



# T-TESS Stakeholder Engagement Report

*March 2026*

# Agenda

Stakeholder Engagement Purpose

Stakeholder Representation and Engagement Approach

Summary of Findings

Impact on Rubric and System Refinement

# Stakeholder Engagement Purpose

# Principles Guiding the T-TESS Refresh Process

## Standards Alignment

- Align the rubric and the T-TESS system with the updated Educator Standards and incorporate research-based practices.

## Addressing Pain/Pinch Points

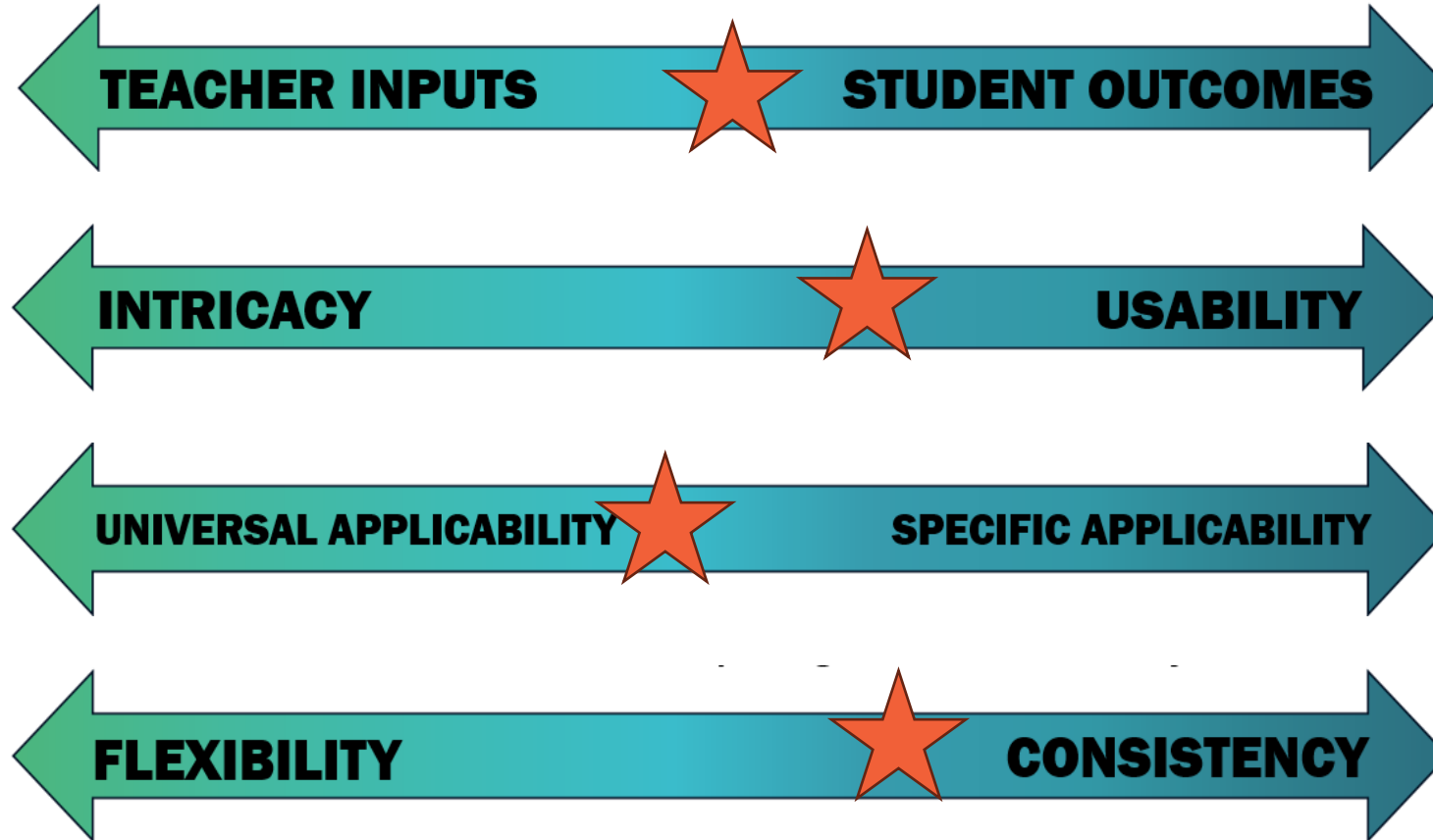
- Navigate and positively address current pain and pinch points in the current T-TESS rubric/system, including:
  - Reducing subjectivity
  - Increasing universal applicability
  - Prioritizing and streamlining indicators

## Change Management

- Support a change management process and continuity by creating a largely effective and widely used tool.
- Recognize the current strengths of T-TESS and maintain the integrity of the current system.

# T-TESS Key Design Decisions

The updated T-TESS rubric skillfully balances key design tensions, allowing for a meaningful experience for teachers and a streamlined process for appraisers.



# Additional Design Considerations

- TIA Alignment: Maintain Rigor
- Incorporation of Student Growth Measures
- Rubric Structure: Performance Levels
- Monitoring the Scope of Updates
- Validity and Reliability



# Stakeholder Representation and Engagement Approach

# Who We Engaged

We partnered with representative committees, district leaders, and field-testing teams to ensure diverse educator perspectives and targeted feedback.

Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC)

Teacher Leadership Fellowship Committee (TLF)

ESC Leads


Field Testing Districts

# Stakeholder Advisory Committee: Fast Facts


**Selected from 1,352 applicants, 30 members representing every region state-wide brought deep classroom and leadership expertise to guide this work.**

- 1,352 total applications to the committee.
- The **30 selected committee members** make up 2% of the total applicants.
  - Selected committee members represent every region of the state.
  - 50% of committee members are teachers.
  - 66% of committee members are based on a campus.
  - 77% of committee members work in a school district.
  - 23% of committee members play active leadership role in the education field outside of a school district.
- Modeled after the Teacher Leadership Fellowship Committee (TLF)

# Role of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee

 **Inform Field Testing and Data Collection:** Provide insights to refine the evaluation tool and system based on educator and district leader feedback

 **Support Implementation of the T-TESS Refresh:** Provide feedback on proposed rubrics, the appraisal system, and related resources

 **Foster Transparency and Buy-in:** Facilitate communication between TEA, educators, and key education organizations to build awareness and support for the refreshed T-TESS rubric.

We engaged **42 teachers** from every district across the state as part of the TLF. Their diverse perspectives, spanning grade levels, location, and content areas, helped shape and ground our work in real classroom experience.

- 25-26 Cohort Fast Facts:
  - 42 members, representing all 20 districts
  - Teachers across all grade bands: Elementary, Middle & High School
  - Broad geographic diversity, including rural, suburban, city, large urban, independent town & charter settings
  - Expertise across key early-grade areas: Early Childhood, SPED, ELAR, Math & Bilingual education
  - Deep content expertise in upper grades, including English, Math, SPED, SS/History, Bilingual, Generalist areas & Specials

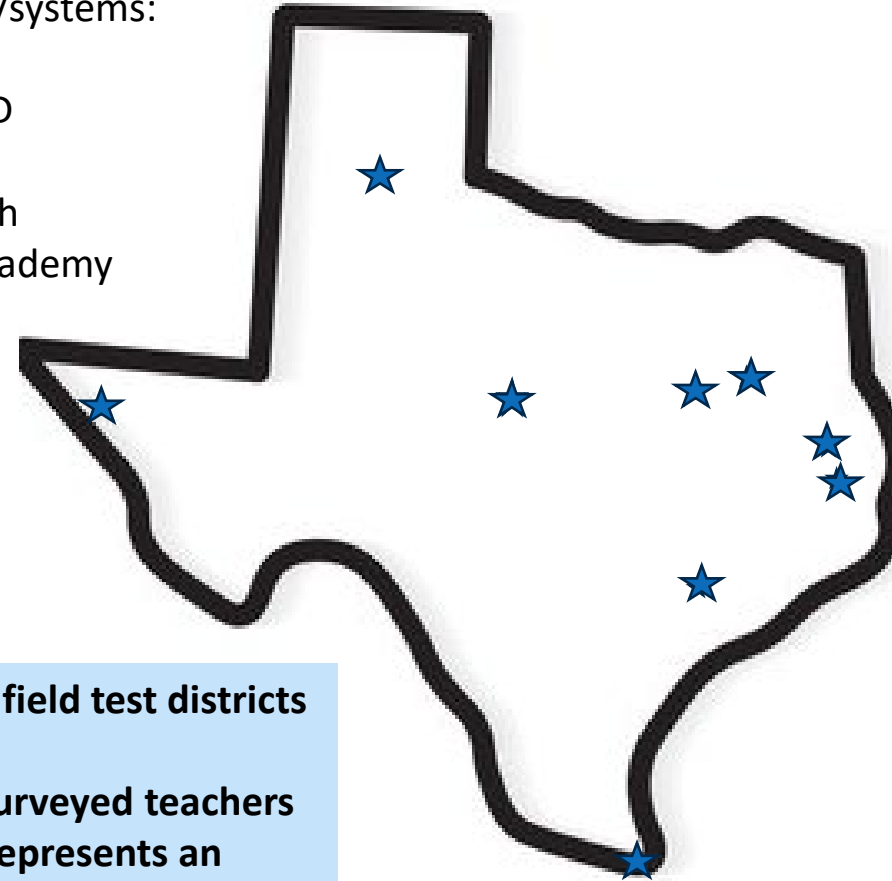
# The refresh team engaged regional, district, and teacher leaders from across the state through 10 field test site visits.

In 2025, the team Field Tested **version 7 of the rubric** in the following districts/systems:

- Clint ISD
- Brownsville ISD
- Klein ISD
- East Fort Worth Montessori Academy

In 2026, the team Field Tested **version 8 of the rubric** in the following districts/ systems:

- Legacy Preparatory Academy
- Amarillo ISD
- Lone Star Online Academy
- Nacogdoches ISD
- North East ISD
- Lufkin ISD



