



Teacher Performance Rubric

# Companion Document



# INTRODUCTION

*The Dallas Independent School District believes that its people are its greatest asset. The District's commitment to educating all students for success begins and ends with ensuring that those supporting students are dedicated, highly effective professionals. This spirit of high expectations for performance outcomes is further embraced within Dallas ISD's Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI).*

*TEI is grounded in comprehensive research that proved teachers are the most important school-based factor in improving student achievement. Through a commitment to continuous improvement, Dallas ISD teachers are afforded opportunities to grow their pedagogy and facilitate exemplary student performance. TEI is central to teacher growth as its initiatives define, support, and reward excellence.*



*The Teacher Performance Rubric (TPR) is the instrument utilized by Dallas ISD evaluators to define teacher quality. The TPR is research-based and was developed in collaboration with Dallas ISD leadership, curriculum departments, and teachers. It transcends classroom, school type, and varied instructional protocols to serve as a reliable tool for providing a fair and accurate assessment of teacher effectiveness.*

*10,000 teachers in 240 school locations across Dallas are assessed using the Teacher Performance Rubric, resulting in it being foundational to the professional development of those tasked with educating our 140,000+ school-aged children. Thus, a surface level understanding of the TPR is not an option. With that in mind, the Teacher Excellence Initiative introduces the **Teacher Performance Rubric Companion Document**. The Companion Document outlines the anchoring tenets and guiding beliefs for defining excellence within TEI's Evaluation System. TEI welcomes this document to its cache of resources that work in concert to define, support, and reward excellence.*

*The following are the six components foundational to all Domains and Indicators of the Teacher Performance Rubric. They are established guideposts for all teaching and learning collaborations undertaken by members of the Dallas Independent School District's instructional staff.*

## LEARNER FOCUSED

Teachers are tasked with collecting and using both formal and informal data sources to inform their decisions when planning to meet each individual student's needs. This knowledge is then used to ensure that the assessment and instructional needs of all students are met. Learner focused strategies allow all learners to develop an understanding of their own needs, interests and strengths in learning. Students thrive when their learning experiences are developmentally appropriate and relevant to their lives. As a result, student voice is an integral part of this process, as teachers use their knowledge of students to drive their instructional practices as they educate all students for success.

## HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Dallas ISD believes that all students can grow; therefore, our responsibility as educators is to determine each student's starting point and to set aggressive expectations for their learning and development. To fully understand and support our students, we must evaluate their social, emotional, and cognitive needs to establish realistic and individualized goals while continuously revising those goals when they are met ahead of schedule. Lessons should be designed to scaffold students to think critically, to consider what happens next, and to arrive at their own conclusions.

We also believe that teachers and leaders must model the high expectations we expect from our students. This means Dallas ISD educators will set expectations for themselves to deeply evaluate pedagogy and utilize student work artifacts and data to intentionally collaborate. Educators must never be satisfied with the status quo. They must actively and continuously seek opportunities to improve all aspects of teaching and learning.

## COMPREHENSIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

Holding ourselves to the mission of educating all students for success involves systemic accountability. From the superintendent to our youngest learners, the Dallas Independent School District promotes ownership of our work at all levels of the organization and work to build independent thinkers and collaborative teams.

To that end, Dallas ISD has built a multi-dimensional evaluation and appraisal tool so that we can differentiate teacher performance and identify, retain, and reward our most effective educators. With the data collected during the appraisal process, we can strategically leverage our talent to give our students the best opportunity to succeed.

In addition, we recognize that teachers and students share accountability for their roles in the learning process. While quality instruction is critical to ensuring learning is achieved, we also believe that students' meaningful participation in the classroom ensures strong outcomes. Finally, we continuously evaluate and realign human capital and budgetary resources in support of rigorous accountability for all.

## CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE

Children do not enter school a blank slate. They are a unique blend of social behaviors, languages, ethnicities, attitudes, and values all of which will influence their perception of the educational process. The Dallas Independent School District is proud to be a district of diversity and as such, we recognize and embrace the critical role that culture plays in the learning process.

As Dallas ISD educators transport students through their educational journey, they continually strive to ensure that individual and cultural perspectives are intentionally woven throughout all components of the learning process. From planning to delivery and pedagogical development, Dallas ISD uses the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and learning styles of its diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective. Thus, we create learning environment that are conducive to all students, no matter their ethnic, cultural, or linguistic background. Being culturally responsive is a cornerstone for building and sustaining the high-quality educational experience provided by the Dallas Independent School District.

