

# T-TESS 2 Pilot

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The Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System serves to clearly define excellent teaching and learning in Texas, as defined by the teacher pedagogy standards so that teachers can receive actionable input to continue to improve their practices and school districts can recognize and reward excellent teaching.

T-TESS 2 brings a cohesive focus to key elements of teaching by clearly articulating four domains:

- Instructional Preparation
- Instructional Delivery
- Learning Environment
- Professional Practices and Responsibilities

Each domain has a series of target skills (indicators), grouped together in dimensions with a guiding question. Primarily indicators progress across performance levels by layering on new skills. Indicators progress from Level 1: Improvement Needed to Level 5: Distinguished. Many performance levels progress from examining the actions of teachers to the actions of students.

**Teacher Actions** ←  **Student Actions**

Except when otherwise noted, for a specific performance level to be considered met, the descriptor must be met by the teacher or student at least 80% of the time during the observation or summative period. In places where it is unrealistic to collect evidence from every student, a representative sample of the classroom must meet the descriptor in the performance level to be considered “met”.

The T-TESS 2 Pilot Rubric will be utilized in a statewide pilot during the 2026-27 school year. Please direct questions to [support@teachfortexas.org](mailto:support@teachfortexas.org).

# Domain 1: Instructional Preparation

## ONLY APPLICABLE FOR TEACHERS NOT USING SBOE-APPROVED HQIM MATERIALS.

D1.A Lesson Design: Is instruction based on a skillfully composed, accurate, and appropriately rigorous lesson plan that is fully aligned with state standards?

	Level 1 Improvement Needed	Level 2 Developing	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Accomplished	Level 5 Distinguished
<b>1. TEKS and ELPS Aligned Lessons</b>	Teacher rarely or never develops lesson objectives.	Teacher sometimes develops lesson objectives, but they are either unaligned to grade- or course-level TEKS and ELPS and may not be written in a student-friendly manner.	Teacher develops lesson objectives aligned to the TEKS and ELPS that are written in a student-friendly manner.	AND lesson objectives are clear.	AND lesson objectives are measurable.
<b>2. Research Based Activities</b>	Teacher does not design lessons that are aligned to research and evidence-based teaching strategies.	Teacher sometimes designs lessons that are aligned to research and evidence-based teaching strategies but may not sequence or scaffold instructional activities.	Teacher designs lessons and units that sequence and scaffold instructional activities, materials, and summative and formative assessments to build understanding, in alignment with research and evidence-based teaching strategies to build understanding throughout the lesson.	AND lessons and units/courses are coherent and build understanding throughout the unit/course.	AND teacher enhances lessons and units to build strong instructional coherence that deepens student understanding.
<b>3. Connection to Prior Knowledge (Schema)</b>	Teacher does not plan for activation of prior knowledge and/or real-world connections.	Teacher sometimes plans for activation of either prior knowledge or real-world connections, but not both.	Teacher plans for activation of prior knowledge and real-world connections.	AND teacher plans for assessing and building on the prior knowledge and real-world connections for future concepts within the grade level.	AND teacher plans for assessing and building on prior knowledge and real-world connections for future grades.
<b>4. Student Practice and Metacognition</b>	Teacher does not plan instructional time to support metacognitive activity and/or student practice.	Teacher plans instructional time within a lesson to support either metacognitive activity or student practice, but not both.	Teacher plans instructional time within a lesson to support metacognitive activity and student practice, including lesson closure.	AND teacher also plans for structured reflection or strategy selection points during lessons and prompts students to think about their thinking in ways aligned with instructional goals.	AND teacher intentionally embeds metacognitive strategies throughout the lesson (e.g., goal setting, self-monitoring prompts, reflection activities). Plans include varied and scaffolded opportunities for students to develop and apply metacognitive skills across content areas.
<b>5. Curriculum Evaluation and Selection</b>	Teacher does not evaluate, select, or adapts district-provided materials.  Customizations made to materials do not maintain rigor, nor are they intentional and justified to meet students' learning needs.	Teacher selects and adapts district-provided materials but may not ensure alignment with grade-level rigor.  Customizations made to materials are intentional and attempt to meet students' learning needs but may lower rigor.	With consideration for curriculum source, teacher evaluates, selects, and adapts district-provided materials, including teacher-designed lessons, to align with grade-level rigor.  Any adjustments made to the materials maintain rigor.	AND teacher evaluates, selects and adapts district-provided materials in response to students' needs while maintaining rigor.	AND teacher can explain how each resource used supports coherence, rigor, and long-term learning goals across units.