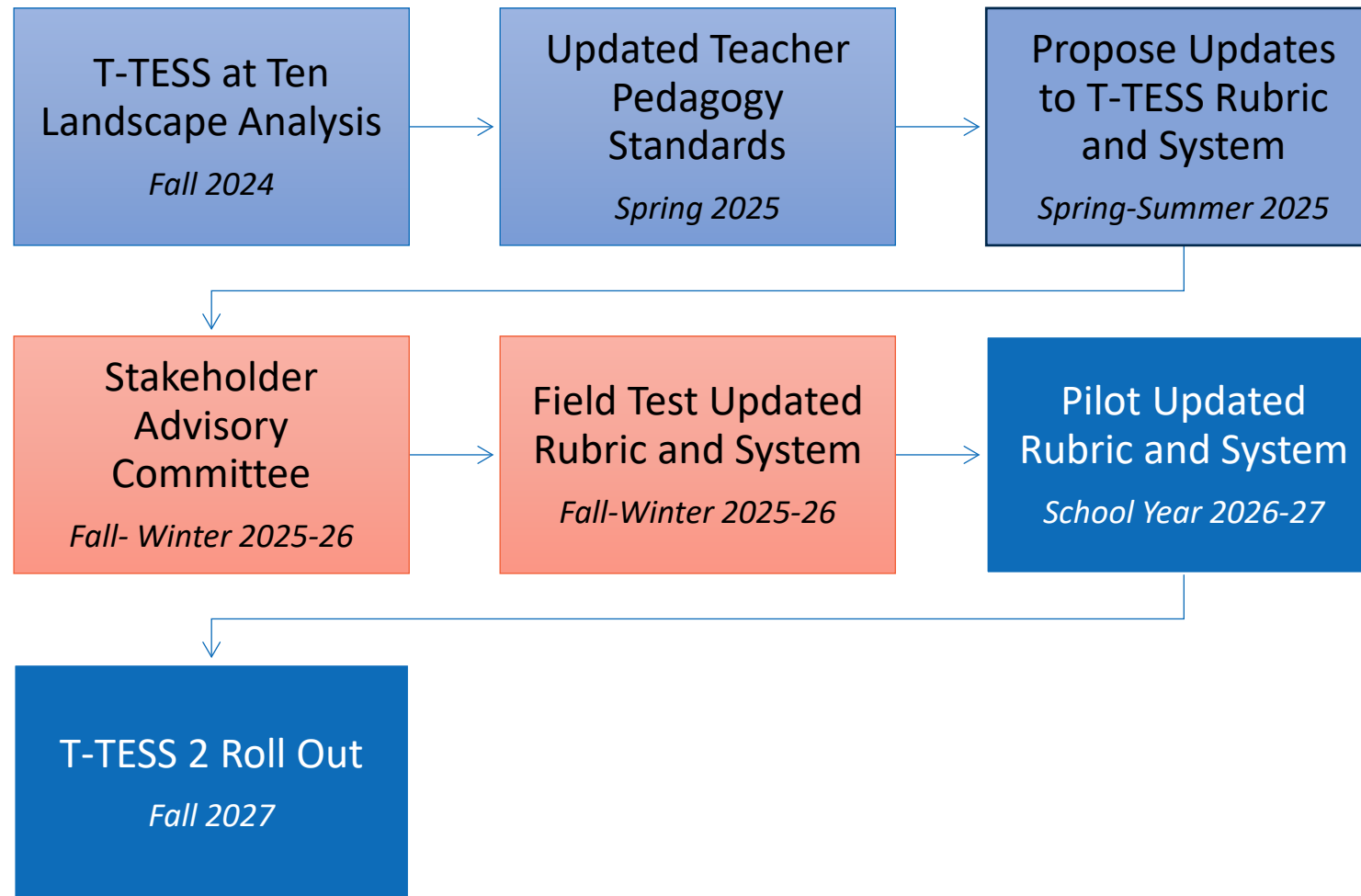
Survey data from field test districts indicates that:

- Over 80% of surveyed teachers feel T-TESS 2 represents an improvement over the current T-TESS rubric.

## T-TESS 2 Field Testing Overview

- Districts across the state were invited to join as Field Test partners through statewide communication.
- 10 classroom observations conducted over two days, each lasting 20–30 minutes with 2–4 observers present.
- Joint observation team (TNTP, TEA, ESC 13) partners with district and school leaders observed teaching and gathered feedback.
  - Educator feedback collected through surveys, debrief conversations, and optional focus groups to assess rubric clarity, fairness, and usability.
- District partnership & logistics support, including planning meetings, coordinating classroom access, and supporting teacher/appraiser participation.

# Stakeholder Engagement Timeline



# Approach: How We Engaged Stakeholders

## Broad Data Collection

- Surveys
- Written Feedback
- Observation Rating Analysis

## Conversations & Feedback

- Interviews & Focus Groups
- Facilitated Committee Discussions

## Applied Field Testing

- Calibration Activities
- Field Testing Observations & Reflections

## Iterative Refinement

- Targeted feedback on draft revisions
- Follow-up conversations to confirm alignment

## Broad Data Collection

- Surveys
  - Post-Field Test Surveys (Teachers)
  - Post-Field Test Surveys (District Representatives)
  - Post-Meeting Surveys (Stakeholder Advisory Committee)
  - ESC-13 T-TESS Surveys (Teachers and Appraisers, 2024 & 2025)
- Written Feedback
- Observation Rating Analysis

## Conversations & Feedback

- Interviews & Focus Groups
  - T-TESS Appraisers
  - Field Test Teachers
  - Field Test District/Campus Representatives
- Facilitated Committee Discussions
  - Stakeholder Advisory Committee
  - Internal Targeted TEA Engagement

## Applied Field Testing

- Calibration Activities
  - Rubric Calibration using Videos
  - Review for Rigor
- Field Testing Observations & Reflections
  - Live Classroom Observations
  - Post-Observation

## Iterative Refinement

- Targeted Feedback on Successive Drafts
- Follow-Up Conversations to Validate Revisions

# Summary of Findings

# Methodology: Data Sources

## Survey Data

- Post-Field Test Surveys (Teachers)
- Post-Field Test Surveys (District Representatives)
- Post-Meeting Surveys (Stakeholder Advisory Committee)
- ESC-13 T-TESS Surveys (Teachers and Appraisers, 2024 & 2025)

## Calibration Data

- 20-minute Classroom Observation Ratings for Domains 2 and 3

## Qualitative Data

- Teacher Focus Groups/Interviews
- District Representative Focus Groups/Interviews
- Open-Ended Responses on Surveys
- Open-Ended Responses on Observation Form
- Committee Meetings

# Methodology: Limitations & Considerations

## Study Design Considerations

### No rater training or norming prior to observations

Raters did not receive formal calibration training or participate in norming sessions before scoring, which may have increased variability in ratings.

### Single observation context

Ratings reflect a limited snapshot (~20 minutes) rather than multiple observations across time.

