



Guidance on Student Growth in T-PESS

Overview

Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, student growth will become a component in principal appraisal within the commissioner's recommended principal appraisal system, the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System or T-PESS.

The requirement of a student growth goal in T-PESS is in addition to the requirement for a practice goal. Principals, in conjunction with their end-of-year conference, will establish a practice goal targeting an area for professional growth aligned with the T-PESS rubric and will establish a student growth goal that targets year-over-year improvement in student performance.

This non-regulatory guidance seeks to support T-PESS districts as they make determinations about student growth in T-PESS. Districts are encouraged to consider their local contexts when shaping their approach to student growth in principal appraisal.

Purpose

T-PESS was developed as an appraisal process that engages principals in a cycle of continuous improvement. T-PESS seeks to:

- Create a shared understanding of what principals should seek to know and be able to do
- Increase the frequency and quality of collaborative and coaching conversations between principals and their appraisers
- Strengthen habits of reflection, self-assessment, and adjustment on the part of principals
- Strategically sequence development opportunities for principals

When considering student growth within T-PESS, the intended purpose is the same. Student growth also seeks to provide feedback to principals and their appraisers that capture where principals are in their practice in order to pinpoint strengths and areas for development.

The inclusion of a student growth measure allows principals to focus on a particular area of concern as it relates to student performance, capture strategies and actions that should lead to improvement in that area, and assess the impact the principal's practices and leadership had on the student performance outcome.

For student growth to be a valuable tool in continuous improvement, principal supervisors should keep the following in mind:

- Although it's called student growth, it is really about principal growth
- Student growth is not the end in itself – the key to a meaningful student growth goal is the ability to translate the student growth outcomes into feedback on leadership practices
- Honest assessment of practice, sincere reflection on the approach to planning and implementation, and a commitment to adjusting leadership practices when targets aren't met are the best ways to improve student growth
- Ratings are less important than the process of professional growth

Format

Student growth in T-PESS takes the form of a goal. Principals and their appraisers will use the Goal- Setting Form (or a similar form if the district has created its own Goal-Setting Form) to create a goal related to the improvement of student performance over time.

Just like with the practice goal, the student growth goal should detail the strategies and actions the principal will lead to attain the improvement in student performance.

Also like the practice goal, progress on the student growth goal should be discussed during the middle- of-year conference and end-of-year conference, and principal appraisers should use it as a tool that focuses their coaching conversations with principals.

Rating

Districts have multiple options when determining end-of-year appraisal ratings for principals. Districts can keep the ratings disaggregated and provide individual ratings for principals for each of the twenty-one indicators in the T-PESS rubric and for each individual goal (including student growth). For districts that adopt this method for summative ratings, the weights in the chart below do not apply, as weights are not needed with disaggregated ratings.

For districts that decide to provide principals a single overall summative rating, the weights in the table below indicate how the different components of T-PESS should be considered based on a principal's tenure leading the campus in question.

This phase-in process acknowledges the limitations of a principal's influence on student growth or progress during his or her first year on a campus. Although a principal's influence can begin to reach classrooms and impact student outcomes during that first year, a student growth rating may not be a reliable indicator of principal effectiveness. By the third year of a principal's tenure on a campus, the principal should have full ownership of student growth or progress results, and from that year forward, student growth would count for 20% of the principal's evaluation rating.

For Districts Calculating A Single Summative Rating

Experience as principal on current campus	Rubric	Practice Goal(s)	Student Growth Goal
0 years	70%	30%	0%
1 year	70%	20%	10%
2 or more years	60%	20%	20%

Frequency of goals

Student growth goals in T-PESS should not force principals and principal supervisors into an inauthentic, short-term focus. Although progress on any given goal will be examined and rated each year, it is strongly encouraged that goals capture implementation and outcomes outside of single-year snapshots. The example goal below focuses on certain actions in year one, knowing that years two, three, and beyond allow for additional actions to continuously improve campus practices.

For a goal that has a multi-year approach, principals could maintain that goal as their T-PESS student growth goal beyond a single year. Principal supervisors and principals should collaboratively determine what is best for the growth of the principal, the campus, and the students when determining whether or not to continue with a single goal for multiple years.

If a goal does carry over from one year to the next, the principal would need to create new short-term and mid-term outcomes for the new year, as implementation in year two should reflect the progress made during implementation in year one.