## APPLICABLE FOR ALL TEACHERS.

D1.B Instructional Internalization: Is the instructional plan skillfully and accurately internalized in a way that sets students up for engaging, rigorous content?

	Level 1 Improvement Needed	Level 2 Developing	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Accomplished	Level 5 Distinguished
<b>1. Lesson Internalization</b>	<p>Teacher does not prepare for instruction.</p> <p>Teacher does not use applicable district-approved tools for internalization.</p>	<p>Teacher sometimes prepares for instruction by reviewing lesson components and selecting appropriate embedded supports through occasional use of applicable district approved tools for internalization.</p>	<p>Teacher prepares for instruction by reviewing and pacing lesson components, completing tasks and assessments, and selecting appropriate embedded supports, through consistent use of applicable district approved tools for internalization.</p>	<p>AND teacher rehearses lesson delivery and anticipates students' misconceptions through consistent use of applicable district approved tools for internalization.</p>	<p>AND teacher uses internalization to articulate clear success criteria, exemplar responses, and aligned assessment opportunities that drive purposeful instruction.</p>
<b>2. Scope and Sequence Pacing</b>	<p>Teacher is behind instructional pacing for year, resulting in significant gaps in coverage of grade-level standards and expectations.</p>	<p>Teacher follows a pacing schedule that ensures most grade-level standards and expectations are addressed during the year.</p>	<p>Teacher follows a pacing schedule that ensures all grade-level standards and expectations are addressed during the year.</p>	<p>AND teacher maintains pacing throughout the year and plans for opportunities for just-in-time supports.</p>	<p>AND teacher pacing allows for opportunities to close already existing instructional gaps for students.</p>
<b>3. Adjustments while Maintaining Rigor</b>	<p>Teacher does not analyze student work and data (formative, summative, anecdotal) to make purposeful adjustments.</p> <p>Any adjustments made to materials do not maintain rigor, nor are they intentional and justified to meet students' learning needs.</p>	<p>Teacher analyzes student work and data (formative, summative, anecdotal) to make adjustments, but the adjustments may not support all learners, maintain the rigor of the lesson, or maintain coherence of science of learning principles.</p>	<p>Teacher analyzes student work and data (formative, summative, anecdotal) to make purposeful adjustments to the instructional approaches, strategies, content, or pacing of upcoming instruction to support all learners.</p> <p>Adjustments maintain the rigor of the lesson and maintain coherence of science of learning principles in district-approved curriculum.</p>	<p>AND adjustments anticipate student needs and address learning barriers while maintaining the rigor of the lesson.</p>	<p>AND adjustments ensure instruction addresses students' strengths and gaps in knowledge, experiences, or skills while maintaining the rigor of the lesson.</p>

## APPLICABLE FOR ALL TEACHERS.

D1.C Supporting All Learners: Does the instructional plan reflect knowledge of learner variability in the class, and does it support all learners?

