Implementation Spotlight: DDM Lessons Learned from the Career/Vocational Technical Education Community

This month’s spotlight focuses on the work being done on district-determined measures (DDMs) in Massachusetts schools and districts with Career/Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) programs. For the last several months, ESE, in partnership with West Ed, has collaborated with Massachusetts CVTE teachers and leaders throughout the Commonwealth to put together a collection of resources designed to help districts move forward with DDM planning and implementation.

Engaging Educators: Earlier this year, ESE and West Ed engaged CVTE educators in the collection, review, and sharing of CVTE assessments for possible use as DDMs. A critical part of this process was convening meetings for CVTE educators and administrators to facilitate collaboration on DDMs across CVTE programs/career clusters, districts, and regions. Expert educators representing all 11 career clusters were included. After the meetings, we conducted follow-up interviews and provided opportunities for resource-sharing with a number of CVTE leaders actively engaged in DDM planning in their districts.

Key Messages: At these meetings and during follow-up interviews, key messages and recurring themes emerged. Most notable among these was the belief that the DDM initiative afforded the opportunity for educators and administrators to specify the knowledge and skills most important for students to learn and consider how best to measure them. CVTE educators suggested that they were more confident about the DDM development and implementation process after seeing that their instructional priorities were the foundation for DDM identification. Dr. Mike Ananis, Executive Director of the Ringde School of Technical Arts, took the first step in working with his educators to develop DDMs by asking them to focus on their critical content, and delivered this message: “I want you to take your juniors and tell me the most important things you want your students to know this year, and then we will work our way backwards to decide what to include in a pre-test and post-test.”

CVTE educators also spoke to using the DDM initiative as an opportunity to improve teaching practices. Michelle Roche, Vocational Director at Minuteman Regional Technical Vocational High School, highlighted this point: “This high school has embraced the opportunity to improve teaching and learning through dialogue across disciplines. In particular CVTE instructors have appreciated discussions about student learning with principals and performance evaluators and sharing of best practices with colleagues.”

CVTE educators acknowledged having a long history of using both traditional and non-traditional assessments to measure student progress. Tom Hickey, Superintendent-Director of South Shore Vocational-Technical High School, reminded colleagues to take a practical approach that builds on the great work already happening in schools: “Let’s keep this process simple, draw from our best assessment practices in CVTE classrooms, and work together to identify those measures best suited to move the field forward.”

New Resources

• Rating Educator Impact—The Student Impact Rating
• DDM Resources for CVTE Educators
• DDMs Implementation Briefs:
  • Considerations for Special Education
  • Considerations for English Language Learners

Preparing for Formative and Summative Performance Evaluations

As districts approach the end of the 2013–14 school year, evaluators will be conducting summative performance evaluations for educators at the end of their evaluation cycle. Educators should receive ratings on each of the four performance Standards, as well as an overall summative performance rating. The performance rating guidance published last spring, “Rating Educator Performance: how to determine Summative Performance Ratings” provides basic guidance on how to determine summative performance ratings in accordance with the regulations, as well as a series of scenario-driven worksheets that give evaluators an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the process of determining Summative Performance Ratings.

Educators halfway through a 2-year self-directed growth plan will receive formative evaluations. Similar to the summative performance evaluation, educators will receive ratings on each of the four Standards and an overall performance rating; however, formative evaluation ratings default to the educator’s prior summative.

Continued on page 2
**Update: ESE Student and Staff Feedback Model Surveys**

As highlighted in the March and April newsletters, beginning next year, teachers and administrators will start collecting and using feedback about their practice as part of the 5-step cycle of evaluation. In July 2014, ESE will publish model surveys to assist districts: a student feedback survey for classroom teachers aligned to the Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching, and a staff feedback survey for school-level leaders aligned to the Standards for Effective Administrative Leadership Practice. The ESE surveys are optional: districts may adopt or adapt these surveys, or choose to use other feedback instruments. ESE recently completed the second (and final) pilot administration of student and staff surveys in eight districts and one Collaborative.

ESE has spent the last ten months developing, piloting, and refining the model feedback surveys in collaboration with educators throughout the state. In addition to rigorous psychometric analyses, items have been evaluated by a diverse set of stakeholder groups across several forums:

- Teams of educators, including PreK-12 teachers, school administrators, and district leaders were convened to review and provide feedback on pilot survey items and feedback guidance.
- Educators in pilot districts provided feedback on survey forms, individual items, and overall guidance through ESE site-visits and post-administration online feedback forms.
- ESE completed cognitive interviews with students in grades K-12 to ensure that students understood the meaning and purpose of survey items for their grade levels.

**We want YOUR feedback!**

*There is still an opportunity to play a critical role in shaping the ESE model feedback surveys.*

**Upcoming engagement opportunities include:**

- **2 weeks only (May 21-June 3): Complete ESE’s item feedback survey** [here](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/cvte-resource.html). The survey is open to educators across the state to provide input on which items are most actionable and will best support educators in making changes to their practice.
- **Join one of our Expert Review Webinars.** Learn about the survey pilot project and ESE’s upcoming guidance for incorporating feedback into evaluation. The webinars will include an opportunity to provide feedback on ESE’s guidance and give suggestions for future implementation resources ESE may provide to districts and educators. Register [to attend one of the webinars here](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/cvte-resource.html).

**Impact Rating Guidance**

ESE has released a guide for educators and evaluators to use in the determination of Student Impact Ratings that meet the regulatory requirements, “Rating Educator Impact: The Student Impact Rating.” In addition to a review of the basic components of a Student Impact Rating, sample Student Impact Rating scenarios are included in the appendix. While initial Student Impact Ratings will be determined following the 2015-16 school year, the impact rating guidance offers a preview of the process and describes how the two ratings that comprise the MA educator evaluation framework (the Summative Performance Rating and the Student Impact Rating) intersect.

The impact rating guidance is a companion to the performance rating guidance published last spring to support educators and evaluations in the determination of Summative Performance Ratings (see sidebar).
Questions from the Field

1. What educator evaluation data is required to be reported to ESE through the Education Personnel Information Management System (EPIMS) end-of-year collection?

ESE will collect educator evaluation data through the EPIMS beginning in June. RTTT districts and charter schools are expected to report rating data for 100% of educators. Non-RTTT districts are expected to report for 50% of educators. Non-RTTT Commonwealth charter schools are not required to submit educator evaluation rating data and may only do so if the school has implemented an evaluation system that is consistent with the evaluation regulations.

For more information on what is required to be reported and how districts will report each data point, please see the updated Quick Reference Guide on Data Collection.

2. What is required to include in the June 1st submission?

By June 1st districts are required to submit their DDM Implementation Plans, which include a list of DDMs that will be implemented in the 2014-2015 school year. The implementation plan template asks districts to identify the DDM name, grades and subjects covered by the measure, the type of assessment and the number of educators that will use the measure. You can download the template for the submission here.

The plan districts will submit by June 1st, should represent the district’s work to date. ESE understands that some districts will continue to revise and update their plans before the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year. Along with the implementation plan, districts may use the submission template to request an extension for specific grades and subject areas for which they are not prepared to implement DDMs. Extension requests must include a plan that identifies key personnel, timelines, and resources the district will allocate to identify two measures for every licensed educator. For more information about June 1st submission and the extension request process, read the Commissioner’s memorandum, dated 3/18/14, here.

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

Contact the Educator Evaluation Team

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

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