post tests
5th Grade Music, HS Marching Band, 4th Grade Art, 7th Grade Art, HS Art I	% if student who met or exceeded expected growth using Music First Pre/Post Assessments

Marlin ISD will utilize the growth targets established by the district, TEA, or vendor, depending on the benchmark used.

- See the vendor assessment materials for more details regarding student growth targets for mClass.
- See TEA's website for more information regarding the Transition Table calculations.
- For Circle, the tests used will be Rapid Letter Naming (PreK 3 & PreK 4) and Letter-Sound Correspondences (PreK 4 only). Individual growth targets for Rapid Letter Naming for PreK 4 students is based on the tier of the student according to BOY. Students who receive a BOY score of 0-19 will be expected to grow by 12 on the EOY, scores of 20-29 will be expected to grow by 6 on the EOY, and students with a score of 30 or above will be expected to at least maintain. For PreK 3: BOY of 0-19 will be expected to grow by 6, 20-29 will be expected to

grow by 3, and students with a score of 30 or above will be expected to at least maintain. For Letter-Sound Correspondences (PreK 4 only), students with a BOY of 0-7 will be expected to grow by 4, students with a score of 8-11 will be expected to reach a score of 12 (the maximum points allowed by Circle for this section), and a BOY score of 12 will be expected to maintain a score of 12 on the EOY.

- For iReady, the district sets the growth from the initial BOY grade level equivalency as such: Students who score below their current grade level are expected to grow by 1.5 years equivalency (example: 4th grader who scores Early 3rd must receive a score on EOY of mid 4th). Any student who scores on/above their current grade level, must grow by 1 year equivalency.
- For End of Year STAAR, each student must grow from the BOY released STAAR to the End of Year STAAR by a full category. (example: a student who scores DNM on the BOY prior year released STAAR must score at least Approaches on the End of Year STAAR). Students who score at the Masters level on the BOY must remain at the Masters level on the End of Year STAAR. At the end of the school year, the district will examine whether or not individual students met their target post-test scores.
- For Fitnessgram the district will use the pacer to measure growth, specifically, we will use quintiles where students will be broken up into five different groups, an average score for each group will be determined using the pre-test scores, then target scores will be predicted. Students who demonstrate at or above their average score according to their quintile will have met expected growth.
- For iCEV, Lifeskills, Music First, and Other (TEKS Ready) the district will measure growth using the Gap Model/Half the Gap, where growth targets are set at closing the gap between the student's actual pre-test score and a perfect score, (example: a test where a perfect score is 100%, a score of 50 on the pre-test is 50 points from a perfect score and half of the gap of 50 is 25, therefore the target score for growth would be 75).

To calculate the classroom student growth score for an eligible teacher, the district will first compute the percentage of students who met or exceeded their expected growth target. The district will then take that percentage and apply the 50% weight for student growth. For example, if an eligible 3-12 core content teacher has 60% of students meet or exceed their growth target, that teacher would receive 60% of the 50 points possible for student growth, for a total of 30 points.

In an effort to ensure fairness and consistency of the classroom student growth calculations, the district will utilize the following criteria and practices to calculate the % of students who met or exceeded expected growth for each eligible teaching assignment.

Student Rosters—To be included in a teacher's classroom student growth calculation for a year-long course, the student must be assigned to the teacher of record at the beginning of year student growth assessment (mid-September); at PEIMS winter roster (mid-February); and at the end of year student growth assessment (mid-May). All eligible teachers and school leaders will be asked to verify the rosters of students who are to be included in the TIA Growth Calculation.

Minimum Number of Scores—In order for the district to calculate a classroom student growth score for a teacher, there must be BOY and EOY (or BOY and EOS for semester courses) student growth data on at least 10 students. In most cases, there will be ample student growth scores to calculate a classroom student growth score; however, in some specialized settings, there may be a small number of students.

Teachers with Multiple Subjects—Classroom student growth will be calculated based on all tests taken for each eligible course with the same growth measure. For example, if a teacher teaches both English I and English II, then the growth measure will consist of all students in both courses. If a teacher is self-contained in 4th Grade, then the growth measure would consist of all student scores for both Math and Reading. Below is an example for how classroom student growth calculations will be calculated based on multiple subjects.

