

January 18, 2016

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

SUBJECT: Texas Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (T-STEM) Designation

The purpose of this letter is to inform school districts and open-enrollment charter schools of an upcoming opportunity to apply to participate in the college and career readiness model: T-STEM Academy designation. Information regarding T-STEM Academy designation and timelines for application are provided below.

T-STEM Designation

Under the authority of Texas Education Code (TEC), §39.235 and Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §102.1093, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has developed a designation process for T-STEM Academies. The designation process identifies districts that operate T-STEM Academies by maintaining the integrity of the model, which was designed to improve instruction and academic performance in science and mathematics-related subjects at secondary schools.

In accordance with TAC §102.1093, the designation process is required for all existing and proposed T-STEM Academies. Schools that receive the T-STEM designation will receive a number of benefits, including:

1) Recognition as an Approved T-STEM Academy:

Schools designated by TEA as state-approved T-STEM Academies will receive various forms of media recognition including, but not limited to: identification on TEA's website as a state-approved T-STEM Academy and recognition in press releases.

2) Participation in T-STEM Convenings:

Special events hosted by TEA provide opportunities for T-STEM Academy administrators to provide input on policies and procedures that impact T-STEM Academies.

3) Membership in the T-STEM Network:

Opportunities are provided for principals, teachers, and students in designated T-STEM Academies to share best practices through conferences and technical assistance sessions. Membership in the T-STEM Network allows T-STEM Academy staff to access online exemplars, professional development, and webinars.

4) Access to Technical Assistance:

Designated T-STEM Academies will have access to technical assistance including advice and information from a leadership coach who has successfully facilitated the design and implementation of T-STEM Academies operating in Texas.

5) Strength of T-STEM Model:

- a. Through the designation process, TEA will recognize those T-STEM Academies that effectively incorporate T-STEM Design Blueprint elements. The designation process will enable districts and their partners to engage in the research and planning necessary to ensure that their T-STEM Academies are set up in the most effective way possible.
- b. The T-STEM Design Blueprint provides a framework for T-STEM Academies to access college and career opportunities that support post secondary success.

To Apply for T-STEM Designation:

The T-STEM designation application is available online at the following address: thetrc.org/TSTEM2016/.

- **Applications must be submitted to TEA through the online application interface on or before Friday, March 4, 2016 at 5 pm CST** in order to be eligible for designation as a T-STEM Academy during the 2016-2017 school year. The TEA anticipates notifying each applicant of its approval status to operate a designated T-STEM Academy by June 2016.
- Districts must complete this application each year in order to renew T-STEM Academy designation.

Technical Assistance:

- The T-STEM designation application for 2016-2017 is an online, web-based application.
- The technical assistance webinar is not required; however, attendance is strongly encouraged and will provide potential applicants the ability to learn how to access and navigate the online, web-based application system.
- A recorded version of the webinar will be available for individuals unable to attend the live webinar.

| Date/Time | Description |
|---|---|
| <p>Wednesday, February 3, 2016 10:00 am – 12:00 pm</p> <p>Webinar Registration https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4001182558489434626</p> | <p>T-STEM Academy Designation Overview and Technical Assistance</p> <p>The webinar provides an opportunity to learn about the T-STEM Academy designation requirements including benefits and application requirements. An overview of the online designation system will be provided.</p> <p>Who Should Attend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Representatives of designated T-STEM Academies• Districts and charter schools planning on applying for T-STEM designation |

For assistance completing the application:

- The current 103 designated T-STEM Academies may contact their T-STEM coaches and should incorporate information from the self-assessment conducted in 2016.
- New applicants may contact tstem@tea.texas.gov.

Sincerely,

Monica Martinez
Associate Commissioner
Standards and Programs

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