Focus Indicators

FOR TEACHING IN 2024-2025

The *Focus Indicators* are a subset of Indicators from the Model Classroom Teacher Rubric that represent high-leverage practices for supporting students' academic and social-emotional needs and promoting a culturally and linguistically sustaining school environment.

By prioritizing a subset of Indicators, districts can establish shared expectations and supports for practice in key areas and better focus and streamline the evaluation process. Educators and evaluators can use this resource alongside the Educator Evaluation Implementation Resources to guide goal-setting, evidence-collection, feedback, support, and professional learning around high-priority practices.

FOCUS INDICATORS

CLICK ON AN INDICATOR TO GET STARTED

|	
I-A Curriculum & Planning	**III-B** Family Collaboration
II-A Instruction	**IV-A** Reflection
II-B Learning Environment	**IV-B** Shared Responsibility, Collaboration, & Decision-Making

EDUCATIONAL VISION

The Focus Indicators reflect a commitment to high-quality teaching and learning for **all students**.

Our vision is that all students in Massachusetts, particularly students from historically underserved groups and communities, will have **equitable opportunities to excel** in all content areas across all grades.

Culturally and linguistically sustaining classroom and school practices will support students to thrive by creating affirming environments where students have **a sense of belonging**, engage in **deeper learning**, and are held to **high expectations with targeted support**.

EACH INDICATOR PAGE FEATURES:
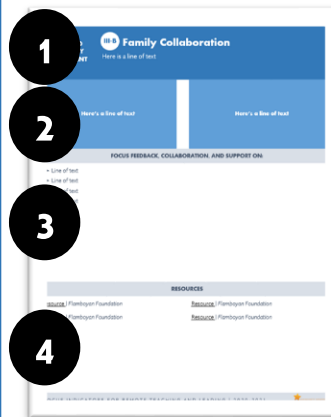
1. **Standard and Indicator** Description

2. **Key Practices**, adapted from elements associated with the Focus Indicator

3. **Focus Points for Feedback, Collaboration, and Support** provide examples of specific practices within the context of this school year
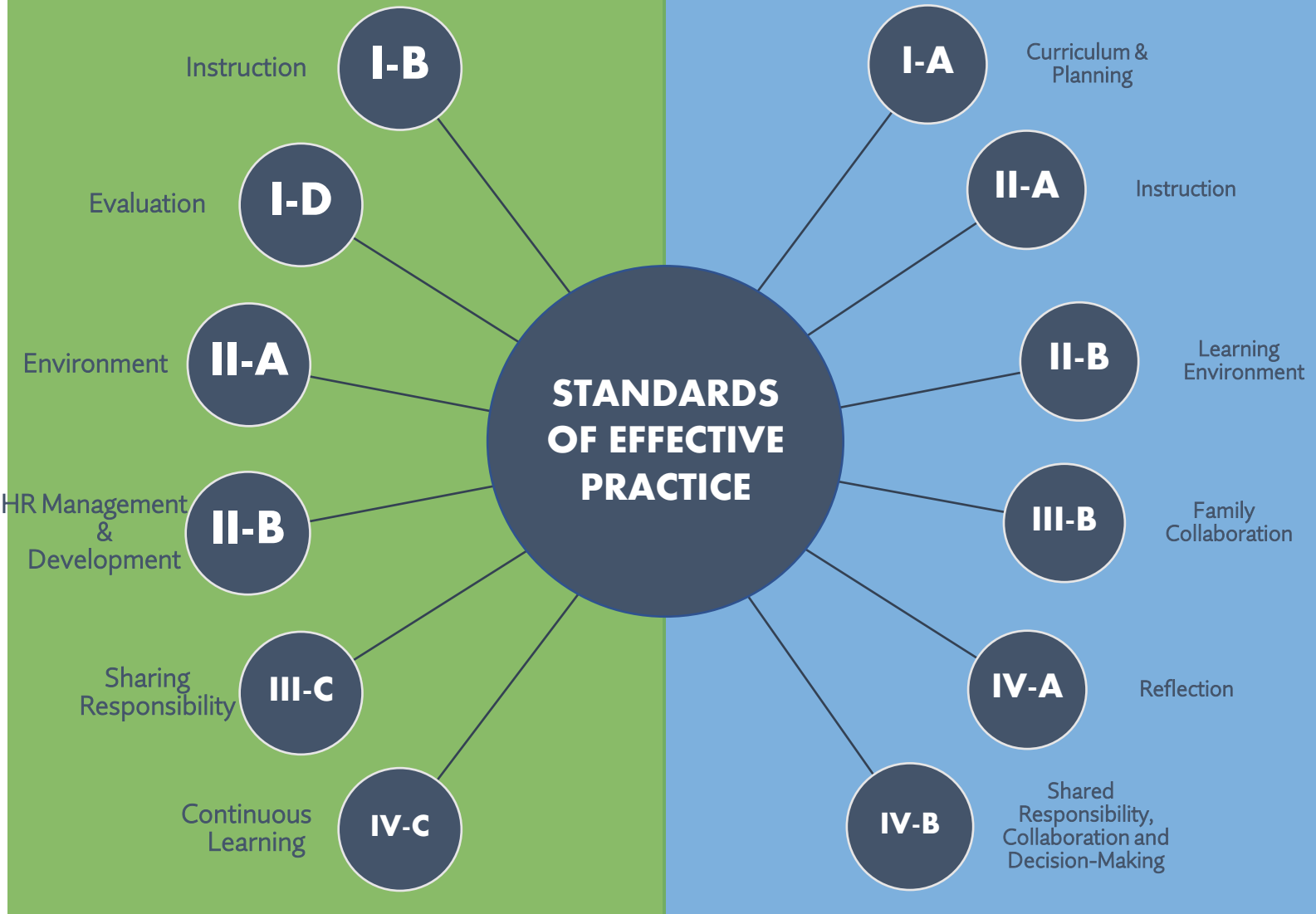
4. **Supportive Resources**