TEACHER OBSERVATION COMPONENT MEASURES

Thirty to seventy percent of a teacher's effectiveness level rating is based on teacher performance, as measured by the T-TESS rubric.

To compute the summative T-TESS score for a teacher, the district will use a numerical process based on a 5-point rating scale. The district will utilize data from formal observations using T-TESS as well as walkthroughs to determine the summative T-TESS score.

Marlin ISD will conduct at least one 45-minute formal observation for each eligible teacher. The district will also utilize data collected through approximately two walkthroughs to determine the final T-TESS score.

Just like has been done for TIA, Marlin ISD will convert the individual ratings on each of the 8 Dimensions in Domains 2 and 3 of T-TESS to a numerical score. *Distinguished* will be assigned a score of "5"; *Accomplished* will be assigned a score of "4"; *Proficient* will be assigned a score of "3"; *Developing* will be assigned a score of "2"; and *Needs Improvement* will be assigned a score of "1". The numerical scores will be averaged together equally for a final numerical score. This will be a number between 1 and 5 and rounded to the nearest hundredths decimal place (for example: 2.87, 3.66, etc.). Once this numerical score is finalized, a percentage of total possible points will be calculated. For example, if a teacher received an average of 3.7 on the eight Dimensions across Domains 2 and 3, they received a total of 74% of possible points ($3.7/5 = 74\%$). Lastly, this percentage will then be applied to the weight for observation under the strategic compensation system. In the same example, if the teacher who earned 74% of possible points was a 4th Grade Teacher, they would receive 74% of the 30 available points for observation, resulting in a total numerical score of 22 points.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMPONENT MEASURES

Teachers of students Grade 3 and above will have a student experience component as a part of their effectiveness level calculation. Students will take the 7 C's Student Perception Survey once in the fall as practice and once in the spring as the final survey.

The 7C's framework captures essential elements of instructional practice and includes the seven components below:

	Personal Support		Curricular Support			Academic Press	
Construct	Care Show concern for students' emotional and academic well-being	Confer Encourage and value students' ideas and views	Captivate Spark and maintain student interest in learning	Clarify Help students understand content and resolve confusion	Consolidate Help students integrate and synthesize key ideas	Challenge Insist that students persevere and do their best work	Classroom Management Foster orderly, respectful, and on-task classroom behavior
Indicators	Building relationships Addressing learning needs	Respecting perspectives Promoting discussion Inviting input	Designing stimulating lessons Facilitate active participation	Explaining clearly Check for understanding Providing constructive feedback	Reviewing and summarizing Connecting ideas	Pressing for rigorous thinking Pressing for quality work Pressing for persistence	Managing activities Managing behaviors

The student experience is measured by a teacher's composite score on the district-wide student survey. The scaled scores for the 7C's components combine responses from all of the students in a classroom and all of their answers on the survey items. Scores range from 202 to 398. A score of 300 represents the midpoint of all schools/teachers in their comparison cohort.

Points will be calculated by dividing a teacher's composite score by the maximum score for the peer group (Upper Elementary, Middle School, and High School). This is to ensure that the process is fair for all teachers, regardless of grade level taught. For example, if a 7th Grade Math teacher receives a composite score of 300, and the maximum score for Middle School teachers is 350, the teacher would receive $300/350$ (86%) of the 20 available points, or 17 points.

EFFECTIVENESS LEVEL SCORE RANGES

The cut points for each effectiveness level are based on targets for each component (e.g., an average "Proficient" score on T-TESS for the Proficient I level). In order to ensure the process is fair, accurate, and rigorous for all teachers, those targets have been set by category, aligned to their effectiveness level components and weights.

PreK-2 Evaluation Score Ranges	
Effectiveness Level	Evaluation Rating
Unsatisfactory	<50
Progressing	50-56
Proficient I	57-66
Proficient II	66-72
Exemplary	73-83
Master	84-100

Note: Cut points will be evaluated each year to ensure the process is fair, accurate, and rigorous for all teachers.

EFFECTIVENESS LEVEL CALCULATION RULES

TWO-YEAR AVERAGE

For the SY 2027-2028 Pay Year and beyond, effectiveness levels will be based on a rolling two-year average of evaluation ratings.