## MAXIMIZED RESOURCES

A key feature of effective teaching is the selection of instructional materials that meet the needs of students and fit the constraints of the teaching and learning environment. Dallas ISD strategically uses its resources (staff, facilities, and materials) in a manner that supports content development, learner style and interest, and varied cognitive and/or developmental levels. To that end, staff are deployed in a manner that aligns their talents and areas of expertise to students' needs. Schools prioritize and target instructional supports and resources to maximize engagement, remediation, and enrichment, thus ensuring an active learning environment with improved achievement outcomes for all students.

## COLLABORATIVE – GROWTH MINDSET

Teachers who work together not only positively impact each other, but their collaboration leads to gains for all students and improvements across the school campus. Educating all students for success requires teachers to have a collaborative mindset. No one person has all solutions; thus, collaboration is a key contributor to the success of any school campus. Research supports the fact that the most effective schools are ones that promote teamwork and collaborative practices. This includes teachers working together to develop and share instructional resources and strategies during professional learning communities. School leaders and teachers must establish a learner-centered environment that identifies and responds to student data and needs while challenging all stakeholders (teachers, parents, and community members) to share responsibility for campus improvement and the improvement of learning outcomes for all students. There should be systems in place that encourage teachers to pursue professional learning and growth opportunities not only for their benefit, but also to support campus needs as documented in the campus action plan.



*"Becoming an exemplary teacher is not a matter of chance,  
it is a matter of the choices we make;  
it is not something that simply comes with years of experience,  
it is something that must be purposefully achieved."*

*- Robert John Meehan*

# INSTRUCTIONAL DOMAINS

1

Our teachers plan research-based, rigorous lessons for diverse student populations.

*Content Expertise • Student Focused • Assessment Design • Lesson Activities • Lesson Structure*

2

Our teachers provide and deliver purposeful, highly effective, and rigorous instruction.

*Alignment • Mastery • Delivery • Cognitive Demand*

3

Our teachers build safe, supportive, and rigorous learning environments.

*Procedures and Systems • Behavioral Expectations • Climate and Culture*

4

Our teachers embrace professionalism with a mindset of continuous improvement and accountability.

*Attendance • Compliance • Professional Learning • Professional Partnerships • Communication*

## DOMAIN 1: PLANNING & PREPARATION

**Our teachers plan research-based, rigorous lessons for diverse student populations.**

Planning and preparation are at the core of effective instruction. During this stage of the lesson cycle, the vision for learning transforms into a concrete set of objectives and action steps that support delivery of an exemplary learning experience. Specifically, planning affords instructors an opportunity to think deliberately about content, student needs, practice/application, resource usage, and assessment.

In addition to lesson design, planning and preparation also allow educators to bring instruction and student outcomes into focus through intentional reflection. Through continuous reflection, teachers identify correlations between past, present, and future lessons and activities and evaluate lesson alignment, progression, content, and cognitive demand to support remediation and/or enrichment. Reflection also allows educators to ensure lessons are meaningful, engaging, and challenging students toward intellectual, cognitive, and social development.

Continuous intentional planning and preparation cannot be underestimated. It is here that an educator answers the questions: What do I want students to know? How will I know if they have learned it? and What will I do if they struggle and/or need to be stretched? Educators who have a well-developed plan and have appropriately prepared for its implementation are more confident and better equipped to answer these questions as they meet student needs, maximize learning opportunities, and accelerate achievement.

### ESSENTIAL TEACHER SKILLS & ACTIONS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Displays extensive content expertise including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prerequisite knowledge</li> <li>Concept knowledge</li> <li>Intra- &amp; interdisciplinary content knowledge</li> <li>Skill enhancement</li> <li>Adaptability</li> </ul> </li> <li>Accesses content specific language and tools at a high level of rigor</li> <li>Demonstrates awareness of common misconceptions and how they can be addressed</li> <li>When planning and selecting lessons, uses individual student data that aligns to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accommodations and/or modifications</li> <li>Cognitive level</li> <li>Social and emotional development</li> <li>Interest and culture</li> </ul> </li> <li>Creates flexible groupings based on data of levels, readiness, and skill</li> <li>Aligns re-teaching and enrichment opportunities to specific data points</li> <li>Plans for the collection and usage of data</li> <li>Selects varied assessments that align</li> <li>lesson objectives and allow students to</li> <li>demonstrate complex understanding</li> <li>Records progress and engages in</li> <li>purposeful data analysis</li> <li>Exhibits knowledge of individual</li> <li>student progress toward mastery</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varies instructional resources and</li> <li>activities</li> <li>Aligns resources activities to content, cognitive/ developmental levels, interest, and culture</li> <li>Integrates technology/digital resources to supplement and enhance mastery of lesson content</li> </ul> <p>Ensures that lessons are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aligned to appropriate content standards</li> <li>Linked to prior and future knowledge, broader goals and/or transferrable skills</li> <li>Representative of a complete lesson cycle</li> <li>Differentiated to consider individual student cognitive/developmental, social, emotional, and cultural needs</li> </ul> |
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## DOMAIN 2: INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

