T-TESS Appraiser Sample Conferencing Questions

1.1 - Standards and Alignment
- How are the goals for learning aligned to state content standards?
- How will technology be integrated into the lesson to support mastery of the lesson's goals?
- How do you plan for activities, materials, and assessments that are sequenced and relevant to students?
- How do you decide on the segmenting of a lesson in order to provide appropriate time for student work, the lesson, and lesson closure?
- How do you decide on activities, materials, and assessments that are appropriate for diverse learners?
- How are "*lesson structure and pacing*" addressed in this lesson?
- How does the sequence of the lesson address scaffolded learning and complex concepts as it progresses?
- In what ways are other disciplines integrated and supported?
- How do you ensure that your lessons are aligned horizontally with the team? Vertically?

1.2 - Data and Assessment
- Which assessment data was examined to inform planning for this lesson?
- What are some ways you communicate your classroom and school goals to stakeholders?
- What does pre-assessment data indicate about student learning needs?
- What formal and informal techniques do you use to collect evidence of students' knowledge and skills?
- How will your assessment data help you identify student strengths and areas of improvement?
- In what ways do you provide specific and timely feedback to students? Families? Other school personnel?
- How is data provided to students to help them identify their own learning needs and track progress?
- How do you compare student results to your own teaching strategies to determine what works for specific students? When are you most successful? When do students struggle? Why? How does this help you plan for future lessons?
- What processes do you use to collect and analyze data over time?

1.3 - Knowledge of Students
- How will this lesson demonstrate your familiarity with students' prior knowledge, life experiences, and interests?
- How will the instructional strategies provide opportunities to address all students' learning needs?
- How will developmental gaps be addressed?
- How do you assess students' learning styles and needs?
- When students have individualized learning plans, how are their needs included in planning for lessons?
- How are students with similar needs grouped and supported during the planning and instruction phases?
- When students are struggling, how do you determine the cause and address their needs?
- How are students' backgrounds, language and/or cultural differences used to plan for instruction?
- How are students' social-emotional needs incorporated into planning for lessons?

1.4 - Activities
- Why is it important for teachers to ask higher order questions during a lesson?
- How do you plan for questions and opportunities for students to engage in higher order thinking and problem-solving?
- How do you decide on the instructional grouping of students before/during a lesson?
- How do you hold groups and individuals accountable for work completed within a group?
- How do you decide on the roles and responsibilities individuals will have when working in groups?
- In what ways do the activities, resources, technology, and instructional materials align to the instructional goals?
- How are activities varied to address different ability levels and learning needs?
- What opportunities do you provide for students to set individual goals and hold each other accountable for meetings those goals? How does goal setting happen within instructional groups?
- How do you ensure that the activities planned are engaging and keep students focused and motivated to learn? How do they engage students in ownership of their own learning?

2.1 - Achieving Expectations
- Why is it important to have academic expectations for students that are high and demanding?
- How will you obtain evidence that most students have demonstrated mastery of the objective?

- How will students take initiative for their own learning and self-monitor their progress?
- What are some examples of high expectations with this unit of study/lesson/activity?
- What opportunities do you provide for students to set high social-emotional expectations for themselves?
- How are students expected to persist with instruction to demonstrate progress towards mastery of learning? What types of strategies do you use to keep them motivated and focused?
- How do you anticipate student mistakes and/or misunderstandings? What types of common learning pitfall do you generally see with this lesson/unit?
- When you know students will struggle with what is presented, what do you do?
- In what ways are students expected to take initiative for their own learning? What role do you play in this?

2.2 - Content Knowledge and Expertise
- How do you develop or select instructional strategies to teach specific skills?
- How do you decide on ways in which you will connect the content to other disciplines and real-world experiences?
- How will you sequence the instruction so that students understand how the lesson fits within the discipline and real-world scenarios?
- How do you plan for opportunities for students to engage in different types of thinking?
- What are some examples related to how you model thinking for students?
- What do you believe are the key concepts with this unit of study/lesson?
- How do you know when to provide differentiated explanations for students?
- What content, if any, do you anticipate will present challenges for students? What cues will tell you that they do not understand what is presented? What might you do to prepare for these misunderstandings up front? What techniques do you/might you use to mitigate those concerns?
- How is instruction sequenced to allow students to see the connections within and across disciplines?
- What are some examples of how you continuously refine your knowledge and expertise?
- How do you stay current in the field?