2-Year Average Calculation Example

Pay Year	Scores Used (Example)	2-Year Average Calculation	Score Used for Effectiveness Level Calculation
2026-2027	2025-26 (40)	N/A	40
2027-2028	2025-26 (40) + 2026-27 (50)	$(40 + 50) \div 2$	45
2028-2029	2026-27 (50) + 2027-28 (40)	$(50 + 40) \div 2$	45
2029-2030	2027-28 (40) + 2028-29 (60)	$(40 + 60) \div 2$	50
2030-2031	2028-29 (60) + 2029-30 (65)	$(60 + 65) \div 2$	62.5

ANNUAL INCREASE AND DECREASE

Teachers can move up or down **one** effectiveness level each year. If the two-year average dictates that a teacher should move up or down two effectiveness levels, they will be moved just one level on the scale.

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT

Uncertified teachers cannot move beyond the “Progressing” effectiveness level and salary, even if their evaluation rating would indicate a higher effectiveness level. Teachers will have two years to become certified before being asked to separate with the district.

NEW TEACHERS

New teachers entering Marlin ISD with at least three full years of creditable experience will receive a salary equal to the salary at their prior district or the midpoint of the market average for the first year. This decision is based on district discretion. After the first year at the district, their salary will be based on their effectiveness level. At that point, they can be placed anywhere on the effectiveness level scale.

New teachers entering Marlin ISD with less than three years of creditable experience will start at the “Progressing” effectiveness level compensation. They will stay at the Progressing level for two years. After being in the district for two years, a two-year average will be used to determine their effectiveness level. At that point, they may be placed anywhere on the effectiveness scale, even if it is several levels above “Progressing.”

EXTENDED LEAVE AND LATE HIRES

The district will void a teacher’s rating for the year if they are on approved leave for 90 days or more. Their compensation will remain the same, and their two-year average will not include that year.

Similarly, new teachers who are hired with fewer than 90 days left in the school year will not receive an effectiveness level for that year.

TEACHER INCENTIVE ALLOTMENT (TIA) SPENDING PLAN

2024-2025 School Year (To be paid in August 2026)

For the 2024-2025 school year, 90% of the received funds will be allotted to the teachers receiving the designation and 10% of the funds will be reserved for supporting the TIA initiative at the district level. The district will provide the TIA compensation to teachers through a lump sum payment (as a separate check/EFT from the district) in August of each year that a teacher generates funding for a TIA designation.

2025-2026 School Year And Beyond

Beginning in SY 2025-2026, Marlin ISD will allocate the full 90% of the generated allotment to the compensation of teachers employed at the campus at which the teacher for whom the district received the allotment is employed. This means that instead of seeing an additional TIA stipend on top of base salary, TIA stipends are a funding source for the strategic compensation system.

Example Scenario

James is an elementary teacher in the district with 5 years of experience. He received an Exemplary designation under TIA and will be paid out a stipend of more than \$15,000 in August of 2026 based on his results in SY 2024-2025. Moving forward, he will no longer receive a separate stipend check on top of his base salary. However, under the new strategic compensation plan, earning an Exemplary effectiveness level designation equates to an \$80,000 base salary. Thus, under this new plan, James is earning \$11,606.89 MORE than he would under the old compensation plan.

	2024-2025 Compensation Plan (Step-And-Ladder)	Strategic Compensation System
Years of Experience	5	6
Effectiveness Level	N/A	Exemplary
Base Salary	\$ 53,298.31	\$80,000
TIA Designation	Exemplary	Exemplary
TIA Stipend	\$15,094.80	N/A – Built Into Salary
Total Compensation	\$68,393.11	\$80,000

PERFORMANCE-BASED COMPENSATION SYSTEM SCENARIO

Vanessa is a high school teacher with 5 years of experience as a teacher. Her current compensation is \$53,000.

Vanessa is a high school teacher in the district with 5 years of experience and has been following the updates on the upcoming strategic compensation system. In a recent meeting, she understood that starting in the 2026–2027 school year, teacher salaries will be adjusted based on annual evaluation ratings that determine an effectiveness level. In some scenarios, teachers could earn an effectiveness level that could potentially result in a lower salary than their SY 2025-2026 base compensation. However, when Vanessa reviews the district's Hold Harmless Guarantee, she notices that it states teachers will be held harmless to the SY 2025-2026 Traditional Salary Schedule pay amounts for one year. This causes her to question her earlier understanding. She is now unsure and needs clarification.