**Our teachers provide and deliver purposeful, highly effective, and rigorous instruction.**

The Essential Teacher Skills and Actions specified in Domain 2, Instructional Delivery, represent the implementation of the planning and preparation of Domain 1. The process of delivering instruction involves applying multiple strategies to communicate and interact with students around specific content.

Instructional delivery is a highly complex process with many moving parts. Educators must ensure that content is appropriate and aligned to standards. Instruction should be relevant beyond test taking and motivate students to assume ownership of their learning. Additionally, flexibility is required as teachers execute real-time formative assessments that, based on student proficiency, facilitate course corrections with respect to pace, lesson content, and instructional strategy. Educators are also tasked with leveraging resources in a manner that supports active engagement and optimal practice opportunities.

Research is nearly unanimous in concluding that teachers are the most impactful school related factor with respect to student achievement. Why? Because it is the teacher who is primarily responsible for ensuring that learning - improving both understanding and ability - takes place. Teachers build bridges, through their delivery of instruction, that transport content through engagement to cognitive growth.

ESSENTIAL TEACHER SKILLS & ACTIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishes standards-based objectives that are:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stated clearly</li> <li>Measurable</li> <li>Developmentally appropriate</li> <li>Focused toward mastery of relevant standards</li> </ul> </li> <li>Uses a variety of aligned tasks</li> <li>Provides accommodations and modifications to address specific learning needs</li> <li>Establishes criteria for success that are:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stated clearly</li> <li>Measurable</li> <li>Developmentally appropriate</li> <li>Aligned to learning objective</li> </ul> </li> <li>Monitors progress toward mastery with multiple and varied checks for understanding at appropriate opportunities</li> <li>Provides systematic feedback that affirms, clarifies, and advances the lesson</li> <li>Reteaches and/or advances content to address level of mastery based on data obtained from checks for understanding</li> <li>Supports objectives, prior learning, and all student populations based on their subject, grade, and level with appropriate instructional strategies</li> <li>Delivers content clearly, accurately, and coherently</li> <li>Incorporates appropriately varied digital and/or print and/or hands-on instructional resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combines differentiated and relevant instructional strategies and questioning techniques to maintain appropriate pace and engagement</li> <li>Uses leveled and/or scaffolded questioning to challenge students</li> <li>Incorporates critical thinking and varied problem-solving strategies throughout the lesson</li> <li>Provides opportunities for students to engage in content and respond to/build on peer ideas</li> <li>Provides appropriately challenging and aligned tasks that increase cognitive demand and gradually move student toward autonomy</li> </ul>

DOMAIN 3: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Our teachers build safe, supportive, and rigorous learning environments.

Creating an environment that encourages active learning through engagement, rigor, and intellectual curiosity garners the same level of importance as planning a high-quality lesson. A well-managed classroom environment addresses everything from room arrangement and routines to discipline and emotional/physical safety.

From the time a student steps into the classroom, it is imperative they understand the teacher’s expectations for all inter-workings of the instructional environment. This includes routine activities such as sharpening pencils, turning in assignments, getting into groups, and entering/exiting the classroom. Additionally, expectations and protocols for classroom behavior must also be addressed. By implementing clear, concise procedures and systems, instructors reduce the probability of off task behaviors and classroom interruptions and increase opportunities for learning.

An instructor’s ability to establish and support a system of efficient management techniques will be reciprocated through a more functional, active learning environment. Their commitment to developing a positive, productive learning environment demonstrates that learning is valued and all members of the learning community, teachers and students, are respected and share responsibility for learning.

