

Item 10:

Discussion of Sam Houston State University T-TESS Pilot Study Update

DISCUSSION

SUMMARY: This item provides the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) with an update on the Sam Houston State University (SHSU) T-TESS pilot study.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND JUSTIFICATION: At the July 2019 SBEC meeting, the Board adopted the edTPA two-year pilot as an optional assessment for classroom teacher candidates in lieu of the required pedagogy and professional responsibilities (PPR) examination for educator certification purposes. The SBEC also announced an open submission period for consideration of a performance assessment pilot to run parallel with the edTPA two-year pilot.

At the December 2019 SBEC meeting, the Board received information from several educator preparation programs, led by Dr. Stacey Edmonson and Dr. Christina Ellis with SHSU, on the status of the parallel pilot using the T-TESS evaluation tool as a performance assessment. The Board requested an alignment of the T-TESS Pilot Study with the edTPA performance assessment criteria from TEA staff.

Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff met with Dr. Edmonson and Dr. Ellis in February and May 2020 to clarify the T-TESS Pilot Study performance assessment timelines and goals, as well as to support their efforts in providing the SBEC the necessary information for their consideration of a parallel pilot. During the collaboration, it became evident that the intent of the T-TESS Pilot Study was not designed to run “parallel” as an examination instrument with the second year edTPA pilot. Rather, the intent of the T-TESS Pilot is to examine the feasibility of using T-TESS as a consequential performance-based assessment for teacher candidates. TEA staff have continued to collaborate with Dr. Edmonson and Dr. Ellis as they prepare to submit their findings to the Board.

In preparation for the December 2020 SBEC meeting, TEA staff, in collaboration with SBEC Chair, Dr. Cavazos, requested that SHSU provide the SBEC important information regarding their T-TESS pilot study to inform the discussion. Below are the guiding questions and responses from SHSU. Dr. Edmonson and Dr. Ellis will be in attendance at the December meeting to submit an update on their pilot study, provide further clarification, and to answer any questions that the Board may have.

Guiding Questions Regarding T-TESS Pilot Study:

1. What are the goals of the T-TESS pilot study? How will those goals be measured? What is the timeline?

The goals of the T-TESS Pilot study are to:

1. Identify and develop best practices in implementation of T-TESS by EPPs

2. Measure early outcomes for candidates and EPPs who complete T-TESS as a performance-based indicator of teacher readiness
3. Develop criteria for using T-TESS as a consequential component of teacher candidate training.

The T-TESS study is designed to run parallel to the edTPA pilot and will therefore continue for the duration approved by SBEC. Multiple measures will be collected and reported related to these goals. For a full explanation of how the outcomes will be measured and the timeline of the study, please see the Attachment.

2. What role would a T-TESS evaluation play in teacher certification? Please describe the technique that would be used. Please provide an example and walk through the preparation to standard certification process.

In our vision, EPPs would be required to implement performance assessment as a consequential component of teacher candidate training. T-TESS, edTPA, PPAT, or other approved performance assessments could be selected by the EPP to either be nationally or locally scored. If T-TESS is selected, EPPs would ensure that appraisers are trained and that they implement the T-TESS process with fidelity, following the approved rubric and guidelines. The scores teacher candidates receive on their summative T-TESS evaluations would determine whether or not the candidate is recommended for certification by the EPP. If the candidate is unsuccessful on any T-TESS dimension, they may repeat the clinical experience (clinical teaching/internship) in order to improve and earn a sufficient score. During the TEA 5-year review, each EPP must demonstrate fidelity of implementation, interrater reliability, and use of data to determine certification readiness.

3. What action would you ask the SBEC to take as an outcome of the study? What is the timeline?

We request that SBEC consider the outcomes of both the T-TESS and edTPA pilots to inform policy decisions related to performance-based assessment. If the study indicates that T-TESS is a viable option for teacher candidate performance assessment, we would ask that the SBEC include EPP-selected performance assessment as a consequential component of EPP curriculum and training (TAC 228), not as a certification requirement (TAC 230). We would also recommend that the PPR be retired and replaced by a grade-banded pedagogy exam that includes constructed response, such as the NES: Assessment of Professional Knowledge. The timeline for this decision corresponds to the edTPA decision, which is determined by the SBEC.

