



HANDBOOK

Policy and Procedures for Professional Service Providers

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INTRODUCTION

The PSP Handbook is the policy manual to which all PSPs are required to adhere. These guidelines were developed by the Texas Center for District and School Support (TCDSS), and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and along with input from active PSPs. It is the responsibility of the PSP to read, clarify, and internalize the information within this handbook. If a PSP fails to comply with any requirements within this handbook, they will be placed on probation, or removed from the network, at the discretion of TCDSS and TEA.

PSP JOB DESCRIPTION

OVERVIEW

Professional Service Providers (PSPs) are experienced, quality educators who provide technical assistance and support to campuses and districts with required interventions in the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS). PSPs assist in building the capacity of campus/district leaders, teachers, and staff to understand and implement the TAIS continuous improvement process.

EXPECTED KNOWLEDGE OF

- Current state policy and programs related to assessment, accountability, curriculum, and educator appraisal systems
- Research-based practices and interventions to address the area(s) of low performance in the state accountability system and, if applicable, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) turnaround principles
- District perspective of organizational structure, communication systems, and structures for collaborative work across district work groups in support of continuous improvement
- Current knowledge of district and campus leadership practices as they relate to fiscal, accountability, and curriculum
- Current research regarding best practices in school improvement and the role the district plays in curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Understanding of how district practices can be leveraged to increase campus success

REQUIRED SKILLS

- Ability to positively influence student performance that increases campus accountability ratings
- Interpersonal skills that influence an atmosphere of shared respect, trust, and confidentiality with campus staff, district personnel, and fellow PSPs
- Confidence in oral communication to engage district/campus leadership in dialogue responsive to critical questions surrounding best practice
- Coaching skills that demonstrate active listening, reflective questioning, and full engagement
- Technical writing skills that capture evidence in a clear, concise, and objective manner
- Ability to effectively use various modes of technology, such as email, virtual meeting platforms, and social networking to communicate
- Ability to connect information to see emerging trends and collaborate to address solutions, and articulate clear and compelling goals



- Ability to quickly apply school improvement and turnaround practices significant to success at the campus/district level
- Ability to accurately analyze and assess systems in order to identify root causes of low performance
- Ability to influence in a results-oriented way so campus and district leadership collaborate in establishing the necessary processes to ensure their path to success
- Ability to use failures as learning opportunities, and celebrate successes
- Ability to analyze qualitative and quantitative data, to draw conclusions out of multiple sources of data, and develop timely actions to meet annual goals

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Adheres to the current year Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators and the PSP Network Handbook
- Exemplifies the trustworthiness and integrity necessary to lead adults and model core values regarding confidentiality, punctuality, work focus, and quality of product
- Serves as a liaison between the Texas Center for District and School Support (TCDSS), Texas Education Agency (TEA), local education service center (ESC), and district/campus
- Verifies that all school improvement requirements are met and reported
- Recognizes and acts upon opportunities for continuous improvement at the district and campus level
- Works with the district coordinator of school improvement (DCSI) to implement the TAIS continuous improvement process with all assigned campuses identified for intervention through the state accountability system or as a priority school
- Maintains a positive problem-solving attitude in the face of unforeseen challenges and acts as a positive change agent
- Works with district and campus staff to ensure their understanding of the current accountability system
- Utilizes research-based practices and interventions to address the identified campus needs
- Supports the effective implementation of all components of the school improvement process
- Facilitates a strategic planning process that addresses gaps in all seven of the Critical Success Factors (CSFs)
- Monitors the progress of activities and strategies contained within the targeted improvement plan and facilitates the on- going refinement of the plan
- Assists in building leadership and teacher capacity through professional learning
- Establishes and/or refines internal systems and processes focused on the sustainability of school improvement
- Serves as a member of the campus intervention team (CIT)
- Responsible for his/her ongoing professional learning, and attends required meetings and trainings
- Maintains clear and concise reports and updates them in a timely manner
- Assists campus with TTIPS grant requirements, when applicable
- Works closely with other statewide partners (PSP Area Leads, ESC Representatives)



PSP EVALUATION PROCESS AND STATUS LEVELS

ANNUAL EVALUATION

All PSPs contracting with TCDSS or a district will receive an annual performance evaluation conducted by TCDSS and TEA. PSPs receive an evaluation rating of Meets Expectations, Below Expectations, or Unacceptable each year. The evaluation rating is used to determine the PSP’s status of Active, Probationary, or Removed for the next academic year. Because the PSP is as an external contractor, TCDSS does not provide formal feedback for professional growth and/or professional development needs.

