Implementation Spotlight: Implementation Tips for the New School Year

Below is a collection of tips, lessons, and practical strategies to support educator evaluation implementation for the coming school year. These strategies have emerged out of feedback from a variety of sources—ESE’s principal advisory cabinets; survey data; daily communications between ESE staff and educators, state associations, unions, and vendors; and preliminary findings from an external evaluator of educator evaluation in Massachusetts. We appreciate the time and effort educators take to engage with us and share their experiences so we can continue to improve the evaluation framework!

Labor-Management

✓ If your district does not have a contract finalized at the beginning of the school year, begin the evaluation cycle with key educators who are not part of a collective bargaining unit, such as principals. This gives principals an opportunity to experience the steps of the evaluation cycle first-hand and model the process for other school-level educators.

✓ Continue meeting regularly with the labor-management committee or educator evaluation work group in order to develop consistent answers to questions, resolve misunderstandings, and promptly address concerns and challenges as they arise. Many districts who did not continue those meetings regretted that decision by the end of the year.

Standards and Rubrics

✓ Identify “power Indicators or elements” aligned to school and district priorities, goals, and initiatives that all educators can focus on more intensively when self-assessing and setting goals. “Power Indicators/elements” should span all four Standards to ensure that evaluators are prepared to issue ratings on each of the four Standards by the end of the evaluation cycle.

✓ Share an example of educator practice, connected to a Standard, at every staff meeting or department meeting; this will help educators develop a common understanding of what good practice looks like, promote conversations about what Proficient and Exemplary mean, and celebrate successes.

Capacity and Observations

✓ Identify teachers in each school with expertise in the evaluation framework to be a peer resource for other teachers with questions such as timelines, requirements, and completing forms. (See the spotlight on Revere’s teacher leaders in the June 2013 newsletter for an example.)

✓ Set weekly and monthly targets for the number of classroom and worksite observations at the beginning of the school year to help evaluators stay on track, taking careful note of potential scheduling conflicts and months with more or less flexibility.

✓ Schedule time for observations, whether they are announced or unannounced; some administrators found it easier to block 2-3 days a month, others preferred to block a couple hours first thing in the morning to avoid inevitable interruptions.

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Capacity and Observations

- If frequent classroom visits haven’t been the norm, encourage evaluators to engage with students during visits, sitting with students and asking questions like, “What are you working on today?” or “If you are confused or need help, what do you do?” This approach is less intimidating than having an evaluator stand at the back of the room taking notes and provides good information about students’ experiences.
- Write up feedback immediately to ensure it is received timely and details aren’t lost; include one question to help establish an ongoing dialogue with the educator.

Do you have highlights or success stories about your work to adopt the new evaluation framework that you would like to share? To submit your story, please send an email to EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu.

District-Determined Measures: Updates, Resources, and Reminders

Commissioner’s Memo on DDM Supports, Timeline, and Pilot Expectations

On August 15th Commissioner Chester released a memo to all superintendents and RTTT charter school leaders providing updates on supports, timeline and pilot expectations for District-Determined Measures (DDMs). The memo describes revisions to timelines that ESE is making in response to feedback we have heard from the field regarding the challenges of implementing DDMs. Districts are still required to pilot DDMs during the 2013-14 school year, but will now have until June 1, 2014 to submit final plans for DDM implementation during the 2014-15 school year. In addition, the Commissioner intends to provide an opportunity for districts to apply for a one-year extension of the implementation of DDMs for grade(s)/subject(s) or course(s) for which the district will have identified DDMs by the second half of the 2013-14 school year. Read the full text of the memorandum at http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=7640.

Example DDMs Now Available!

ESE is excited to announce the release of over 600 example DDMs. Our partner, WestEd, evaluated a wide range of assessments, including commercial, non-commercial, traditional, and non-traditional assessments. The collection includes over 600 options covering a wide array of grades/subject and courses. Each option is presented in a one-page summary that includes critical information to inform district decision-making and links for more information. Access more information about the Example DDMs at http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/example/.

List of Pilot DDMs Due September 30th

All districts (RTTT and non-RTTT) and RTTT charter schools must use the District DDM Piloting Plan Template to report the list of DDMs the district will pilot during the 2013-2104 school year. At a minimum, the district must indicate the DDMs the district will pilot to satisfy the minimum DDM piloting requirements. Email completed templates to EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu no later than September 30, 2013. Download the template at http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/.

Technical Guide B: Measuring Student Growth and Piloting District-Determined Measures

Technical Guide B is designed as a timely, practical resource focused on supporting districts to identify and pilot DDMs. This guide supports districts to meet the goal of measuring impact on student learning by: introducing key questions and considerations for selecting and piloting measures, describing approaches to measuring growth with examples of assessment types, and finally, providing a brief overview of recommended steps for piloting measures. Download a copy from ESE’s DDM webpage at http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/.
Questions from the Field

1. Do districts have to use ESE’s example DDMs and/or the “core course objectives”?

No. Districts can choose to use the example DDMs, modify them to fit their needs, or not use them at all. ESE, in partnership with WestEd, worked with Massachusetts educators to identify core course objectives (CCOs) for roughly 100 high incidence grades/subjects and courses. WestEd assessment evaluators used these CCOs to ensure that example DDMs are well-aligned to content taught in Massachusetts classrooms. Districts are encouraged to review the CCOs when considering whether a particular example DDM represents a good “fit” with the district’s curriculum. ESE welcomes districts to use the identified CCOs and/or the CCO development process, but does not expect the CCOs to supplant curriculum work done locally.

2. Do districts have to submit educator evaluation data during the October 2013 EPIMS collection?

No. ESE may begin collecting data related to educator evaluation during the fall EPIMS collections in future years, but will not collect any data in the October 2013 submission.

3. How can districts use data from the Massachusetts Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS) in educator evaluation?

ESE just released a three-page guidance document on how this data can be used as part of educator evaluation. For information about how to incorporate EWIS data in self-assessment, identifying a target population, and understanding classroom context, you can access the guidance here. The 2013-2014 EWIS data is also now available in Edwin Analytics which can be accessed via the Security Portal.

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

Contact the Educator Evaluation Team

Claire Abbott, Evaluation Training Program, Implementation Support
Susan Berglund, Evaluation Liaison to Level 3 and Level 4 Districts
Kat Johnston, Communications, Peer Assistance & Review, Implementation Support
Simone Lynch, Assistant Director, Office of Educator Policy, Preparation and Leadership
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
Craig Waterman, Assessment Coordinator, District-Determined Measures, Staff & Student Feedback

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“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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