ESSENTIAL TEACHER SKILLS & ACTIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establishes an organized system of routines, procedures, and transitions that allow for maximized instructional time</li><li>• Organizes material and supplies (visual graphics, anchor charts, and/or technology) in a manner that facilitates readiness, progression, and enhancement of the lesson</li><li>• Aligns physical environment to lesson structure to support outcomes, delivery, and enhancement of peer interaction</li><li>• Communicates specific, concrete expectations and norms</li><li>• Promotes self-discipline and self-monitoring using verbal and non-verbal cues</li><li>• Aligns behavioral consequences to students’ social, emotional, and cognitive development</li><li>• Responds appropriately to student behaviors and uses varied strategies to focus student behaviors without disruption to lesson momentum</li><li>• Recognizes and reinforces positive behaviors with praise and other incentives when appropriate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conveys high expectations for learning and participation and active participation by using appropriate engagement strategies</li><li>• Interacts equitably and respectfully with students</li><li>• Creates opportunities to strengthen relationships and build rapport with students through words and actions</li><li>• Celebrates individual and group efforts and successes</li></ul>

# DOMAIN 4: PROFESSIONALISM

**Our teachers embrace professionalism with a mindset of continuous improvement and accountability.**

A professional demeanor shows that an employee takes their responsibilities seriously and is a quality that is foundational for all educators of the Dallas Independent School District. Dallas ISD teachers are dedicated to executing their duties to the highest standard and developing their attitudes, knowledge, and skill set through continuous professional learning.

A commitment to maintaining a rigorous standard of performance is where professionalism beings. This means accepting responsibility for what does and does not happen in the classroom. It mandates that intentionality of thought be given to school attendance/punctuality, ethics, and documentation requirements. When educators demonstrate high levels of adherence to state and district policy, stakeholder confidence increases. As a result, teachers are viewed as not only competent to perform instructional duties, but also as caring individuals dedicated to the core mission of teaching – educating students.

Just as students are encouraged to always push their learning further, teachers that exhibit professionalism recognize they must also be continuous learners. In Dallas ISD schools, students are taught to question, innovate, and think, using skills that are highly valued in our technology driven society. The district values these same skills within its instructional community. Whether it is through participation in professional learning communities, attending conferences, professional organizations, or team collaborations, teachers should enthusiastically seek out and participate in learning opportunities to stay abreast of advances in technology and emerging trends in education.

A focus on professionalism translates to purposeful accountability. Teachers are widely considered to be the most important school-based factor for student achievement and as such, they must sustain a high standard of professionalism and personal accountability as a model to the students they serve.

ESSENTIAL TEACHER SKILLS & ACTIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adheres to professional standard of attendance as outlined by district policy</li> <li>Exhibits punctuality and preparedness</li> <li>Establishes clear procedures and expectations for instruction in the event of an emergency or absence</li> <li>Operates in accordance with Federal and state laws, Code of Ethics, Standard Practice for Texas Educators, and State and local school board policies, regulations, and practices</li> <li>Develops an efficient system for maintaining accurate up-to-date academic and nonacademic records</li> <li>Adheres to federal and state laws of compliance with regard to record-keeping and confidentiality for all students including those with special needs</li> <li>Analyzes multiple sources of evidence to evaluate/ determine individual strengths and weaknesses (self-reflection)</li> <li>Establishes short- and long-term professional goals based on self-reflection and feedback</li> <li>Participates in relevant/current research based professional learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructional practices are advanced through professional learning</li> <li>Collaborates with colleagues to plan, share, review, and seek feedback on instructional practices and professional learning</li> <li>Develops and sustains professional and collegial relationships for the purpose of student and staff growth</li> <li>Understands campus action plan and advocates for continuous evaluation to ensure alignment with learner and school needs</li> <li>Initiates contact with parents regarding:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic, social, and emotional growth</li> <li>Accommodations and/or modifications</li> <li>Attendance and behavior</li> </ul> </li> <li>Considers diverse populations and needs when selecting communication method</li> <li>Responds to all communications in a clear, appropriate, and timely manner</li> <li>Establishes collaborative partnerships with families and community to enhance instructional programs</li> </ul>

# PERFORMANCE RATING DESCRIPTION

## EXEMPLARY

The exemplary teacher is considered a role model that consistently exhibits exceptional performance translating to high levels of learning for ALL students. They show evidence of in-depth content expertise along with superior ability to implement and integrate ALL Essential Teacher Skills and Actions. Their instruction is always culturally responsive, learner focused, and branded with high expectations for all learners. The exemplary teacher's impact is not limited to their classroom but is campus wide. They possess a growth mindset that facilitates productive collaboration and compelling mentorship of colleagues. Teachers performing at this level are master teachers and leaders in the field, both within and beyond the school.