	Level 1 Improvement Needed	Level 2 Developing	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Accomplished	Level 5 Distinguished
1. Planned Differentiation	Teacher does not plan for differentiation in the lesson.	Teacher plans for differentiation, but the rigor of standards-aligned instruction may be lowered.	Teacher plans differentiation that maintains the rigor of standards-aligned instruction and meets the diverse needs of learners, including students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, and emergent bilingual students.	AND planned differentiation addresses content, process, and product to address the varied needs of diverse learners.	AND teacher refines and adjusts the planned differentiation to meet the needs of the diverse learners across the year.
2. Evidence Based Support	Teacher does not plan for the use of evidence-based supports to meet the diverse needs of learners.	Teacher plans the use of supports to meet the diverse needs of learners, but they may not be evidence-based.	Teacher plans the use of evidence-based supports (including multiple means of engagement, representation, and/or expression) to meet the diverse needs of learners.	AND teacher evaluates the effectiveness of the supports used to meet the needs of diverse learners.	AND teacher refines and adjusts the supports used to meet the needs of the diverse learners.
3. Adjusting Instruction with Colleagues	Teacher does not partner with colleagues to collaboratively meet the needs of diverse learners within the lesson.	Teacher inconsistently meets with colleagues to discuss the needs of diverse learners within the lesson.	Teacher partners with colleagues (e.g., special education, ESL, bilingual) to collaboratively meet the needs of diverse learners within the lesson.	AND teacher collects student work and data connected to the usage of individual supports.	AND teacher proactively contributes to the refinement of the individual supports (e.g., IEPs, linguistic accommodations) informed by student work/data collected during instruction.

## Domain 2: Instructional Delivery

### D2.A Instructional Alignment: Are students engaging in rigorous, well paced learning, aligned to the developed lesson?

	Level 1 Improvement Needed	Level 2 Developing	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Accomplished	Level 5 Distinguished
<b>1. Alignment to Objective</b>	Teacher does not provide instruction aligned to the rigor of the objective and standards.	Teacher provides instruction aligned to the objective and standards but below the expected rigor.	Teacher provides instruction aligned to the objective and standards at the expected level of rigor.	AND students can explain the lesson and objectives.	AND students also make connections to the lesson and objective to previous learning and other content areas.
<b>2. Pacing and Structure</b>	Teacher does not follow the planned lesson structure or pacing, resulting in missed instructional objectives and confusion for students.	Teacher attempts to follow the lesson plan but may deviate from pacing or structure in ways that limit instructional effectiveness or student understanding.	Teacher maintains pacing and lesson structure aligned to the purpose of the lesson and progress towards student mastery of the objective.	AND teacher makes in-the-moment adjustments that maintain the instructional flow and respond to student needs without compromising learning objectives.	AND lesson pacing allows sufficient time for instruction, student engagement, and reflection.
<b>3. Questions and Tasks</b>	Teacher does not use appropriate tasks and questioning strategies, or questions do not build and deepen student understanding.	Teacher uses tasks and questioning strategies, but they are limited in their ability to deepen or build student understanding.	Teacher uses rigorous, meaningful, standard-aligned tasks and questioning strategies, aligned to the lesson, to build and deepen student understanding.  Students respond to teacher-initiated questions in a way that demonstrates understanding.	AND students provide rationale to support their answers and respond to other student's responses when applicable.	AND students generate and discuss additional questions that further deepen and expand student understanding.
<b>4. Instructional and Individualized Supports</b>	Teacher does not provide a progression of instructional and individualized supports or uses supports that reduce the rigor of instruction.	Teacher implements instructional and individualized supports but without a clear purpose.	Teacher appropriately implements a progression of instructional and individualized supports (scaffolding, flexible grouping, Specially Designed Instruction [SDI], etc.) to support learning.	AND teacher adjusts instructional and individualized supports based on student progress.	AND students identify when they need additional instructional and individualized supports and which supports to use as a strategy.

D2.B Instructional Content: Are all students learning accurate content through research and evidence-based instructional strategies?

