



## Superintendent Memo

To: Region 4 Superintendents  
Cc: Region 4 Cabinet and Executive Staff  
From: Dr. Rodney Watson, Executive Director & CEO  
Date: March 28, 2026  
RE: Strategic Superintendent TAA Briefing – Financial, Workforce, and Compliance Priorities

The seven updates included in this briefing are not routine communications. They represent strategic levers that will directly impact your district’s financial position, workforce stability, instructional alignment, and compliance posture over the next 12–24 months. Each briefing directly correlates to one of the TAAs released on March 26, 2026.

Districts that lead proactively will gain resources, stability, and clarity. Those who delay will face increased risk, lost funding, and reactive decision-making. This is a moment that requires intentional leadership, cross-functional alignment, and disciplined execution.

The enclosed summaries address critical areas, including funding strategy, workforce incentives, compliance requirements, and instructional alignment. Each represents a decision point, not just an information update.

Districts risk leaving funding unclaimed, repaying funds, misaligning systems, and experiencing avoidable compliance issues. The cost of inaction is both financial and operational. Financial efficiency is about maximizing revenue, protecting funding, aligning resources, and ensuring system precision. It is achieved when strategy, data, and execution are aligned. It’s important to engage your Cabinet, assign ownership, validate data, act within timelines, and treat each update as a strategic lever rather than a compliance task.

Region 4 remains your District Advancement Champion—supporting decision-making, maximizing funding, minimizing risk, and strengthening systems that drive student outcomes. As you review, consider where you can capture value, reduce risk, and align systems for execution at scale. The difference between information and impact is leadership.

Dr. Rodney Watson  
Executive Director & CEO  
Region 4 Education Service Center



**TAA: Financial Compliance:**  
**Local School District Revenue and Funding Decisions**

**Region 4 District Advancement Champion Framing:**

Superintendents, one of the biggest misconceptions in school finance is that funding happens to us. The reality is: funding responds to us.

The decisions you make around enrollment, attendance, programming, and tax strategy are not operational. They are financial strategy decisions that directly impact your district's capacity to serve students.

What we're discussing today is not about compliance. It's about control. Control over your resources, control over your opportunities, and ultimately control over your outcomes.

Districts that understand and act on these levers will generate significantly more revenue without asking their communities for more.

**Region 4 ESC Goal 2:**

**Enable school districts to operate more efficiently and economically.**

**Introduction: Why This Matters Now**

This update represents one of the most significant opportunities to strengthen your district's financial position through strategic decision-making rather than mere compliance.

If not acted upon, YOU risk:

- Leaving substantial funding on the table
- Misaligning resources with academic priorities
- Missing opportunities to increase revenue by 10–15%+ through local decisions and program participation

**Executive Summary**

School funding has increased significantly under HB 2, with over \$4 billion in additional annual funding and increased per-student allocations. However, how much your district receives is heavily influenced by your local decisions.

District revenue is driven by:

- Enrollment and attendance

- Tax rate decisions (Tier I & II)
- Program participation (CTE, CCMR, ADSY, etc.)
- Strategic use of state and federal funding streams

Districts that actively manage these levers can increase total funding by over 15%.

### **Why This Is Important**

#### **1. Financial Efficiency = Strategic Leadership**

- Funding is no longer static—district decisions actively influence it
- Superintendents control key levers that directly impact revenue

#### **2. Direct Impact on Student Achievement**

- Funding opportunities are tied to:
  - Early literacy
  - CTE pathways
  - Dual language
  - College & Career Readiness

#### **3. Local Control = Competitive Advantage**

- Districts that are proactive will:
  - Outperform peers financially
  - Expand academic offerings
  - Build sustainable systems

### **Impact if No Action Is Taken**

- Lost revenue opportunities
- Inefficient resource allocation
- Reduced ability to fund strategic priorities
- Competitive disadvantage vs. other districts

### **Key Strategic Levers**

- Increase enrollment (open enrollment, specialized programs)
- Improve attendance rates
- Expand CTE and CCMR pathways
- Leverage ADSY and TIA
- Optimize tax rate decisions
- Utilize available state and federal programs

### **Who Should Be Engaged**

- **Superintendent** (strategy and decisions)
- **CFO** (financial modeling and forecasting)
- **PEIMS/Data Lead** (attendance and reporting accuracy)
- **Academic Leadership** (program expansion)
- **CTE Directors** (CCMR and workforce pathways)

### **Immediate Actions**

1. Conduct a district funding audit
2. Identify missed funding opportunities
3. Align programs to maximize revenue (CTE, ADSY, CCMR)
4. Review attendance and enrollment strategies
5. Engage Region 4 for financial strategy support

### **Bottom Line**

Districts that lead strategically will generate more revenue without additional taxation. This is the essence of Region 4 Goal 2: Financial Efficiencies: doing more with what you already control.

