

ALAMO  
HEIGHTS  
INDEPENDENT  
SCHOOL  
DISTRICT



Teacher  
Appraisal  
Process

2017-  
2018



**ALAMO HEIGHTS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**TEACHER APPRAISAL PROCESS**

**General Provisions**

Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, teachers in AHISD shall be evaluated using a locally developed appraisal system that includes components of the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS). Designed by Texas educators, education leaders, and policy experts in 2013-2014 and piloted by 57 Texas districts in 2014-2015, the T-TESS evaluation system and process has been refined so that it reflects the experiences, recommendations and ongoing feedback from districts and campus practitioners. T-TESS aligns with the Texas Teacher Standards (TAC, Chapter 149, Section 149.1001) and is intended to be used for continuous professional growth through ongoing feedback and support which results in refinement of knowledge, skills, and practices that ultimately impact student performance.

The two components of T-TESS included in the AHISD appraisal system are:

1. **Goal-setting and Professional Development Plan-** The Goal-Setting and Professional Development (GSPD) process is an ongoing, recursive process where teachers reflect on current professional practices, identify professional growth goals, establish a professional development plan to attain those goals, track progress towards goals over the course of the year, and reflect on goal attainment, including how the goals and professional development actually refined practices. **Each teacher will be appraised on GSPD criteria as described below.**
  - *Teacher Self-Assessment-* Each teacher will conduct a self-assessment by **reviewing data** and **reflecting on professional practices** to determine teacher and student needs.

- *GSPD Conference*- The GSPD Conference ensures that both the teacher and appraiser are clear about the goals and subsequent actions to reach the desired outcomes. The appraiser will approve the goals.
- *GSPD Plan Implementation and Formative Reviews*- The teacher will engage in targeted professional development outlined in the GSPD Plan and periodically will assess how the professional development plan and goals have an enduring impact on performance with the individual teacher and students. Teachers should prepare to bring their Domain 4 evidence/data prior to the End of Year (EOY) meeting, which includes their GSPD Plan.
- *End-of-Year Conference (Domain 4 Aspect)*- This EOY Conference provides an opportunity for the appraiser and the teacher to summarize the year, to collect information that will provide evidence to score Domain 4 of the T-TESS Rubric, and to discuss next year's goal(s) and professional development plan.

**Teachers who have been employed in Alamo Heights for a minimum of two years may qualify for an exception to the formal observation. Refer to the waiver section for specific criteria. Teachers who get an exception to the formal observation must still participate in the GSPD process outlined above.**

2. **The evaluation cycle** - The Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support (T-TESS) System evaluation cycle includes a pre-conference, observation and post-conference, as the recommended cycle for supporting teachers.
  - *Pre-conference* - The required pre-conference before an announced observation provides teachers an opportunity to

demonstrate their knowledge and skills for the Planning domain and its correlating dimensions: Standards and Alignment, Data and Assessments, Knowledge of Students and Activities. Together, the appraiser and teacher will discuss the upcoming lesson observation with a focus on the interrelationships between planning, instruction, the learning environment, and student outcomes.

- *Formal Observations*- Formal observations involve a certified appraiser collecting evidence and determining ratings for the dimensions in the first three domains of the T-TESS rubric: planning, instruction, and learning environment. During the observation, appraisers capture detailed, strategically-scripted evidence and use this evidence in conjunction with the T-TESS dimensions and descriptors of the rubric to determine performance levels.
- Post-conference - The post-conference provides teachers with opportunities to reflect on the impact of their lessons with guidance and support from the administrators or teacher leaders who conducted the observation. Results are used to inform and guide the teacher's future practices and growth. **Post-conferences are required after formal observations**, must be conducted in person with teachers, and are most successful when completed shortly after the observed lesson (within 10 business days after the formal observation). Appraisers prepare for the post-conference by organizing and examining the evidence obtained during the observed lesson, pre-conference, and planning process.

