

Executive Summary

Prepared for Board of Trustees Meeting

April 19, 2016

Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) Teacher Information Sessions Overview

Board Goals:

Vision – Develop and maintain a culture where learning remains our first priority and establish goals for individual campuses that incorporate both measurable and intangible factors.

Teaching & Learning – Develop academic skills and interpersonal relationships necessary for student success in college, the workplace and for life; establish quality staff development programs that promote professional learning communities; stay abreast of and incorporate best practices into teaching, learning, technology and leadership; and, advocate and practice true accountability based on measurement of individual student progress over time, regardless of external mandates.

Climate – Encourage and nourish a safe learning and compassionate working environment which ensures open and transparent communication and is supportive, cooperative, and ethical; establish a high expectation level for success for all students, staff, parents, and community; instill in students a love of life-long learning; and, motivate and prepare students to embrace their full responsibilities and obligations as active citizens of their community, nation, and world.

Human Resources – Develop and expect a consistently high level of, and respect for, professional performance by all staff; and, encourage all teachers and staff to pursue advanced professional development and degrees within their specialty area.

Growth, Change & Fiscal Responsibility – Create and continuously modify strategies to mitigate increasing stresses on our children, our schools and our community

Purpose of Report:

To provide the Board of Trustees an overview of the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) teacher information sessions that were provided for our teachers during the week of April 4-8, 2016.

Objectives:

- Facilitate an overview of the information sessions provided to the PDAS Cadre/Teacher Leaders and teachers about the possible implementation of Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS)
- Highlight key teacher concerns and expectations in moving from PDAS to T-TESS

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- Provide “next steps” in moving forward for T-TESS implementation for the 2016-2017 school year

Overview of Information Sessions

On March 31, 2016, Human Resources facilitated a meeting with the PDAS Cadre to provide a brief overview of T-TESS and solicit their guidance and feedback for implementation. This group of teacher leaders were instrumental in guiding the transition from PRIDE to PDAS. Their honest feedback and willingness to partner with district leaders in this transition was encouraging and exciting.

During the week of April 4-8, 2016, Denton ISD teachers were given the opportunity to attend a T-TESS information session. There were three different sessions offered throughout the district. The following were the available sessions and the number of attendees:
April 5, 2016 at Denton High School from 6:00-7:00 p.m. (23 attendees)
April 6, 2016 at Navo Middle School from 5:00-6:00 p.m. (25 attendees)
April 7, 2016 at McMath Middle School from 4:00-5:00 p.m. (32 attendees)

The information sessions provided an overview of the T-TESS instrument, the evaluation cycle, the professional learning and goal setting portion of the tool, and the T-TESS rubric. In addition to the overview, teachers were given the opportunity to ask questions and provide open feedback.

Feedback

Strengths:

Teacher feedback reflected the following strengths of T-TESS...

- The opportunity to engage in coaching conversations with campus administrators
- The specific feedback and intentional language on the rubric (clear performance indicators)
- The district’s investment in our campus administrator’s training in coaching their teaching staff and encouraging a “growth mindset” culture
- The collaborative nature of T-TESS will serve as a growth tool for each individual teacher
- Designing professional learning resulting from the goals and appraisal observations

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Concerns:

Teacher feedback reflected the following concerns of T-TESS...

- The qualitative nature of the evaluation; concerned about the possible subjectivity of the appraiser
- The time that campus administrators will have to invest in T-TESS observations
- The “Proficient” rating represents “rock solid” teaching
- The rubric contains pages of specific language so understanding and applying the standards of the rubric seems overwhelming
- The training needs to be consistent across the district- same message

Moving Forward

The Human Resource department will develop a webpage designed to provide links to the “Teach for Texas” website which contains information about T-TESS. A digital copy of the rubric will be made available to all teachers via the website to ensure evaluation criteria is available prior to the evaluation cycle. The information session presentation will be made available to all Denton ISD teachers on the district T-TESS webpage to allow teachers who couldn’t attend the session access to the information.

In addition, the area superintendents and the human resources' team will partner together to ensure implementation with fidelity across the district; to maximize campus leaders' time to support valuable coaching and goal-setting between appraisers and teachers; to build upon coaching skillset of campus leaders/appraisers; and to provide opportunities for leaders to take part in “calibration walk-throughs” to ensure a common understanding of instructional expectations outlined in the T-TESS Rubric.

Operational Impact:

During the 2016 – 2017 school year (phase in period), Educational Service Centers will provide training and support for district appraisers at no charge. Our teachers will receive training during their in-service week in August. Curriculum and Instruction, Academic Programs, and Human Resources are collaborating on training, support, and systems required for implementation with minimal cost.

Other Options:

The District could continue to utilize the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), but must incorporate a student growth measure for the 2017 – 2018 school year. With an incorporated student growth measure, the District must formally adopt the amended PDAS

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evaluation system as our local evaluation system. The District may also choose to develop and formally adopt an independent evaluation system designed specifically for the District, but must ensure state compliance. NOTE: PDAS will no longer be supported by Educational Service Centers and/or TEA. If the District adopts the amended PDAS evaluation system, but moves to T-TESS in later years, the District will incur significant costs for training and support for campus administrators, administrative support teams, and teachers.