During our May 5, 2026, Superintendents meeting, Dr. Jorgannie Carter, Region 4 CFO and New TASBO Director, and I will provide a deep dive into this information for your CFO, PEIMS lead, and you. You will have opportunities to learn, ask questions, and share insights with other ISDs representing large, medium, and small enrollments, as well as urban, rural, and suburban contexts.

### **[Access Optional Resources](#)**



**TAA: Educator Preparation and Certification:**  
**House Bill 2 Implementation: CTE Certification Reimbursement to Districts**

**Region 4 District Advancement Champion Framing:**

This next opportunity is one of the clearest examples of why timing and alignment matter in leadership. The state is offering to reimburse the dollars you have already spent, but only if you act, and only if you act quickly.

This is not about new work. It's about recovering value from work you've already done. The challenge is that this funding is limited and distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. That means some districts will recover those dollars, and others simply won't, based solely on execution.

As superintendents, this is where we must ensure our systems are aligned, HR, CTE, and finance, so we don't leave money on the table.

**Region 4 ESC Goal 2:**

**Enable school districts to operate more efficiently and economically.**

**Introduction: Why This Matters Now**

This is a time-sensitive, first-come, first-served funding opportunity under HB 2 that directly reimburses districts for CTE educator certification costs.

If you do not act quickly:

- Funds may be exhausted before your district submits
- You will absorb costs that could have been reimbursed

This initiative directly supports Region 4 Goal 2: Financial Efficiencies by recovering district expenditures that have already been incurred.

**Executive Summary**

House Bill 2 (HB 2), passed during the 89th Texas Legislative Session, introduced key changes to the Texas Education Code (TEC), §29.190, expanding the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) reimbursement authority.

HB 2 allows TEA to reimburse districts for CTE certification-related costs for educators certified between:

- September 1, 2025 – June 1, 2026

Eligible reimbursements include:

- Certification exam fees
- Application fees
- Fingerprinting costs

Reimbursements are:

- Submitted per teacher
- Processed in order received
- Paid by August 2026

### **Why This Is Important**

You should pay attention to this information because it provides:

1. **Financial Support for Districts:** HB 2 provides an opportunity for districts to receive reimbursement for certification costs incurred for eligible educators in approved Career and Technical Education (CTE) areas. This knowledge and strategy planning can help alleviate financial burdens on district budgets.
2. **Workforce Development:** By supporting educators in obtaining certifications, you will be better positioned to enhance the quality of your CTE programs, better preparing students for careers in high-demand fields.
3. **Compliance and Deadlines:** You need to ensure your districts meet the submission deadlines (June 12, 2026) and follow the proper process to secure reimbursements, as funding is limited and distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.
4. **Strategic Planning:** You can use this information as you plan and allocate resources effectively, ensuring eligible educators receive certifications and the district maximizes reimbursement opportunities.

### **Key changes include:**

1. **Educator Certification Reimbursement:** HB 2 allows TEA to reimburse districts for certification costs paid for educators issued a standard certificate in approved Career and Technical Education (CTE) areas. This applies to certifications issued between September 1, 2025, and June 1, 2026.
2. **Approved CTE Areas:** Reimbursement is available for certifications in 10 specific CTE areas, including Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, Business and Finance, Family and Consumer Science, Hospitality, Nutrition and Food Science, Human Development and Family Studies, Health Science, Marketing, Technology Education, Trade and Industrial Education, and Trade and Industrial Workforce Training.

3. **Eligible Costs:** Districts can request reimbursement for certification exam fees, application fees, and fingerprinting fees.
4. **Reimbursement Process:** Districts must submit one reimbursement request per eligible educator using the "CTE Certification Reimbursement to Districts Form" in Qualtrics. Requests can be submitted annually, with the fiscal year 2026 deadline set for June 12, 2026.
5. **Funding Limit:** Reimbursements will be processed in the order received until the annual funding limit is reached. Approved reimbursements will be paid out by early August of each fiscal year.