### Field conditions varied across sites

Natural differences in school settings increased validity but introduced variability that could not be fully controlled.

## Sample and Data Considerations

### Small sample size

Because calibration required multiple observers per teacher, the effective sample size was further limited.

### Non-random participation

Participants opted in, which could introduce selection bias.

### Missing or incomplete data

Not all teachers had multiple raters, and not all participants completed the perception surveys.



T-TESS 2 sets a clear bar for effective teaching across school systems and teaching placements.



The T-TESS 2 rubric clearly delineates levels of performance, supporting consistent calibration across schools and school systems.



The T-TESS 2 observation cadence more authentically matches the existing accountability structures within many school systems.



The T-TESS 2 rubric and system supports a coherent teacher experience across school system and state initiatives.



T-TESS 2 sets a clear bar for effective teaching across school systems and teaching placements.

# Stakeholders Report Strong Overall Perception of Rubric

Teachers and Leaders overwhelmingly agree that the updated rubric is strong, reliable, and aligned to the most essential elements of instruction.

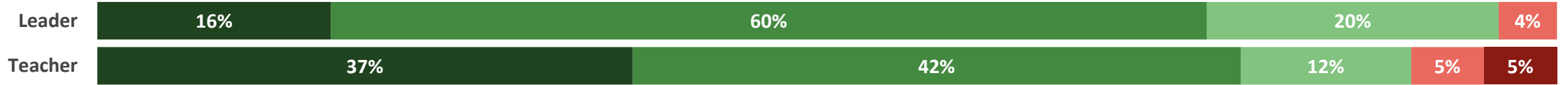
*Overall, I have a positive impression of the updated rubric.*



*I would recommend that school districts across the state adopt this rubric.*



*This rubric captures the most important aspects of teaching.*



*This rubric represents an improvement over the current T-TESS rubric.*



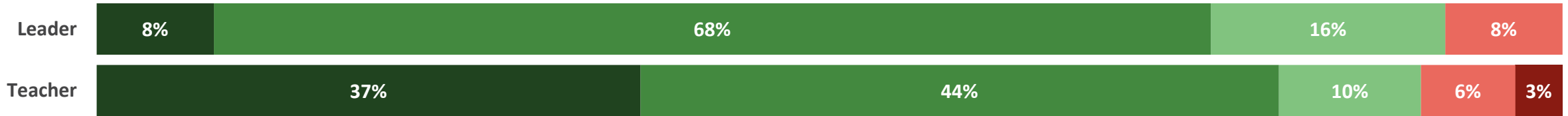
■ Strongly Disagree 
 ■ Disagree 
 ■ Somewhat Disagree 
 ■ Somewhat Agree 
 ■ Agree 
 ■ Strongly Agree



# Rubric Accurately Represents Teaching Across Contexts

Teachers and Leaders agree that the rubric accurately reflects teaching across grades, subjects, and student needs.

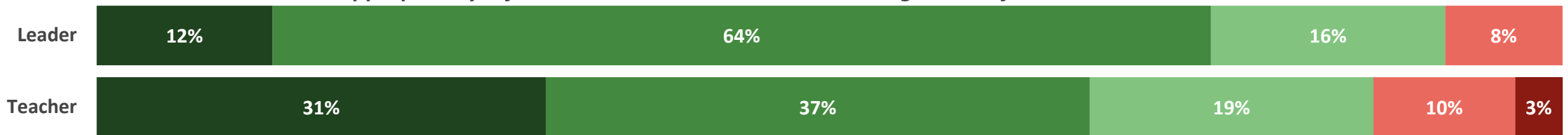
*This rubric appropriately reflects teaching across the grade levels in our district.*



*This rubric appropriately reflects teaching across the subject areas in our district.*



*This rubric appropriately reflects the instructional needs and backgrounds of the students our district serves.*



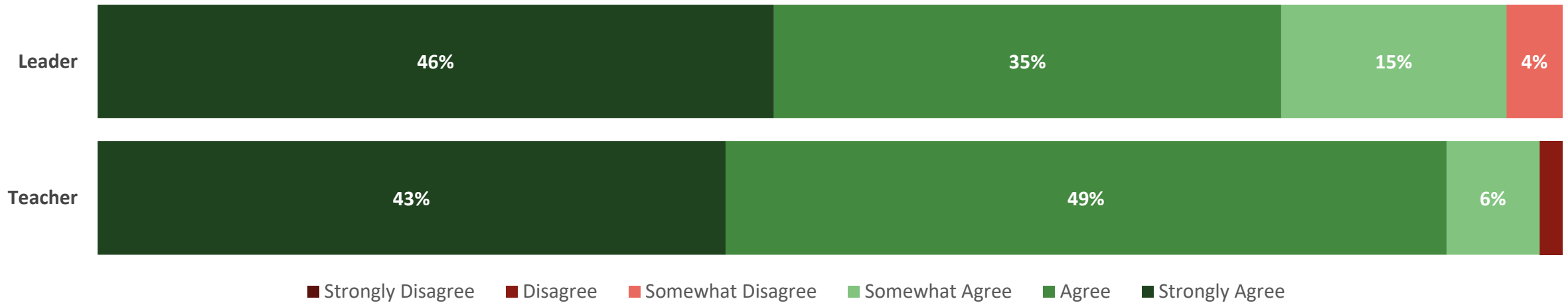
■ Strongly Disagree 
 ■ Disagree 
 ■ Somewhat Disagree 
 ■ Somewhat Agree 
 ■ Agree 
 ■ Strongly Agree



# Rubric Reflects District Instructional Priorities

Feedback confirms that the rubric reflects district priorities for high-quality instruction.

