



Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System FAQ

A. Overview

1. What is T-PESS?

T-PESS is the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System. It is a new principal evaluation system for the state of Texas designed to support principals in their professional development and help them grow and improve as campus and instructional leaders. It is being piloted by approximately 60 districts in the 2014-2015 school year, will be implemented as a refined system in the 2015-2016 school year in approximately 200 districts, and is scheduled to be rolled out statewide in the 2016-2017 year.

2. What are the components of T-PESS?

T-PESS has three measures of principal effectiveness. The three measures are:

- A rubric capturing the effective practices of high-performing principals
- Progress in achieving goals and initiatives
- Student growth

For the pilot year, student growth will not be factored into the overall rating. (See #F.1) For statewide implementation, the following percentages would be assigned to determining the overall rating:

Experience as principal on particular campus	Rubric	Goal-Setting	Student Growth
0 years	70%	30%	0%
1 year	70%	20%	10%
2 or more years	60%	20%	20%

3. How was T-PESS developed?

Starting in the spring of 2012, TEA worked with a principal advisory committee to build principal standards. This committee began by determining best practices for principals to be effective leaders and improve student performance, primarily by reframing the central role of the principal as the instructional leader of a campus. This work concluded in the fall of 2013 with a comprehensive set of principal standards that capture the aspirational practices all principals can strive toward regardless of their level of experience or the context of their position.

During the spring of 2014, a principal steering committee, comprised of campus principals, central office administrators, members of the higher education community, and principal association members, was convened to build a state principal evaluation system. The committee developed an evaluation system tied to the principal standards and focused on creating a process that would be used for continuous professional growth. The system they created will provide actionable, timely feedback that will allow principals to reflect consistently on their practice and strive to implement those practices that would improve their performance.

4. What is the timeline for T-PESS development and implementation?

During the 2014-2015 school year, T-PESS will be piloted in over 60 districts across the state. TEA will take feedback from pilot districts to refine T-PESS for implementation in approximately 200 districts during the 2015-2016 school year. Statewide rollout will occur during the 2016-2017 school year. However, it should be stressed the agency is committed to collecting feedback from districts that use T-PESS and will continue to improve and refine the system beyond the 2016-2017 school year.

5. How does T-PESS align with T-TESS?

The two steering committees that built both the teacher and principal evaluation systems established the same primary goals for evaluation – feedback that is specific, ongoing, and timely, and a process that builds relationships between appraisers and appraisees so they can deepen their understanding of effective practices together. With that in mind, both systems:

- Differentiate practices across five performance levels
- Establish processes that value reflection, goal setting, and professional development throughout the year
- Consider student growth as essential information in determining effectiveness and areas for improvement

6. How will the TEA support school districts toward implementing the new system?

TEA, in conjunction with McREL International, a nonprofit entity with extensive experience with school leadership, will provide statewide “train the trainer” sessions at Education Service Centers (ESCs) during the spring of 2015 to prepare a cadre of experts to train district appraisers for the 2015-2016 refinement year. ESCs will continue to build up their training capacity during the 2015-2016 school year in order to support statewide rollout during the 2016-2017 school year. Similar to what is currently in place with the existing teacher appraisal system, ESCs will build support systems for districts as they implement best practices in evaluation, including professional development and guidance for appraisers on structuring and conducting conferences, gathering data and artifacts, and coaching principals.

7. Will Texas school districts be required to use T-PESS when it is ready for statewide rollout?

As the Texas Education Code indicates, districts have the option of creating their own evaluation system. T-PESS will become the state recommended evaluation system.

8. How will principal preparation align with T-PESS?

One of TEA's major ongoing initiatives is to better align preparation, evaluation, professional development, mentorship, and career pathways around a set of standards and practices that act as a foundation and bring the entire timeline of an educator's career into alignment. One of the first steps was to establish the principal standards that reinforce the principal's role as the instructional leader of the campus. In addition, preparation programs will be trained on the new principal evaluation system so that they can build the skills necessary to effectively perform or appraise these practices in both aspiring principals and leaders of principals.