Overview

The Focus Indicators highlight high priority, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices for teaching and leading in SY2024-25. Because teachers and administrators depend on one another to be effective in meeting the needs of every student, the Focus Indicators for teachers and administrators are complimentary.

ADMINISTRATORS

- Instruction — **I-B**
- Evaluation — **I-D**
- Environment — **II-A**
- HR Management & Development — **II-B**
- Sharing Responsibility — **III-C**
- Continuous Learning — **IV-C**

STANDARDS OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

TEACHERS

- **I-A** — Curriculum & Planning
- **II-A** — Instruction
- **II-B** — Learning Environment
- **III-B** — Family Collaboration
- **IV-A** — Reflection
- **IV-B** — Shared Responsibility, Collaboration and Decision-Making

GENERAL RESOURCES

DESE's Educational Vision and Catalog of Aligned Supports

Supports and Resources for Educator Evaluation Implementation

Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices

Massachusetts Blueprint for English Learner Success

Deeper Learning

I-A Curriculum & Planning

Applies sound knowledge of the subject matter with deep knowledge of their students to skillfully use curriculum materials and provide all students access to grade-level instruction.

KEY PRACTICES

Uses evidence-based pedagogical practices that enable students to develop and apply grade-level knowledge and skills in relevant and real-world contexts	**Builds on and draws from knowledge of their students' identities, skills, developmental levels, cultures, languages, and communities**	**Skillfully uses curricular materials to plan culturally and linguistically sustaining instruction**

FOCUS FEEDBACK, COLLABORATION, AND SUPPORT ON:

- Grounding lessons in materials and tasks that are aligned to grade-level content standards and evidence-based practices.

- Ensuring materials are representative and affirming of diverse identities, backgrounds, and perspectives

- Incorporating targeted language development aligned to grade appropriate WIDA standards

- Preparing student-centered learning experiences that build on students' assets—their identity, cultural and language background, interests, and aspirations—to make the learning relevant and engaging

- Planning lessons with a clear purpose that connects to prior and/or upcoming learning and engages students with essential questions, real-world topics, problems, or phenomena connected to grade-level standards

- Ensuring a coherent instructional approach that builds student learning towards grade-level standards or individual learning goals over time through aligned lesson goals, scope, sequence, and tasks

- Determining strengths and weaknesses of curricular materials and adapting them with integrity

- Interrogating curricular materials for bias and supporting students to do so

- Identifying necessary supplemental resources and/or tiered supports to ensure equitable access to the content

- Providing differentiated learning experiences that enable all students to exercise social-emotional skills (e.g., self-management and responsible decision-making) and grow academically and social-emotionally

RESOURCES

CUrriculum RAtings by TEachers (CURATE) | *DESE*

MASS Literacy | *DESE*

Appleseeds | *DESE*

OpenSciEd | *DESE*

Next Generation ESL Toolkit | *DESE*

Professional Learning Partner Guide | *Rivet Education*

II-A **Instruction**

Instructional practices and pedagogy are evidence-based and culturally and linguistically sustaining, so that all students engage in the complex thinking and ideas of the lesson.