2.3 - Communication
- How will the goals for learning be communicated to students?
- How will you provide opportunities for students to elaborate and extend their learning?
- How do you provide for wait time when questioning during a lesson?
- Why is it important for teachers to ask higher order questions that are aligned to the lesson's objective(s)?
- How do you communicate your expectations to students?
- How is student-to-student communication encouraged and established during instruction?
- How do you make decisions about the types of technology and/or visual tools to use during the lesson?
- How are technology and visual tools used to engage students and communicate learning?
- How do you know when your explanations or direct teach are clear and coherent? What strategies do you use to assess whether students understood what was explained? What happens when students do not understand?
- How are questions leveled to increase complex thinking during the lesson? In what ways do they promote deeper thinking and a broader understanding of the objective(s)?
- What are some strategies you use to provoke and guide discussions with students?
- How are students expected to communicate what they have learned?

2.4 - Differentiation
- How will the instructional strategies address all students' learning needs?
- How do you provide differentiated instructional methods within your lesson?
- How will the lesson engage and challenge all students of all levels?
- Why is it important to provide varied options for student mastery?
- Why is it important to provide multiple strategies to teach and assess students?
- How are lessons adapted and presented using a variety of strategies to reach all students?
- In what ways do you monitor student participation and performance? What do you do when these expectations are not present?
- What student behaviors do you look for during the lesson as signals that differentiation may be needed?
- How do you know when students are confused?
- What do you do when students become disengaged? How do you refocus instruction?

2.5 - Monitor and Adjust
- How will you check for understanding during the lesson?
- How will you use student feedback to make adjustments to your instruction?
- How does student engagement impact student performance?
- What strategies do you use to gather input from students? How is this information used to monitor and adjust instruction?
- How are activities adjusted to align with the lesson objective and yet meet students' needs?
- How is pacing monitored and adjusted to maximize learning and keep students progressing towards mastery? What behaviors might you see to indicate that pacing needs to be adjusted?
- What strategies do you use for ongoing checks for understanding?
- What kinds of questions do you ask when purposefully checking for understanding?
- What are some examples of specific, academic feedback you provide to students? How do students provide academic feedback to each other? What are students expected to do with the feedback?

3.1 - Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures
- How do you ensure that routines, procedures and transitions are efficient in order to maximize student learning?
- How will different grouping strategies be used to encourage student responsibility for resources and materials?
- How do you build safety in the classroom, promoting open communications and/or collaboration?
- What are some strategies for involving students in leading and managing responsibilities within the classroom?
- How are students encouraged to take risks?
- What would students say about the environment – from both instructional and social-emotional aspects? How do you know that?
- If you could refine your routines and procedures, what would you do? Why?

3.2 - Managing Student Behavior
- What systems are in place to effectively monitor student behavior?
- How do you plan to address inappropriate behavior should that become an issue during instruction?
- How are students involved in developing classroom procedures?
- How are clear behavioral expectations communicated and monitored?
- What types of consequences do you use when behavior is inconsistent?
- What types of non-verbal signals do you use with students to re-direct behavior?
- What is the relationship between student behavior and student engagement?
- How does your behavior management system extend beyond classroom walls?

3.3 - Classroom Culture
- How do you determine/plan appropriate procedures to ensure a respectful classroom culture?
- How do you provide opportunities for students to collaborate and build a strong team culture?
- In what ways does your classroom culture reflect high expectations for performance and student-centered behaviors?
- How does the classroom culture ensure that relevant, meaningful learning is the norm?
- How are activities structured so that students are expected to collaborate positively with each other?
- How is positive rapport amongst students established and maintained?
- In what ways are students empowered to build a positive classroom culture that they own and respect?