TCDSS and TEA use the following data elements to evaluate the performance of a PSP:

- Annual Survey Data
 - o Principal, campus leadership team members, and DCSI 45%
 - o Local ESC members and TCDSS/TEA support specialist 25%
- Student achievement data 20%
- PSP Professional Learning Self-Evaluation (pre and post) 10%

Evaluation ratings are determined as listed below:

- Meets Expectations 70% or higher
- Below Expectations 60% - 69%
- Unacceptable 59% or lower

PSP STATUS LEVELS

TCDSS and TEA assign one of the following three PSP status levels—Active, Probationary, and Removed—based on the PSP’s compliance with the guidelines and procedures in the PSP Network Handbook and the PSP’s annual performance evaluation. These status levels are determined annually by TCDSS and TEA. A fourth status, leave of absence, requires specific approval from TCDSS. All statuses are discussed in further detail below.

ACTIVE

A PSP in Active status is eligible for contracting with schools as a PSP at any time during the school year. A PSP who resigns from the PSP Network while on Active status will be eligible to reapply.

To maintain an Active status the PSP must:

- participate in all required professional learning requirements (see page 9); and
- achieve a combined average rating of Meets Expectations on the annual PSP performance evaluation if the PSP is assigned to at least one campus.

PROBATIONARY

TCDSS and TEA may place a PSP on Probationary status at any time during the contract year. PSPs on probation are only allowed to contract with a maximum of three schools.

PSPs will be placed on Probationary status for the following reasons:

- failing to comply with attendance at required events (see page 9);
- failing to comply with the Texas Code of Ethics and the PSP Handbook;
- receiving an average rating of Below Expectations (for two or more campuses) on the annual PSP performance evaluation;
- receiving an Unacceptable rating on the annual PSP performance evaluation when serving only one campus; and/or
- having a minimum of two contracts terminated at the request of different districts within a 12-month period.



REMOVED

TCDSS and TEA may remove a PSP from the network at any time during the year. A PSP who has been removed from the network is not eligible to reapply.

PSPs will be removed from the network for the following reasons. The PSP:

- demonstrates repeated and/or serious behavior not in compliance with the Texas Code of Ethics and the PSP Handbook;
- receives an average rating of Unacceptable on the annual PSP performance evaluation and works on two or more campuses;
 - if serving only one campus an Unacceptable rating will result in a Probationary status;
- receives a probationary status for two consecutive years; and/or
- receives a probationary status three times within a ten-year period. A ten-year period begins upon initial probation received, and this policy begins with the status received in July 2015.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

To request a Leave of Absence, a PSP should select this option on the annual “intent to return” survey. A Leave of Absence may be granted annually at the discretion of TCDSS, for a maximum of two consecutive academic years. To be granted a 2nd year of Leave of Absence, the PSP must attend at least one Statewide Partners Institute during the 2-year period. PSPs that resign from the network while on Leave of Absence remain eligible to reapply.

If a PSP is unable to fulfill a contract due to an illness or injury, TCDSS must be contacted immediately regarding the situation. Depending on the specific situation and length of absence, an interim or replacement PSP may be recommended to the campus by TCDSS.

NOTIFICATION OF STATUS LEVEL

New PSPs will be placed on Active status upon completion of the first PSP Institute and a satisfactory criminal background check has been received. Any PSP whose status changes during the year will be notified in writing by TCDSS. Current PSPs will receive status notification before the end of the contract year.



PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

ETHICAL EXPECTATIONS

Every individual contracting to serve as a PSP must agree to:

- exemplify trustworthiness and integrity;
- demonstrate an attitude of service;
- act within the boundaries of careful stewardship of taxpayer-provided resources;
- respect, at all times, the inherent dignity of each individual;
- continue to enhance his or her professional knowledge and skills;
- never use the PSP position for self-promotion or seek additional monetary benefits;
- comply with all requirements of contract(s) and the PSP Handbook;
- comply with the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators (see below and/or online at the [Texas Education Agency Website](#)); and
- notify the campus, district, and TCDSS within 48 hours if charged with criminal conduct or arrested. The PSP may be placed on temporary leave pending conviction if it is determined that the charges interfere with the effectiveness of the PSP's services. The same is true if criminal conduct is reported on the criminal history background check.
- refrain from sub-contracting with individuals not assigned to a campus by the district or TCDSS regardless of whether they are being compensated, or not. This includes any work that would typically be performed by the assigned Professional Service Provider. Any violation of this directive will result in immediate removal of the PSP from the PSP Network.

TEXAS CODE OF ETHICS

PSPs are required to report unethical behavior and noncompliance issues. Procedures for reporting suspected noncompliance with school laws and rules fall under the jurisdiction of the Texas Education Agency.

Please review the [CODE OF ETHICS AND STANDARD PRACTICES FOR TEXAS EDUCATORS RULE §247.2](#) from the TEA website.



CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

PSPs may not accept a contract for a school where they:

- served as principal;
- held any position on the campus within the last 2 years;
- supervised or evaluated the current principal;
- have an immediate family member or close friend currently employed by the district in a supervisory role or is currently serving on the district board; and/or
- are performing other services for the campus (i.e., consulting work, vendor for materials/products, grant writing, mentoring/coaching).

PSPs are not to create an unfair advantage for personal or material gain, or create the appearance of such while serving on a campus. Specifically, PSPs are not to:

- contract for additional hours of service on the campus during the PSP contract. PSPs
- contracting with an Improvement Required (IR) campus may add additional hours at the request of the district;
- seek expanded contractual roles on any assigned campus, including soliciting or accepting a role in any campus grant;
- market or promote personal products, or other PSPs' products, within a district in which they hold a contract;
- market or promote products of an entity that employed the PSP on a full-time or part-time basis in the last two years;
- retain ownership of any product developed for the campus while assigned to the campus as a PSP;
- use influence for additional work with campus or district staff members or board members;
- subcontract with anyone to do the work they have been selected to do on a campus without the written consent of TCDSS;
- use data collected while serving as a PSP for research or publication, without written consent from the district and TCDSS;
- serve as an employee in a district in which they serve as a PSP;
- serve as a full-time employee in any capacity without written consent from TCDSS and TEA.



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DELIVERABLES

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

PSPs are expected to fulfill all professional learning requirements as determined annually by TCDSS and TEA. Currently the required events include the Statewide Partners Institute and any additional required training. In addition, the Advancing Improvement in Education (AIE) Conference is required for all PSPs currently under contract with a campus. If deemed necessary, TCDSS and TEA may require PSPs to attend additional events within a school year. If a PSP has an extenuating circumstance and cannot attend a required event, the PSP must contact TCDSS immediately to determine an acceptable course of action.

OTHER INFORMATION

- If the district allows, PSPs may claim service hours while providing direct support to campus or district staff at a professional learning activity.
- PSP are not allowed to charge an additional fee for preparing and/or conducting a professional development session for staff. This type of service would fall under PSP contract hours and must be submitted as service hours.

PSP DELIVERABLES

Deliverables are defined as required documents and reports with specific timelines, including, but not limited to:

- PSP Progress Report;
- PSP Self-Evaluation (pre and post);
- End-of-Year survey(s).

PSP PROGRESS REPORT

All contracted PSPs are required to complete and submit quarterly PSP Progress Reports to the DCSI and campus principal. PSP Progress Reports are required to be submitted to TEA via ISAM. If the PSP does not have ISAM access, which is determined by the district, for a particular campus, the DCSI or campus principal will submit the progress report for the PSP.