*This rubric aligns with the way my district talks about and values effective teaching.*



# Stakeholders Agree the Rubric Is Clear, Strong, and Effective



"We've taken the guesswork out of the old rubric. This update provides more value because it's easy to follow and clearly defines what high-quality instruction looks like in action."

-Teacher



"I like the focus on maintaining rigor while supporting students."

-Teacher



"I like this rubric. It is easy to follow and understand."

-Teacher

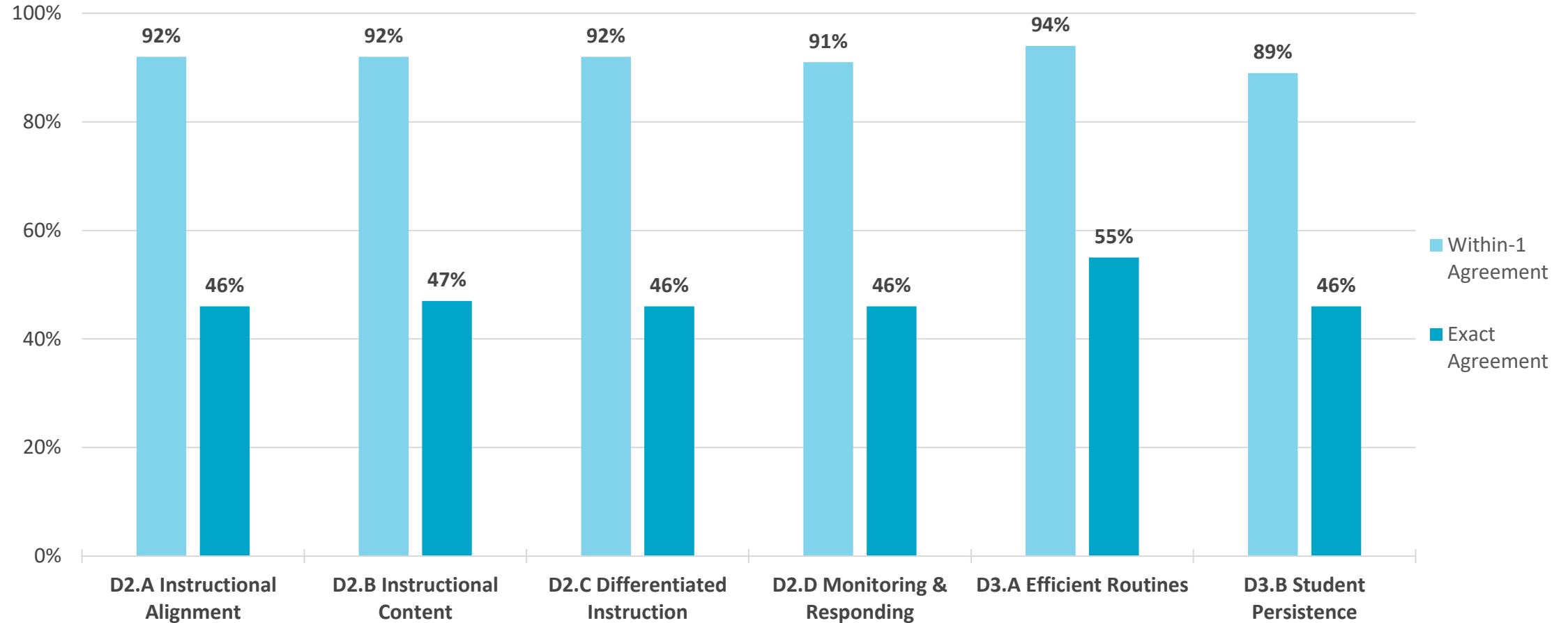




The T-TESS 2 rubric clearly delineates levels of performance, supporting consistent calibration across schools and school systems.

# Calibration Results Show Strong Rater Consistency

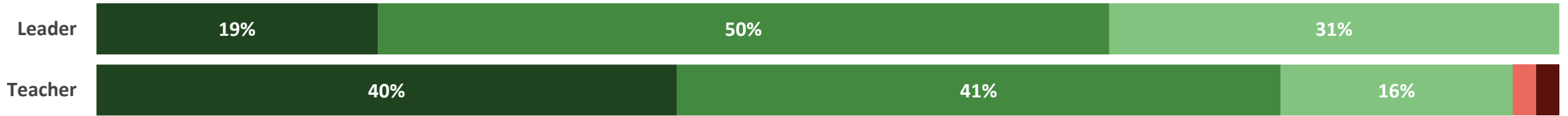
For Rubric Draft 8, calibration results show high consistency across raters, with ~90% of scores within one performance level.



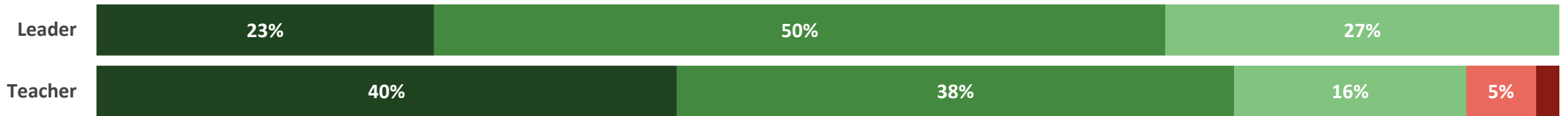
# Rubric Clearly Delineates Performance Levels

Stakeholders agree that the rubric is clear, well-organized, and clearly defines levels of performance.