### **Impact if No Action Is Taken**

- Loss of reimbursement funds
- Increased district financial burden
- Slower expansion of CTE programs

### **Key Deadlines**

- **March 26, 2026:** Submission window opens
- **June 12, 2026:** Final submission deadline
- **August 2026:** Payments distributed

### **Who Should Be Engaged**

- **Superintendent** (priority setting)
- **CFO** (tracking reimbursement opportunities)
- **CTE Directors** (identifying eligible teachers)
- **HR** (certification tracking)
- **Finance/Grants Staff** (submission process)

### **Immediate Actions**

1. Identify all eligible CTE-certified educators
2. Compile all eligible expenses
3. Submit reimbursement requests immediately – [form linked here](#)
4. Monitor submission status
5. Coordinate across HR, CTE, and Finance

### **Strategic Consideration**

Use this as a bridge strategy to:

- Expand CTE pathways
- Build workforce-aligned programs
- Increase CCMR outcomes and funding

**Bottom Line**

This is one of the fastest ways to recover dollars already spent. Districts that move quickly will maximize reimbursement; those that don't will miss out.

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)



**TAA: Educator Preparation and Certification: House Bill 2 Implementation:  
Teacher Certification Incentive**

**Region 4 District Advancement Champion Framing:**

This next initiative sits at the intersection of two of our most important priorities: people and resources. The Teacher Certification Incentive is not just about funding. It’s about how we develop, support, and retain the teachers who are in front of our students every day.

The state is saying: if you invest in your people and ensure they become fully certified, we will invest in you. However, this only works if we are intentional—if we know who our teachers are, where they are in the certification process, and how we are supporting them to completion.

This is where talent strategy becomes financial strategy. Districts that approach this as a system will not only receive funding but also build a stronger, more stable workforce.

**Region 4 ESC Goal 2:**

**Enable school districts to operate more efficiently and economically.**

**Introduction: Why This Matters Now**

This is not just a compliance initiative. It is a strategic opportunity to strengthen your teacher workforce while generating additional funding.

If districts do not act:

- Eligible teachers may not be reported
- Certification timelines may be missed
- Districts will lose funding tied directly to workforce development

This initiative directly supports Region 4 Goal 2: Financial Efficiencies by aligning talent strategy with revenue generation.

**Executive Summary**

House Bill 2 (89th Texas Legislature) established the Teacher Certification Incentive to strengthen the educator workforce by supporting uncertified teachers in earning full certification and encouraging retention.

The Teacher Certification Incentive provides:

- \$1,000 per eligible teacher

Eligibility requires:

- Uncertified first-year hire (2022–23 or 2023–24)
- Uncertified as of January 1, 2025
- Standard certification by the end of 2026–27
- Continuous employment

## Why This Is Important

### 1. Financial Impact

- Provides direct funding tied to teacher development and retention
- Revenue scales based on the number of eligible teachers
- Can be reinvested into:
  - Certification support programs
  - Grow-your-own pipelines
  - Teacher retention strategies

### 2. Workforce Stability & Instructional Quality

- Reduces reliance on uncertified teachers
- Strengthens early-career teacher retention
- Improves long-term instructional quality across campuses

### 3. Data-Driven Funding

- Funding is 100% dependent on accurate PEIMS and certification data
- Inaccurate or unverified data = lost funding opportunity
- Reinforces the critical importance of data governance: *Your data directly drives your resources and outcomes.*

### 4. Strategic Alignment with TEA Priorities

- Supports statewide focus on:
  - Teacher pipeline development
  - Certification compliance
  - Sustainable staffing models

### Impact if No Action Is Taken

- Lost funding per eligible teacher
- Continued workforce instability
- Missed opportunity to strengthen instructional quality

### Key Deadlines

- **June 12, 2026:** Data corrections due
- **August 2026:** Initial payments
- **August 2027:** Final payments

## **Who Should Be Engaged**

- **Superintendent**
- **HR (CHRO)**
- **CFO**
- **PEIMS/Data Lead**
- **Academic Leadership**
- **Principals**
- **Certification/ACP Coordinators**

## **Strategic Considerations and Action Steps:**

### **1. Treat Teacher Certification Incentive as a Talent Strategy and not just a compliance task**

- Use this opportunity to strengthen your teacher pipeline and retention model

### **2. Build a Certification Completion System**

- Identify all uncertified teachers
- Provide structured supports:
  - Coaching
  - Test preparation
  - Program alignment