9. Are other districts and states implementing similar evaluation systems?

Yes. The components of T-PESS – a rubric, a goal setting process, and student growth – are used in districts throughout the state and in many states throughout the nation. They provide three sources of information that create a more complete picture of a principal's effectiveness.

B. Rubric

1. How was the rubric developed?

The principal steering committee that convened in the spring of 2014 (see #A.3) began the rubric development process by looking primarily at two sources. First, they reviewed literature and research that indicated the campus factors and principal practices that had the greatest effect on improving student performance. Second, they reviewed the Texas principal evaluation standards and examples of principal evaluation systems from other states. Finally, they reviewed and analyzed a base rubric that attempted to capture those practices in language that aligned with the new principal standards created during the fall of 2013 and currently in Chapter 149 of the Texas Administrative Code.

Over the course of several meetings throughout the spring, the committee revised and edited the evolving rubric so that it accurately articulated the appropriate progression of principal practices, differentiating performance across an ordinal scale from “developing” to “distinguished.” Equally important, they focused on making sure the rubric captured the context of Texas principals and allowed for enough flexibility in application so that all districts could use the rubric regardless of their size or location.

2. What are the components of the rubric?

The full rubric is available here:

http://txcc.sedl.org/our_work/tx_educator_evaluation/508_compliant_Principal_Eval_rubric.pdf.

The rubric has five standards:

- Instructional Leadership

- Human Capital
- Executive Leadership
- School Culture
- Strategic Operations

There are 21 total indicators within those five standards, with five indicators in School Culture and four indicators in each of the remaining standards.

C. Goals and Initiatives

1. Who chooses the principal's goals and initiatives?

A principal's goals and initiatives are determined through collaboration between the principal and the principal's appraiser. Goals and initiatives should take into consideration the individual performance goals of the principal, the goals and initiatives for the campus, and broader goals and initiatives at the district level. At the end of the pre-evaluation conference, the appraiser of the principal needs to sign off on the goals captured on the "Beginning-of-Year Goal Setting Form."

All goal forms can be found here:

http://www4.esc13.net/uploads/pdas/docs/3_Evaluation_Forms_V4_061914.pdf.

2. What's the process for assessing goals and initiatives?

During the mid-year conference, the principal and appraiser should meet to discuss progress toward goal attainment. The appraiser should indicate whether the principal is progressing or not progressing toward attainment and include a narrative of evidence of progress and/or revise the plan if necessary. The appraiser should use the "Progress toward Goal Attainment Form" to include any relevant feedback and comments that will assist the principal and promote growth.

During the end-of-year conference, the principal and appraiser should meet to discuss final ratings and review goals. The appraiser should use the "End-of-Year Goal Attainment Form" to indicate whether the principal achieved or did not achieve the established goals and provide a narrative of evidence that supports the determination. Relevant feedback and comments articulated during this conference should assist the principal in identifying areas for improvement and should promote growth in practice.

T-PESS seeks to establish with this process that:

- Development is an ongoing process for all principals regardless of their level of proficiency
- Development isn't isolated in single-year snapshots of performance but is continuous and consistently building off prior efforts and attention
- Principals have a say in and monitor their own goals and growth throughout the year, with appraisers seeking to provide the support that principals need to achieve their goals

D. Student Growth

1. What does student growth measure?

Student growth measures how much a student progresses academically during a given period of time. It takes into consideration a student’s entering achievement when measuring how much the student grew over the year, and, as opposed to measuring student proficiency on a single assessment, student growth isn’t concerned with whether or not a student passes a test.

By measuring growth, a teacher who has students who enter multiple years behind grade level could still demonstrate his or her effectiveness based on how much those students progress during that year. Students who move from three years behind to one year behind make considerable growth, and although a proficiency measure would still show those students as unable to pass the test, student growth would capture the remarkable progress (two years’ worth) those students made during their time with that teacher. Campus-level student growth captures the aggregation of growth demonstrated by the campus’s teachers and students.

