

Principal Appraiser Guide



TEXAS
PRINCIPAL
EVALUATION &
SUPPORT SYSTEM

2020 Update

T-PESS Principal Appraiser Guide

“The growth and development of people, is the highest calling of leadership.” – Harvey S. Firestone

What should I know about T-PESS and my role as a principal appraiser?

The Texas Education Agency’s commitment to effective schools and leaders has resulted in an aligned system of support and evaluations. Those systems, including the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (T-PESS), have been designed around standards- and research-based effective practices that lead to effective schools, campus administrators as lead learners, and student growth measures that are evident.

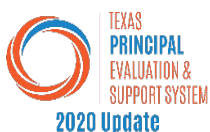
A strong and effective evaluation system is supported by ongoing, robust conversations between the appraiser and principal. Appraisers play an important role in campus and student performance by supporting principals with the guidance and feedback they need to be balanced, effective leaders. Appraisers also provide objective, standards-based evaluation feedback that principals can use to guide their own professional growth and development, whether they are novice or experienced. When appraisers and principals clearly understand the standards and essential actions for performance as outlined in the T-PESS rubric, both professional growth and principal evaluations are on point, transparent, and strengthen the larger system of educator quality and effectiveness in Texas.

The T-PESS rubric serves as the foundation for the appraisal process and incorporates a series of essential actions and practices that should be continuously applied. It is also directly tied to the State’s Effective Schools Framework, which provides the basis for school diagnostics and the alignment of resources. While T-PESS annually leads to the principal’s summative appraisal and recommendations for continued growth, the preferred lens focuses on a comprehensive system of support that results in recursive self-assessments, goal setting, analysis of practices, actionable feedback, and refinements in behaviors that improve the quality and effectiveness of the principal as a leader. An involved and supportive principal appraiser has the capacity to facilitate this growth and development through ongoing, focused conversations and coaching, rather than a compliance-driven mindset. The system should be streamlined and create a central focus for the appraiser-principal relationship.

What are the key priorities for T-PESS?

School leadership is complex and requires a dynamic set of knowledge, skills, and dispositions to realize positive outcomes for the organization and its stakeholders. Four key priorities serve as the guiding principles for the process to fulfill the expectations outlined in the Texas Administrative Code and to strengthen leadership performance across the state of Texas. The key priorities are as follows:

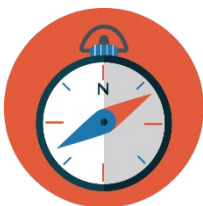
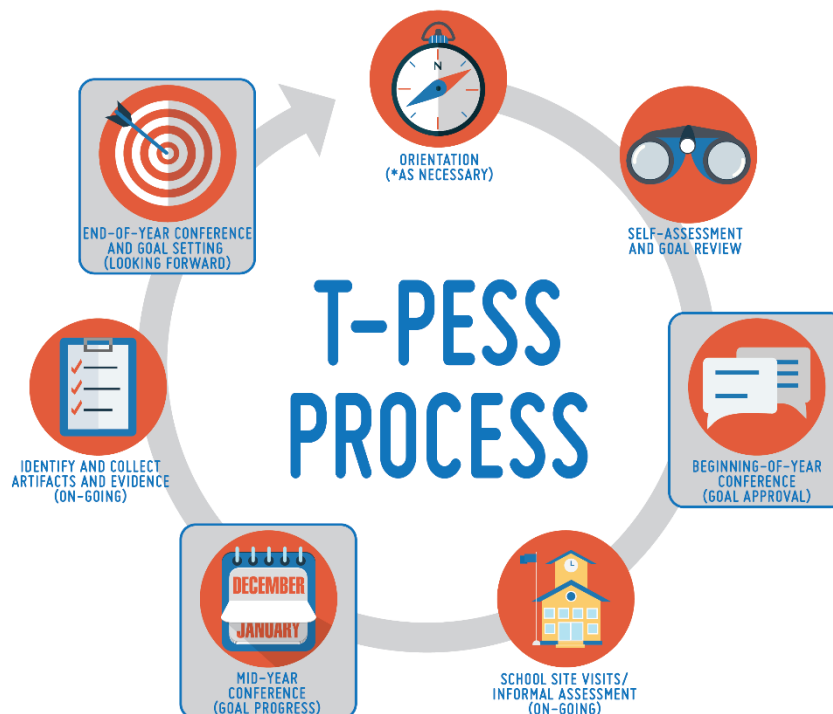
- Personify continuous growth and improvement
- Guide self-reflection
- Inform professional development
- Improve leadership quality



Those key priorities exemplify the TEA's commitment to ensuring that this part of the larger system is meaningful, manageable, and operates in a way that is coherent and supportive of leadership effectiveness, school productivity, and student outcomes.

What is the T-PESS process?

To support each principal's ongoing development, the appraisal process consists of seven steps that are completed together throughout the school calendar year. The T-PESS process is most successful when the principal appraiser applies it systematically and consistently. The graphic below outlines the year at a glance.



