



## Austin Independent School District | Texas

### SUMMARY

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) REACH program aims to recruit, develop, and retain high-quality teachers and administrators in Austin, particularly at the district's high-need schools. It builds the capacity of Austin educators to better serve students, empowers educators to support the growth of their colleagues, and challenges educators to reach rigorous performance goals aligned to the district's goal of preparing all students to be college and career ready.

### PROGRAM GOALS AND EVALUATION

AISD REACH focuses on five program elements:

1. **Student growth.** REACH rewards educators for improving the academic achievement of students at the campus, team, and individual levels.
2. **Professional growth.** REACH provides an intensive mentoring program for novice teachers. It also includes professional development units designed to improve teaching strategies and student growth.
3. **Leadership pathways.** REACH provides opportunities for educators to advance their leadership roles in the capacity of mentors/master teachers, student learning objective (SLO) facilitators, or peer observers.
4. **Observation.** AISD uses peer observation to provide teachers with additional feedback for professional growth.

**State:** Texas

**Location:** Austin ISD

**Award amount:** \$59,007,705

**TIF Cohort:** 3

**STEM Grantee:** No

**Number of LEAs participating:** 1

**Number of schools participating:** 38

**Number of teachers eligible:** 2,100

**Number of principals eligible:** 38

**Superintendent:** Dr. Paul Cruz (interim)

**Key program staff:**

Joann Taylor, Project Director

**Email:** jotaylor@austinisd.org

5. **Recruitment and retention in hard-to-staff schools.** REACH provides stipends for teachers who are in their first to third year of service and teachers who serve in a hard-to-staff school for three or more years. REACH also identifies hard-to-staff positions eligible for additional compensation.

## REWARD STRUCTURE

Eligible staff can earn rewards through the five program elements. For student growth, teachers write one individual SLO and one team SLO as well as participate in campus-wide goal setting. Staff may also elect to participate in a Professional Development Unit (PDU) or take on a leadership role such as SLO facilitator or PDU team lead. All staff are observed and provided feedback and can earn a retention stipend based on SLO achievement. All of these elements have rewards associated with them.

## YEARS 1-4 HIGHLIGHTS

- AISD established Teacher and Principal Advisory Groups comprising representatives from each campus to monitor the status of the program and problem-solve issues.
- In addition to schoolwide EVAAS scores, AISD has a program to develop and use SLOs and is working on how to interpret SLOs in conjunction with value-added measures (VAM) (grades 3-8). Based on its research, AISD decided to stop using the individual VAM measure and instead use a student perception survey and keep the group VAM measure, alongside individual-level SLOs.
- The district developed an Office of Educator Quality that complements the Office of Human Resources in the Division of Human Capital. This office consists of three departments: Professional Development, Leadership Development, and Strategic Compensation. The overall goal of this office is to create an integrated approach to recruiting, developing, and retaining high-quality teachers and administrators.
- AISD's Department of Evaluation is conducting its program evaluation, the results of which are on the AISD website under Educator Quality. These results include different reports on SLOs, as well as qualitative data such as surveys.

## YEAR 5 OUTLOOK

- Continue development of common assessment bank
- Improve peer observation support to teachers through observation walks and shadowing
- Continue refining SLO and PDU process
- Provide full-release mentors for all one- to three-year teachers

## SUSTAINABILITY

As the TIF grant continues for this final year, the district has developed a leadership team and working group to study the elements of the program that will be the best investments to include in a new salary and compensation system for teachers that we hope to have developed by the spring of 2016. The district is working with the American Federation of Teachers to study the best practices in salary restructuring from other districts to inform the district's proposal for the 2016–17 school year. The REACH program elements that are identified as most beneficial to and/or reflective of teacher and student success will be incorporated into Professional Pathways for Teachers as a sustainable system developed from the innovative work that occurred with the TIF grant.

## PERFORMANCE-BASED COMPENSATION

SLOs July 2014	\$5,784,500
Basket of Measures December 2014	\$1,863,500
PDU July 2014	\$483,000
Mentoring Stipend July 2014	\$205,000
SLO Facilitator Stipends July 2014	\$118,500
PDU Team Leads July 2014	\$33,500
Peer Observation July 2014	\$839,500
Recruitment/Retention November 2013 (first half) July 2014 (second half)	\$4,077,000