KEY PRACTICES

Supports all students to meet or exceed high standards, produce high-quality work, and develop self-awareness and skills for independent learning	**Engages all students as active participants in their own learning of meaningful, standards-aligned, grade-appropriate content**	**Accommodates and supports individual differences in all students' learning2. including students with disabilities and multilingual learners**

FOCUS FEEDBACK, COLLABORATION, AND SUPPORT ON:

► Facilitating student-centered learning experiences where the students do the majority of the thinking during lessons in service of grade-level standards

► Providing flexible scaffolds and supports as needed so that all students can engage in grade-level, standards-aligned work

► Using questions and/or tasks that support students to actively draw upon their backgrounds and experiences to connect new concepts to their funds of knowledge, lived experiences, and cultural assets

► Leveraging multilingual students' native language(s) and linguistic resources to support instruction, such as through cognates and translanguaging practices

► Using a variety of instructional methods so that students have multiple ways to access information and demonstrate their learning

► Facilitating high-quality student-to-student academic discourse (in pairs, small groups, and/or whole class) in order to clarify or improve their understanding of grade-level content

► Providing opportunities for students to make choices, explore topics and apply learning in culturally relevant, real-world, and interactive contexts

► Establishing clear criteria for success (e.g., models, rubrics and exemplars)

► Providing students with targeted and constructive feedback that clarifies misconceptions

► Integrating digital tools and educational technology purposefully to enhance learning experiences and promote the development of digital literacy skills

► Supporting students to think critically about the content and resources of the lesson to identify, analyze, and/or examine real-world topics or problems

► Seeking out the perspectives, feedback, and voices of all students and families and incorporating those voices into instructional decision-making

RESOURCES

Deeper Learning | DESE
Next Generation ESL Toolkit | DESE
 Universal Design for Learning Guidelines | *CAST*

Translanguaging | *WIDA*
Ready for Rigor Framework | *Zaretta Hammond*
The Opportunity Myth | *TNTP*

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II-B Learning Environment

Creates and maintains a safe and collaborative learning environment, based on positive relationships and inclusive practices, that supports all students to thrive academically and social-emotionally.

KEY PRACTICES

Builds positive, caring relationships with students	Creates and maintains a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment	Develops students' relationship and communication skills through collaborative learning	Supports students to take ownership of their learning.

FOCUS FEEDBACK, COLLABORATION, AND SUPPORT ON:

➢ Prioritizing relationship-building to ensure all students feel valued, respected, equitably supported, and a sense of belonging in the classroom community

➢ Co-creating meaningful rituals and routines with students

➢ Purposefully organizing and using classroom space to support student routines and learning, such as language models, anchor charts, classroom agreements, and criteria of success.

➢ Supporting student accountability for the impact of their actions through equitable and logical consequences and use of restorative practices

➢ Modeling and reinforcing respect for and affirmation of their own and others' differences related to background, identity, language, strengths, and challenges (self- and social awareness)

➢ Interrupting bias or racism, whether spoken or read, and using those moments to model for students how to understand and address them going forward

➢ Providing opportunities for students to reflect on and discuss historical and contemporary sociopolitical issues of impact in the students' communities and the world

➢ Seeking feedback from students on their experience of the classroom learning environment and making aligned adjustments to practice

➢ Facilitating purposeful and structured group work

➢ Supporting students to engage with differences and diverse perspectives, respectfully challenge each other's thinking, and address interpersonal conflicts as they arise

➢ Supporting students to think critically about the content and resources of the lesson to identify, analyze, and/or examine real-world topics or problems

➢ Guiding students to self-assess, problem-solve, ask for support, and access resources when needed

➢ Empowering students to demonstrate leadership and positively contribute to the classroom and school community

RESOURCES

Safe and Supportive Schools | *DESE*

Supporting Student Engagement, Learning, Well-being

Fundamentals of SEL | *CASEL*

SEL Guide | *DESE*

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III-B Family Collaboration

Collaborates with families to create and implement strategies for supporting student learning and development both at home and at school.

KEY PRACTICES

Leverages families' cultural and linguistic knowledge and expertise to support student learning.	Engages in dialogue with families about what students are learning in the classroom and expectations for student success.	Identifies and seeks feedback on strategies and resources for supporting student learning and growth in and out of school.