Orientation At the beginning of each year, an orientation is conducted with all principals to clarify the T-PESS rubric, along with the district's expectations for practice and performance, timelines, materials, forms, and any additional rollout information. The orientation is an important step in the process, because it:

- provides the appraiser and principal with concise and accurate information regarding T-PESS, including the actions embedded in the rubric;
- ensures that the appraiser and principal understand individual roles and responsibilities;
- details the T-PESS process and provides specific timelines for when required activities are due;
- communicates any regulations and policies that govern principal evaluations; and
- clarifies how performance will be measured.

Resources are provided for appraisers to conduct this orientation, including the option to revise the presentation in accordance with local protocols.

Appraiser's Action Steps: Provide an orientation where each principal received a complete set of materials and participants become thoroughly familiar with T-PESS and correlating forms.



Self-Assessment and Goal Setting Using the Texas Principal Standards, T-PESS Rubric, T-PESS Principal Guide, and data sources such as the campus needs assessment, campus improvement plan, district strategies and priorities, student and staff outcome data, and past feedback from peers and appraisers, the principal completes a data-driven self-assessment to identify the variances between actual and expected competence and performance. Begin with the “Developing” performance descriptors and move left towards the “Distinguished” column. The descriptors in the rubric clarify expected knowledge and skills and should be used to identify those actions and practices that are consistently performed at expected levels and those that require growth or present challenges. The principal should gain a clear idea of the highest-priority areas on which to base growth goals.

During initial implementation of the T-PESS rubric, principals use the self-assessment to identify professional growth goals which will strengthen leadership practices and student outcomes. It is essential that the goal-setting process prioritizes areas of development for the principal as a professional, independent of campus-related needs. Therefore, the primary goal is focused on the principal’s individual growth, while a second goal must be developed to address student growth on the campus. Although principals may choose to establish more than two goals, doing so is not required, and any additional goals should be considered carefully, so they do not divert energies from the two required goals. In the second year and beyond, principals may use summative refinement areas and additional data to establish growth goals and revisit them at the beginning of the school year.

Appraiser’s Action Steps: Ensure that principals complete the self-assessment and generate draft goals in preparation for the Beginning-of-Year Conference.



Beginning-of-Year Goal Setting/Refinement Conference During this conference, the appraiser and principal discuss the self-assessment results, school and district priorities and plans, and any data or artifacts that proved useful in determining the growth goals. Once the goals have been established, it is important to discuss and agree on the data, evidence, and documentation that will be collected throughout the year in support of the goals, how periodic reviews and support will be conducted, and the criteria for success. This discussion may also include a review of the current context of the school and previous practice, as applicable.

Appraiser’s Action Steps: Conduct the BOY Conference to review the Self-Assessment and proposed goals. Reach agreement on the yearly performance goals, necessary supports, artifacts/evidence to be collected, what success will look like, and how attainment will be measured. Complete the Goal Setting and Professional Development section. Complete the BOY section for each Domain/Indicator of the rubric and collect signatures.



School Site Visits/Informal Assessment Ongoing school visits are conducted to observe the campus environment, interact with the school community, gather evidence, coach, and provide actionable feedback regarding performance and practices in various contexts and settings. Increased frequency of those visits

provides a comprehensive perspective on trends, patterns, and the extent of evidence. Those visits also provide an opportunity for the appraiser and principal to discuss strengths and challenges with the T-PESS process and practices.

Appraiser's Action Steps: Conduct frequent school visits to collect data, monitor progress, coach practices, and provide actionable feedback to the principal.



Mid-Year Conference When ongoing school visits are conducted, the mid-year conference then provides a platform to focus on the status of the goals and whether adjustments in actions need to occur to accomplish the goals. This mid-year checkpoint is also used to formatively assess performance and practices using the T-PESS rubric. As a result of this meeting, the appraiser and principal should have a clear understanding of the principal's current level of practice, the performance trajectory with rubric ratings, and actionable next steps to leverage

leadership practices. The Mid-Year Conference is an extension of the ongoing dialogue between the appraiser and principal.

Appraiser's Action Steps: Conduct the Mid-Year Conference to review the status of the goals, including the artifacts and evidence that support this status. Complete the MOY section for each Domain/Indicator to formatively assess performance and practices. Complete the Mid-Year Progress section of the Goal Setting Form, and collect signatures.



Identify and Collect Artifacts and Evidence Because T-PESS is an evidence-based process, it is imperative that the appraiser and principal must collect and prioritize evidence throughout the year. Each indicator of the T-PESS rubric provides numerous examples of artifacts and evidence. The appraiser should be intentional about conducting school site visits to collect pertinent evidence, including the impact on systems, processes, teacher performance, student outcomes, and

including the implications on the larger system.

Principals and appraisers synthesize their collected artifacts and evidence, to create a comprehensive view of the principal's performance throughout the year. This brief summary is not intended as a portfolio, but rather a concise review of information that may be used as consideration for performance and ratings during the end-of-year conference. T-PESS evidence is collected using four comprehensive strategies:

- Purposeful observations and walk-throughs tied to principal practices
- Ongoing and purposeful data collection tied to the systems and processes within the campus.
- Artifacts and/or evidence tied to the domains, indicators, and descriptors in the rubric
- Other performance data regarding the campus and its operational systems and processes, staff, students, and parent/community stakeholders

The principal may be asked to provide the summary evidence to the appraiser in advance of the EOY meeting, as specified in local policy or procedure, or as requested by the appraiser.

