



Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation

Part I: District-Level Planning and Implementation Guide

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Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370
www.doe.mass.edu



This document was prepared by the
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

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A Letter from the Commissioner

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906 Telephone: (781) 338-3000
TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner

December 1, 2015

Dear Educators and other interested Stakeholders,

I am pleased to re-issue Part I of the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation. In June 2011, when the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted regulations to improve student learning by overhauling educator evaluation in the Commonwealth, staff here at the Department began working closely with stakeholders to develop the Model System called for in the regulations. With the help of thoughtful suggestions and candid feedback from a wide range of stakeholders, we developed the ESE Model System for Educator Evaluation, comprised of eight components:

- I. District-Level Planning and Implementation Guide
- II. School-Level Planning and Implementation Guide
- III. Guide to Rubrics and Model Rubrics for Superintendent, Administrator and Teacher
- IV. Model Collective Bargaining Contract Language
- V. Implementation Guide for Principal Evaluation
- VI. Implementation Guide for Superintendent Evaluation
- VII. Rating Educator Impact on Student Learning Using District-Determined Measures of Student Learning
- VIII. Using Staff and Student Feedback in the Evaluation Process

Originally released in January 2012, the following Part I has been updated to reflect revised timelines and new resources to support effective implementation.

I remain excited by the promise of Massachusetts' educator evaluation regulations. Thoughtfully and strategically implemented, they are supporting analytical conversation about teaching and leading that is strengthening professional practice and improving student learning. At the same time, the regulations are providing educators with the opportunity to take charge of their own growth and development by setting individual and group goals related to student learning.

The Members of the State Board and I know that improvement in the quality and effectiveness of educator evaluation happens only when the Department does the hard work "with the field," not "to the field." To that end, we at the Department are constantly learning with the field. We will continue to revise and improve the Model System and related implementation guides and resources based on what we learn with the field. To help us do that, please do not hesitate to send your comments, questions and suggestions to us at EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu, and visit the Educator Evaluation webpage at www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/. We regularly update the page with new resources and tools.

Please know that you can count on ESE to be an active, engaged partner in the work ahead.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

The Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation

The Model System is a comprehensive educator evaluation system designed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), pursuant to the educator evaluation regulations, 603 CMR 35.00. The following eight-part series was developed to support effective implementation of the regulations by districts and schools across the Commonwealth.

Part I: District-Level Planning and Implementation Guide

This Guide takes district leaders – school committees, superintendents and union leaders - through factors to consider as they decide whether to adopt or adapt the Model System or revise their own evaluation systems to meet the educator evaluation regulation. The Guide describes the rubrics, tools, resources and model contract language ESE has developed, and describes the system of support ESE is offering. It outlines reporting requirements, as well as the process ESE uses to review district evaluation systems for superintendents, principals, teachers and other licensed staff. Finally, the Guide identifies ways in which district leaders can support effective educator evaluation implementation in the schools.

Part II: School-Level Planning and Implementation Guide

This Guide is designed to support administrators and teachers as they implement teacher evaluations at the school level. The Guide introduces and explains the requirements of the regulation and the principles and priorities that underlie them. It offers guidance, strategies, templates and examples that will support effective implementation of each of the five components of the evaluation cycle: self-assessment; goal setting and educator plan development; plan implementation and evidence collection; formative assessment/evaluation; and summative evaluation.

Part III: Guide to Rubrics and Model Rubrics for Superintendent, Administrator, and Teacher

The Guide presents the ESE Model Rubrics and explains their use. The Guide also outlines the process for adapting them to specific educator roles and responsibilities.

Part IV: Model Collective Bargaining Contract Language

This section contains the Model Contract that is consistent with the regulations, with model language for teacher and principal evaluation, as well as model language for the Student Impact Rating and district-determined measures (DDMs) and the implementation of student and staff feedback.

Part V: Implementation Guide for Principal Evaluation

This section details the model process for principal evaluation and includes relevant documents and forms for recording goals, evidence and ratings. The Guide includes resources that principals and superintendents may find helpful, including a school visit protocol.

Part VI: Implementation Guide for Superintendent Evaluation

This section details the model process for superintendent evaluation and includes relevant documents and a form for recording goals, evidence and ratings. The Guide includes resources that school committees and superintendents may find helpful, including a model for effective goal setting.

Part VII: Rating Educator Impact on Student Learning Using District-Determined Measures of Student Learning

The Guide contains information for districts on identifying and using district-determined measures of student learning, growth and achievement, and determining ratings of High, Moderate or Low for educator impact on student learning.