	Level 1 Improvement Needed	Level 2 Developing	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Accomplished	Level 5 Distinguished
<b>1. Content Knowledge and Academic Language</b>	Teacher does not accurately teach academic language and/or content knowledge.	Teacher sometimes teaches academic language and content knowledge with some minor inaccuracies.	Teacher uses precise academic language and accurately teaches content knowledge.  Students use precise academic language and symbols with teacher prompting and/or support.	AND students use appropriate academic language, symbols, and/or labeling without prompting.	AND students independently use academic language purposefully and precisely, enhancing reasoning, explanations, and peer interactions.
<b>2. Prior Knowledge</b>	Teacher does not activate or connect to prior knowledge.	Teacher activates prior knowledge but does not connect to it.	Teacher activates and connects to prior knowledge, including opportunities for retrieval.	AND teacher responds to students' errors in retrieval with feedback	AND teacher ensures that retrieval opportunities intended to activate prior knowledge include all students and are low stakes.
<b>3. Clarity of Instruction</b>	Teacher delivery of instruction is unclear and does not consider the limitations of working memory.	Teacher delivers instruction with clarity but does not consider the limitations of working memory.	Teacher delivers instruction with clarity and consideration for cognitive load through strategies such as explicit modeling and standards-aligned think-aloud strategies.	AND teacher anticipates and intentionally addresses moments of student misconception.	AND students remain focused on the core learning of the lesson objective, using the teacher's modeling to apply strategies on their own and make connections without prompts.
<b>4. Student Practice and Cognitive Work</b>	Teacher provides little to no opportunities for student practice.	Teacher provides opportunities for practice but engages a limited selection of the class throughout the lesson.	Teacher provides frequent opportunities for practice using multiple engagement strategies to allow for whole class engagement.  Most students are engaged in the practice and do the cognitive work at the depth required for mastery as called for by the lesson. (81-95%)	Almost all or all students actively engage in practice and do the cognitive work at the depth required for mastery as called for by the lesson in ways that that reveals their thinking, such as explaining reasoning, justifying answers, and interacting meaningfully with peers or tasks. (96% to 100%)	AND students direct their practice with increasing independence, using engagement opportunities to monitor their thinking and adjust their approach without needing prompts.

D2.C Monitoring and Responding to Student Learning: Are all students able to demonstrate student learning with teacher adjustments through formative assessments?

	Level 1 Improvement Needed	Level 2 Developing	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Accomplished	Level 5 Distinguished
1. Student Progress	Student evidence (responses and/or work) indicates little to no students show expected progress towards mastery of grade-level objectives/ standards (less than 20%).	Student evidence (responses and/or work) indicates some students show expected progress towards mastery of grade-level objectives/ standards (21- 60%).	Student evidence (responses or work) indicates most students show expected progress towards mastery of grade-level objectives/ standards (61-80%)	Student evidence (responses or work) indicates almost all students show expected progress towards mastery of grade-level objectives/ standards (81-95%).	Student evidence (responses or work) indicates all students show expected progress towards mastery of grade-level objectives/ standards (96-100%).
2. Checks for Understanding	Teacher does not check for understanding during the lesson.	Teacher checks for understanding using a single method and/or in limited instances during the lesson.	Teacher deliberately checks for understanding through questioning, student work tasks, and formative assessments throughout the lesson.	AND teacher uses information gathered in the checks for understanding to provide feedback and address misconceptions.	AND students use feedback to refine their understanding and make progress towards mastery.
3. Monitoring and Responding	Teacher does not monitor student work.	Teacher monitors student work but focuses mainly on surface-level observations without analyzing responses.	Teacher actively monitors student work and analyzes responses, verbal and/or written.	AND teacher makes adjustments in response to student learning to build upon and strengthen current student understanding.	AND students monitor their own learning and can articulate gaps in understanding during the lesson.

## Domain 3: Learning Environment

### D3.A Efficient Routines: Is the classroom environment structured to support efficient routines, smooth transitions, and maximized instructional time?

