



EPIC Teacher and School Leader (TSL) Grant

US Department of Education

Federal Grant Purpose: TSL is designed to improve student learning as districts implement systemic change by (1) Improving or expanding comprehensive performance-based compensation systems (PBCS) and human capital management systems (HCMS) for teachers, principals, and other school leaders at high-need schools who raise academic achievement and close achievement gaps; and (2) Studying the effectiveness, fairness, quality, consistency, and reliability of PBCSs and HCMSs.

13 Target High-Priority Schools
Elementary: Benton Heights, East, Marshville, Rock Rest, Rocky River, Sardis, Union, Walter Bickett, and Wingate; **Middle:** East Union and Monroe; **High:** Monroe and Forest Hills

Eligibility Requirements

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To be eligible to participate in the EPIC Award Program, Union County Public Schools employees must meet all of the following general eligibility requirements:

1. Employees must work in an eligible position. Eligibility is determined by the employee's position title in HRMS
 - Teachers must directly instruct students at least 50% of the instructional day.
 - Principals and Assistant Principals must directly supervise teachers in an EPIC school.
 - Per the U.S. Department of Education, licensed support personnel are not eligible for performance-based compensation through the EPIC Grant (Interventionists, Media Specialists, Counselors, Psychologists, Social Workers, Lead Teachers, Instructional Coaches, etc.)
2. Employees must be supervised and evaluated by the principal or other designated evaluator at the school where the employee is serving students. Employees not supervised or evaluated by the principal or school evaluator are not eligible, even if 100% of their time is spent working at the school (e.g., Child Nutrition employees, maintenance, custodians, etc.).
3. Employees must have a job position assigned to an EPIC school (Benton Heights Elementary, East Elementary, East Union Middle, Forest Hills High, Marshville Elementary, Monroe High, Monroe Middle, Rock Rest Elementary, Rocky River Elementary, Sardis Elementary, Union Elementary, Walter Bickett Elementary, and Wingate Elementary).

4. Employees must be continuously employed in an eligible position in an EPIC school through the last student day on the school calendar. An exception to this are involuntary mid-year administrative transfers. Awards for employees subject to involuntary administrative transfer will be prorated based on the number of instructional days the employee was assigned to an EPIC-eligible school.
5. Employees must work at least 50% of the school time (equivalent to 2.5 days per week) at the same EPIC school to be eligible. If an employee is assigned to multiple campuses, the employee must be assigned to an EPIC campus at least 50% of the time to be eligible.
6. Hourly employees in any capacity are not eligible to participate in the EPIC Award Program.
7. Substitute employees are not eligible to participate in the EPIC Award Program.
8. Employees who take a leave of absence during the eligibility period (e.g., temporary disability, developmental leave, but not family medical leave) are not eligible.
9. Employees cannot miss more than 10 instructional days during the instructional school year. That number of days will be prorated for any employee with a start date after the first required teacher workday of the school year. All student days, including early release days, days designated for remote instruction, and required teacher workdays are treated as instructional days. The following types of leave will be held harmless and not count as days absent:
 - Religious holidays
 - Professional Leave
 - Military leave
 - Approved FMLA/Medical Leave of Absence
 - Approved COVID Leave
 - Workers' compensation
 - Authorized off-campus duty
 - Jury duty
 - Days the district closes

Note: Approved FMLA/Medical Leave of Absence, military leave, and workers' compensation must be authorized through Human Resources. COVID-related leave must be documented at the UCPS Covid Line.

10. Employees must have a summative in the North Carolina Educator Effectiveness System for the school year to be eligible.
11. Teachers who received a final summative rating of "Not Demonstrated" or "Developing" on Standard IV of the North Carolina Educator Effectiveness System for the school year are not eligible.
12. Employees who were on a Directed Growth Plan for the school year are not eligible.
13. Employees must be in good standing at the time of payout. Therefore, an employee under investigation by the Human Resources Department or reassigned pending the outcome of a district investigation is not eligible for an EPIC award. Such an employee would remain ineligible for an EPIC award unless documentation was placed in the employee's personnel file

at the conclusion of the investigation which confirmed no policy violations by the employee, resulting in the employee being reinstated in good standing.