FOCUS FEEDBACK, COLLABORATION, AND SUPPORT ON:

➢ Regularly reaching out and listening to families, in formal and informal ways, about their values and priorities for their students' academic learning and experience in school

➢ Connecting with families early on and using systems to maintain regular two-way communication throughout the year

➢ Asking families for and honoring their communication preferences, including primary contact, time of day, frequency, language and method of communication

➢ Providing opportunities for families to contribute to classroom decisions and initiatives (e.g., celebrations, routines), demonstrating understanding of and respect for different home languages, cultures, and values

➢ Notifying family members in a timely manner about any concerns about their child's learning or well-being

➢ Collaboratively sharing concrete strategies for supporting academic learning and well-being at school and at home

➢ Sharing information about learning targets, curriculum, and content with which students are engaging

➢ Encouraging families of multilingual learners to use their home language to help build students' background knowledge and support their academic learning at home

➢ Interrogating one's own biases around family communication and learning more about students' cultures and backgrounds to support strengths-based, culturally responsive communication

➢ Regularly asking family members for feedback

RESOURCES

Strengthening Partnerships: A Framework for Prenatal through Young Adulthood Family Engagement in Massachusetts | *Massachusetts Family Engagement Coalition*

Academic Partnering Toolkit for Teachers | *Flamboyan Foundation*

Family Guides to the Curriculum Frameworks | *DESE*

MA Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals Self-Assessment | *DESE*

Family Portal | *DESE*

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IV-A Reflection

Engages in self-reflection in order to improve teaching and learning for all students

KEY PRACTICES

| Continuously reflects on the effectiveness of instruction and how one's identities, biases, and practices impact student learning and well-being. | Works towards professional practice and student learning goals that aim to improve practice and eliminate learning inequities. | Seeks out and engages in ongoing cycles of professional learning to strengthen equitable practice and improve student learning. |

FOCUS FEEDBACK, COLLABORATION, AND SUPPORT ON:

➢ Engaging in individual reflection on one's own biases and the impact these may be having on student engagement, achievement, and relationship-building, and taking steps to ensure that all students feel valued and affirmed in the classroom

➢ Regularly examining student data to identify disparate outcomes for particular students or groups of students

➢ Considering and responding to the ways that issues of equity and access have affected and continue to influence students' learning experiences and environments

➢ Setting and monitoring challenging and measurable professional practice and student learning goals based on thorough self-assessment, analysis of student learning data, and feedback from students and families

➢ Setting and monitoring goals intentionally focused on promoting more inclusive and equitable learning experiences and outcomes for all students

➢ Adopting an inquiry-based approach to professional learning and reflection, and adjusting practice on an ongoing basis

➢ Applying new knowledge and skills into practice and monitoring the impact on student learning

➢ Seeking out and valuing input and feedback from colleagues, students, and families on the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and adjusting practice accordingly

RESOURCES

SMARTIE Goals | *DESE*

LEA Equity Activity Guide | *DESE*

Culturally Responsive Teaching: a Reflection Guide ı *New America*

Culture in the Classroom ı *Learning for Justice*

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IV-B Shared Responsibility, Collaboration, & Decision-Making

Shares responsibility for the success of all students through effective collaboration with colleagues and involvement in schoolwide decision-making to advance evidence-based, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices

KEY PRACTICES

Shares responsibility for supporting and reinforcing supporting schoolwide culture and learning expectations.	Collaborates and communicates with colleagues in support of shared goals for student learning.	Contributes ideas and expertise to planning and decision making.

FOCUS FEEDBACK, COLLABORATION, AND SUPPORT ON:

➢ Fostering trusting and supportive collegial relationships

➢ Collaborating with colleagues to tailor high-quality instructional materials to ensure that instruction is engaging and inclusive for all students, while maintaining the rigor and coherence of the materials

➢ Sharing effective and equitable instructional practices and strategies for developing a safe and supportive learning environment

➢ Collaboratively planning with special education and English learner education teachers, paraeducators, and specialists to align instruction and coordinate supports

➢ Identifying common family engagement strategies and supports to center and strengthen family engagement across grades and subject areas

➢ Analyzing data (e.g., attendance, assessment, student feedback, discipline) in teams to identify and disrupt inequities in access, treatment, and achievement in and across classrooms

➢ Examining student work, analyzing student performance, and planning together appropriate scaffolds, interventions, and supports

➢ Contributing ideas and expertise to planning and decision-making at the school, department, and/or grade level

➢ Consistently holding students to high expectations and school-wide policies, while interrogating those policies for bias and advocating for equitable expectations for all students

➢ Naming harmful practices, moments, and policies when they occur to ensure all staff and students feel safe and supported

RESOURCES

English Learner Education Collaboration Tool | *DESE*

Collaboration: Working Together to Serve Multilingual Learners ı *WIDA*

Collaborative Planning Templates for Content/ESL/SPED Teachers ı *Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence*

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