Principal and Campus-Based Support Team Members
Prior to beginning the Campus Set-Up Period on April 20, it is important to note the following special cases that may be present among your staff members during the Linkage and Verification process:

TELPAS, Reading, and Language Arts Linkage
New for the 2014–2015 linkage period, a content area entitled “TELPAS” is available on the ASPIRE portal to which teachers may link students. This new content area was created to account for those teachers responsible for teaching language acquisition and responsible for the student gains on the TELPAS reading exam. These teachers can be the same as the teacher responsible for Reading instruction and Reading STAAR student gains, or as Language Arts instruction and Language Arts Iowa/Logramos student gains; however, many times the teacher responsible for TELPAS student gains is different from the teacher responsible for STAAR, Iowa, or Logramos student gains. The following guidelines will apply for teachers of students enrolled in a course which is designated as being responsible for TELPAS student gains:

If the students are enrolled in a course which has been identified as “TELPAS” only:
Teachers should link those students in this course for the appropriate percentage of instruction they are providing for language acquisition. Linking students in a course identified as “TELPAS” only will not cause alerts and will not conflict with linkages in another subject (for example, Reading). Linking students in multiple TELPAS-only rosters will cause overclaimed student alerts for the content area of TELPAS. Student-teacher linkages will be used to calculate TELPAS Comparative Growth teacher reports only.

If the students are enrolled in a course which has been identified as “Reading + TELPAS”:
Teachers should link those students in this course for the appropriate percentage of instruction they are providing for both Reading and language acquisition. Linking students in a course identified as “Reading + TELPAS” allows a teacher to link students in one roster for two content areas. If multiple teachers are responsible for the instruction of Reading or language acquisition, teachers should link appropriately so as to ensure students are not linked for more than 100% of instruction. Student-teacher linkages will be used to calculate Reading EVAAS teacher reports, Reading Comparative Growth teacher reports, and TELPAS Comparative Growth teacher reports.

Linking students in “Reading + TELPAS” and in “TELPAS” can cause students to be claimed at more than 100% for the “TELPAS” content area. While this will not trigger an alert within the linkage system, this will need to be addressed to ensure that students are not overclaimed in the “TELPAS” content area. If students are overclaimed in the Reading content area, the linkage system will trigger an alert for Reading.

Please review carefully.
If the students are enrolled in a course which has been identified as “Language Arts + TELPAS:” Teachers should link those students in this course for the appropriate percentage of instruction they are providing for both Language Arts and language acquisition. Linking students in a course identified as “Language Arts + TELPAS” allows a teacher to link students in one roster for two content areas. If multiple teachers are responsible for the instruction of Language Arts or language acquisition, teachers should link appropriately so as to ensure students are not linked for more than 100% of instruction. **Student-teacher linkages will be used to calculate Language Arts EVAAS teacher reports and TELPAS Comparative Growth teacher reports.**

Linking students in “Language Arts + TELPAS” and in “TELPAS” can cause students to be claimed at more than 100% for the “TELPAS” content area. While this will not trigger an alert within the linkage system, this will need to be addressed to ensure that students are not overclaimed in the “TELPAS” content area. If students are overclaimed in the Language Arts content area, the linkage system will trigger an alert for Language Arts.

Please review carefully.

If the students are enrolled in a course which has been identified as “Reading + TELPAS” or “Language Arts + TELPAS” and the teacher is not responsible for TELPAS student gains: Principals and/or support team members should change the course designation to “Reading” or “Language Arts” only. The class can then be copied to the teacher responsible for TELPAS student gains, and the course designation can be changed to “TELPAS” only.

If students are enrolled in a course which has been identified as “Reading + TELPAS” or “Language Arts + TELPAS” but no teacher is responsible for TELPAS student gains: Principals and/or support team members should change the course designation to “Reading” or “Language Arts” only. No teacher should have a “TELPAS” roster.

If students are enrolled in a course which has been identified as “Reading” or “Language Arts,” but they are also responsible for TELPAS student gains: Principals and/or support team members may either change the course designation to the appropriate “+ TELPAS” type, or may add a separate “TELPAS” roster.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact the ASPIRE team either through email (aspireaward@houstonisd.org) or by visiting an optional workgroup to receive face-to-face assistance.

