Implementation Spotlight: Educator Evaluation Spring Convening: Connecting Policy, Practice, and Practitioners

As part of our mission to create opportunities for educators to connect and share best practices, ESE hosted a one-day convening in Sturbridge, MA on the new educator evaluation system. On May 29th, more than 700 practitioners from school districts across the Commonwealth came together to learn from and with their colleagues. Participants included teachers, district and school leaders, local union leaders, and representatives from educator preparation programs.

Commissioner Chester and Fitchburg Public Schools Superintendent Andre Ravenelle provided opening remarks on the importance of this initiative to the state’s larger reform efforts. Local district and union leaders also led 14 breakout sessions on emerging best practices in implementing the new system.

Thank you to everyone who participated! We are grateful for the collaborative spirit on display at the convening and the commitment to successfully implementing and sustaining this critical initiative.

Materials from the event are available on our website at http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/convening/2013spring.html.

Breaking News—Student and Staff Feedback Incorporation Shifted to 2014-2015 School Year

In response to district requests for time to focus on implementation of the 5-step evaluation cycle and to pilot District-Determined Measures during the 2013-2014 school year, ESE has decided to further phase-in the educator evaluation framework by shifting the incorporation of student and staff feedback as a source of evidence in the determination of the Summative Performance Rating to the 2014-2015 school year.

ESE will use the additional year of planning to support districts in the 2014-2015 implementation of student and staff feedback by developing and executing:

- A plan for piloting/field testing model instruments
- A plan for field engagement for both instrument and guidance development
- A plan for the state to collect, analyze, and use data from the pilot to inform the development of final model instruments

ESE will be hosting opportunities for interested educators to learn more about the project and provide feedback on the pilot instruments during feedback workshops, the first set of which will be held in September. If you are interested in participating in one of these sessions, please email EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu. Look for more detailed information in the August Educator Evaluation e-Newsletter.
Engaging Educators to Identify DDM Examples

ESE has partnered with WestEd, a nationally recognized non-profit research, development, and service agency with a history of working with educators and school leaders across the Commonwealth, to identify sample District-Determined Measures (DDMs) for a wide array of grades/subject and courses districts can choose to use.

Earlier this month, WestEd began convening panels of expert educators from across the Commonwealth at face-to-face meetings to discuss a series of high incidence grades/subjects and courses for which the MA Curriculum Frameworks do not provide grade-specific standards. Panelists identified core course objectives essential to these courses which will directly inform ESE’s and WestEd’s efforts to identify appropriate example DDMs.

Panelists’ work will be published on ESE’s website for public feedback from July 8th-12th. More information about the grade/subjects and courses for which WestEd has convened panels and the link to provide feedback on the identified core course objectives will be found here in early July: http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/.

To develop this set of example DDMs, we are seeking your help in recommending assessments, measures of student learning, growth, or achievement that have been piloted or are currently in use in your school district. We are interested in commercially available assessments as well as locally-developed instruments for any grade/subject or course.

WestEd has developed an online survey that asks a few questions about the assessments you are using and provides a simple tool for uploading copies of the instruments: https://www.smartsheet.com/b/form?EQBCT=52e3762ac7954f93aa40cc879bc38855.

District Evaluation System Reviews

Submission Requirements and Process
ESE is currently collecting teacher contract language and select rubrics via an online questionnaire that incorporates a document upload tool. It also asks a series of questions to determine whether the district is required to submit any rubrics to ESE. All districts (RTTT and non-RTTT) and RTTT charter schools should complete the questionnaire. RTTT districts will not need to upload materials unless the district made changes to the teacher contract language or the previous agreement had an end date, such as in the case of a one-year MOA. Similarly, RTTT charter schools will not need to upload materials unless changes have been made to the evaluation system, in which case the charter school will upload a document that outlines the new process such as guidelines or a handbook.

Timeline
By September 1, 2013, the questionnaire should be completed and documents uploaded by someone who is aware of what materials have previously been submitted to ESE for review and who knows details about performance rubrics, including the kinds of modifications made to the MA Model Rubrics if applicable. A copy of the questions will be posted on the ESE website in early July. Please note that districts cannot complete the online questionnaire until the teacher contract language has been ratified by the school committee.

The questionnaire can be found here: http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/1288394/District-Evaluation-System-Questionnaire.

NOTE: Contract language that is adapted from the MA Model Contract Language for Teachers must be submitted as a Word document with modifications visibly marked using "Track Changes" or highlighting.
Questions from the Field

1. Can our district request an exemption from reporting educator evaluation data to EPIMS this year?

No. The state does not offer any exemptions from reporting data. If you are a RTTT district that did not implement, all educators must be reported as "Not Evaluated." There is, however, a small list of errors generated by the submission of educator evaluation data to EPIMS for which ESE will approve an exception. Exceptions are reviewed and approved only in response to EPIMS errors; exception requests are made by completing and submitting an "Implementation Exception Request Template," which has been sent to all EPIMS data contacts. Please contact EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu with additional questions.

2. What will I do without a July issue of the Educator Evaluation e-Newsletter?!?

Enjoy a good book or go to the beach! Although we will not be releasing a July newsletter, the Educator Evaluation team will be in the office. As always, feel free to reach out to us with any questions. Have a wonderful summer!

Questions or Comments are always welcome at EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu

Contact the Educator Evaluation Team

Claire Abbott, Evaluation Training Program, Implementation Support (Currently, on maternity leave until mid-September)
Susan Berglund, Evaluation Liaison to Level 3 and Level 4 Districts
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Ron Noble, Project Co-Lead, Evaluation System Reviews, District-Determined Measures, Staff & Student Feedback
Samantha Warburton, Project Co-Lead, MA Model System, Evaluation Training, Implementation Support, Data Reporting

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is committed to preparing all students for success in the world that awaits them after high school. Whether you are a student, parent, educator, community leader, taxpayer, or other stakeholder interested in education, we invite you to join us in this endeavor.

"To strengthen the Commonwealth's public education system so that every student is prepared to succeed in postsecondary education, compete in the global economy, and understand the rights and responsibilities of American citizens, and in so doing, to close all proficiency gaps."

- Strengthen curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Improve educator effectiveness
- Turn around the lowest performing districts and schools
- Use data and technology to support student performance

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