### **3. Leverage Funding to Reinvest in Workforce Development**

- Consider reinvesting TCI funds into:
  - Certification stipends
  - Retention incentives
  - Grow-your-own programs

### **4. Strengthen Data Governance**

- Ensure PEIMS and certification data are:
  - Accurate
  - Timely
  - Continuously monitored

### **5. Align Campus Leadership Accountability**

- Principals should:
  - Know which teachers are eligible
  - Support completion efforts
  - Set a regular progress tracking calendar

## **Next Steps:**

1. Review TCI Report in TEAL (FSP System)
2. Validate all eligible teachers
3. Submit corrections by June 12, 2026
4. Track certification progress
5. Align HR, PEIMS, and campus leadership

## **Bottom Line**

This is where talent strategy meets financial efficiency.

Districts that act intentionally will:

- Increase funding
- Strengthen their workforce
- Improve student outcomes

## **Key Actions Operationalized:**

### **1. Access and Review TCI Report**

- Available in TEAL → Foundation School Program (FSP) System
- Verify all eligible teachers are included

### **2. Validate Data Accuracy**

- Cross-check:
  - Employment records (PEIMS)
  - Certification status (ECOS)

### **3. Submit Corrections by June 12, 2026**

- Use the Teacher Certification Incentive Data Change Request Form
- No submission = funding based on current TEA data

### **4. Monitor Certification Progress**

- Track all eligible teachers through completion
- Ensure certification is achieved by the end of the 2026–27 school year

### **5. Align Internal Systems**

- Ensure HR, PEIMS, and campus leaders are coordinated
- Establish clear ownership and progress monitoring

[Resource if LEAs need to change their data: Teacher Certification Incentive Data Change Request Form](#)



TAA New TSDS Core Collection: Teacher Vacancy Collection  
TSDS Data Submission

**Region 4 District Advancement Champion Framing:**

What gets measured drives what gets funded, and what gets funded drives what gets prioritized. This new Teacher Vacancy Collection is not just about reporting vacancies. It is about shaping how the state understands the teacher workforce across Texas.

The data you submit will influence future policy decisions, funding allocations, and statewide strategies to address teacher shortages. If our data is incomplete or inaccurate, then the solutions that follow will be as well. This is our opportunity to ensure that our shared reality is clearly understood and represented at the state level.

It's an opportunity to strengthen our internal systems by aligning HR, PEIMS, and campus leadership around a shared understanding of staffing.

**Region 4 ESC Goal 2:**

**Enable school districts to operate more efficiently and economically.**

**Introduction: Why This Matters Now (Elevated Framing)**

Superintendents, this update represents a fundamental shift in how the state understands, monitors, and will ultimately respond to your teacher workforce realities.

The Teacher Vacancy Collection is not simply a new data requirement. It is the foundation for future policy decisions, funding allocations, and accountability measures related to teacher staffing across Texas.

If not approached strategically, you risk:

- Misrepresenting their staffing realities to the state
- Influencing future funding and policy decisions with incomplete or inaccurate data
- Missing the opportunity to shape statewide solutions to teacher shortages
- Creating internal misalignment between HR, PEIMS, and campus operations

This work directly connects to:

- Workforce stability
- Data governance
- Future funding implications

## **Executive Summary**

The Teacher Vacancy Collection, as part of TSDS Core Collections, requires districts to systematically report teacher vacancies using standardized definitions and data processes.

This collection will:

- Provide TEA with accurate, statewide vacancy data
- Inform:
  - Teacher pipeline strategies
  - Certification pathways
  - Future funding and legislative decisions
  
- Increase transparency around:
  - Staffing gaps
  - Hard-to-fill positions
  - Certification challenges

## **Why This Is Important:**

### **1. Data Will Drive Future Funding & Policy**

- State decisions on:
  - Incentives
  - Grants
  - Workforce programswill be based on this data

### **2. Accurate Representation of Your District**

- This is your opportunity to:
  - Clearly communicate staffing challenges
  - Ensure your district's needs are visible at the state level

### **3. Workforce Strategy Alignment**

- Connects directly to:
  - Teacher certification initiatives
  - CTE certification pathways
  - Recruitment and retention strategies

### **4. Internal Systems Alignment**

- Requires coordination across:
  - HR systems
  - PEIMS reporting
  - Campus staffing realities

## **Impact if No Action Is Taken**

- Inaccurate or incomplete data submitted to TEA
- Reduced influence over future state investments
- Misalignment between district reality and reported data
- Missed opportunity to advocate for staffing needs

## **Who Should Be Engaged**

This requires tight cross-functional ownership:

- **Superintendent** (sets priority and ensures alignment)
- **Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO)**
  - Defines and tracks vacancies
- **PEIMS/Data Governance Lead**
  - Ensures accurate submission and compliance
- **Campus Principals**
  - Provide real-time vacancy data
- **Academic Leadership**
  - Align staffing needs with instructional priorities
- **Finance/CFO**
  - Monitor future funding implications

## **Key Implementation Considerations**

While specific submission timelines will be communicated through TEA, districts should act immediately to prepare systems.

