TEACHER EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE

DTR Application Tips and Best Practices June 2026

Application Tips

- Use **specific details**.
- Highlight **individual contributions**.
- Provide qualitative and quantitative **outcome**
- **Be aware of character limits.**
- Attend a **DTR Workshop.**
- Write in **paragraph** form (no bullets).
- Avoid vague language or paraphrasing rubric language.
- **Artifacts are optional**. (Limited to 5 pages)
- **Utilize the DTR Rubric**.
- **Submit your application early!**

Avoid these Application Pitfalls

Too Many Actions/Training:

I attended AVID training, Advanced Placement Summer Institute, GT training, Human Resources trainings, On-Ramps training, Dual Credit Training, Lead4Ward, Amplify, and Eureka Math. I went above what the district requires.

Best Practice: Focus on one or two things and describe your implementation and impact/outcome. Greater impact/outcome scores higher on the DTR Rubric.

Vague or Passive Key Actions:

I implemented the strategies from Reading Academy in my classroom. I also used various types of technology. (0)

Best Practice: Be Specific in describing implementation. Words like strategies and technology are not specific nor clear.

If the review committee cannot discern what was implemented, the experience will score 0 points.

Not Using Universal Measurements for Growth:

My Students improved to 70% passing on the STAAR. (not significant)

Best Practice: Explain data (prior/current) in detail and with the correct vocabulary so that the review committee can determine significance. For example, use percent of Approaching, Meets, Masters as opposed to "passing."

Not defining Impact or Outcomes:

Of the 74 teachers from 5 different states who attended my training at the National Math Conference, 43 implemented number lines in their own classroom according to a survey. (no impact)

Best Practice: Describe the impact for those teachers. (Several teachers sent emails documenting how the students had a better understanding of the math TEKS due to number lines, and they improved on assessments in this area.)

I received Teacher of the Year. (no impact)

Best Practice: Use Active experiences over Passive Experiences.
For example, what did you do on the campus that led to this distinction? What is your impact?

Not Understanding the Domain

Leadership Experiences—Must impact the **CAMPUS served.**

Lifelong Learning Experiences—Must start from some form of **NEW LEARNING and impact the CAMPUS served**.

Contributions Experiences—Must focus on **the PROFESSION (changing education policy or other teachers)**

Reviewing Your DTR Application

Before submitting your DTR Application, TEI recommends the following steps:

- ❑ Review your application for spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- ❑ Seek feedback from a colleague or friend. Ask them to share their thoughts on its clarity.
  - ❑ Does the reader understand the experience you are sharing?
  - ❑ Does the reader require additional information to believe your experience? If so, add additional qualitative or quantitative data.
- ❑ Reach out to a DTR Ambassador.
- ❑ Revise your DTR Application as necessary.

Final Checklist

Recommendation: Answer these questions about each experience.

Date Range

- Did you provide a date range at the beginning of the application?
- The date range must fall between **June 2022 and present date** to receive points for the experiences. A date range must be included to receive points.

Vague Language

- Is the experience written in complete sentences and easy to understand?
- Is it written in specific detail and is free of langugage copied from the DTR Rubric?

Key Actions Outcomes

- Did you include specific details about individual actions?
- Do the outcomes described match the actions?

Rubric Alignment

Leadership

- Did you describe an experience where you serve as a role model to other professionals on your campus?
- Did you describe how your actions led to an improvement in the practice of others?

Lifelong Learning

- Did you describe an experience that occurred on your campus due to a specific new learning?
- Did you provide an explanation of how the new learning was applied and the outcomes/improvements that occurred as a result?

Contributions to the Profession

- Does the experience contribute to the improvement of other PK-12 teachers on the campus, in the Feeder/Network, in the District or beyond? Does it impact PK-12 education policy?
- Did you provide impact and outcomes that occurred as a result of the experience?

Accuracy

- Is the information provided true and accurate?

Do you need more support for your DTR Application?
Attend a DTR Workshop. Register in Cornerstone.

THE ESSENTIAL 10

impact **at the campus level**

Leadership (4 pts):

- Do you have an experience where you served as a role model to other professionals on your campus?
- Can you describe how your actions led to an improvement at the campus level?
- **The Essential 10:** How did you lead and what was the outcome?

impact **in classroom or on campus**

Lifelong Learning (3 pts):

- Do you have an experience that occurred on your campus due to a specific new learning?
- Can you provide an explanation of how the new learning was implemented or shared and the outcomes/improvements that occurred as a result?
- **The Essential 10:** What did you learn, what did you implement, and what was the outcome?

impact **on feeder or district level**

Contributions to the Profession (3 pts):

- Do you have an experience that contributes to the improvement of other PK-12 teachers at the feeder/district level or impact feeder/district PK-12 education policy?
- Can you provide impact/outcomes that occurred as a result of the experience?
- **The Essential 10:** What did you do and how did it impact other teachers or policy in your feeder/district?

THE ESSENTIAL 10

Lifelong Learning 3 Points + Leadership 4 Points + Contributions 3 Points

Lifelong Learning	3 Points
3 Points	What did you **learn**? What did you **implement** or **share** with others? What **improved**?

Leadership Lever	4 Points
A. Student Activities	What was the extra- or co- curricular activity? What was the outcome or **what improved**?
B. Mentoring	Who did you mentor? What was **the change** in the mentee's practice?
C. Collaboration	What was the problem? What was the solution? **What improved** (outside your classroom)?
D. Professional Development	What PD did you deliver? What was the **change in practice**?
E. Family and Community Engagement	What did you create or improve? **What changed** in family/community engagement?
F. Awards and Recognition	Were you Teacher of the Year for your Campus? What did you do to receive this award?

Contributions to the Profession	3 Points
3 Points	How did you impact **teachers** at the **feeder or** at the **district?** **(beyond campus)**