Student growth also incentivizes principals to address the needs of all students – those who are unlikely to meet certain levels of proficiency and those who are likely to meet them regardless of how much they learn in a year.

2. How will student growth data be a part of the evaluation process?

Student growth data should be used just as any other data collected during an evaluation – as information that will help to inform principals about their campus’s strengths and potential areas of improvement so they can better impact all students the following year. Student growth is one measure in a multiple measure evaluation system, and the inclusion of student growth data in a formative evaluation process provides for a more complete understanding of which students are being reached and how much students have progressed in a given year.

3. What are the options for measuring student growth for principals?

TEA will work with pilot districts to determine the appropriate measures for student growth for the various campus configurations and will seek to account for the variability in campus contexts throughout the state. Campus-level value-add scores are one potential measure of student growth. Other suggested measures of student growth include but are not limited to:

Campus Configuration		
Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Potential Measures	Potential Measures	Potential Measures
Indices of State Accountability System	Indices of State Accountability System	Indices of State Accountability System
Attendance	Attendance	Attendance
Student Surveys	Student Surveys	Student Surveys

Literacy Measures (TPRI/DRA/Dibels)	% of Students in Algebra 1 or other advanced curriculum	Advanced Placement Participation and Scores
District-wide Assessments	District-wide Assessments	ACT and SAT Participation and Scores
		AP/IB Participation and Scores
		Graduation Rates/Dropout Rates
		% College and Career Ready

For the options listed above, growth would be determined based on year-over-year progress in a measure identified as appropriate for a particular campus.

TEA will work with pilot districts, ESCs, and experts in alternative growth measures to build the resources and guidelines that administrators will need to implement student growth measures.

As indicated in FAQ #D.2, the purpose of student growth data is to provide principals with a better sense of how much of an impact the campus, under their leadership, has had on the progress of all their students, regardless of the students’ achievement levels. Most importantly, student growth data allow principals to make informed decisions about the goals and initiatives that will best impact all students the following year. Although a score does need to be calculated, the value of a student growth measure lies primarily in the feedback it provides to principals so that they can improve their practice.

- 4. What is a value-added measure (VAM)? How is it calculated? Is it fair?

A set of FAQs focused specifically on VAM can be found here: <https://tea.sas.com/>

- 5. When will student growth data be available?

The availability of student growth data depends on the measure in question. Some measures won’t be available until later in the summer, such as value-add scores, AP scores, or College and Career Readiness percentiles, because the data underpinning those measures won’t be processed until that time.

The timing of finalized student growth data, however, reinforces two critical concepts in T-PESS. Student growth is one of multiple measures of campus performance and a principal’s practice, and decisions should take into consideration more than just single year student growth. Second, in a formative evaluation process like T-PESS, the timing of student growth data reinforces the ongoing loop between evaluation, feedback, and development. Discussions about a principal’s practice should be ongoing and should evolve over the course of the year. Student growth data can be analyzed when available and should be taken into consideration when a principal modifies or adjusts his or her goals and initiatives at the beginning of a new school year.

E. T-PESS Pilot Year

- 1. What school districts will be participating in the T-PESS pilot program?

A list of participating districts is available here:

http://txcc.sedl.org/our_work/tx_educator_evaluation/pilot_districts.php

2. What role do pilot districts play in the development of T-PESS?

Pilot districts will build on the work done by the principal steering committee by providing feedback on the evaluation tools, the evaluation process, training, and support and by identifying what additional concerns need to be addressed prior to statewide rollout of T-PESS. Their feedback will be instrumental in refining the system so that the purpose of T-PESS – supporting principals in their pursuit of improving their practice, can be realized.

3. What will pilot districts implement during the pilot year?

For scoring purposes, pilot districts will implement only the rubric and the goals and initiatives portions of the system.