## **Immediate Actions**

### **1. Establish a Clear Definition of “Vacancy.”**

- Align district-wide understanding with TEA definitions

### **2. Conduct a Vacancy Audit**

- Identify:
  - Current vacancies
  - Long-term substitutes
  - Misassigned or uncertified teachers

### **3. Align HR and PEIMS Systems**

- Ensure consistency between:
  - HR staffing records
  - PEIMS reporting

### **4. Build a Real-Time Tracking System**

- Move from static reporting to:
  - Ongoing monitoring
  - Monthly updates

## 5. Train Campus Leaders

- Ensure principals:
  - Understand reporting expectations
  - Provide accurate and timely data

## Strategic Considerations for Superintendents

### 1. Treat This as a Strategic Narrative Opportunity

- Your data will help shape:
  - Statewide teacher shortage responses
  - Funding priorities

### 2. Align with Certification & Workforce Strategies

- Connect vacancy data to:
  - TCI (Teacher Certification Incentive)
  - CTE certification reimbursement
  - Grow-your-own programs

### 3. Use Data to Drive Local Decisions

- Identify:
  - Hard-to-fill roles
  - Certification gaps
  - Recruitment priorities

### 4. Strengthen Data Governance

- Ensure:
  - Accuracy
  - Timeliness
  - Accountability

## Bottom Line

**This is not just a reporting requirement. It is a strategic lever.**

Districts that:

- Report accurately
- Align systems
- Use the data proactively

will be positioned to:

- Influence state decisions
- Strengthen workforce strategies
- Access future funding opportunities

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)



**TAA: Federal Fiscal Compliance and Reporting:**  
**Release of FY 2025 Preliminary Compliance Reviews for IDEA – B LEA MOE**

**Region 4 District Advancement Champion Framing:**

Some financial risks show up immediately, and others show up later, often when it's too late to adjust. IDEA-B Maintenance of Effort is one of those areas where the consequences of inaction are delayed but significant.

This is not just a compliance requirement. It is a federal expectation that directly ties to your funding, your credibility, and your ability to serve students with disabilities. If we fall short, we don't just risk future funding; we risk losing it. We risk having to repay dollars we've already used to serve students.

That is why this work must be owned at the highest level and aligned across finance, special education, and data systems. The question is not whether MOE applies to your district. The question is whether your systems are strong enough to ensure you meet it every year.

**Region 4 ESC Goal 2:**

**Enable school districts to operate more efficiently and economically.**

**Introduction: Why This Matters Now**

Superintendents, this update represents a high-stakes intersection of compliance, finance, and risk management that requires your immediate attention and leadership oversight.

The release of the FY 2025 IDEA-B Maintenance of Effort (MOE) preliminary compliance reviews is more than a routine notification. It is a direct indicator of whether your district meets federal special education spending requirements.

If not addressed strategically, districts risk:

- Repayment of federal IDEA-B funds
- Future reductions in special education funding
- Increased audit scrutiny and compliance interventions
- Disruption to services for students with disabilities

This is not just about compliance. It is about protecting your district's financial stability and ensuring continuity of services for some of your most vulnerable students.

*Failure to maintain effort can result in the loss or repayment of funds you have already received.*

## **Executive Summary**

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has released preliminary compliance reviews for IDEA-B Maintenance of Effort (MOE) for FY 2025. MOE requires districts to:

- Maintain or exceed prior-year levels of local or state/local spending on special education

These preliminary reviews:

- Indicate whether your district is meeting, exceeding, or failing MOE requirements
- Are available through TEA's GFFC Reports and Data Collections system
- Provide districts an opportunity to:
  - Review findings
  - Identify discrepancies
  - Take corrective action (if applicable)

## **Why This Is Important**

### **1. Direct Financial Risk**

- Failure to meet MOE may require:
  - Repayment of federal IDEA-B funds
  - Reduction in future funding allocations

