Implementation Spotlight: DDM Piloting Underway—Stories from the Field

More than 380 districts submitted plans for piloting District-Determined Measures (DDMs) earlier this fall. The pilot plans indicate that many districts are going above and beyond piloting DDMs in the five required areas. In fact, over 130 districts are piloting additional DDMs, with some piloting over 100 DDMs this school year. Districts are approaching DDM piloting with thoughtful consideration of existing resources and an awareness of the importance of engaging educators in the work and planning for continuous improvement. Read on to learn how two districts are approaching this work and have seen promising early returns.

**Embracing Locally Developed Assessments & Educator Engagement—Auburn Public Schools.** Auburn’s commitment to locally developed assessments and a data-driven culture of instructional improvement supports a DDM development process built around both new and preexisting structures. For the past decade, Auburn has focused on helping teachers develop high-quality assessments to measure student progress, analyze and disaggregate the data, and adjust instruction accordingly throughout the year. Educators regularly modify assessments in response to changing student and district needs to ensure the assessments are providing them with useful information. Superintendent Maryellen Brunelle sees tremendous value in using locally developed assessments to drive continuous improvement: “By creating our own [assessments], it makes for a rich conversation both in terms of their development and review of the data collected. People really examine what they’re teaching and why.”

Two years ago, Auburn developed an educator evaluation team consisting of teachers and administrators from across schools and departments to facilitate the introduction and implementation of the new evaluation framework. The team’s approach to DDM development has been to embed DDMs into the rich assessment work already taking place throughout the district, rather than see it as an “add on.” After reviewing all current assessments, the team distributed the DDM development work to department and grade level groups to discuss, select and/or develop measures to pilot this year. As a result, Auburn’s initial pilot plan included over 50 DDMs, a majority of which were locally developed and have been used in the district for two or more years. Grades and subject areas for which appropriate assessments were missing remain an ongoing focus, with grade level and department teams working together to develop potential DDMs that are aligned to their curriculum and informative to each educator.

Overall, Auburn’s history of locally developed assessments and its commitment to teacher engagement in this work has supported a comprehensive approach to DDM development that is embedded in preexisting structures and practices. As Kathy Lauzé, the Director of Teaching & Learning concluded, “The angst around DDMs is reduced because we’re using what educators are used to. And they’ve had a voice each step along the way.”

**Establishing Key Content & Reviewing Current Assessments—Quincy Public Schools.** Quincy is concentrating their efforts on engaging educators at each level—elementary, middle, and high school—to identify and develop DDMs. In the spring of 2013, Quincy established a district DDM team consisting of the Superintendent, directors, coordinators, and administrators to oversee the development process. Members of this team continue to participate in the ESE’s Assessment Literacy Webinar Series and district educator evaluation meetings.

How Are We Doing?
Share your feedback about the Educator Evaluation e-Newsletter! Please complete this quick survey (2-3 minutes) to let us know how useful you find the newsletter and ways we can improve it.

You can take the survey here: [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/31451425](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/31451425)

New Resources Available
- **Curriculum Summit Materials Now Available!** Materials include presentations and resources shared at this year’s Curriculum Summit entitled *Creating Cohesion between Curriculum Frameworks and Educator Evaluation Implementation.*
- **Assessment Literacy Webinar Series, Part 7:** Ramping Up for Next Year: Strategies for Using Current Assessments in DDMs & Materials from the third Technical Assistance and Networking Session will be available here by the end of December.

Meet Our New Team Member!
Kate Ducharme, Educator Evaluation Specialist
Kate is from Ware, MA and brings project and team management experience as a former Senior Site Manager for Jumpstart for Young Children. She is also an experienced pre-kindergarten teacher and was selected as a model teacher in a series of instructional videos for Teach For America.

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- **Elementary Schools:** Across the 11 elementary schools, grade and subject DDM teams have been established and include an administrative facilitator, four teacher leaders, and teacher representatives from each school. Currently, there are 24 working teams at the elementary level. Each team is scheduled to meet twice in facilitator meetings, twice in vertical content teams, and three times with larger teams of teachers during system wide Professional Development (PD) days. All elementary teachers will be working in their content area to create new pacing and alignment guides, identify common assessments, and build consensus before proposing related DDMs by June of 2014.

- **Middle Schools:** Following a similar model, Quincy’s five middle schools established content area teams and are utilizing teacher leaders, core teams, and four system wide PD days to identify DDMs. The middle school vertical and content teams were experienced in collaborating on curriculum and assessment development, so providing the time and a clear direction was the key for these teams. Teams are focusing on a variety of topics, including developing a common pacing and alignment guide, sharing benchmark assessments and/or program surveys already in use, and exploring methods of scoring and administration of common assessments.

- **High Schools:** Under the direction of the principals, department chairs, and the Curriculum and Assessment Management team, DDM implementation in Quincy’s two high schools began with an overview for administrators and instructional leaders. Utilizing established contractual time and cabinet council meetings, the department chairs are taking the lead in facilitating the roll-out of the DDM initiative in their buildings. This fall, the cabinet council identified current assessments that can be used in both high schools. In January, they will utilize PD days to share their work with all educators.

