

T-TESS Tips – August 2016

Timely Resources for T-TESS

On the Teach for Texas Portal: <https://teachfortexas.org/>

1. [T-TESS Implementation and Phase-In Guides](#)
2. [Orientation materials](#)
3. [Goal-Setting and PD Plan Process Overview](#)

Beginning of the Year Communication

- Appraisal is culture. It's not something that's done to someone, but instead is a pervasive growth mindset within a district – effective educators consistently seek out opportunities to improve, and that commitment to the improvement process is modeled throughout the district.
- T-TESS is a developmental process, and it will be successful on one campus and unsuccessful on another based on culture alone. It works best when a campus's approach reinforces one of the common T-TESS phrases, "It's okay to be where you are; it's not okay to stay there."
- The primary purpose of appraisal is to help us better understand, with accuracy, what's working, what's not working, and what we can do to improve moving forward.
- The beginning of the school year is a critical moment to begin communicating the primary purpose of T-TESS. Teachers generally haven't sat through a T-TESS presentation, haven't gone through the training, and haven't interacted with the system. They will be wary of these new things, especially since they involve appraisal and TEA. That can be a frightening combination.
- As they experience the system, they'll start to see that the system is about collaboration, reflection, and professional growth. Until then, communication from leadership is all they'll really have to go on. Framing T-TESS well now will lay a solid foundation for the entire year.

Self-Assessment and the Goal-Setting and Professional Development (GSPD) Plan

- Survey results show that teachers who self-assess on the T-TESS rubric prior to establishing the GSPD plan have a more favorable view of the rubric and the GSPD plan than those who don't self-assess on the rubric.
- Goals should be closely aligned to descriptors on the rubric – they should be about a practice and should be specific ("differentiate better" is not a workable goal).
- The activity plan should both specifically spell out the steps an educator will take to accomplish the goal (so we can determine if those steps were effective) and determine what goal accomplishment will look like – how do we know if the goal has been reached?
- GSPD plans are "alive" – teachers track activities on the plan throughout the year, and additions can be made to them based on pressing needs discovered through the walkthroughs, observations, etc.
- The goal-setting and professional development plan gets rated at the end of the year. Dimensions 4.2 and 4.3 cover goals and professional development, respectively.
- The GSPD plan process is where, during the EOY conference, evidence is synthesized to determine the following year's goals. This is the piece of the process that keeps the continuous improvement process continuous.

Please take advantage of your ESCs for support as you work through implementation. You can also contact Tim Regal at tim.regal@tea.texas.gov to talk through any part of the T-TESS process.