STRATEGIC COMPENSATION MODEL – VANESSA'S EXAMPLE

YEAR	CURRENT YEAR COMPENSATION	EOY EVAL RATING	2-YR AVERAGE	EFFECTIVENESS LEVEL (Determines Next Year's Compensation)
2025-2026	(same as step-and-ladder pay)	55	N/A	Progressing

2026-27	25-26 pay (held harmless)	65	$(55+65) / 2 = 60$	Proficient I
2027-28	\$60,000	67	$(65+67) / 2 = 66$	Proficient II
2028-29	\$65,000	71	$(67+71) / 2 = 69$	Proficient II
2029-30	\$65,000	75	$(71+75) / 2 = 73$	Exemplary
2030-31	\$80,000	71	$(75+71) / 2 = 73$	Exemplary
2031-32	\$80,000	81	$(71+81) / 2 = 76$	Exemplary
2032-33	\$80,000	83	$(81+83) / 2 = 82$	Master
2033-34	\$100,000	80	$(83+81) / 2 = 82$	Master

COMMON QUESTIONS Q&A

- Does the “hold harmless” guarantee protect her salary from reducing below her SY 25-26 base salary in SY 26-27?
 - Yes, Vanessa will not earn less than her SY 25-26 salary of \$53,000 in SY 26-27, even though her effectiveness level was “*Progressing*,” which has a corresponding salary of \$47,000 for high school teachers.
- How is Vanessa’s compensation of \$60,000 determined in SY 2027-2028?
 - Vanessa earned an evaluation rating of 55 in SY 25-26 and 65 in SY 26-27. The two evaluation ratings averaged together calculate a 2-year average rating of 60. This 2-year averaged rating equates to an Effectiveness Level of “*Proficient I*,” which has a corresponding salary of \$60,000. Remember: During the first two years of TSC, the maximum compensation increase is \$7,500. Vanessa received an increase of \$7,000, which is below the threshold.
- Vanessa received an evaluation rating of 71 in SY 2028-2029. Why did she not receive an increase in salary in the following school year (SY 2029- 2030)?
 - The 2-year average rating of 67 from SY 27-28 and 71 SY 28-29 calculated an average of 69, which is equivalent to a “*Proficient II*” Effectiveness Level.
- Vanessa received an evaluation rating of 71 in SY 2030-2031. Why did she not receive a decrease in salary in the following school year (SY2031-2032)?
 - The 2-year average rating of 75 in SY 2029-2030 and 71 in SY 2030-2031 calculated an average of 73, which is equivalent to an “*Exemplary*” Effectiveness Level.
- Had Marlin ISD not transitioned to the strategic compensation system, what would Vanessa’s earnings have been over the 9-year time period, and how does that compare to her compensation under the strategic compensation model during the same period?
 - If Marlin had remained on the Traditional Salary Schedule with the current TIA spending plan, Vanessa would have earned a total of \$598,284 over the nine-year period. Under the Pay-for-Performance model, she earned \$636,596 over the nine-year period, which is an additional total earnings of \$38,312 of TRS-eligible funds.

	Marlin ISD Traditional Compensation Plan and TIA Spending Plan		Marlin ISD New Strategic Compensation Plan	
	Years of Experience	Salary	Effectiveness Level	Salary
2025-2026	5	\$53,298.31	-	\$53,298.31
2026-2027	6	\$55,100.17	Progressing	\$53,298.31
2027-2028	7	\$55,600.17	Proficient I	\$60,000
2028-2029	8	\$56,100.17 + \$7,508 (Recognized TIA Stipend)	Proficient II	\$65,000
2029-2030	9	\$56,600.17 + \$7,508	Proficient II	\$65,000
2030-2031	10	\$57,100.17 + \$15,014 (Exemplary TIA Stipend)	Exemplary	\$80,000
2031-2032	11	\$58,533.57 + \$15,014	Exemplary	\$80,000
2032-2033	12	\$59,033.57 + \$15,014	Exemplary	\$80,000
2033-2034	13	\$60,033.57 + \$26,824 (Master TIA Stipend)	Master	\$100,000
Earnings over 9 Years		\$598,284	Earnings Over 9 Years	\$636,596.62