Based on the ongoing involvement of teachers and administrators, Quincy is piloting the five minimum DDMs and field testing a variety of math assessments in an effort to “try out” potential options. The Director of Assessment and Analysis is also convening a data collection and management team this winter to focus on how the district will store data and how teachers will access essential data to use throughout the year to inform their practice.

Is your district developing promising practices around DDM piloting? The Educator Evaluation Team wants to hear from you! Please send us an email at EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu.

### Educator Evaluation Performance Ratings Released for Race to the Top Districts

On November 21st, the ESE released the first set of performance ratings under the new educator evaluation system. The educator evaluation system is designed to provide teachers and administrators with more meaningful feedback than ever before to improve their practice and support them to become better educators. Data from the first year shows that evaluators are differentiating performance among educators. The results are promising:

- The vast majority of educators evaluated received a solid performance rating.
- Statewide, 85.2 percent of educators evaluated last year were rated Proficient. Smaller percentages of educators received the highest performance rating of Exemplary (7.4 percent) or a rating of Needs Improvement (6.8 percent). Less than one percent of educators were rated Unsatisfactory (0.7 percent).
- During the 2012-13 school year, 61.8 percent of educators (or 37,940 educators) in 213 RTTT districts were evaluated, which was above the required 50 percent for last year.
- Districts are ensuring that support goes to new teachers: 82.4 percent of teachers without Professional Teaching Status (PTS) were evaluated last year compared to 65.8 percent of teachers with PTS.

When fully implemented by the end of 2013-2014, the new system will require all public school districts in Massachusetts to evaluate every educator and will help discern where educators are performing well, where there is room for improvement, and how ESE, districts, and schools can best support the development of all educators.

Read the complete press release [here](https://www.doe.mass.edu/press/2012/11/21/20121121.html). For school and district evaluation data, visit ESE’s [website](https://www.doe.mass.edu/). Per state law, individual evaluation data submitted to ESE is considered confidential personnel information and is not subject to disclosure under the public records law.

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**Update on Using Student and Staff Feedback in Educator Evaluations**

In the 2014-15 school year, student feedback and staff feedback (for administrators) will become a source of evidence used in educator evaluation (603 CMR 35.07 (c)). In July 2014, ESE will publish model surveys for collecting student and staff feedback. Districts can adopt or adapt these surveys, or districts can choose to use other feedback instruments. ESE will also be releasing guidance on incorporating feedback into educator evaluations, as well as model contract language to support collective bargaining.

To develop the model surveys and implementation guidance, ESE is engaging educators at all levels, conducting two survey administration pilots, and consulting with national experts.

- **Engaging educators:** To date, ESE has hosted five expert review working sessions to provide MA educators an opportunity to give feedback on draft survey items. Classroom educators, as well as school and district administrators have participated in each session. Additional sessions are planned for late winter and early spring. If you’d like to participate in an upcoming session or if your district is interested in hosting a session, email EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu.

**Piloting in MA districts**

Eight districts—Auburn, Boston, Greater Lawrence Technical, Lincoln, Malden, Norwell, Quaboag, Westport—and the South Coast Educational Collaborative have volunteered to pilot the draft surveys. Combined, approximately 16,700 students and 1,600 educators will participate in two pilot administrations over the next several months.

- **Partnering with experts**

ESE is finalizing agreements with national experts to provide survey development and implementation expertise as well as build an online platform for survey administration.

For more information about student and staff feedback, check out our [Quick Reference Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/nta/).
Questions from the Field

1. What will ESE require districts to report with regard to individual educators’ Student Impact Ratings and when?

Districts will report a rating of Low, Moderate, or High Impact for individual educators, based on at least two years of data and at least two measures. ESE will begin collecting Impact Ratings through EPIMS following the 2015-2016 school year. Note: ESE does not intend to collect individual educator information on which measures were used to determine an Impact Rating or student data on those measures. For more information on data collection, read our Quick Reference Guide.

2. How is ESE ensuring the confidentiality of data collected for the purpose of educator evaluation?

For all educators other than the superintendent, state law and regulations guarantee that any information concerning an individual educator’s evaluation, including ratings, is considered personnel information and is not subject to disclosure under public records law. For more detail, see 603 CMR 35.11(6) and Section 2 of Chapter 131 of the Acts of 2012 (An Act Providing for the Implementation of Education Evaluation Systems in School Districts). ESE has also taken additional precautions to ensure that individual educator ratings cannot be identified by applying rigorous "suppression rules" to the public release of the data. Where cells are blank on the performance rating data for a district, school, or educator subgroup on the Profiles website, this indicates that ESE has suppressed data for at least one of three reasons: 1) the number of staff evaluated was fewer than six; 2) all staff evaluated in a group received the same rating, and/or 3) all educators were evaluated and a single educator had a rating different from all other educators in the group.

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

Contact the Educator Evaluation Team

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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