Staff Member Responsible:

Jessica McLoughlin, Director, Educator Standards and Testing

Attachment:

T-TESS Teacher Candidate Assessment of Readiness: Handbook for EPPs

ATTACHMENT

T-TESS TEACHER CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT OF READINESS



Handbook for EPPs

A Project Lead by



In Collaboration with



August 26, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the 2020-21 T-TESS Teacher Candidate Assessment of Readiness. You are joining hundreds of other educators from across the state in a study of a new approach to teacher candidate evaluation and novice teacher development.

We are united by a single goal: A high-quality teacher candidate in every classroom for every student, enabled by high-quality support for all teachers' ongoing professional development. The T-TESS Teacher Candidate Assessment of Readiness builds upon TEA's Instructional Expectations, which emphasize teacher development focused on supporting all students to meet the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. Research has shown that nothing we can do for our students matters more than ensuring they have great teachers. Knowing the difference effective teachers can make, our highest priority is finding, developing and training great teachers.

The T-TESS Teacher Candidate Assessment of Readiness centers on these key practices:

- Frequent classroom observations coupled with timely, useful feedback focused on improving teacher candidate training
- Regular conversations between school leaders and teachers about each teacher's ongoing development and impact on student learning
 - Ongoing professional development to support each teacher's growth
 - Helping school leaders to fairly and accurately assess teachers' practice to make fair, informed decisions as they build effective instructional teams

This handbook explains the key features of the T-TESS Teacher Candidate Assessment of Readiness for the year. It will answer many of your questions about the project and connect you to other available resources. I strongly encourage you to take the time to review it and refer to it throughout the year.

Our excitement about the early successes of the T-TESS Teacher Candidate Assessment of Readiness only intensifies our commitment to, in the future, provide teacher candidates with an evaluation and development system that recognizes their success and supports their ongoing professional growth. I am confident that with your support and commitment, the T-TESS Teacher Candidate Assessment of Readiness can help us accomplish just that.



Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	6
WHO WE ARE.....	6
WHY T-TESS?.....	7
VISION, BELIEFS, AND PRINCIPLES	8
POLICY CONTEXT	8
METHODOLOGY.....	9
TIMELINE	11
ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR TEACHER CANDIDATES	11
ROLE OF FIELD SUPERVISORS	11
T-TESS T-CAR RUBRIC: THE FOUR DOMAINS.....	12
T-TESS RUBRICS AND FORMS.....	16
STATE STANDARDS	16
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.....	17

INTRODUCTION

The T-TESS Teacher Candidate Assessment of Readiness is designed to support collaboration between teacher candidates, T-TESS evaluators, and EPPs to strengthen instructional practice in every classroom, fostering a shared vision for instructional excellence. Pairing targeted feedback aligned to a research-based rubric with opportunities to enhance their individual professional skill sets.

The purpose of T-TESS T-CAR is twofold: (1) to identify and develop best practices on implementation of T-TESS by EPPs and (2) to measure early outcomes for candidates and EPPs who complete T-TESS as a performance-based indicator for certification and teacher readiness

WHO WE ARE



T-TESS Teacher Candidate Assessment of Readiness places a particular focus on:

- Linking best preparation practice with certification
- Providing EPPs with tools to support candidates, connect coursework with fieldwork, and map pre-service activities to in-service teaching
- Accelerating the development of well-prepared teachers through formative goal-setting and professional development plans
- Preparing more consistently responsive and reflective teachers who are ready to meet the demands of the classroom

WHY T-TESS?

The current certification assessments do not require teacher candidates to demonstrate and reflect upon vital teaching practices learned in their EPPs. Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS), as the current evaluation system for in-service teachers in Texas, is the most relevant and meaningful assessment for pre-service teachers and will meet the need to authentically assess teacher candidate performance. In conjunction with content and pedagogical written exams (TExES), preferably with constructed response additions, the T-TESS allows for: teacher Candidate Assessment of Readiness (T-TESS: T-CAR) allows for a robust, contextually appropriate, and rigorous evaluation process to certify teachers across Texas.



Vision, Beliefs, and Principles

The T-TESS T-CAR is designed to support a common vision:

A day-one ready teacher in every classroom, realized through high-quality training and support for all teacher candidates.

This vision is supported by our core beliefs:

Students	Teachers	EPPs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">All children can achieve, no matter their life circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teachers are the key levers in influencing the achievement of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">EPPs have the responsibility to support teacher candidates through their development into day-one ready teachers

Our work together is informed by these **guiding principles**:

- When teacher candidates succeed, Texas schools succeed.** Effective training is crucial to teacher success. Teacher candidate assessments should be meaningful tools that help them grow to be day-one ready.
- Setting high expectations for EPPs will result in better prepared teachers.** Everyone will be held to a higher standard for effectiveness.
- EPPs should be accountable** for supporting teacher development through quality feedback and professional development.