Ultimately, the T-TESS components in the locally developed appraisal system is a process that seeks to develop habits of continuous improvement, and the process itself best leads to that outcome when appraisers and teachers focus on evidence-based feedback and professional development decisions based on that feedback through ongoing dialogue and collaboration.

## **Assessment of Teacher Performance.**

Each teacher shall be appraised on the following domains and dimensions of the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) rubric that is aligned to the Texas Teacher Standards in Chapter 149 of Texas Administrative code (relating to Commissioner’s Rules Concerning Educator Standards).

Domain I. Planning, which includes the following dimensions:

- (A) standards and alignment;
- (B) data and assessment;
- (C) knowledge of students; and
- (D) activities.

Domain II. Instruction, which includes the following dimensions:

- (A) achieving expectations;
- (B) content knowledge and expertise;
- (C) communication;
- (D) differentiation; and
- (E) monitor and adjust.

Domain III. Learning Environment, which includes the following dimensions:

- (A) classroom environment, routines, and procedures;
- (B) managing student behavior; and
- (C) classroom culture.

Domain IV. Professional Practices and Responsibilities, which includes the following dimensions:

- (A) professional demeanor and ethics;
- (B) goal setting;
- (C) professional development; and
- (D) school community involvement.

The Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) rubric instrument, will be used to collect evidence that supports the ratings for each dimension and domain. Each domain and dimension of the T-TESS shall be scored independently. The evaluation of each of the domains shall consider all data generated in the appraisal process. The data for the appraisal of each domain shall be gathered from observations and other documented sources. The data shall describe teacher contributions in increasing student achievement, making the whole school safe and orderly, and creating a stimulating environment for students.

Each teacher shall be evaluated on the 16 dimensions in Domains I-IV using the following categories:

1. distinguished;
2. accomplished;
3. proficient;
4. developing; and
5. improvement needed.

### **Appraisals, Data Sources, and Conferences.**

Each teacher must be appraised each school year, except as provided by subsection (I) of this section (See below Qualification for Waiver of the Formal Observation). Whenever possible, an appraisal shall be based on the teacher's performance in fields and teaching assignments for which he or she is certified.

The annual teacher appraisal, or full appraisal, shall include:

1. a completed and appraiser-approved Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan that shall be:
  - (A) submitted to the teacher's appraiser within the first six weeks from the day of completion of T-TESS orientation for teachers in their first year of appraisal under the T-TESS or for teachers new to the district; or

- (B) initially drafted in conjunction with the teacher's end-of-year conference from the previous year, revised as needed based on changes to the context of the teacher's assignment during the current school year, and submitted to the teacher's appraiser within the first six weeks of instruction; and
  - (C) maintained throughout the course of the school year by the teacher to track progress in the attainment of goals and participation in professional development activities detailed in the approved plan;
  - (D) shared with the teacher's appraiser prior to the end-of-year conference; and
  - (E) used after the end-of-year conference in the determination of ratings for the goal setting and professional development dimensions of the T-TESS rubric;
2. for teachers new to the district, a Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan conference prior to the teacher submitting the plan to the teacher's appraiser;
  3. after a teacher's first year of appraisal under the T-TESS within the district, an observation pre-conference conducted prior to announced observations;
  4. at least one classroom observation of a minimum of 45 minutes with additional walk-throughs and observations conducted at the discretion of the certified appraiser and in accordance with the Texas Education Code, §21.352(c-1). Additional observations and walk-throughs do not require an observation post-conference. Additional observations and walk-throughs do require a written summary if the data gathered during the additional observation or walk-through will impact the teacher's summative appraisal ratings, in which case the written summary shall be shared within 10 working days after the completion of the additional observation or walk-through;
  5. an observation post-conference that: (A) shall be conducted within 10 working days after the completion of an observation; (B) is diagnostic and prescriptive in nature; (C) includes a written



report of the rating of each dimension observed that is presented to the teacher only after a discussion of the areas for reinforcement and areas for refinement; and (D) can allow for, at the discretion of the appraiser, a revision to an area for reinforcement or refinement based on the post-conference discussion with the teacher;