14. Employees who retire in lieu of termination or non-renewal, or who resign in lieu of termination or non-renewal as documented by the Human Resources Department, are not eligible.
15. If an employee meets all of the eligibility requirements for an award and then resigns or retires from the district prior to the payout of the awards, the employee is still eligible for the award. It is incumbent upon the employee to provide the district with correct forwarding information so that the award payout can be processed.
16. For an employee who transfers or is reassigned from one EPIC award-eligible position to another EPIC award-eligible position during the eligibility period, the award will be determined on the basis of the EPIC award-eligible position the employee held the greatest percentage of the school year (based on the 180- day academic calendar). For example: On September 6, an employee teaches social studies. On February 6, the employee transfers to a PE position on the same campus. Both assignments are EPIC award-eligible. However, the award model differs. In this case, the greatest percentage of the “school year” was spent as a social studies teacher, core foundation teacher. Therefore, the award amount would be determined on the basis of the job, a social studies teacher, core foundation teacher.
17. For an employee who transfers from an EPIC award-eligible position to a non-eligible position during the eligibility period, he/she will not be eligible for an award.
18. The EPIC award for employees who function in multiple award groups (above) will be determined based on the job in which they function for the majority of their work day.
19. Employees must have credentials for the position in which they function to be eligible under that category. For example: A teacher teaching eighth-grade math must be certified or on lateral entry contract to teach eighth-grade math in order to be eligible as a core foundation teacher.
20. For an employee who has multiple End-of-Grade or End-of-Course subject and/or grade assessments in one year, the employee’s “Student Growth Measure” will be used for award payout. For example: A teacher teaching fifth-grade science, math, and Reading would not receive individual awards for each assessment area. The teacher will receive one award based on the “Student Growth Measure” report which includes all three tested areas.

The EPIC Award Program incentives will be calculated using this model. Certain situations, however, require the adoption of the following award calculation rules in order to apply the award model appropriately.

1. Employees who work less than full time must work at least 50% of the school time (equivalent to 2.5 days per week) at the same EPIC school to be eligible to receive a prorated EPIC award. The prorated EPIC award will be based on the full-time average daily membership (ADM) of their eligible position, the portion of time spent in the eligible position, and the EPIC award level. For example: A half-time employee (or 0.5 ADM) who spends all of his or her time at a single EPIC school would be eligible to receive 50% of the award. This same employee who

works 50% of his/her time at two EPIC campuses (0.25 ADM at each campus) would not be eligible.

2. Awards for employees whose job record/position is assigned to an EPIC school for time reporting who are assigned to and work on multiple campuses a minimum of 50% of the time and report directly to the principal (principal is responsible for supervising and evaluating the individual employee) will be calculated and prorated on the basis of the percentage of campus assignments. For example: An EPIC school-assigned, school-based employee works 50% of his or her time at campus A, 25% at campus B, and 25% at campus C. If the employee is eligible for an EPIC award based on school data, then the employee would receive 50% of the eligible payout at campus A and would not receive an award for campus B or C.

Position Eligibility Requirements and Award Groups

Different positions within UCPS qualify for various aspects of the EPIC Award Program. Following are definitions for position groups and eligibility requirements that will be used to group employees for award purposes. Note: Only teacher and school leader positions, as listed below, are eligible for the EPIC Award Program.

Instructional Position Groups

Employees must be certified teaching staff and will fall into either core or elective instructional positions as defined below:

- **Tier 1 (Core Teachers)**: Employees must be assigned to a campus, plan lessons, provide direct instruction to students, and be responsible for providing content grades—not conduct or participation grades—to core foundation courses for the majority of the day/school year. Tier 1 Core Teachers teach one or more of the following grades/courses for the majority of the school day:
 - Pre-K-5
 - Math
 - English
 - Science
 - Social Studies
 - EC
 - ESL
- **Tier 2 (Elective Teachers)**: To be considered an elective teacher, teachers must teach elective classes (i.e., art, music, physical education, etc.) for the majority of the school day/year.

School Leadership Groups: The EPIC Award Program recognizes campus leaders for their contribution to student progress and achievement based on campus performance. Certification for these positions is required in order to be considered for these categories. Interim principals or assistant principals

who meet the other eligibility requirements are eligible. The following describe the award group eligibility criteria for leadership positions:

- **Principals:** To be considered in this group, employees must meet all general eligibility requirements and be the “principal of record” according to HR for an EPIC school.
- **Assistant Principals:** To be considered in this category, employees must meet all eligibility requirements and be coded as an assistant principal according to HR.