	Level 1 Improvement Needed	Level 2 Developing	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Accomplished	Level 5 Distinguished
<b>1. Classroom Management</b>	Teacher does not implement district, campus, and/or classroom behavior system.  Few or no students follow expectations.	Teacher inconsistently implements district, campus, and/or classroom behavior system.  Students require substantial redirection to follow expectations.	Teacher establishes and implements district, campus, and/or classroom behavior systems effectively and responds to student misbehavior with minimal disruption to instruction.  Students follow expectations with positive teacher reinforcement.	AND behavior systems are established and implemented to mastery, providing scaffolds to support student behavior regulation skills.  AND students efficiently follow expectations with minimal reinforcement from the teacher.	AND students follow the behavior systems with minimal redirection, use behavior regulations when appropriate, and when appropriate, encourage their peers to execute behavior systems and use behavior regulation skills.
<b>2. Classroom Environment</b>	Teacher does not ensure that the classroom environment is safe.	Teacher ensures that the classroom environment is safe but does not consistently provide an accessible or organized space to support learning.	Teacher ensures that the classroom environment is safe, accessible, and organized to support learning.	AND teacher ensures that the classroom environment allows students to efficiently navigate the space	AND teacher ensures that the classroom environment fosters student independence.
<b>3. Routines and Maximizing Instructional Time</b>	Teacher does not plan for or manage instructional time, leaving students idle for portions of the lesson.  Students do not execute transitions, routines, and procedures.	Teacher does not adequately plan for instructional time, leaving most students idle for one or two minutes at a time.  Students execute transitions, routines, and procedures but need ongoing teacher prompting and support to do so.	Teacher plans for and manages instructional time.  Students execute transitions, routines, and procedures in an efficient manner that maximizes instructional time.	AND teacher monitors instructional time during the lesson and makes slight adjustments to maintain pacing.  AND students execute transitions, routines, and procedures independently.	AND students assume responsibility for transitions routines and procedures and execute them in an orderly, efficient, and self-directed manner.

### D3.B Student Persistence: Is the classroom environment designed to encourage student persistence?

	Level 1 Improvement Needed	Level 2 Developing	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Accomplished	Level 5 Distinguished
<b>1. Expectations for Behavior and Learning</b>	Teacher does not communicate nor reinforce goals and expectations for student learning and behavior.	Teacher communicates goals for student learning but does not reinforce grade-level appropriate expectations for learning.	Teacher communicates goals for student learning and reinforces grade-level appropriate expectations for learning and behavior.  Students meet appropriate expectations for learning and behavior.	AND teacher establishes systems that communicate goals and reinforces grade-level appropriate expectations for learning and behavior.  AND students demonstrate self-monitoring of their behavior and learning goals.	AND students take ownership of their behavior and learning by holding themselves—and, when appropriate, each other—accountable.
<b>2. Student Engagement</b>	Students passively listen to the lesson but may not be active participants.	Students actively listen to the lesson.	Students actively listen to and participate in the lesson as initiated by the teacher.	AND students actively engage in the lesson through independently completing instructional tasks, volunteering responses, and/or asking appropriate questions.	AND students demonstrate initiative in problem solving and adapt strategies to maintain progress toward learning goals and engagement in the lesson.

## Domain 4: Professional Practices and Responsibilities

### D4.A Professional Behavior: Does the teacher meet district expectations for procedural, ethical, legal and statutory responsibilities?