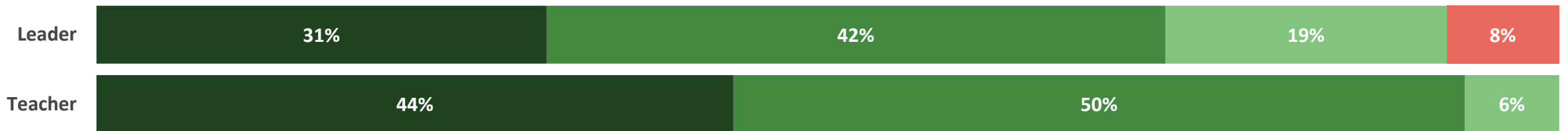
*In this rubric, the differences between performance levels are clear and meaningful.*



*The rubric language is clear and easy to understand.*



*The structure of this rubric (domains, dimensions, indicators, performance levels) is logically organized.*



■ Strongly Disagree  
 ■ Disagree  
 ■ Somewhat Disagree  
 ■ Somewhat Agree  
 ■ Agree  
 ■ Strongly Agree

# Rubric Supports Consistent & Aligned Use Across Contexts

Leaders agree that observers can use the rubric to support consistent, aligned use across contexts.

*With appropriate training, observers can interpret this rubric's language consistently.*



*With appropriate training, observers can apply this rubric reliably.*



Strongly Disagree Disagree Somewhat Disagree Somewhat Agree Agree Strongly Agree

# Rubric Allows for Greater Clarity Amongst Stakeholder

“

"In this rubric, the differences between performance levels are clear and meaningful."

-District Representative

”

“

“This rubric is easier and targets specific, observable skills. With the other rubric, the evaluator and I would interpret the words differently, and I thought I was doing something and they did not think I had met the bar.”

- Teacher


”

“

“I appreciate the greater distinction between distinguished and accomplished. I like the idea of rating each indicator.”

- District Representative

”

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The T-TESS 2 Observation Cadence more authentically matches the existing accountability structures within many school systems

# Conferences Strengthen the Evaluation Process

Stakeholders agree that conferences with the appraiser and teacher are essential components of the evaluation process.

Leaders most strongly favor requiring pre- and post-conferences for every observation (29%), with Teachers close behind (25%).

Both groups show moderate support for making pre-conferences optional but requiring post-conferences for all teachers (Teachers 21%, Leaders 25%).

## Conferences Strengthen the Evaluation Process (Part 2)

Stakeholders agree that conferences with the appraiser and teacher are essential components of the evaluation process.

Leaders most strongly favor requiring pre- and post-conferences for every observation (29%), with Teachers close behind (25%).

Both groups show moderate support for making pre-conferences optional but requiring post-conferences for all teachers (Teachers 21%, Leaders 25%).

# Stakeholders Emphasize Growth-Focused, Fair Evaluation Systems

“

"An ideal, fair, and helpful system for defining and supporting excellent teaching would focus on growth, context, and meaningful impact on students rather than just compliance or test scores."

-Teacher

”

“

"The most important change I would recommend is making the observation process more supportive and growth-focused. Observations should include clear feedback, specific examples, and follow-up support so teachers can use them as opportunities to improve rather than just as evaluations."

- Teacher

”

“

"An ideal system for defining and supporting excellent teaching would be clear, fair, and focused on growth. It would provide specific, realistic expectations, offer constructive feedback and support, and help teachers improve over time."

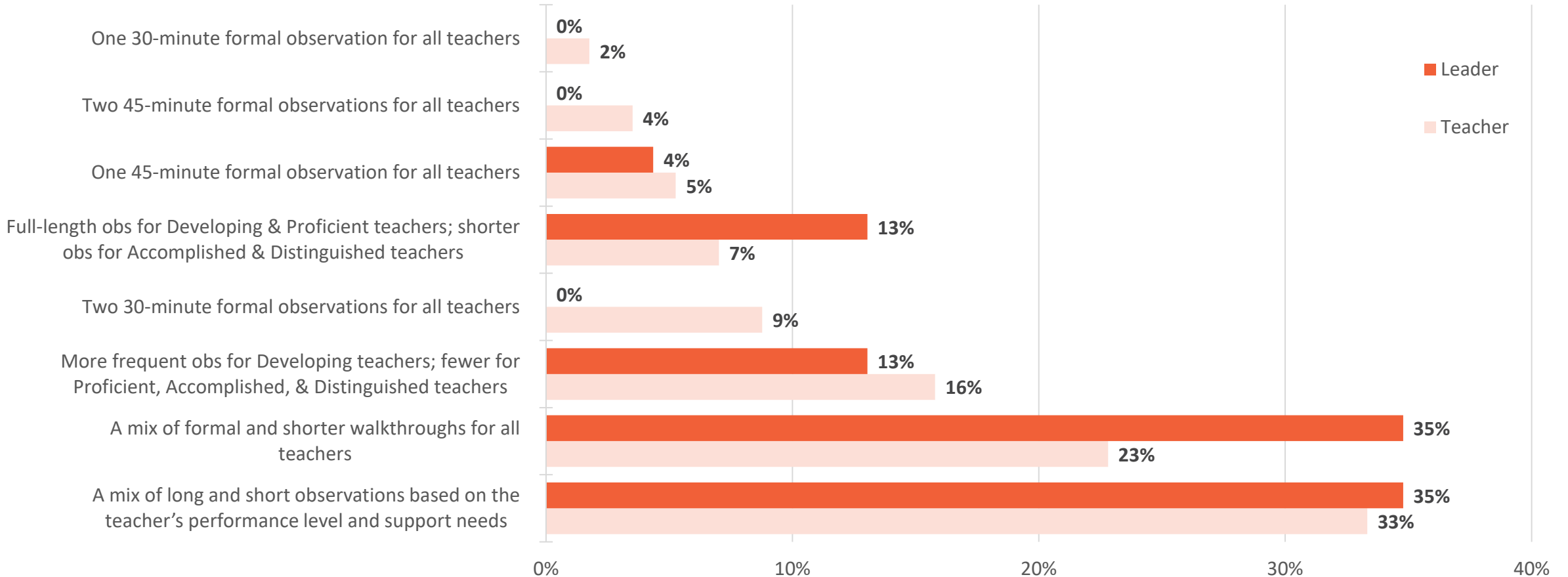
-Teacher

”

# Stakeholders Support Context-Responsive Observation Cadence

Stakeholders support flexible, context-responsive observation cadence evaluation structures.