6. cumulative data, as described in subsection (f) of this section, from written documentation collected regarding job-related teacher performance in addition to formal classroom observations;
7. an end-of-year conference that:
  - (A) reviews the appraisal data collected throughout the current school year and previous school years, if available;
  - (B) examines and discusses the evidence related to the teacher's performance on the four dimensions of Domain IV of the T-TESS rubric;
  - (D) identifies potential goals and professional development activities for the teacher for the next school year; and
8. a written summative annual appraisal report to be provided to the teacher within 10 working days of the conclusion of the end-of-year conference but no later than 15 working days before the last day of instruction.

A teacher **may be given advance notice** of the date or time of an observation, but advance notice is not required.

The district shall establish a calendar for the appraisal of teachers and provide that calendar to teachers within three weeks from the first day of instruction. The appraisal period for each teacher must include all of the days of a teacher's contract. Observations during the appraisal period must be conducted during the required days of instruction for students during one school year.

The appraisal calendar shall:

1. exclude observations in the two weeks following the day of completion of the T-TESS orientation in the school years when an orientation is required; and

2. indicate a period for end-of-year conferences that ends no later than 15 working days before the last day of instruction for students.

During the appraisal period, the certified appraiser shall evaluate and document teacher performance specifically related to the domain criteria and the performance of teachers' students.

The certified appraiser is responsible for documentation of the cumulative data. Any third-party information from a source other than the certified appraiser that the certified appraiser wishes to include as cumulative data shall be verified and documented by the certified appraiser. Any documentation that will influence the teacher's summative annual appraisal report must be shared in writing with the teacher within 10 working days of the certified appraiser's knowledge of the occurrence. The principal shall also be notified in writing of the cumulative data when the certified appraiser is not the teacher's principal.

By written, mutual consent of the teacher and the certified appraiser, the required minimum of 45 minutes of observation may be conducted in shorter time segments. The time segments must aggregate to at least 45 minutes.

A written summative annual appraisal report shall be shared with the teacher no later than 15 working days before the last day of instruction for students. The written summative annual appraisal report shall be placed in the teacher's personnel file by the end of the appraisal period.

An end-of-year conference shall be held within a time frame specified on the school district calendar, no later than 15 working days before the last day of instruction for students. The end-of-year conference shall focus on the data and evidence gathered throughout the appraisal year; the teacher's efforts as they pertain to Domain IV; the results of the performance of teachers' students, when available; and the potential goals and professional development plans for the following year. The written summative annual appraisal report shall be shared with the teacher within 10 working days following the conclusion of the end-of-year conference

but no later than 15 working days before the last day of instruction.

In cases where the certified appraiser is not an administrator on the teacher's campus, either the principal, assistant principal, or another supervisory staff member designated as an administrator on the campus must participate in the end-of-year conference.

Any documentation collected after the end-of-year conference but before the end of the contract term during one school year may be considered as part of the appraisal of a teacher. If the documentation affects the teacher's evaluation in any dimension, another summative report shall be developed to inform the teacher of the change(s).

### **Qualification for Waiver of the Formal Observation**

Teachers who are eligible for less-frequent evaluations in accordance with law [see Board Policy DNA (LEGAL) and (LOCAL)] and the local criteria established in this policy shall be appraised in accordance with the provisions below.

In addition to meeting the eligibility requirements in state rules, to be eligible for less-than-annual evaluations under the T-TESS, a teacher shall:

- Be employed on an educator term or continuing contract;
- Hold SBEC certification;
- Have been employed by the District for at least two years;
- Have received ratings of at least "Proficient" in most dimensions, with no more than one dimension rated as "Developing" in each domain, for Domains I–IV on the most recent full appraisal; and
- Have not received a rating of "Improvement Needed" on any area in any of the 16 dimensions on the most recent full appraisal.

