

Texas Workforce Commission

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Larry E. Temple
Executive Director

July 3, 2014

Mr. Larry E. Temple
Executive Director
Texas Workforce Commission
101 East 15th Street, Room 618
Austin, Texas 78778-0001

Dear Mr. Temple:

House Bill 376, enacted by the 83rd Texas Legislature, Regular Session (2013), added §2308.321 to the Texas Government Code establishing a Texas Rising Star (TRS) workgroup to propose revisions to the TRS program and to submit the recommendations to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC).

On June 12, 2014, the TRS workgroup approved final recommendations to TWC for consideration. The Executive Summary of the TRS workgroup recommendations is included and covers the following enclosed attachments:

- TRS Assessor and Mentor Qualifications (previously transmitted)
- Facility Assessment
- Minimum Licensing Requirements
- TRS Measures
- Scoring Parameters to Determine Star Level
- Providers That Move or Expand
- Long-Term Financing

The complete workgroup recommendations, with attachments, are posted at:
<http://www.twc.state.tx.us/svcs/childcare/texas-rising-star-workgroup.html>.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact me at (512) 936-3563 or reagan.miller@twc.state.tx.us.

Sincerely,



Reagan Miller, Director
Workforce Development Division
Presiding Officer, TRS Workgroup

Enclosures (7)

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Texas Rising Star Workgroup Recommendations Executive Summary

TRS Assessor and Mentor Qualifications (Attachment 1)

As submitted to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) on December 19, 2013, the Texas Rising Star (TRS) workgroup recommends the following minimum education and work experience for TRS assessors and mentors:

- **Minimum Education Requirements:**
 - Bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university in early childhood education, child development, special education, child psychology, educational psychology, elementary education, or family consumer science;
 - Bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university with at least 18 credit hours in early childhood education, child development, special education, child psychology, educational psychology, elementary education, or family consumer science with at least 12 credit hours in child development; or
 - Associate's degree in early childhood education, child development, special education, child psychology, educational psychology, elementary education, or family consumer science with two years of experience as a director in an early childhood program, with preference given to experience with a provider that is accredited or TRS certified.
- **Minimum Work Experience:**
 - One year of full-time early childhood classroom experience in a child care, Early Head Start, Head Start, or prekindergarten through third grade school program

Facility Assessment (Attachment 2)

The TRS workgroup recommends the following:

- 100 percent of provider classrooms *are assessed at the initial assessment and at each scheduled recertification.*
- All certified TRS program facilities are recertified every three years.
- Certified TRS program providers are monitored on an annual basis and the monitoring, at a minimum, consists of:
 - one unannounced on-site visit; and
 - a review of the providers' licensing compliance.

Minimum Licensing Requirements (Attachment 3)

The TRS workgroup recommends the establishment of a maximum number of licensing deficiencies for TRS program providers. The workgroup agreed that a TRS applicant will not be eligible for TRS certification if the facility has:

- any critical deficiency listed in Attachment 3;
- five or more high/medium-high deficiencies listed in Attachment 3; or
- 10 or more total deficiencies.

Critical High-Risk Deficiencies:

- Four-Star and Three-Star level TRS program providers who have any critical high-risk deficiency will be reduced to Two-Star level, and Two-Star providers will lose TRS certification.

Total Number of Deficiencies:

- Certified TRS program providers with five or more high/medium-high deficiencies on their licensing compliance history will lose a star level, with Two-Star providers losing certification.
- Up to six months of corrective action will be initiated for providers who have 10–14 total deficiencies on their licensing compliance history.
- Revocation of certification will occur if a provider receives more than 14 total deficiencies.

TRS Measures (Attachment 4)

The TRS workgroup recommends that the TRS program consist of the following five categories:

1. Director/Staff Qualifications and Training
2. Caregiver-Child Interactions
3. Curriculum
4. Nutrition and Indoor/Outdoor Activities
5. Parent Involvement and Education

The Texas Early Learning Council recommends that the TRS program consist of:

- structural measures at the Two-Star level that can be assessed through provider documentation; and
- process measures at the Three- and Four-Star levels that are documented or observed during on-site facility and classroom assessments and scored on a range of zero to three points.

The TRS workgroup noted that the recommended measures and protocols will require extensive training to ensure that the measures and scoring are understood and consistently applied throughout the 28 local workforce development areas. In addition, the workgroup recommends that TWC consider efforts to educate parents about TRS and quality child care.

Scoring Parameters to Determine Star Level (Attachment 5)

The TRS workgroup recommends that to be certified at the Two-Star level, a provider be required to meet all Two-Star level structural measures. If the provider meets all the structural measures for the Two-Star level, the combined score of the process measures will determine the star level for each category.

To ensure that the provider meets a certain level of quality across all categories, the overall provider star level will be based on the category of the lowest star level achieved. Additionally, the TRS workgroup recommends that a provider not be certified at a Four-Star level if one classroom is scored below the Three-Star level.

Providers That Move or Expand (Attachment 6)

The TRS workgroup also made recommendations related to assessments for certified TRS program providers that move or expand, as follows:

- Facility Moves:
 - The facility will retain its star level during the move.

- A full TRS reassessment will take place within the initial three-month period after moving and the star level will be based on the results of the reassessment.
- Facility Expansions/Splits:
 - Facilities that expand will be treated as new facilities, requiring a permanent license and 12 months of licensing history in order to begin the TRS certification process.

Long-Term Financing (Attachment 7)

After reviewing current quality initiatives and spending, the TRS workgroup recommends the following regarding long-term financing of the TRS program:

- The Texas legislature should maintain current budget levels for the TRS program, but plan for increased funding as the number of TRS providers grows.
- The state should encourage public-private partnerships, local government contributions, and private foundation funds to expand available TRS program funds.
- TWC should examine the feasibility of creating a fee-for-service for TRS mentoring of nonsubsidized providers.

TRS Assessment Reconsiderations

Finally, the TRS workgroup addressed the issue of the potential for a provider to appeal the results of an assessment. Because assessments are based on on-site observations and it is not possible for an appeals officer to rule on those observations, the workgroup recommends that if a provider disagrees with an assessment, the disagreement should not go through the appeals process in Chapter 823, TWC's Integrated Complaints, Hearings, and Appeals rules.

Instead, the TRS workgroup recommends that the process for reconsideration of a facility assessment be handled at the Local Workforce Development Board (Board) level. Boards may:

- assign a different assessor to conduct the reassessment; or
- request another Board's assessor to conduct the reassessment.