*In your ideal fair and helpful T-TESS system... How many observations would you include in an evaluation cycle, and how long should each observation be?*





The T-TESS 2 rubric and system supports a coherent teacher experience across school system and state initiatives.

# Rubric Supports Clear Instructional Coherence Across Districts

Leaders confirm clear instructional coherence with existing district practices.

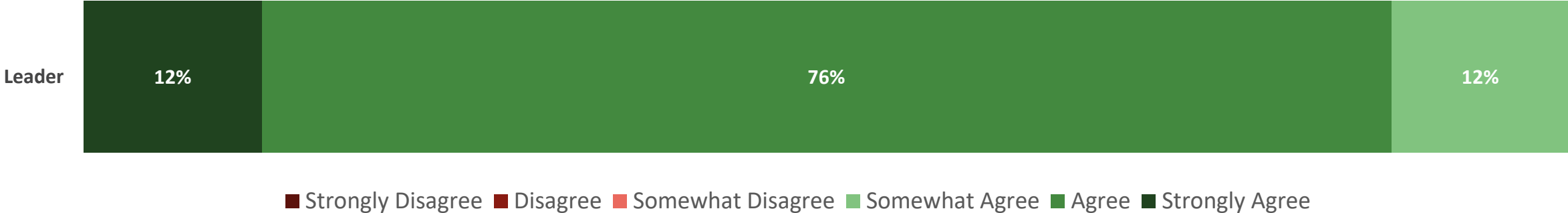
*This rubric aligns with other instructional frameworks/initiatives used in our district.*



# Rubric Supports Coherent System Implementation

Stakeholders highlight the rubric's relevance and coherence with existing school development practices.

*This rubric could be integrated into our current professional development systems.*



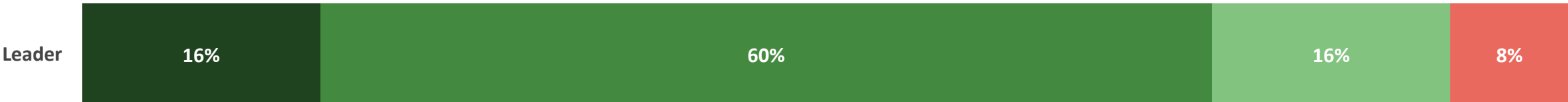
# Rubric Supports a Clear and Coherent Teacher Experience

Leaders agree that the rubric updates support growth, clarity, and coherence.

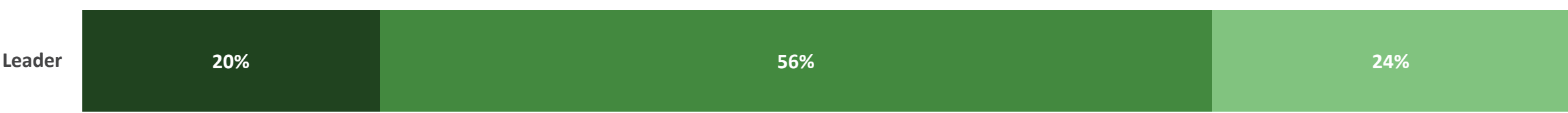
*The performance levels reflect a realistic progression of teacher growth.*



*This rubric provides clear next steps for teacher growth.*



*This rubric supports meaningful coaching conversations.*



Strongly Disagree Disagree Somewhat Disagree Somewhat Agree Agree Strongly Agree



# Rubric Supports Clear and Meaningful Teacher Growth

Teachers agree that the rubric is a realistic and useful tool to support their personal growth.

*In this rubric, the performance levels reflect a realistic progression of teacher growth.*



*This rubric could be a useful tool for self-reflection.*



*This rubric provides clear next steps for improving my teaching.*



*This rubric supports meaningful conversations about my growth as a teacher.*



■ Strongly Disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Somewhat Disagree
 ■ Somewhat Agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Strongly Agree



# Rubric Provides a Clear Path for Ongoing Teacher Growth

“

“The rubric provides a clear understanding of what I am doing well and what I need to improve on, helping me know exactly where to focus in my professional growth as a teacher.”

-Teacher

”

“

"I was very pleased with the rubric and found it to be an empowering tool that inspired me to reflect on my current practice. I was able to read it as a progression of teaching and as a progression of learning opportunities and experiences for my students. It was clear and, while robust, helped me to dig deeper as an educator."

-Teacher

”

“

"The rubric worked very well for 5th grade science, and I wouldn't recommend any changes at this time. It was clear, effective, and easy to follow. I can see myself continuing to grow and improve over the years by consistently using the rubric."

- Teacher

”



# Stakeholder Engagement Impact on Rubric and System Refinement

# How did stakeholder engagement inform the refresh process?

## Rubric Language Refinement

- **Internal TEA Alignment:** Adjacent TEA teams have provided significant support in language review and alignment throughout the process, including key changes to ensure alignment between T-TESS and the LIFT observation feedback tool in December. Science of Learning and OSSPS also contributed inputs on refinement.
- **Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC):** The SAC reviewed draft 6 of the rubric at the beginning of November, draft 7 at the end of November and Draft 8 in February. After each review, the SAC reported greater confidence in the direction of T-TESS and the T-TESS rubric.
- **Field Testing:** In December, 4 school systems applied the language of draft 6 to their classroom settings to test that the language of the rubric could accurately account for the instruction in a variety of classrooms. In January and February, 6 additional school systems tested the language of draft 8. The real time feedback informed language refinement to ensure for rubric applicability and for clear evidence collection.