**Reading, Language, and ELA Teachers of Students in Grades 7 and 8**

*Please note these guidelines have not changed.* For the 2014–2015 Linkage and Verification process and ASPIRE Award Program, the following guidelines will apply for Reading and English Language Arts (Language Arts) teachers of students in grades 7 and 8:

1. If the students at your campus are enrolled in Language Arts only, then teachers should link those students for Reading AND Language Arts—each at 100% of instructional time.
   - Teachers’ EVAAS® analyses will be based on Reading STAAR for Reading and Iowa/Logramos Language for Language Arts.
• Teachers' Comparative Growth analyses for Reading will be based on Reading Iowa/Logramos.
• Teachers' EVAAS® Composite Cumulative Gain Index (CGI) will include their Language Arts and Reading gain indices.
• The ASPIRE award is calculated using the Composite CGI. Principals or support teams should ensure that these teachers have Reading and Language Arts courses with which to link.

**Scenario 1:** A teacher teaches Language Arts and Reading TEKS through one ELA course. There is not a separate Reading course.

In this example, the Language Arts course is pre-loaded from Chancery, and the Reading course is set up by the support team. The teacher “links” students for both the Reading and Language Arts course.
2. If the students at your campus are enrolled in Language Arts and are receiving additional reading instruction (in the form of a course), then the teacher providing the reading instruction will claim the students for Reading.

The teacher providing Language Arts instruction will claim the students for Language Arts.
- The Reading EVAAS® score will be based on Reading STAAR
- The Language Arts EVAAS® score will be based on Iowa/Logramos Language.
- The Reading Comparative Growth score will be based on Reading Iowa/Logramos.
- The composite EVAAS® score will be based on the subject or subjects for which the teacher had students linked.

Scenario 2A (see diagram on right): A teacher teaches both Language Arts and Reading TEKS through two different courses.

In this example, both the Reading and the Language Arts classes are pre-loaded from Chancery. The teacher “links” students for both of the classes.

Scenario 2B (see diagram on left): Two different teachers teach students in two separate courses. There is one teacher for Language Arts (English) and a second teacher for Reading.

In this example, Teacher 1’s Reading class is pre-loaded from Chancery, and Teacher 1 links students for the Reading class only. Teacher 2’s Language Arts (English) class is pre-loaded from Chancery, and Teacher 2 “links” students for the Language Arts class only.
Elementary School Librarians
For the purposes of the ASPIRE Award Program, “librarians” are considered as Group 5: Instructional Support Staff. All librarians are automatically defaulted to Group 5. However, we recognize that some elementary school librarians are on an ancillary rotation, and should be considered as Group 4: Elective/Ancillary Teacher.

If an elementary school librarian was overridden to Group 4 in the 2013–2014 school year, and has the same job title and is at the same school as he/she was in the 2013–2014 school year, then an override has been processed to place the librarian in Group 4 for the 2014–2015 school year. No further action is necessary on the part of the principal or support team members unless the librarian is no longer on an ancillary rotation. If the librarian is no longer on an ancillary rotation, an override must be submitted by the principal or a support team member.

If an override has not been processed for an elementary school librarian, and he/she should be considered as an ancillary teacher, an override request must be submitted by the principal or a support team member.

To consider a librarian as an ancillary teacher, the principal should be prepared to show documentation (i.e., an ancillary schedule, lesson plans, etc.) in the event the district is audited—even if the override was processed from last year’s data.

Tutors
After-school tutors, STAAR tutors, hourly tutors, Apollo Fellows, or other types of instructors who are not responsible for the school day instruction of a core foundation subject should not be linked to the students they tutor. Student linkages should be completed only for those teachers who are assigned to teaching students the courses designated as “core foundation ASPIRE courses,” and for those teachers identified as the “teacher of record.”

HISD recognizes the value tutors can and do have on a campus. However, the purpose of the linkage process is to link the appropriate students to the appropriate core foundation teachers of record responsible for the instruction of courses that have been identified as core foundation. Please see the ASPIRE core course list here.

The current ASPIRE Award Program does not consider tutors as core foundation teachers. These employees should be verified based on the position in which they spend the majority of the day.

Hourly Teachers
Hourly teachers and long-term substitutes should not be linked to students. While HISD recognizes the value hourly/part-time teachers have on campus, the purpose of the linkage and verification process is to link the appropriate students to the appropriate core foundation teachers of record. Please note that hourly teachers and long-term substitutes will not be eligible for an ASPIRE award as they do not meet general eligibility requirements. In addition, they are not the “teacher of record.” As such, they cannot be considered as core foundation teachers.
**Percentage of Time**

It is extremely important to note that the percentage of instruction that a teacher reports for a student does not indicate the percentage of the award the teacher will receive. Whether a teacher links the students at 100% of instruction or at 20% of instruction, the potential award amount is equivalent. The percentage of instruction a teacher is assigned to a student is used to weigh the effect that a student has on the teacher’s EVAAS® analysis. Therefore, a student’s score that is linked at 20% of instruction will not be weighted as heavily toward an EVAAS® score as a student’s score that is linked at 100% of instruction.