POLICY CONTEXT

At the February 2019 State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) meeting, the board acknowledged and encouraged investigation of performance-based certification methods with specific mention of T-TESS with teacher candidates. The T-TESS: T-CAR will collect data to answer the Board's question and allow participating EPP's to proceed with T-TESS T-CAR. At its September 2019 State Board of Education meeting, the SBOE similarly acknowledged a T-TESS and specifically asked for feedback and results from this project as it proceeds and at its conclusion.

METHODOLOGY

This study will collect and analyze data to explore the efficacy of using T-TESS to inform teacher candidate and EPP improvement. The findings from this research will also be used to inform policy and practice as Texas policymakers craft the selection and implementation of performance assessments to be used as a consequential component of teacher certification. The purpose of the study is to (1) determine the degree to which T-TESS can be used to inform teacher candidate and EPP improvement, (2) identify and develop best practices for implementing T-TESS in EPPs, and (3) ascertain the degree to which reliable and valid scores can be obtained using T-TESS as a measure of teacher candidate performance.

A mixed-methods design will be used to evaluate the psychometric properties of T-TESS and assess the potential for using T-TESS for candidate and program improvement. Quantitative approaches allow for the psychometric evaluation of T-TESS and qualitative approaches lend themselves to a rich understanding of the formative processes associated with the complex and multi-faceted nature of teaching. Collecting both quantitative and qualitative data will also allow the researchers to consider the context of Texas, the only state in which the majority of teachers are certified through alternative routes.

Participants

All EPPs in Texas were invited to participate in this study. To date, 13 EPPs have agreed to participate in the study, representing a range of EPP types including public and private universities, region service centers, and alternative certification programs. Any teacher candidate enrolled in a participating EPP is eligible to be included in the study during the clinical teaching or internship phase of the program. We anticipate collecting data regarding 2,000 teacher candidates per year. A study is being conducted in Spring 2020 with 733 teacher candidates. Findings from this study will be used to inform future data collection processes and procedures.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

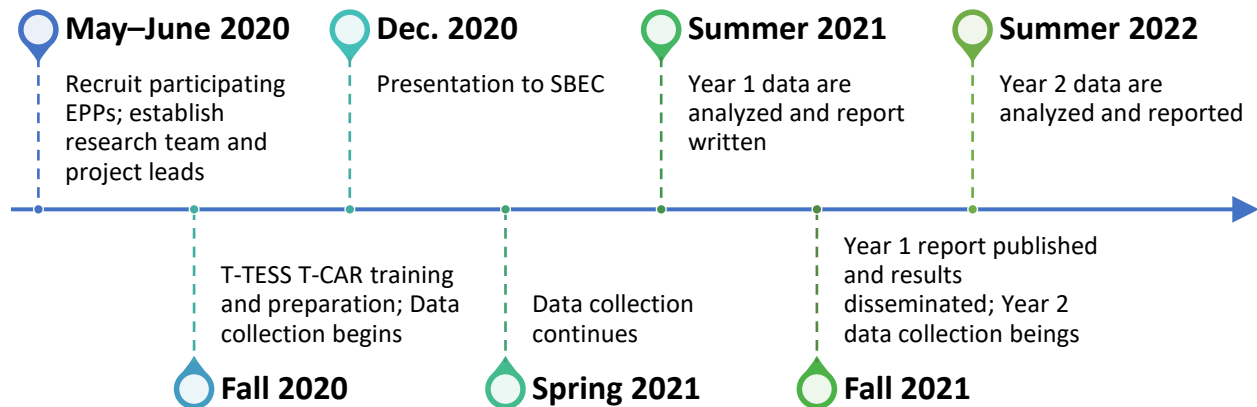
- Are the scores obtained from T-TESS a valid and reliable measure of teacher candidates' teaching performance and ability?
- Is T-TESS an appropriate assessment to inform educator preparation program and teacher candidate growth?

