
Note: This document aligns with the appraisal practices recommended by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS)¹, as described at the TEA site.

TEA's *Guidance on Student Growth in T-TESS*² will help you make determinations about student growth in teacher appraisals.

Teacher Appraisal System

T-TESS is a process that seeks to develop habits of continuous improvement with evidence-based feedback and professional development decisions based on that feedback through ongoing dialogue and collaboration.

T-TESS is composed of two components: the domains and dimensions of the T-TESS rubric and the performance of a teacher's students as measured by a student growth measure determined by the District.

Components of the appraisal process, such as classroom observations and walk-throughs, will be conducted as frequently as necessary to ensure that teachers receive appropriate guidance.

Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting

The teacher self-assessment, goal-setting, and professional development processes are all interwoven and applied throughout the school year to positively impact each teacher's professional practices and ultimately increase student performance and academic growth.

Each teacher will review data and reflect on his or her professional practice, including reviewing the domains, dimensions, and descriptors of the T-TESS rubric.

A teacher who is new to the District or who is in the first year of the appraisal process will receive an orientation and will be guided through the self-assessment and goal-setting process to establish a professional development plan. Within six weeks of completing the orientation, a teacher who is new to the District or who is in the first year of the appraisal process will formulate targeted goals on the Teacher Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting Form, and the appraiser will schedule an in-person, goal-setting conference with the teacher. After the conference, the teacher will submit his or her approved Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan to the appraiser.

A returning teacher will review the goal(s) and professional development plan established at the end-of-year conference to determine whether changes are needed. The teacher will submit to the appraiser his or her approved Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan within the first six weeks of the school year.

Implementation of Goals Each teacher will regularly monitor progress toward his or her goals. If the teacher feels the goals need to be modified, the teacher should make an appointment with his or her appraiser to discuss individual progress toward his or her goals and/or obtain additional supports.

Pre-Conference

The purpose of a pre-conference is for the appraiser and teacher to mutually discuss the upcoming formative observation with a focus on the interrelationships between planning, instruction, the learning environment, and student outcomes. For a teacher in the first year of appraisal under T-TESS, teachers new to the district, or teachers changing from the LEADS appraisal instrument to T-TESS, the Observation Pre-Conference may be held in conjunction with the Goal Setting and Professional Development (GSPD) conference, but prior to the formal appraisal. For those continuing on T-TESS, an Observation Pre-Conference must be conducted prior to the formal observation.

The pre-conference will provide the teacher an opportunity to demonstrate his or her knowledge and skills for the planning domain and its correlating dimensions. The conference is primarily focused on the upcoming observation and what the teacher has planned to ensure that the instructional objective(s) are met.

Formal Observation

The teacher will be formally observed in the classroom one time, unless the appraiser deems additional observations to be necessary. A classroom observation will be an instructional period or a complete lesson within an instructional period that consists of a minimum of 45 minutes of instruction.

By mutual, written consent between the appraiser and the teacher, the required minimum of 45 minutes of observation may be conducted in shorter time segments. The time segments must aggregate to at least 45 minutes.

Each teacher may have additional observations or walk-throughs that provide actionable, timely feedback, which will allow the teacher to make efficient and contextual professional development choices to help refine practice. If data gathered during the additional observation or walk-through will impact the teacher's summative appraisal rating, a written summary will be shared with the teacher within ten working days after the completion of the additional observation or walk-through.

Notice

The formal observation for a teacher's appraisal will be either announced by date and time or unannounced.

The District will establish an appraisal calendar each year, and provide the calendar to teachers within the first three weeks of the first day of instruction.

Post-Conference The formal observation will include an in-person post-conference within ten working days of the observation. If the teacher has additional observations or walk-throughs that will impact the appraisal rating, a written summary will be shared with the teacher within ten working days after the completion of the additional observation or walk-through.

The overall purpose of the post-conference is to provide a teacher an opportunity to self-reflect on the execution of his or her lesson, including the impact on student performance. The results will be used to inform and guide the teacher regarding future practices and growth.

End-of-Year Conference The end-of-year conference will be held at least 15 days prior to the last day of instruction to discuss overall performance for the year. End-of-year conferences are mandatory.

Each teacher will provide his or her appraiser with an update regarding the professional goals and development plan that were developed at the beginning of the year.

Preliminary Goal Setting, Planning for Following School Year The appraiser and teacher will discuss how the current year self-assessment and goal-setting process will continue into the next school year for continuous improvement, including professional development to support learning.

Summative Annual Appraisal Report A written summative annual appraisal report will be provided to the teacher at the summative conference. The report will be shared with the teacher no later than 15 working days before the last day of instruction for students. The written summative annual appraisal report will be placed in the teacher’s personnel file by the end of the appraisal period.

Appraisal Rating To provide an individual rating for student growth, SMART goals are aligned to TEKS & District curriculum. This is counted as a “seventeenth (17th)” dimension.

Appraiser Each teacher will be appraised by a certified appraiser. If the certified appraiser is not the teacher’s supervisor, the appraiser will be selected from the list of certified appraisers approved by the Board.

Second Appraiser In accordance with 19 Administrative Code 150.1004, a teacher may request a second appraiser within ten working days of receiving a written observation summary or a written summative annual appraisal report. Upon a teacher’s request for a second T-TESS appraisal made directly to the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, the second appraiser shall be selected from a roster of trained appraisers approved by the Board of Trustees.

If a teacher requests a second appraisal by another certified District appraiser, the second appraiser will be determined in accordance with the following:

- Must be certified T-TESS appraiser approved by Board.
- Must be knowledgeable in subject/grade level.

**Teacher Response
and Rebuttal**

In accordance with 19 Administrative Code 150.1004(a), a teacher may submit a written response or rebuttal at the following times:

- For Domains I, II, or III, after receiving a written observation summary or any other written documentation related to the rating of those three domains; or
- For Domain IV, after receiving a written summative annual appraisal report.

Any written response or rebuttal must be submitted within ten working days of receiving a written observation summary, a written summative annual appraisal report, or any other written documentation associated with the teacher's appraisal.

A teacher may not submit a written response or rebuttal to a written summative annual appraisal report for the ratings in Domains I, II, or III if the ratings are based entirely on observation summaries or written documentation already received by the teacher earlier in the appraisal year for which the teacher already had the opportunity to submit a written response or rebuttal.

**T-TESS to LEADS
Eligibility Criteria**

The purpose of the Lead Educator Appraisal and Development System (LEADS) is to offer teacher leaders, who have consistently met or exceeded the standards of T-TESS, an opportunity to be evaluated at a higher level. The eligibility criteria for LEADS is as follows:

- Must be recommended for a term contract
- At least 9 dimensions rated as Accomplished or Distinguished with remaining domains rated Proficient
- Principal recommendation
- LEADS recommended teachers may elect to opt out of LEADS and remain on T-TESS either before the appraisal window begins or at the end of year for the following year.

Grievances

Complaints regarding a teacher appraisal should be addressed in accordance with DGBA(LOCAL).

¹ Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS): <https://teachfortexas.org/>

² *Guidance on Student Growth in T-TESS*: https://teachfortexas.org/Resource_Files/Additional_Resources/Guidance_on_Student_Growth_in_T-TESS.pdf