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**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Directors of Schools

FROM: Nakia Towns, assistant commissioner for data and research

RE: Guidelines for Teachers who Claim Students for Teacher Effect Calculations

DATE: April 14, 2015

The information in this memo was communicated last year and is still applicable.

This spring, shortly after the conclusion of state testing, teachers will claim students taught during the school year, and their claiming rosters, once approved at the school and district levels, will be used to calculate teacher effect scores. As you know, teacher effect scores are used for a number of diagnostic and evaluative purposes including teacher evaluations. The claiming process plays a crucial role in ensuring that we have accurate data for calculating teacher effect scores.

The two most important points to consider in the claiming process are that, in the overwhelming majority of cases:

- All students should be claimed for 100 percent of their instructional time, and
- All teachers should personally verify their claiming roster.

For each student, a teacher is required to claim two categories of information – *instructional time and instructional availability*. As a measure to protect teachers' effect scores from extreme situations, the claiming information will be aggregated and will exclude any student test score outliers based on the student's testing history (for example, if a student chooses answer choice "A" on every single test question this student's test score will likely be excluded from the teacher's effect score). Districts will be responsible for any grievances that are filed by teachers based on the process of claiming and should establish those processes based on local decisions.

The purpose of this memorandum is to define the parameters within which teachers must claim students for teacher effect calculations and to address common circumstances that can impact claiming decisions. While there are general state expectations for the claiming process, districts have broad discretion to make specific decisions based on local policies. The last section of this memo outlines the types of questions that could help a district arrive at a local decision across several of the most common claiming situations.

## **Instructional Time**

Instructional time is defined as the percentage of time a teacher spent as the primary classroom instructor for each student. For example, if a teacher is solely responsible for a student's classroom instruction for the duration of the instructional period, the teacher claims 100 percent instructional time. If the teacher splits that responsibility *equally* with another teacher, each would claim 50 percent. If a teacher is absent from teaching for a period of time, the appropriate percentage of instructional time must be determined *per local policy*.

## **Instructional Availability**

Instructional availability is determined by the number of days a student is available for instruction, *as defined by local policy*, during the *entire* instructional period. The instructional period for the student may be determined using both enrollment and attendance. Instructional availability is reported on TCAP Achievement (3-8) and End of Course answer documents as follows:

Traditional Schedule (approximately 180 days):

Full – F (150 days or more)

Partial – P (75-149 days)

Excluded – (74 days or fewer)

Modified Schedule (approximately 90 days):

Full – F (75 days or more)

Partial – P (38-74 days)

Excluded – (37 days or fewer)

*According to TCA 49-1-606 (a), only students claimed as F count towards a teacher's teacher effect calculation. In isolated situations, teachers will be required to calculate students' anticipated availability from the date of claiming through the end of the instructional period based upon student availability prior to claiming.*

*For example:*

A teacher claims their students in the EdTools application with 10 days remaining on their district's instructional calendar. On the day they claim, one of their students has been available for instruction 145 days. The teacher must determine whether the student will reach the 150 day threshold. Districts should issue guidance to teachers and principals on how to address these types of situations.

*Full time equivalent* students are established based on the percentage of instructional time a teacher claims for that student. For TCAP Achievement (3-8), if a teacher has a minimum of *six full time equivalent* students claimed for a particular subject and grade, he/she will receive a teacher effect score. For End of Course, if a teacher has a minimum of *six full time equivalent* students claimed for a particular subject, *and* a minimum of *ten overall* students with *at least three prior test scores* claimed for that subject, he/she will receive a teacher effect score.

*For example:*

1. A 4<sup>th</sup> grade Mathematics teacher claims 30 students. Five students are claimed as P instructional availability – those students will not be included in the teacher’s teacher effect calculation. The other 20 students are claimed at F instructional availability and 25 percent instructional time - the teacher will only have *five* (20 x .25) *full time equivalent* students. Thus, because TCAP Achievement (3-8) teachers must have *six full time equivalent students*, the teacher will not receive a teacher effect score.

2. A Biology I teacher claims nine students. All nine students are claimed as F instructional availability and 100% instructional time and have *at least three prior test scores*. Thus because End of Course teachers must have *six full time equivalent students and 10 overall students with at least three prior test scores*, the teacher will not receive a teacher effect score.

### **Additional Claiming Decision Points**

Some circumstances are not necessarily covered by these general parameters. This section outlines some of these additional decision points, as well as guiding questions that could help districts arrive at local decisions.