DATA COLLECTION

T-TESS T-CAR Observations & Summative	Self-Reflection	Candidate Demographics	TEXES Exam Scores
Principal Survey	VAM Scores	Employment records	Surveys & Interviews

- **Formative Lesson Demonstrations**
 - Field Supervisor observes teacher candidate using T-TESS TCAR Observation form ([PDF](#))
 - Pre-conference—synchronous; establish expectations for observation
 - Observation—synchronous or asynchronous; in-person or video
 - Post-conference—synchronous; provide feedback and set goals
- **Final Lesson Demonstration**
 - Pre-conference—synchronous; establish expectations for observation
 - Observation (video recorded by teacher candidate)—synchronous or asynchronous; in-person or video; ([PDF](#))
 - Teacher candidate reflects using Self-Reflection Protocol ([PDF](#))
 - Post-conference—synchronous; provide feedback and set goals
 - Teacher candidate submits video for external evaluation
 - External scorer evaluates video using T-TESS TCAR Observation
- **Summative T-TESS T-CAR Evaluation**
 - Field supervisor evaluates teacher candidate’s performance over the course of the clinical experience.
 - Field supervisor conferences with teacher candidate to review performance, reflect, and set goals
- **End of semester data collection**
 - Formative lesson demonstration data (optional)
 - Final lesson demonstration data (optional)
 - Summative T-TESS T-CAR Evaluations (required)
 - Participant Demographics (required)
 - Teacher candidate survey (optional)
 - Teacher candidate interviews (optional)
 - edTPA scores (optional)
- **Follow-up data collection**
 - In-service teacher VAM scores
 - Employment records
 - Principal survey about Novice Teachers
 - TEXES Exam Scores

TIMELINE



ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR TEACHER CANDIDATES

Participating teacher candidates will uphold the standards and expectations set forth by their individual EPPs but maintain the expectations provided below:

Candidates are required to record evidence of professional practice through classroom recordings that will be uploaded into a third-party site for evaluation. Candidates will receive a standard certification upon successful completion of the T-TESS summative evaluation, a self-reflection, successful completion of the Early Childhood-Grade 12 Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities exam (PPR), and appropriate content area certification exam(s). The standard certification is contingent upon candidates meeting all other programmatic and testing requirements currently in TAC rule.

ROLE OF FIELD SUPERVISORS

The participating EPP and the designated evaluator should continuously evaluate their teacher candidate's progress and performance. Through regular periods of discussion, successful performance is jointly determined by the cooperating teacher/site-supervisor and the field supervisor.

To evaluate effectively, the field supervisor should:

- Use the T-TESS T-CAR rubric with fidelity
- Observe the teacher candidate in actual teaching situations and make notes that can be used as the basis for critiques.
- Use multiple sources of evidence as the basis for T-TESS T-CAR ratings.
- Share strengths and criticize weaknesses constructively.
- Provide ongoing, regular feedback to promote teacher candidate growth.
- Encourage the teacher candidate to use self-evaluation techniques.

T-TESS T-CAR RUBRIC: THE FOUR DOMAINS

The following sections reference the T-TESS evaluation process as designed by the Texas Education Agency. Information, figures, and tables have been taken in whole or in part from the Texas Teacher Evaluation & Support System Teacher Handbook found at www.teachfortexas.org and www.tea.texas.gov.

Planning

- Standards and Alignment
- Data and Assessments
- Knowledge of Students
- Activities

Instruction

- Achieving Expectations
- Content Knowledge and Expertise
- Communication
- Differentiation

Learning Environment

- Classroom Environment, Routines, and Procedures
- Managing Student Behavior
- Classroom Culture