## PROFICIENT

The proficient teacher is a valued educator who demonstrates consistent favorable performance that translates to most students meeting performance goals. There is evidence of increased content expertise along with implementation and integration of the Essential Teacher Skills and Actions. Proficient teachers participate in collaborative learning opportunities and are supportive of colleagues. This rating refers to a successful, professional teacher that is consistently culturally responsive and learner focused while maintaining high expectations for learners. It is the expectation that most teachers are consistently performing at a proficient level while simultaneously engaging in further development.

## PROGRESSING

The progressing teacher displays sporadic shifts in effectiveness. There is evidence of basic content expertise and implementation of some Essential Teacher Skills and Actions, but more consistent overall performance is required. They are cordial with colleagues and collaboration is occasional and typically initiated via mandates. This rating refers to professional teaching that is occasionally culturally responsive and learner focused, while maintaining some expectations for learning. This level of performance indicates that the teacher knowledge and skills are inconsistent and often ineffective, thus opportunities for improvement are warranted.

## UNSATISFACTORY

The unsatisfactory teacher is considered ineffective. The teacher shows little or no content expertise and minimal ability to implement Essential Teacher Skills and Actions. The teacher does not meet minimal performance standards and needs substantial improvement. This rating refers to teaching that is rarely culturally responsive or learner focused. This level of performance is hindering learning or is doing harm in the classroom and significant intervention is required.

Principals and other appraisers are tasked with conducting frequent, fair, and objective observations and evaluations of our teachers. To support our instructional leaders, Dallas ISD conducts annual training and calibration on the teacher performance rubric and evaluation system requirements, supports campus-level calibration through learning walks, and provides ongoing technical assistance and consultation with the performance management team.

To collect the richest evidence on the effectiveness of our teachers, we recommend the following best practices for evaluators to follow:

**PREPARE:** Share your instructional and cultural expectations with teachers before observing them. Understand the student population the teacher is working with during the observation. Give reasonable advance notice to teachers that you are collecting evidence of their teaching and learning practices.

**VARY TIMES/SUBJECTS/SETTINGS:** Teachers deserve to have evidence collected about their practices not only throughout the year but also at differing times of the day, in multiple subjects (if applicable), and in various settings. Rather than setting a routinized schedule that has the evaluator visiting the same classrooms at the same times, we recommend that evaluators vary their visits to maximize their understanding of teaching and learning in their school.

**COLLECT FACTUAL EVIDENCE:** Collecting evidence and evaluating effectiveness are two separate tasks; therefore, evidence should be collected which can be supported by data to assist in evaluating effectiveness. Evidence is seen, heard, or sensed in a way that can be objectively recorded and replayed. Examples: What do you see? What do you hear? What is the teacher saying/doing? What are students saying/doing? *If it is an opinion, it is not evidence.*

**MITIGATE BIAS AND PERSONAL PREFERENCES:** Appraisers must recognize their preferences and work to mitigate bias so that evaluations are fair and objective. Personal perceptions and observer effects (e.g. familiarity) contribute to unclear and unrealistic feedback that can impact a teacher's view of their practice and can affect the working relationship between administrator and teacher. We recommend appraisers proactively identify evidence that could lead them to rate lower or higher, recognize their pre-conceived notions, and limit value-laden language when discussing instruction.

**ASK FOR CONTEXT AND PROVIDE REALISTIC FEEDBACK:** To assist teachers' growth, appraisers and teachers should collaborate to establish a shared understanding of the observed lesson. Feedback needs to be focused on the "highest lever" that will make the most positive impact on teaching and learning, and it should be given in achievable segments to scaffold the teacher towards success. Last, to make it meaningful, the feedback conversation should occur as soon as possible.

**ELIMINATE SURPRISES:** The summative evaluation is designed to depict a culmination of the year. It is intended to provide a summary of how the teacher's practice has evolved. Spot, extended, and informal observations inform the summative evaluation, so they are to be used as evidence of teacher growth rather than numbers to "average" to arrive at a final score. By collecting fact-based data and holding constructive feedback conversations with teachers throughout the year, evaluators are ensuring the arrival of a shared understanding of the teacher's performance at the end-of-year evaluation.