Potential Measures

When considering what student growth measures a principal should pursue, it is strongly encouraged that principals and their appraisers consider root causes of student performance. This could inform two different aspects of the student growth goal:

1. The goal itself could be an aspect of student performance that is non-academic. For example, year-over-year improvement in student attendance or student discipline could be the growth goal if it is determined that these areas are significant factors limiting student academic performance.

- The strategies and actions articulated on the goal form could detail non student-centric steps central to improving student outcomes. For example, a goal could be the year-over-year improvement in the number of passing scores on Advanced Placement (AP) exams, but some of the strategies and actions could focus on using teacher performance data in assigning AP courses, funding AP summer institutes for AP teachers, strengthening vertical alignment between pre-AP and AP courses, and ensuring instructional leaders have the skills necessary to grow and develop AP teachers.

Campus Configuration		
Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Potential Measures	Potential Measures	Potential Measures
Domains of state accountability system	Domains of state accountability system	Domains of state accountability system
Student growth measures	Student growth measures	Student growth measures
Student attendance	Student attendance	Student attendance
Student surveys	Student surveys	Student surveys
Literacy measures	% of students in Algebra 1 or other advanced curriculum	Advanced Placement participation or scores
Numeracy measures	District-wide assessments	ACT and SAT participation or scores
District-wide assessments		IB participation and scores
		Graduation rates/dropout rates
		% college and career ready

Example

The following example tries to capture three things:

- 1) The student growth goal
- 2) The actions leadership needs to take to bring about the goal
- 3) What should occur in the short-term (implementation), mid-term (early outcomes), and long-term (goal attainment)

These three aspects provide both a concrete measure to gauge improvement in student performance and a sequence of actions to bring about that improvement so that principal appraisers can pinpoint opportunities to coach principals on those leadership practices that could have the greatest impact on improving student outcomes.

This goal doesn't capture everything. There are innumerable actions a principal and campus could take to address any particular student growth goal.

The following goal, to increase the number of passing scores on AP exams, is based on the theory that if all teachers improve data-driven instruction and the alignment between student tasks and the necessary rigor needed to master standards, then more students will be better positioned to succeed in AP courses and on AP exams.

Goal:

Improve the number of passing scores on AP exams by an average of 15% per year for the next three years. Prior years have shown minimal growth in the number of passing scores (<5%).

Potential strategies and actions:

Leadership actions

- Attend data-driven instruction professional development
- Base teaching assignments on impact with high-achieving students
- Facilitate rigor sessions with teachers – alignment of student tasks with depth of knowledge and skill required

Short-Term Metrics:

Summer

- Attend data-driven instruction training for principals and assistant principals
- Conduct sessions on data-driven instruction for all teachers during summer staff development (breakout)
- Configure class schedule for common off-period for all AP teachers for bi-weekly cluster group meetings on data-driven instruction

Fall and Spring

- Principal and assistant principals use SLO approval process to conference with each teacher on evidence-based lesson planning
- Principal and assistant principals conduct bi-weekly mini-observations with pre-AP and AP teachers with follow-up coaching sessions on rigorous instruction, data-driven instruction, and student tasks
- A campus leadership team member attends each PLC to help facilitate “community of practice” approach to examining rigor through analysis of student tasks
- Host AP scholars celebration for students that take AP exams
- During student scheduling for following year, present at student grade-level meetings on the benefits of AP courses in order to increase enrollment
- Review appraisal and student growth data to inform Pre-AP and AP staffing for following year (proficiency with high achieving students)
- Have new and inexperienced pre-AP and AP teachers sign up for AP summer institutes

Mid-Term Metrics

- Increase enrollment in Pre-AP and AP courses by 10% for following school year (2018-2019)
- Increase 2018 AP passing scores by 10%
- Increase percentage of teachers rating proficient or above on SLOs by 20%

Long-Term Metrics

- Increase enrollment in Pre-AP and AP courses by 15% for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021
- Increase AP passing scores by 15% for 2019 and 20% for 2020

Closing

Although principals have experience with creating goals in T-PESS, a student performance goal as a part of a growth process and coaching conversations may be new for many. Districts are encouraged to work with principals to select student performance goals that match both the context of the campus and the relative proficiency of the principal. Exceedingly complex and challenging student performance goals for a principal who straddles the line between Developing and Proficient on the T-PESS rubric are likely to suppress growth and success.

Improvement of practice is the ultimate goal in T-PESS, and the student performance component needs to be structured so that principals have a better sense of what's working, what's not working, and what they can do to improve their leadership moving forward.

Please reach out to your local education service center (ESC) for support in both crafting student performance goals in T-PESS and developing the skills principal appraisers need to be effective coaches for principals.