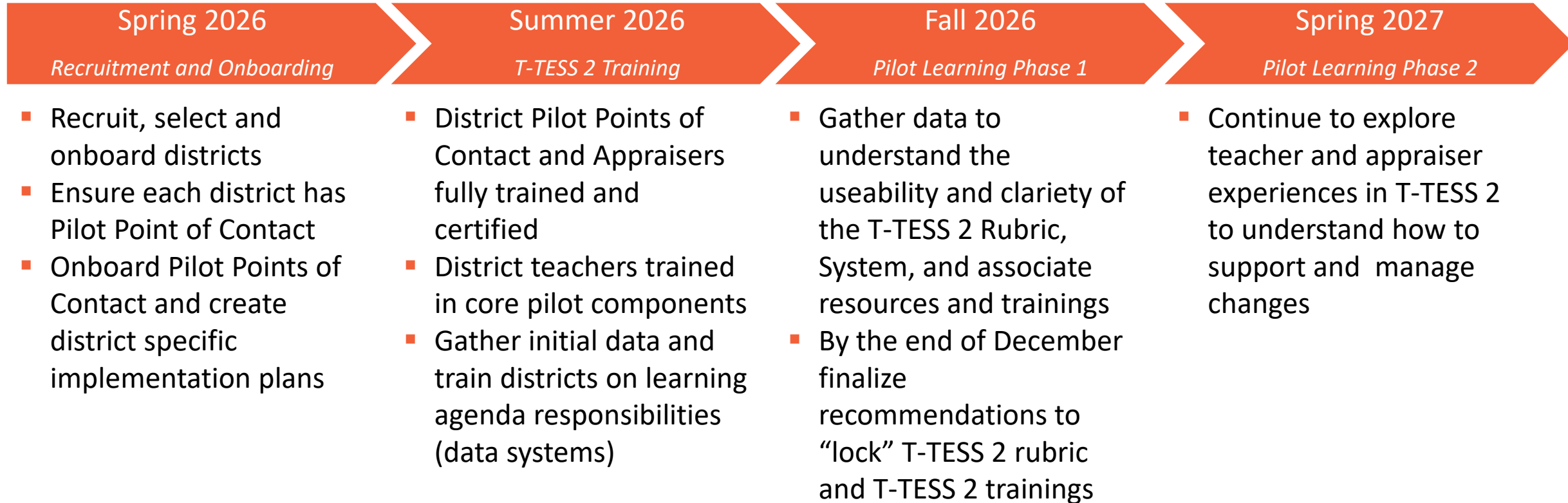
# Conclusion and Next Steps



# Current T-TESS and T-TESS 2 Domain Structure Comparison

Current Structure (16 dimensions)	T-TESS 2 Structure (11 dimensions)
<p>Domain 1: Planning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Standards and Alignment</li> <li>2) Data and Assessment</li> <li>3) Knowledge of Students</li> <li>4) Activities</li> </ol>	<p>Domain 1: Instructional Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1A - Lesson Design <b>(Only if applicable for teachers not using SBOE-approved HQIM materials)</b></li> <li>• 1B – Instructional Internalization</li> <li>• 1C - Supporting All Learners</li> </ul>
<p>Domain 2: Instruction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Achieving Expectations</li> <li>2) Content Knowledge and Expertise</li> <li>3) Communication</li> <li>4) Differentiation</li> <li>5) Monitor and adjust</li> </ol>	<p>Domain 2: Instructional Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2A – Instructional Alignment</li> <li>• 2B – Instructional Content</li> <li>• 2C – Monitoring and Responding to Student Learning</li> </ul>
<p>Domain 3: Learning Environment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures</li> <li>2) Managing Student Behavior</li> <li>3) Classroom Culture</li> </ol>	<p>Domain 3: Learning Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3A – Efficient Routines</li> <li>• 3B – Student Persistence</li> </ul>
<p>Domain 4: Professional Practices and Responsibilities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Professional Demeanor and Ethics</li> <li>2) Goal Setting</li> <li>3) Professional Development</li> <li>4) School Community Involvement</li> </ol>	<p>Domain 4: Professional Practices and Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4A - Professional Behavior</li> <li>• 4B - Goal Setting, Self-Reflection, and Professional Development</li> <li>• 4C – Communication and Partnership</li> </ul>

# High Level Pilot Timeline



# T-TESS 2 Pilot Overview: What we need to answer

During the 2026-27 school year, school systems across the state will engage in a year-long pilot of the full T-TESS 2 evaluation system (rubric, training, observation cycle) with the goal of confirming coherence with district/ state priorities, strengthening teacher growth supports, and ensuring fair/ trusted recognition of teaching.

## Learning Priorities

### Defining Excellent Teaching

Do teachers and appraisers see coherence between the rubric and their district priorities?

Are the intended definitions of excellent teaching aligned with other statewide measures?

How is this work connected to other TEA initiatives? What practices/procedures need to be in place?

### Supporting Teachers

Does the full evaluation process (rubric + training + observation cycle) provide actionable feedback that helps teachers improve practice?

What resources and supports (training, calibration, coaching) are most critical to ensure usability and growth?

How sustainable is the process for appraisers and districts at scale?

### Recognize and Rewarding

How do districts and the state use evaluation results to identify, recognize, and retain excellent teachers?

How does T-TESS impact TIA?