All teachers will be placed in a 3 year observation rotation group. The rotation groups will determine if a teacher will be observed or if the teacher is eligible for a formal observation waiver for the current school year. Each 3 year cycle rotation group will consist of 2 years of formal observation waiver eligibility and 1 year of formal observation in no particular order. A teacher must both meet the qualification above and be group eligible to be considered for a waiver of formal observation.

A teacher who receives a full observation less than annually must receive a full observation at least once during each period of three school years. Teachers must still participate in the GSPD process, a modified end-of-year conference that addresses:

- the appraisal data collected throughout the current school year
- the progress on the Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan;
- the following year's Goal-Setting and Professional Development plan.

A teacher's supervisor shall have the authority to return a teacher to the traditional appraisal cycle as a result of performance deficiencies documented in accordance with state rule.

### **Texas Education Agency (TEA) Commissioner Rules**

1. TEA Commissioner rules state that a district policy may stipulate:
  - (A) whether the option to receive a full appraisal less frequently than annually is to be made available to teachers;
  - (B) whether the option to receive a full appraisal less frequently than annually is to be adopted districtwide or is to be campus specific;
  - (C) if the appraisal accompanying a teacher new to a district or campus meets the option as specified in this subsection, whether the appraisal is to be accepted or whether that teacher is to be appraised by the new campus administrator;

and

- (D) whether a certified appraiser may place a teacher on the traditional appraisal cycle as a result of performance deficiencies documented.
2. A school district may choose annually to review the written agreement to have less frequent full appraisals with the teacher. However, at the conclusion of the school year, the district may modify appraisal options through board policy and may make changes to expectations for appraisals that apply to all teachers regardless of a teacher's participation in the appraisal option in the previous year(s).
  3. In a year in which a teacher does not receive a full appraisal due to meeting the requirements identified in this subsection, a teacher shall participate in:
    - (A) the Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan process,
    - (B) a modified end-of-year conference that addresses:
      - (i) the progress on the Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan;
      - (ii) the following year's Goal-Setting and Professional Development plan.

The teacher's supervisor may elect to conduct formal observations, informal observations, and walkthroughs of teachers who qualify for the three-year waiver.

### **Teacher Response and Appeals**

A teacher may submit a written response or rebuttal at the following times:

1. for Domains I, II, and III after receiving a written observation summary or any other written documentation related to the ratings of those three domains; or
2. for Domain IV and for the performance of teachers' students after receiving a written summative annual appraisal report.

Any written response or rebuttal must be submitted within 10 working days of receiving a written observation summary, a written summative annual appraisal report, or any other written documentation associated with the teacher's appraisal. A teacher may not submit a written response or rebuttal to a written summative annual appraisal report for the ratings in Domains I, II, and III, if those ratings are based entirely on observation summaries or written documentation already received by the teacher earlier in the appraisal year for which the teacher already had the opportunity to submit a written response or rebuttal.

A teacher may request a second appraisal by another certified appraiser at the following times:

1. for Domains I, II, and III after receiving a written observation summary with which the teacher disagrees; or
2. for Domain IV and for the performance of teachers' students after receiving a written summative annual appraisal report with which the teacher disagrees.

The second appraisal must be requested within 10 working days of receiving a written observation summary or a written summative annual appraisal report. A teacher may not request a second appraisal by another certified appraiser in response to a written summative annual appraisal report for the ratings of dimensions in Domains I, II, and III if those ratings are based entirely on observation summaries or written documentation already received by the teacher earlier in the appraisal year for which the teacher already had the opportunity to request a second appraisal.

A teacher may be given advance notice of the date or time of a second appraisal, but advance notice is not required.

The second appraiser shall make observations and walk-throughs as necessary to evaluate the dimensions in Domains I-III or shall review the Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan for evidence of goal attainment and professional development activities, when applicable. Cumulative data may also be used by the second appraiser to evaluate other dimensions.