Appraiser's Action Steps: Establish a process for collecting and synthesizing artifacts and evidence, including items collected by the principal. Begin preparing for the End-of-Year Conference.



End-of-Year Conference and Goal Setting The appraiser and principal review artifacts and evidence that was collected throughout the year and map the evidence to the goals and rubric. The artifacts and evidence inform goal attainment, and, with the principal's input, decisions are made about final performance ratings using a preponderance of evidence. That information is further used to project and establish draft performance goals

and performance refinements for the next school year as a cycle of continuous improvement.

To finalize the annual process, the appraiser takes into consideration the information shared during the End-of-Year Conference, along with evidence collected throughout the year, to complete the T-PESS Summary Rating and Goal Attainment Form. Pursuant to local procedures, both the appraiser and principal sign and submit the required forms.

Note: Districts have multiple options when determining End-of-Year ratings. Ratings may be reported separately for each indicator of the T-PESS rubric and for each individual goal. If so, the weights below are not applicable.

*For districts that opt to provide principals with an overall summative rating, the weights in the table below indicate how T-PESS components should be calculated based on a principal's tenure **on a campus**. This phase-in process acknowledges that leadership impact is not fully assessed until the third year of a principal's tenure on a campus. At that time, the principal has full ownership of student growth or progress results from that year onward.*

| Tenure on Campus | T-PESS Rubric | Individual Growth Goal(s) | Student Growth Goal |
|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 0 Years | 70% | 30% | 0% |
| 1 Year | 70% | 20% | 10% |
| 2 or More Years | 60% | 20% | 20% |

Appraiser's Action Steps: Review the artifacts and evidence prior to the EOY meeting. Complete the EOY section for each Domain/Indicator of the rubric. Develop draft goals for the next school year. Complete the Summative Evaluation Rating, share the ratings with the principal, and collect signatures.

How are performance levels defined?

This evaluation system is based on various research-based essential actions that ultimately drive achievement and outcomes for teachers and students. The T-PESS rubric focuses on those high-yield practices that effective campus leaders exhibit, and it illustrates the continuum of implementation through clearly defined performance levels: distinguished, accomplished, proficient, developing, and needs improvement. Those performance levels may be differentiated as using a preponderance of evidence as follows:

- **Distinguished** – Describes an exemplary level of performance that has a profound impact on both campus- and district-level performance. These exhibited practices serve as an exemplar for

other principals and campus leaders and represents a distinct group of principals. Direct comment is required.

- **Accomplished** – Describes highly skilled level of competence and automaticity with practices and performance that exceed proficiency.
- **Proficient** – Describes demonstrated competence with practices and performance with expected proficiency of the standard.
- **Developing** – Describes basic competence with practices and performance and requires direct oversight and/or growth toward achieving the standard at the proficient level.
- **Needs Improvement** – Describes subpar competence with practices and performance and requires immediate growth. Direct comment is required.

What are the timelines and schedules?

It is important for districts to establish timelines and schedules for when specific T-PESS actions and activities should be completed. Those communicated structures promote fidelity and consistency in implementation and should align with established and required policies and state statutes. The alignment of timelines to the T-PESS steps may be reflected as follows:

| T-PESS Timeline Example | | | | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Orientation | Self-Assessment and Goal Setting | Beginning-of-Year Conference | School Site Visits/ Informal Assessments | Mid-Year Conference | Identify and Collect Artifacts and Evidence | End-of-Year Conference and Goal Setting |
| Prior to the beginning of the school year | Prior to the Beginning-of-Year Conference | By the end of September | Ongoing | Close to the end of the first semester or mid-year point | Ongoing collection - Synthesize at or near the end of the school year | End of the school year, once all performance data has been received and analyzed |

What are the other considerations for me, the appraiser?

The appraiser's commitment to the T-PESS process communicates a powerful message about its importance in promoting each principal's professional development and effectiveness as a school leader, and in defining and strengthening each principal's evaluation and support system.

Effective implementation requires each appraiser to:

- know and understand the Texas Standards for Principals;
- participate in professional development to fully understand the core principles of T-PESS;
- commit to growth-oriented supervision and support;
- ensure that all steps are conducted with fidelity according to the intended process and philosophy;
- engage in ongoing dialogue with principals through a combination of site visits and professional interactions;

- understand the context and environment in which the principal must work and leverage the knowledge and skills that are required to implement T-PESS to benefit leadership practices and school performance;
- effectively guide and facilitate all T-PESS conferences and meetings with the principals; and
- commit to ongoing coaching and support with real-time, actionable feedback as a core practice.

A principal appraiser's responsibilities are inextricably linked with T-PESS and have the potential to significantly influence the performance of principals statewide.

For additional information, visit the T-PESS website at tpess.org or contact your local education service center for further technical assistance.