### **2. Federal Compliance Requirement**

- MOE is a federal requirement under IDEA-B
- Noncompliance can trigger:
  - Monitoring
  - Audits
  - Corrective action plans

### **3. Protection of Special Education Services**

- Ensures districts maintain investment in:
  - Students with disabilities
  - Required supports and services

### **4. Financial Efficiency & Stewardship**

- Avoiding repayment = preserving resources
- Strategic financial planning ensures compliance without disruption

## **Impact if No Action Is Taken**

- Financial penalties or required repayment
- Loss of future federal funding
- Increased oversight and intervention from TEA
- Potential disruption to special education programming

## Who Should Be Engaged

This requires immediate cross-functional leadership alignment:

- **Superintendent** (oversight and urgency)
- **Chief Financial Officer (CFO)**
  - Analyze MOE calculations and financial impact
- **Special Education Director**
  - Ensure programmatic alignment and compliance
- **PEIMS/Data Lead**
  - Validate financial and program data submissions
- **Grants/Compliance Staff**
  - Support documentation and response processes

## Strategic Considerations for Superintendents

### 1. Treat MOE as a Financial Planning Discipline

- Integrate MOE tracking into:
  - Budget development
  - Multi-year financial planning

### 2. Align Finance and Special Education

- Ensure collaboration between:
  - CFO
  - Special Education leadership

### 3. Build Internal Monitoring Systems

- Move from reactive to:
  - Proactive compliance monitoring

### 4. Protect Funding Through Precision

- Accurate coding and reporting are critical
- Small errors can create large financial consequences

## Immediate Operational Actions

### 1. Access Preliminary MOE Review

- Retrieve report from TEA's GFFC system

### 2. Analyze MOE Status

- Determine:
  - Met requirement
  - Failed requirement
  - Risk areas

### **3. Validate Data**

- Review:
  - Financial expenditures
  - Coding and reporting accuracy

### **4. Identify Allowable Exceptions (if applicable)**

- Determine if any:
  - Student population changes
  - Staffing changes
  - Other allowable adjustments can be applied

### **5. Develop a Response Plan**

- If noncompliant:
  - Prepare corrective actions
  - Plan for financial adjustments

### **6. Strengthen Future MOE Monitoring**

- Implement internal tracking systems to:
  - Monitor spending annually
  - Prevent future noncompliance

#### **Bottom Line:**

This is about protecting your funding, your compliance standing, and your ability to serve students.

Districts that:

- Review early
- Validate data
- Act strategically

will avoid penalties and strengthen their financial position.

#### **Resources:**

- [IDEA-B LEA MOE Compliance Standard](#)
- [IDEA-B MOE Options](#)
- Upcoming Webinar on Thursday, April 2, 2026, from 9:30 AM-10:30 AM  
[Identify staff to attend and pre-register at this link](#)



[TAA: “Curriculum Standards and Student Support” Texas Civics Training, Program Implementation](#)  
[R4 Summer Training Schedule Here](#)

**Region 4 District Advancement Champion Framing:**

The way civics is taught in our classrooms is no longer just an instructional decision. It is a statutory expectation and, increasingly, a matter of public trust. This work requires us to strike the right balance: ensuring our students receive strong, meaningful civics education while also ensuring our educators are fully aligned with state law.

When that balance is off, districts can quickly find themselves navigating complaints, confusion, and unnecessary risk. This is why clarity and alignment matter across curriculum, professional development, and campus leadership. Done well, this strengthens instruction. Done poorly, it creates exposure and possibly a financial efficiency issue. Preventing problems is always less costly than responding to them.

Our goal is to ensure every Superintendent understands both the opportunity and the responsibility that comes with teaching civics in Texas.

**Region 4 ESC Goal 1: Assist school districts in improving student performance**

**Introduction: Why This Matters Now**

Superintendents, this update represents a growing intersection of instructional practice, statutory compliance, and public trust in how civics is taught in Texas classrooms.