Each school district shall adopt written procedures for determining the selection of second appraisers. These procedures shall be disseminated to each teacher at the time of employment and updated annually or as needed.

**Appraiser Qualifications**

The teacher appraisal process requires at least one certified appraiser.

Under the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS), a campus administrator includes a principal, an assistant principal, an administrator who holds a comparable administrator/supervisor certificate established by the State Board for Educator Certification, or supervisory staff whose job description includes the appraisal of teachers and who is not a classroom teacher. Only in the event of the circumstances identified in subsection below of this section may an individual other than a campus administrator act as a certified appraiser.

Before conducting an appraisal, an appraiser must be certified by having satisfactorily completed the state-approved T-TESS appraiser training and having passed the T-TESS certification examination, and must have received Instructional Leadership Training (ILT), Instructional Leadership Development (ILD), or Advancing Educational Leadership (AEL) certification. Appraisers without ILT, ILD, or AEL certification before January 1, 2016, may not take ILT or ILD to satisfy this requirement. Periodic recertification and training shall be required.

An individual other than a campus administrator may act as a certified appraiser if:

1. the individual has been certified by completing the training required under subsection (c) of this section prior to conducting appraisals; and
2. in the case where the certified appraiser is a classroom teacher, the certified appraiser:
  - (A) conducts appraisals at the same school campus at which the

certified appraiser teaches if the certified appraiser is the chair of a department or grade level whose job description includes classroom observation responsibilities; or

(B) does not conduct appraisals of classroom teachers who teach at the same campus as the certified appraiser if the certified appraiser is not a department or grade-level chair.

### **Teacher Orientations**

A school district shall ensure that a teacher is provided with an orientation of the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) no later than the final day of the first three weeks of school and at least two weeks before the first observation when:

1. the teacher is new to the district;
2. the teacher has never been appraised under the T-TESS; or
3. district policy regarding teacher appraisal has changed since the last time the teacher was provided with an orientation to the T-TESS.

The teacher orientation shall be conducted in a face-to-face setting during a district's first year of T-TESS implementation and include all state and local appraisal policies and the local appraisal calendar. In addition to the orientation, campuses may hold other sessions sufficient in length allowing teachers to actively participate in a discussion of the T-TESS specifics and to have their questions answered.



## **Job Description for Teachers**

The Alamo Heights School District seeks teachers who are concerned both with teaching course content and with providing an atmosphere that promotes learning. These professionals need to be committed to the personal growth of each student. They also should endeavor to challenge each student to reach his full potential.

Each teacher shall:

1. Hold a valid teaching certificate.
2. Conduct planned instruction for assigned students.
3. Provide guidance to students which enhances their social and personal development.
4. Maintain long- and short-range instructional plans.
5. Follow subject matter guidelines established by the Texas Education Agency, Board policies, and administrative regulations.
6. Employ a variety of instructional techniques and media, appropriate to the needs and capabilities of students.
7. Assist in the selection of books, equipment, and other instructional materials.
8. Demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and skill in the subject areas taught.
9. Maintain and improve professional competence.
10. Attend and participate in faculty meetings.
11. Participate in the inservice education program.

12. Develop and maintain an environment conducive to effective learning.
13. Manage classroom routines and instructional activities effectively.
14. Maintain discipline in accordance with Board policies and administrative regulations.
15. Take precautions to protect student safety and health.
16. Help to enforce school rules, administrative regulations, and Board policy.
17. Be responsible for textbooks, study materials, teaching supplies, equipment and facilities.
18. Submit reports and maintain records as required by law, district policy, and administrative regulations.
19. Assess the accomplishments of students and send progress reports to parents on a regular basis.
20. Be accessible to students and parents for school related purposes.
21. Maintain cordial professional relationships with colleagues, students, and parents.
22. Cooperate with other members of the staff in planning goals and implementing and evaluating instructional programs.
23. Support outside school events and share responsibility for extracurricular activities.
24. Perform other duties which may be assigned by the principal.