Progress Reports should reflect specific actions conducted by the PSP while on and off the campus and include:

- a detailed description of the services the PSP provided during that quarter;
- Data used by the PSP to determine necessary actions and progress;
- a description of PSP actions to support the implementation of the targeted improvement plan and/or the campus turnaround plan;
- and the number of hours and costs associated with IR contracts.

REQUIRED CAMPUS REPORTING DOCUMENTS

- PSPs are to review and validate any campus reporting documents required by TEA.
- Submission requirements and deadlines can be found on the [TCDSS website](#).



PSP CONTRACTS EXPECTATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

MAXIMUM HOURS FOR TOTAL CONTRACTS

PSPs may not accept contracts for PSP work from TCDSS and/or districts that total more than 700 hours. It is the PSP's responsibility to monitor their assignments to ensure they meet this criterion and are able to successfully carry out all duties and assignments.

CONTRACTING AS A PSP WITH DISTRICTS WITH *IR* CAMPUSES

PSPs serving *Improvement Required (IR)* campuses will negotiate with the district to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that specifies hours, travel reimbursements, allowable/non-allowable expenses, and an hourly rate for service. The commissioner has provided a suggested contract rate of \$75.00 per hour. If the district determines more hours are needed to fulfill the needs of a specific campus, the PSP may contract for additional hours.

CONTRACTING AS A PSP WITH TCDSS FOR PRIORITY CAMPUSES

PSPs contracting with TCDSS are issued a Letter of Agreement (LOA) for a specific number of hours per campus. The LOA is a 12-month contract that starts on September 1 and ends on August 31.

The PSP is:

- required to schedule time on the assigned campus using contract hours for the entire 12-month period of the LOA. The PSP is expected to provide on-site services each month unless there is an agreement with the principal. However, a PSP may not be off the campus for two consecutive months;
- expected to work with the DCSI and principal to develop an appropriate schedule of services;
- expected at a minimum, to remain in contact with the DCSI and principal by email or phone when providing off-site services;
- not allowed to contract for additional hours under the PSP Network. The TCDSS contract is for the entire 12-month period of the LOA. Additional hours will not be added to the LOA. If the district determines that the campus requires more assistance than the PSP can provide with the hours allocated in the LOA the district can create an additional contract with the service provider for specific work to be performed at the campus.
- not to use more than 15% of their total contract hours for off-site, indirect services. TCDSS contracted PSPs may not claim off-site, indirect service hours for travel time, for time completing invoices; and
- expected to use all service hours on the contract to provide technical assistance to the campus. However, if there is a unique circumstance preventing the use of the hours (i.e., the campus is being closed), the PSP must contact a PSP Network representative and/or the assigned Support Specialist to explain the situation.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

As provided under state law, all PSPs working in public schools are subject to criminal history background checks. The contracting organization may obtain any criminal history record information, including fingerprinting, pertaining to the PSP and obtain such information from any law enforcement agency, including a police department, the Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas Department of Corrections or similar out-of-state entities as called for in Senate Bill 9. PSPs are responsible for all expenses related to the criminal history check, including fingerprinting.



THREE CONSECUTIVE YEAR REVIEW

Upon a PSP's third consecutive year on a single campus, a review of the campus' improvement efforts will be conducted. If growth is made on the campus, the PSP may continue to work on that campus, if approved by TCDSS and TEA. If there was no growth or negative progress, the PSP may be removed from the campus.

UNABLE TO FULFILL CONTRACT

If a PSP is unable to fulfill a contract, TCDSS must be contacted immediately regarding the situation. At that time, TCDSS, in collaboration with the campus principal and DCSI will determine the best course of action for the school. Depending on the length of absence, TCDSS may recommend an interim or replacement PSP to the campus.

CONCERNS WITH CONTRACT

If a PSP determines he or she is not a good match for the campus after meeting with the principal, the PSP should contact the assigned Support Specialist for direction and notify a TCDSS representative.