Pilot year feedback needs to focus on the underpinnings of the system. Student growth is clearly an important part of the system and one that will require adjustments along the way as the state begins to implement it. The state and districts will improve at identifying appropriate student growth measures for principals as they move forward. The goal is that all involved will stay focused on the purpose of student growth data – to provide another piece of information that will let principals know what potential initiatives to pursue to help all students improve performance.

4. Will pilot districts implement both their locally developed principal evaluation system and T-PESS?

No, pilot districts will appraise those principals who are a part of the pilot on T-PESS only. Pilot districts will need to adopt T-PESS as their locally approved appraisal systems through their school board.

5. How will student growth be a part of the pilot year?

Although the pilot year will not include a student growth measure in the final evaluation score, pilot districts will provide feedback to TEA and ESCs on potential measures of student growth for principals, additional needs districts will have while calculating measures of student growth, and ways TEA and ESCs can better support districts as they begin implementation of student growth as a component of a principal appraisal system.

Campus-level value-add data will be provided to pilot districts in August/September, once this information becomes available, and will be used by pilot districts for formative purposes.

6. Will there be additional training dates for those who miss the summer training or are late hires?

Yes, TEA and McREL will work to schedule a few additional training dates in various locations throughout the state to train those appraisers that either couldn't attend summer training or were late hires.

F. T-PESS Pilot Year Process

1. How is a principal's total score calculated?

For the pilot year, a principal's end-of-year score will include rubric-based results and the principal's goals and initiatives results. Student growth will not be a part of a principal's evaluation score during the pilot year. The weight of the rubric-based results will be 70% and the weight of the principal's goal attainment results will be 30%. The online system will calculate scores for appraisers.

The scoring on the rubric is based on an additive/cumulative process. Appraisers will use data, evidence, and artifacts throughout the year to determine the final rating in each indicator, including evidence of performance discussed during conferences earlier in the school year. A principal receives a particular rating once the evidence demonstrates that the principal has accomplished what each of the descriptors in a particular performance level capture for that indicator. Lack of evidence that the descriptors in the performance level "Developing" have been accomplished, for example, would result in a rating of "Not Demonstrated/Improvement Needed" for a particular indicator.

2. Who can appraise principals under T-PESS?

Only those who have attended the entire two-day T-PESS training can appraise principals. Those individuals have had a certificate issued to them indicating that they are certified appraisers on T-PESS.

3. What does the principal orientation entail and who facilitates that training?

The T-PESS orientation should include an overview of the evaluation process, familiarize principals with the tools and components of the evaluation system, and clarify the district's expectations for principals.

The orientation should be conducted by a district leader certified to appraise principals on T-PESS.

4. What is discussed in the pre-evaluation conference?

The pre-evaluation conference should include the following:

- Review and discussion of the principal's rubric-based self-assessment
- Review and discussion of the goals and initiatives identified by the appraiser and the principal
- Final determination of goals and initiatives heading into the current school year
- Supports needed to achieve the established goals and initiatives

5. What is discussed in mid-year conferences?

The mid-year conference should include the following:

- Review of the performance evidence relating to the goals set by the principal and appraiser
- Determination of progress toward goals
- Identification of additional supports needed for the principal to attain goals
- Adjustments to the goal setting form
- Determination of what data, artifacts, and evidence would be appropriate for the adjusted goals

6. What is the timeline for when the end-of-year conference must be held?

The end-of-year conference should be conducted by May 15th and final evaluation results input in the Teach for Texas portal by May 29th. Data needs to be collected and analyzed in a timely manner so that potential changes can be made to T-PESS in time for summer trainings for the refinement year.

7. When are the end-of-year (summative) scores shared with the principals?

End-of-year scores should be shared with principals at the conclusion of the end-of-year conference. During this conference, which should be conducted at the principal's school, the principal could provide additional information necessary in the consideration of performance ratings.

8. Can districts use this system to evaluate assistant principals?

T-PESS is designed to evaluate principals, not assistant principals. Any district that would like to use T-PESS to evaluate assistant principals would need to modify the tools and components of the system to better fit the roles and responsibilities of their assistant principals.