Professional Practices and Responsibilities

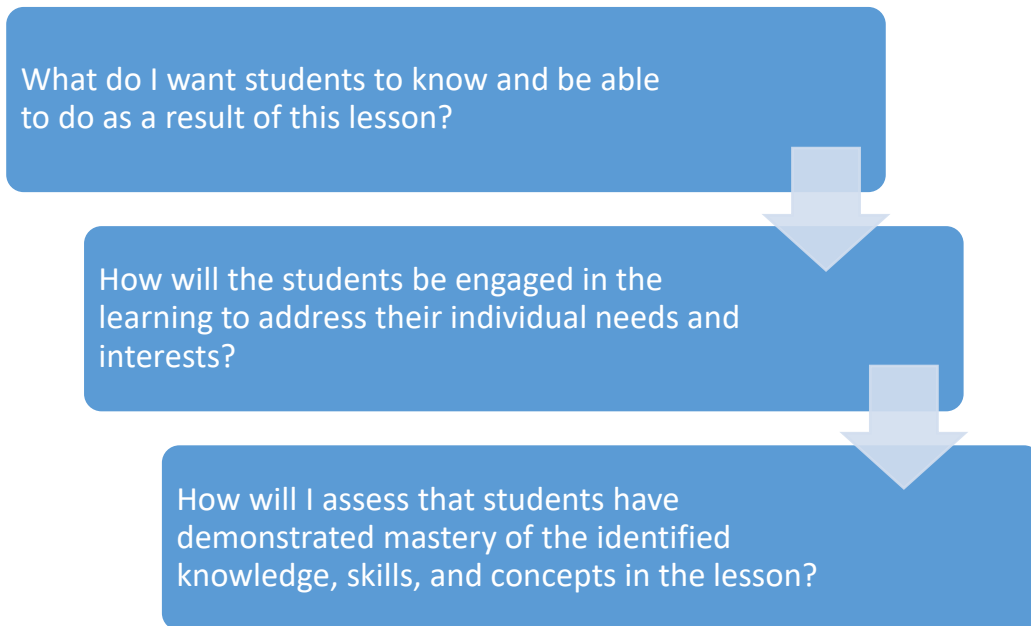
- Professional Demeanor and Ethics
- Goal Setting

Planning

This section provides guidance regarding the planning domain and correlating four dimensions:

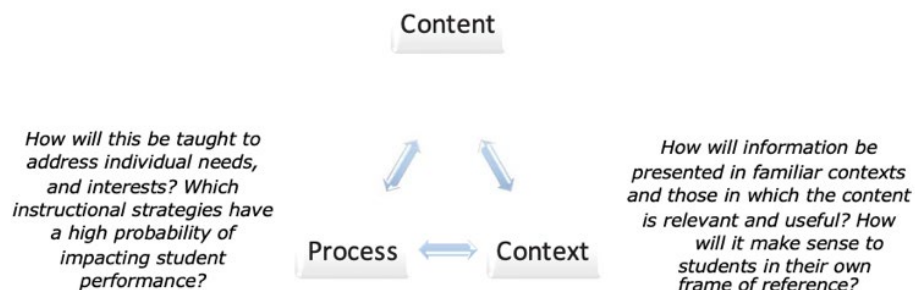
- Standards and Alignment
- Data and Assessments
- Knowledge of Students
- Activities

Effective planning begins with measurable and explicit learning outcomes aligned to the TEKS and other relevant standards for learning. Planning is ideally based on three driving questions:



Key Aspects of Planning

What do I want students to know and be able to do as a result of this lesson? Which curriculum standards will be addressed?



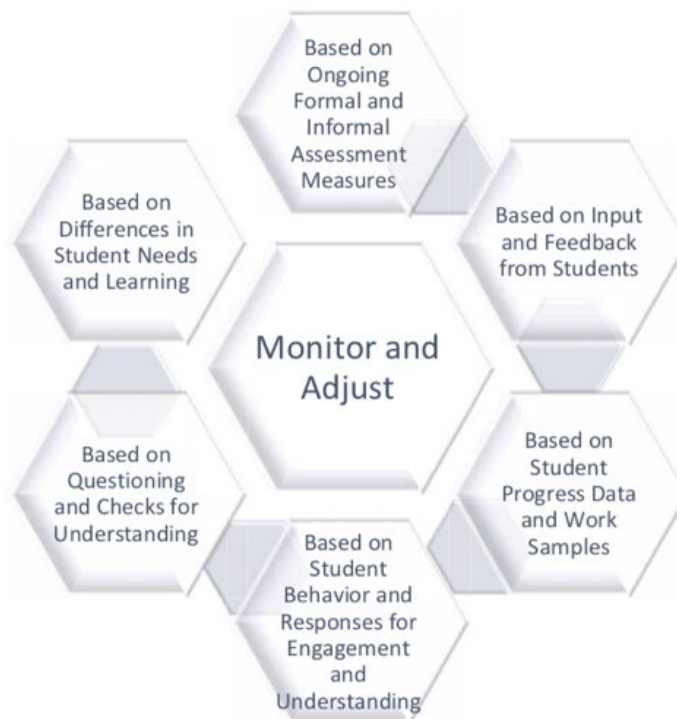
Instruction

This section provides guidance regarding the instruction domain and correlating five dimensions:

- Achieving Expectations
- Content Knowledge and Expertise
- Communication
- Differentiation
- Monitor and Adjust

This domain specifically addresses “how” learning is structured and executed during the lesson to ensure that student mastery of the learning objectives is occurring. Quality planning is the precursor to quality instruction, and as discussed in the previous section, is a multi-faceted process.

