

5004 - Early-Career Teacher Recruitment Incentives Policy (Federal Funds)

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish criteria for the use of federal funds to provide one-time recruitment incentives for early-career teachers in order to address staffing challenges in Title I schools and hard-to-staff instructional areas, in compliance with Florida Department of Education (FDOE) requirements.

Definitions

Early-Career Teacher:

An instructional employee with less than one (1) year of full-time K–12 teaching experience, including:

- Newly graduated teachers entering the profession; and
- Second-career professionals transitioning from non-education fields into teaching.

Policy Statement

The Board authorizes the use of federal funds, where allowable, to provide one-time recruitment (sign-on) incentives to early-career teachers who are hired into:

- Documented hard-to-staff certification areas; and/or
- Title I schools serving high percentages of students from low-income households.

Because three-year aggregate state value-added model (VAM) data are not available for early-career teachers, recruitment incentives provided under this policy:

- Shall not be performance-based;
- Shall not be renewable;
- Shall not be considered retention or reward incentives.

Transition to Performance-Based Incentives

Early-career teachers shall be incorporated into the LEA's approved student growth model beginning in their second year of instruction. Retention or reward incentives funded with federal funds may only be provided once sufficient multi-year student growth data are available and meet FDOE requirements.

Incentive Structure by Teacher Category

A. Early-Career Teachers (No VAM Data Available)

- **Eligible Teachers:**
 - Newly graduated teachers
 - Second-career teachers entering the profession

- Less than one year of instructional experience
- **Allowable Incentive Type:**
 - One-time recruitment (sign-on) incentive only
- **Conditions:**
 - Assigned to an Odyssey Title I school and/or a documented hard-to-staff position
 - Incentives are not performance-based, not renewable, and not retention or reward incentives
- **Compliance Rationale:**
 - Three-year aggregate VAM data are unavailable; therefore, incentives are limited to recruitment and approved on a case-by-case basis

B. Transferring Teachers with Existing Florida VAM Data

- **Eligible Teachers:**
 - Instructional personnel with qualifying three-year aggregate Florida state VAM scores
 - Transferring to an Odyssey Charter School, Inc. Title I school
- **Allowable Incentive Type:**
 - Recruitment, retention, or reward incentives based on VAM performance
- **Conditions:**
 - Incentives are earned, not automatic
 - Transfer alone does not create eligibility
 - Incentives are tied directly to documented student growth outcomes
- **Compliance Rationale:**
 - Fully aligns with FDOE requirements that incentives be based on three-year aggregate state VAM data when available

Prohibited Uses

Federal funds shall not be used under this policy for:

- Retention or reward incentives without qualifying student growth data;
- Incentives based on evaluations, observations, or attendance;
- Incentives for non-instructional personnel.

Oversight

All recruitment incentives must be approved on a case-by-case basis, documented, and aligned to the appropriate federal funding source.

Compliance Statement

This policy complies with:

- Florida Department of Education guidance on recruitment, retention, and reward incentives
- Title I, Part A and Title II, Part A statutory purposes
- Federal cost principles under 2 CFR Part 200