#### ***Special education students***

We strongly encourage both testing coordinators and special education supervisors to proactively discuss student claiming decisions with each other, with school leaders, and with school-level testing coordinators prior to the beginning of the claiming process. Students’ IEPs should drive claiming decisions, although some specific circumstances might still necessitate additional local decision-making. Here are a few questions that could inform local decisions:

- How many hours of instruction does the student receive from a special education teacher in accordance with their IEP in a particular subject?
- How many hours of instruction does the student receive in each subject in the general education classroom?
- What proportion of the total instructional time does the student receive from a special education teacher? What proportion do they receive from the general education teacher?
- Does the student receive any additional instruction in a co-teaching or inclusion environment?

#### ***Inclusion settings***

For students in inclusion settings, specific claiming policy is a local decision. Here are a few questions that could inform local decisions:

- Is delivery of instruction clearly split between multiple educators?
- Is a student receiving instruction within the inclusion setting from someone other than the general education teacher?
- Which services are outlined in the IEP?

### ***IEP case managers***

Staff who manage portfolios of students but do not deliver instruction should not claim students. In some cases, where this is not clear, claiming is a local decision. Here are a few questions that could inform local decisions:

- Is the teacher delivering instruction or services to students?
- Is the teacher a certified educator?
- In which subjects is the teacher delivering instruction?
- Is this teacher delivering instruction within core instruction time or during pull-out or

### ***Co-teaching environments***

Claiming for teachers in co-teaching environments is a local decision. Here are a few questions that could inform local decisions:

- Are both teachers providing instruction to all students or only a subset of students in the class?
- If one of the teachers is a special education teacher, did he or she also provide instruction to general education students in the class?
- If both teachers are claiming a percentage of a student's instructional time, what percentage of time did each teacher provide instruction to the student?

### ***Science and social studies***

Claiming for teachers in the science and social studies content areas is a local decision. Students are required to receive science and social studies instruction and should be claimed by the teacher delivering the instruction. When it is unclear who is delivering instruction in science and social studies, claiming is a local decision. Here are a couple of questions that could inform local decisions:

- Is science and social studies curriculum embedded in other subject areas such as math and literacy?
- Who is providing instruction that will lead to student learning in science and social studies?

### ***RTI<sup>2</sup>***

Incorporating RTI<sup>2</sup> into claiming is a local decision. Here are a few questions that could inform local decisions:

- Have students spent a sufficient amount of instructional time in Tier II and Tier III interventions to make claiming that time appropriate?
- Who was delivering instruction outside of Tier I instruction?
- Which subject areas were being supported during intervention time?

### ***English Learners***

Claiming English Learners is a local decision. Here are a few questions that could inform local decisions:

- Are multiple teachers delivering instruction in the same subject area?
- How many hours of instruction in each subject area did a student receive?
- How were those hours of instruction divided among different teachers?

### ***Alternative schools***

Claiming policies related to alternative school teachers are a local decision. Here are a few questions that could inform local decisions:

- How much time did a student spend in an alternative school?
- What is the minimum amount of time spent in an alternative school before it is appropriate for an alternative school teacher to claim a student?
- Are students who spend time in alternative schools maintaining continuous enrollment at their home schools?
- Is there a process in place that enables educators in alternative schools to claim students from multiple feeder schools?

### ***Extended leave***

Sometimes teachers take extended leave during the school year and another teacher spends a portion of the year delivering instruction. In these cases claiming decisions must be made locally. Here are a few questions that could inform local decisions:

- How much instructional time did the teacher on leave spend with the students?
- Was the substitute teacher a certified educator who will maintain employment within the district? Or was the substitute teacher uncertified or not maintaining employment within the district?
- Is it appropriate in limited situations for a student to be claimed, but not claimed 100 percent?

### ***Online educators***

Claiming policies related to online classes are a local decision. In some cases, when the online instructor is not a licensed Tennessee educator employed by a district, claiming is not possible. Other cases may require additional decision-making. Here are a few questions that could inform local decisions:

- Is the online educator a licensed Tennessee educator?
- Is the online course part of a locally run virtual school?
- Is the educator facilitating an online course but not providing direct instruction?

If you have any questions, please complete a Contact support ticket in EdTools or you may contact [TNed.assessment@tn.gov](mailto:TNed.assessment@tn.gov).