Key Aspects of Instruction



Learning Environment

This section provides guidance regarding the learning environment domain and correlating three dimensions:

- Classroom Environment, Routines, and Procedures
- Managing Student Behavior
- Classroom Culture

This domain specifically addresses “how” the learning environment is structure both physically and culturally so that it is conducive to teaching and learning. Establishing a safe, respectful, inclusive, and efficient learning environment is critical to students’ social-emotional readiness to learn and ensuring that academic learning goals and outcomes are met. Students who feel connected, valued, and inspired in the classroom are more likely to exhibit positive attitudes.

Professional Practices and Responsibilities

This section provides guidance regarding the Professional Practices and Responsibilities domain and correlating two dimensions:

- Professional Demeanor and Ethics
- Goal Setting

This domain specifically addresses “how” teachers fulfill their professional roles and responsibilities, engage in ongoing review and development of their practices, and adhere to legal and ethical requirements of the profession. Research consistently indicates that the primary factor for increasing student achievement is the effectiveness of the teacher. Therefore, teachers and other professionals clearly understand the importance of using reflection and ongoing self-assessment to enhance their effectiveness and impact on student performance. The T-TESS system, therefore, focuses on continuous professional growth where teachers consistently hold themselves to a high standard for individual development to improve their instructional effectiveness, knowledge, and skill.

T-TESS Rubrics and Forms

T-TESS Rubric

T-TESS Guidelines for Instruction -
https://www.teachfortexas.org/Resource_Files/Guides/T-TESS_Rubric.pdf

T-TESS Virtual Instruction Rubric

T-TESS Guidelines for Virtual Instruction -
https://www.teachfortexas.org/Resource_Files/Guides/T-TESS_Virtual_Instruction_Rubric.pdf

STATE STANDARDS

Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities Standards

State Board for Educator Certification –
<https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/PPR%20EC-12%20Standards.pdf>

Technology Application Standards

State Board for Educator Certification – <https://tea.texas.gov/academics/learning-support-and-programs/technology-resources/technology-standards-for-students-teachers-and-librarians>

Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators

State Board for Educator Certification –
[https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=19&pt=7&ch=247&rl=Y](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=19&pt=7&ch=247&rl=Y)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

About the T-TESS Teacher Candidate Assessment of Readiness

1. How were EPPs selected to participate in the T-CAR?

All EPPs in Texas were invited to participate through recruitment events at conferences and direct email.

Observations and Feedback

2. Are the observations required by the T-TESS Teacher Candidate Assessment of Readiness (T-CAR) separate from, or in addition to,

the formal observations that are already required under the current system.

No. The recommended 2-3 observations are inclusive of the required minimum number in compliance with TAC

3. Are T-TESS evaluators expected to rate on all components following each observation?

Yes, observers should expect to rate and give feedback on all domains and dimensions covered in T-TESS.

What does the T-TESS Teacher Candidate Assessment of Readiness do to ensure that EPPs are prepared to use T-TESS to assign ratings in a way that is fair, accurate, and consistent across schools?

A core focus of the calibration as directed through T-TESS training materials which means to cultivate a shared understanding of what effective teaching practice looks like. Teacher Candidate Assessment of Readiness pursues this objective in several ways:

- EPPs and Teacher candidates will engage in ongoing in-person and online professional development throughout the 2020-21 school year.
- The usage calibrated modules with exemplar videos and comparative evidenced annotated scoring rubrics

4. When an observer has difficulty determining a rating for a specific component should he or she round up or down

Observers should not "round" in the rating process, but instead rate on evidence they have gathered, organized in alignment with the T-TESS Rubric. Regardless of the rating assigned, feedback should convey which critical attributes aligned with the higher rating level and which aligned to the lower rating, as this level of specificity in feedback will best support teacher development.

5. How can EPPs and teacher candidates engage collaboratively in the observation and feedback process?

EPPs must engage teachers in dialogue about evidence, ratings, and feedback at post- observation conferences. Meeting competencies prior to the post- observation conferences deepened the dialogue and helps EPPs to provide more meaningful and useful feedback.

6. Where can I find videos that showcase effective practice?

Teachfortexas.org, you will find a range of resources to support teacher development, including a growing library of videos of effective classroom practice for each grade-band (elementary, middle, high) and special education.

To find resources on T-TESS, visit www.teachfortexas.org