The implementation of Texas Civics Training Programs is not simply about professional development. It is about:

- Ensuring instructional alignment to state law
- Protecting districts from compliance risk and community concern
- Equipping educators to navigate increasingly complex and sensitive instructional topics

If not approached intentionally, districts risk:

- Noncompliance with state statute (SB 3)
- Inconsistent instructional practices across campuses
- Increased exposure to parent complaints and community scrutiny
- Missed opportunities to strengthen high-quality civics instruction

*Proactive training and alignment reduce the risk of costly complaints, investigations, and corrective actions while ensuring efficient use of professional development resources.*

## **Executive Summary**

Under Texas Education Code §21.4555 (as amended by SB 3), TEA has developed Civics Training Programs for teachers and administrators to support instruction aligned to:

- TEKS requirements
- Statutory expectations for civics instruction

These programs are designed to:

- Ensure educators understand what can and cannot be taught
- Provide clarity on:
  - Instructional boundaries
  - Use of materials
  - Facilitation of classroom discussions

Districts are expected to:

- Ensure appropriate elementary staff participate in training this summer; secondary staff will participate in a Civics Training Program in summer 2027
- Align instructional practices with statutory requirements
- Maintain compliance with state expectations

## **Why This Is Important**

### **1. Compliance with State Law**

- Directly tied to SB 3 requirements
- Noncompliance may result in:
  - Complaints
  - Investigations
  - Required corrective actions

### **2. Instructional Consistency**

- Ensures all campuses:
  - Teach civics within legal parameters
  - Maintain consistency across classrooms

### **3. Risk Mitigation**

- Reduces exposure to:
  - Parent/community concerns
  - Public scrutiny
  - Legal challenges

### **4. Strengthening Civics Education**

- Supports high-quality instruction in:
  - Government

- Citizenship
- Civic responsibility

### **Impact if No Action Is Taken**

- Increased risk of complaints and investigations
- Inconsistent classroom practices across campuses
- Misalignment with TEA expectations
- Potential reputational and legal challenges

### **Who Should Be Engaged**

This requires instructional and compliance alignment:

- **Superintendent** (sets expectation and tone)
- **Chief Academic Officer (CAO)**
  - Oversees curriculum and instructional alignment
- **Curriculum & Social Studies Leaders**
  - Ensure TEKS-aligned implementation
- **Professional Development Coordinators**
  - Facilitate training participation
- **Campus Principals**
  - Monitor classroom implementation
- **Legal/Policy Advisors (as needed)**
  - Support compliance interpretation

### **Strategic Considerations for Superintendents**

#### **1. Treat This as Both Instructional and Compliance Work**

- Balance:
  - Academic rigor
  - Legal alignment

#### **2. Create Clear Guardrails for Staff**

- Ensure educators understand:
  - Expectations
  - Boundaries

#### **3. Align Professional Development Systems**

- Integrate civics training into:
  - Ongoing PD structures
  - Instructional coaching

#### **4. Strengthen Principal Oversight**

- Principals must:
  - Understand requirements
  - Monitor classroom practices

## **Immediate Operational Actions**

### **1. Identify Required Staff**

- Determine:
  - Teachers - who should complete civics training?
  - Administrators - who should complete civics training?

### **2. Review TEA Training Programs and Region 4 Training Schedule**

- Ensure understanding of:
  - Content expectations
  - Compliance requirements

### **3. Align Curriculum and Instruction**

- Review current materials and practices
- Ensure alignment with:
  - TEKS
  - SB 3 requirements

### **4. Implement Training Plan**

- Schedule and track completion
- Ensure district-wide participation

### **5. Monitor Implementation**

- Conduct campus-level checks for:
  - Instructional alignment
  - Consistency

## **Bottom Line**

This is about protecting your district while strengthening instruction. Districts that:

- Train proactively
- Align systems
- Monitor implementation

will:

- Reduce risk
- Ensure compliance
- Deliver high-quality civics instruction

**Important Note:** From TEA's Superintendent Call with Commissioner Morath on March 26, 2026, Monica Martinez, Managing Director, Curriculum Division, TEA, responded at 3:37 PM

**District Chat Question:** Can the assistant principal be the administrator?

**TEA Answer from Monica Martinez:** No. It must be the principal.

Resources:

[TEA Civics Training Website](#)



**TAA: Standards and Programs:**  
**Senate Bill 1191 Calculation of High School Grade Point Average**

**Region 4 District Advancement Champion Framing:**

How we calculate GPA may seem like a technical detail, but in reality, it is one of the most powerful signals we send about what we value in student achievement.

Senate Bill 1191 represents a shift from local flexibility to greater statewide consistency. With that shift comes both opportunity and responsibility. Opportunity to ensure fairness and clarity for students across Texas. Responsibility to ensure that our local systems align in a way that protects our students and reflects our values.

GPA influences class rank, college access, and student decision-making. When that system changes, behavior changes. That's why we're not waiting on this. We must engage early, analyze deeply, and lead proactively.

