

May 10, 2017

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

SUBJECT: Update on Teacher Evaluations in Texas

The Commissioner has reached an agreement with various teacher organizations regarding the student growth component of teacher appraisal for both the state recommended teacher appraisal system, the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS), and locally adopted teacher appraisal systems.

With this agreement, all components of T-TESS and the minimum requirements for locally adopted systems currently captured in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 150 remain in place. A student growth measure at the individual teacher level is still a necessary component for both T-TESS and locally adopted systems

The Commissioner wants to ensure, however, that districts know that they can pursue any valid student growth measure they choose, so the reference(s) to the four ways to measure student growth will be removed from rule in order to make that explicitly clear.

This agreement does not alter districts' ability to submit a waiver to TEA to pilot student growth during the 2017-2018 school year.

### **Measures of Student Growth**

With this agreement, districts are still free to choose any valid student growth measure they'd like, including value-added measures based on state assessments or other assessments.

Current teacher appraisal rules always intended to capture all the valid measures of student growth and not limit choice. In addition, current rules do not require one particular measure to be used over another measure based on what subject or grade a teacher teaches. This agreement confirms both of those realities. Current rule language can be found [here](#).

In choosing student growth measures, districts may elect to use a variety of methods to inform the impact of instruction. For example, a district may determine that portfolios are the best measure of student learning in an art class. However, in social studies, student learning objectives may be the most effective tool. And math teachers may benefit more from feedback derived from a value-added measure based on state assessments.

Different districts can choose different approaches, and an individual district can use different methods for different types of teachers or classes. Providing feedback in a teacher appraisal instrument on the measurable growth of a teacher's students is necessary, but districts have flexibility to determine the most useful approach that helps maximize the professional growth of their teachers.

### **Ratings and Weights**

Current rules for T-TESS allows student growth to vary in weight depending on how the district provides summative ratings. This agreement does not change that.

If the district provides a single summative rating (i.e. the teacher is "Proficient" overall), then student growth must be at least 20 percent of the summative rating.

If the district provides disaggregated ratings (i.e. the teacher gets a final rating for each of the 16 rubric dimensions individually), then student growth acts as the 17<sup>th</sup> dimension and doesn't technically have a weight.

For local systems, weights have always been and still are determined by the district.

### **Guidance**

Non-regulatory guidance on student growth in teacher appraisal can be found [here](#) on the T-TESS website, [teachfortexas.org](http://teachfortexas.org).

### **Agreement Details**

A copy of the agreement is attached. A copy of the press release describing the agreement is available at [http://tea.texas.gov/About\\_TEA/News\\_and\\_Multimedia/Press\\_Releases/2017/Agreement\\_Affirms\\_Key\\_Components\\_of\\_Teacher\\_Evaluations\\_in\\_Texas/](http://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/News_and_Multimedia/Press_Releases/2017/Agreement_Affirms_Key_Components_of_Teacher_Evaluations_in_Texas/).

If you have any questions, please email [tim.regal@tea.texas.gov](mailto:tim.regal@tea.texas.gov).

Sincerely,

Mike Morath  
Commissioner of Education

[Attachment - Settlement & Rule 11 agreement.pdf](#)