<b>1. Laws and Policies</b>	Does the teacher meet expectations of all applicable federal, state, and local laws and policies (including, but not limited to, the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators) pertaining to the professional behaviors and responsibilities of educators?				If yes, proceed to rate the remaining indicators in this dimension, 2-5.  If no, this dimension receives level 1.
	<b>Level 1 Improvement Needed</b>	<b>Level 2 Developing</b>	<b>Level 3 Proficient</b>	<b>Level 4 Accomplished</b>	<b>Level 5 Distinguished</b>
<b>2. Safe, Ethical, and Legal Practices with Technology</b>	Teacher does not employ safe, ethical, and/or legal practices with digital tools and technology.	Teacher employs most, but not all, safe, ethical, and legal practices with digital tools and technology and, when applicable, models them for students.	Teacher employs safe, ethical, and legal practices with digital tools and technology and, when applicable, models them for students.	AND teacher remains informed of evolving technologies and how to implement them in a safe and ethical way.	AND teacher actively builds systems and safeguards in for the use of technology and emerging technologies into their practices with students in their classrooms.
<b>3. Accurate Records</b>	Teacher does not maintain records.	Teacher maintains records that are not thorough or accurate.	Teacher maintains thorough and accurate records with occasional prompting or reminders.	AND teacher maintains thorough and accurate records independently.	AND teacher supports students by applying knowledge of their progress and learning plans through records.
<b>4. Campus and District Systems</b>	Teacher does not consistently implement campus and district systems.	Teacher implements most, but not all, campus and district systems.	Teacher implements campus and district systems with rare prompting or reminders.	AND teacher implements campus and district systems independently.	AND teacher serves as a resource when necessary for peers on how to implement campus and district systems.
<b>5. Instructional Collaboration</b>	Teacher does not collaborate with colleagues to improve instructional practices and student outcomes.	Teacher occasionally collaborates with colleagues to improve instructional practices and student outcomes.	Teacher collaborates with colleagues to improve instructional practices and student outcomes.	AND teacher actively contributes to collaboration with colleagues to improve instructional practices and outcomes.	AND teacher initiates meaningful collaboration with colleagues to improve instructional practices and student outcomes.

**D4.B Goal Setting, Self-Reflection, and Professional Development: Does the teacher reflect on instructional practice and set goals for professional development?**

	Level 1 Improvement Needed	Level 2 Developing	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Accomplished	Level 5 Distinguished
<b>1. Professional Goal Setting</b>	Teacher does not set and meet short- and long-term professional goals.	Teacher sets and meets short-term professional goals.	Teacher sets and meets short- and long-term professional goals based on reflection, supervisor feedback, and student learning data.	AND teacher adjusts short- and long-term goals based on self-assessment.	AND teacher also uses peer feedback and contemporary research to set, adjust, and meet short- and long-term goals.
<b>2. Professional Development</b>	Teacher does not engage in professional development.	Teacher engages in professional development, but it is not targeted to improve practice or support school improvement.	Teacher regularly engages in professional development, including curriculum-specific and job-embedded trainings, to improve practice and support school improvement.	AND teacher actively contributes in the development of professional development.	AND teacher leads colleagues in recognizing and identifying professional needs.
<b>3. Professional Learning Collaboration</b>	Teacher does not attend regular collaboration structures.	Teacher attends regular collaboration structures but may not always be an active participant.	Teacher engages in regular collaboration structures such as professional learning communities, grade or subject collaborations, committees, etc.	AND teacher actively contributes in regular collaboration structures.	AND teacher takes on leadership opportunities on campus through grade- or -subject-level team leadership, committee membership, or other opportunities.

**D4.C Communication and Partnership: Does the teacher demonstrate leadership with parents and families?**

	Level 1 Improvement Needed	Level 2 Developing	Level 3 Proficient	Level 4 Accomplished	Level 5 Distinguished
<b>1. Instructional Engagement</b>	Teacher does not communicate with or engage parents, guardians, and families.	Teacher communicates with parents, guardians, and families, but the communication may be limited to students' non-academic growth.	Teacher communicates with and engages parents, guardians, and families to support students' academic and non-academic growth.	AND teachers provides feedback and solicits input from parents, guardians, and families.	AND teacher partners with parents, guardians, and families by sharing timely, clear, and actionable feedback to support student academic and non-academic growth.
<b>2. Campus Engagement</b>	Teacher does not communicate the mission, vision, and goals of the school to students, parents, and families.	Teacher communicates the mission, vision, and goals of the school to students but not to parents and families.	Teacher communicates the mission, vision, and goals of the school to students, parents, and families.	AND teacher works with students, colleagues, parents, families, and other community members in actively working toward the school's mission, vision, and goals.	AND teacher leads students, colleagues, parents, families, and other community members in actively working toward the school's mission, vision, and goals.