This is also about efficiency. The more proactive we are now, the less disruption, confusion, and cost we will experience later. The question is not whether this change is coming. The question is whether we are positioned to lead through it.

**Region 4 ESC Goal 1: Assist school districts in improving student performance**

**Introduction: Why This Matters Now**

This update represents a significant shift in how student achievement is quantified, compared, and ultimately communicated across the state of Texas. Senate Bill 1191 moves GPA from a locally determined practice to a more standardized, state-influenced methodology. While this may appear technical, its implications are far-reaching:

- Class rank and valedictorian determinations
- College admissions competitiveness
- Course-taking behaviors (AP, dual credit, advanced coursework)
- Equity across districts

If not approached strategically, YOU risk:

- Misalignment between current local GPA systems and future state expectations
- Confusion among students, parents, and staff
- Unintended consequences in:
  - Class rank outcomes
  - Course enrollment patterns

- Missed opportunity to influence rulemaking before it is finalized

*Misalignment in policy implementation can create downstream costs—revisions to systems, retraining, communication breakdowns, and potential legal or policy challenges.*

### **Executive Summary**

Senate Bill 1191 (89th Texas Legislature) requires the Commissioner of Education to:

- Develop a standardized method for calculating high school GPA
- Ensure that additional weight is applied to certain advanced courses

This represents a shift from:

- District discretion → State-directed methodology

TEA has:

- [Published a proposed administrative rule](#)
- Opened a public comment period (through April 20, 2026)
- Indicated that districts should begin preparing for potential implementation

### **Why This Is Important**

#### **1. Impact on Students & Class Rank**

- GPA calculation directly affects:
  - Valedictorian/salutatorian rankings
  - Scholarship eligibility
  - College admissions competitiveness

#### **2. Course-Taking Behavior**

- Weighting decisions will influence:
  - Enrollment in AP, dual credit, and advanced courses
  - Student academic pathways

#### **3. Equity Across Districts**

- Standardization aims to:
  - Reduce variability between districts
  - Ensure fair comparison of student achievement statewide

#### **4. Policy & Governance Implications**

- Districts may need to:
  - Revise local GPA policies
  - Update board-approved grading systems

#### **Impact if No Action Is Taken**

- Misalignment with future TEA requirements
- Confusion among students and families
- Potential inequities in class rank outcomes

- Reactive (instead of proactive) policy adjustments
- Missed opportunity to shape final rule through public comment

### **Key Deadlines**

- **April 20, 2026:** Public comment period closes
- Future implementation timeline pending final rule adoption

### **Who Should Be Engaged**

This requires academic, policy, and operational alignment:

- **Superintendent** (strategic oversight and communication)
- **Chief Academic Officer (CAO)**
  - Leads instructional and grading alignment
- **High School Principals**
  - Implement GPA and class rank systems
- **Counselors**
  - Advise students and families
- **Curriculum & Advanced Academics Leaders**
  - Align course weighting and offerings
- **Policy/Legal Advisors**
  - Review local board policies

### **Immediate Operational Actions**

#### **1. Review Proposed Rule**

- Understand:
  - GPA calculation changes
  - Course weighting implications

#### **2. Analyze Current District GPA System**

- Identify:
  - Differences from the proposed state model
  - Potential impacts on students

#### **3. Engage in Public Comment Process**

- Provide feedback to TEA before April 20, 2026

#### **4. Begin Scenario Planning**

- Model:
  - Impact on class rank
  - Impact on course enrollment patterns

#### **5. Prepare Communication Strategy**

- Ensure clarity for:
  - Students
  - Families

- Staff

## **Strategic Considerations for Superintendents**

### **1. Treat GPA as a Strategic Lever, not just a Calculation**

- GPA influences:
  - Student motivation
  - Academic rigor
  - Postsecondary outcomes

### **2. Align Advanced Academics Strategy**

- Ensure:
  - Course offerings align with the weighting structure
  - Students have equitable access

### **3. Lead Proactively, Not Reactively**

- Shape policy now rather than adjust later

### **4. Ensure System Coherence**

- Align:
  - Board policy
  - Campus practice
  - Counseling guidance

## **Bottom Line**

This is about fairness, strategy, and future alignment.

Districts that:

- Engage early
- Analyze impact
- Align systems

will:

- Protect student outcomes
- Ensure clarity
- Influence statewide policy

## **Resources:**

[Link to Proposed COE Rule](#)