**Elementary School Lab Teachers**

Elementary school lab teachers of core foundation courses can and should be linked to students if all of the following conditions apply.

**If the lab teacher:**

1. Is responsible for at least 20% of the curriculum instruction (e.g., one class period a week);
2. Provides content grades (e.g., a percentage score to be used in the overall letter grade; not a conduct grade such as a E/S/P/U) for the course to the homeroom teacher and/or on the report card; and
3. Plans and conducts lessons with students.

If all of these conditions apply, then the lab teacher should link all students for which he/she is responsible—at the appropriate percentage. A lab teacher with student linkages will be considered as a core foundation teacher (Group 1). A lab teacher with no student linkages will be considered as Group 4: Elective/Ancillary teacher.

Please consider your lab teacher(s) carefully. Do they contribute to the instruction and grading of students in a core course, or is their instruction and grading more appropriately categorized as ancillary? If the lab teacher links students for 20% of instruction, then the other teacher linking the students should link those students at 80% of instruction. A student can never be claimed at more than 100% instruction for a subject from all teachers claiming that student.

*Please note: Tutors are not to be considered as lab teachers!*

**Special Education Core Foundation Teachers**

It is critical that Special Education core foundation teachers in grades 1–12 link the students for whom they are responsible for teaching “ASPIRE core foundation courses.” Special Education core foundation courses have been expanded to include a wide variety of core courses. Please see the ASPIRE core course list [here](#).

- A Special Education core foundation teacher who has linked students will be placed in Group 3 if he/she teaches core foundation subjects to Special Education students in grades 3–12 where an EVAAS® report cannot be generated.
- A Special Education core foundation teacher who has linked students will be placed in Group 2 if he/she teaches core foundation subjects to Special Education students in grades 1–2. S/he will also be placed in Group 2 if s/he teaches students in grades PK-K and does not complete linkages (no linkages are required for PK and K).
- A Special Education core foundation teacher who has linked students will be placed in Group 1 if he/she teaches core foundation subjects to Special Education students in grades 3–12 where an EVAAS® report has been generated.
• A Special Education teacher of students in grades 1–12 who has not linked students will be placed in Group 4 or Group 5. Regardless of the reason, if a Special Education teacher does not link students, the Special Education teacher cannot be considered as a core foundation teacher (award Group 1, 2 or 3).

Student linkage to the appropriate core courses is imperative in determining appropriate award grouping.

*Please see the section entitled “co-teachers” for special education core foundation teachers who participate in shared teaching.*

**Co-Teachers**

Co-teachers (certified Special Education teachers teaching in an inclusion setting) and Special Education inclusion teachers, or teachers who function as co-teachers but do not have the job title of “co-teacher,” include teachers who work with regular education teachers to teach *the same students for the same content area.*

In these cases, the teachers who “share students” for the same content area should both link *all students for whom they are responsible* at the appropriate percentages. For examples, please see the section entitled “Team/Collaborating Teachers.”

**Team/Collaborating Teachers**

Team teachers, collaborating teachers, or other shared teaching arrangements include teachers who work together to teach *the same students for the same content area.* In these cases, the teachers who “share students” for the same content area should both link *all students for whom they are responsible* at the appropriate percentages.

For example, if two teachers are teaching *the same students* in math, and each is responsible for half of the teaching, then both teachers should link *the same students* at 50% of instruction each. This equates to 100% of instruction for each student, with half of the instruction being “credited” to Teacher A and half of the instruction being “credited” to Teacher B.

It is important to note that if two teachers verify *exactly the same students at exactly the same percentage time,* then they will receive *exactly the same teacher report.* However, if two teachers verify *similar students* at a *similar* percentage of time, then they will not receive the same report.

For this reason, teachers who *share students* should collaborate to complete their student linkage and verification for the best results.
Questions

About Linkage and Verification
General support for all staff members is available on the ASPIRE portal. Log into the "My Resources" tab, click on "Link," and access supporting materials in the "Resources" box, including:

- Principal Checklist
- Award Program Eligibility
- Leader Award Diagram
- Staff Award Diagram
- L&V Principal Information
- Core Course Listing
- Principal User Guide
- Staff User Guide

If you have questions, contact the ASPIRE Support Team at (866) 543-7555 M–F from 7 a.m.–5 p.m. CST.

About the 2014–2015 ASPIRE Award Program
Staff members are encouraged to review the 2014–2015 award program materials on the ASPIRE portal here. If you have questions regarding the ASPIRE Award Program, please contact ASPIREAward@houstonisd.org.

Thank you for your efforts in completing this important process!