Part VIII: Using Staff and Student Feedback in the Evaluation Process

This Guide includes directions for districts on incorporating student and staff feedback into the educator evaluation process, as well as ESE Model Surveys for students and staff.

Overview

The Opportunity

On June 28, 2011 the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted new regulations to guide the evaluation of all educators serving in positions requiring a license—teachers, principals, superintendents, and other administrators¹. The regulations are designed first and foremost to promote leaders’ and teachers’ growth and development. They place student learning at the center of the process using multiple measures of student learning. Every district in the Commonwealth is implementing evaluation processes and procedures that are consistent with the regulations.

The new regulatory framework for educator evaluation required changes in culture and practice in many schools and districts. Members of the Task Force that crafted recommendations for the regulations found that in many schools in the Commonwealth—and nationwide—the educator evaluation process was ineffective.² Too often, they found, the process was divorced from student learning and was superficial, ritualistic and passive, experienced by many as something “done to them.” Fewer than half of teachers and administrators polled described their own experience of evaluation as a process that contributed to their professional growth and development. The new regulations are designed to change all this when well implemented. Each educator takes a leading role in shaping his/her professional growth and development.

- Every educator assesses his/her own performance and proposes one or more challenging goals for improving his/her own practice. A formal process for reflection and self-assessment creates the foundation of a new opportunity for educators to chart their own course for professional growth and development.
- Every educator uses a rubric that offers a detailed picture of practice at four levels of performance. District-wide rubrics set the stage for both deep reflection and the rich dialogue about practice that our profession seeks.
- Every educator also considers her/his students’ needs using a wide range of ways to assess student growth and proposes one or more challenging goals for improving student learning. Every educator monitors progress carefully and analyzes the impact of his/her hard work.
- Every educator is expected to consider team goals, a clear indication of the value the process places on both collaboration and accountability.
- Every educator compiles and presents evidence and conclusions about their performance and progress on his/her goals, ensuring that the educator voice is critical to the process.

These and other features of the educator evaluation framework hold great promise for improving educator practice, school climate and student learning. To turn promise into reality, every educator—and the teams they work with—needs to be supported to do this work effectively and efficiently.

¹ For the full text of the regulations, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr35.html>.

² For the full report of the Task Force, see Building a Breakthrough Framework for Educator Evaluation in the Commonwealth, submitted by the Massachusetts Task Force on the Evaluation of Teachers and Administrators, March 2011 available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/breakthroughframework.pdf>.

The Task Force envisioned ESE playing an active role in that support, expecting ESE to develop a model to support districts to implement its “breakthrough framework.” The regulations therefore called on ESE to develop a “model system” which it defined as “the comprehensive educator evaluation system designed and updated as needed by the Department as an exemplar for use by districts. The Model System shall include tools, guidance, rubrics, and contract language developed by the Department that satisfy the requirements of (this regulation).”³ This guide and its companions are the first components of the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation (hereafter referred to as “the ESE Model System”).

The Purpose of this Guide

The District-Level Planning and Implementation Guide aims to support district leaders—school committee members, superintendents, union leaders, human resource directors, curriculum directors and others—as they work together to turn the promise of a breakthrough framework for educator evaluation into reality for every educator in the district. It is at the district level that most of the design work for educator evaluation will take place. This guide supports district leaders as they collaborate to design their district’s educator evaluation system. While most of the design work is in the hands of district leaders, most of the *implementation* work will be in the hands of school-level staff—teachers, principals and other school staff. Therefore, the guide is also intended to help district leaders plan from the start how to engage school-level educators in its design and develop thoughtful plans that will support effective implementation at the school and classroom level.

The guide provides information district leaders need to help them decide whether to adopt the ESE Model System, adapt it their local context, or revise an existing system to conform to the educator evaluation regulations. The guide first addresses practical requirements and considerations, including:

- What the educator evaluation framework requires
- What the timetable for implementation is
- What the ESE Model System is and how to use it
- What is required if a district “adopts” the model, “adapts” the ESE Model System, or decides to “revise” its own
- What is required for collective bargaining
- Technical assistance and professional development from ESE
- How to report educator ratings

³ See CMR 603 35.02 at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr35.html>

With the practical requirements and considerations established, the guide turns to addressing key strategic opportunities and choices:

- Planning implementation in a way that supports coherence among district initiatives
- Addressing issues of feasibility and “do-ability”
- Supporting teachers and leaders at the school and classroom level

The guide includes several appendices that provide more detail on certain topics.

The regulations require that ESE update the ESE Model System as needed in future years. ESE looks forward to receiving feedback on this guide at educatorevaluation@doe.mass.edu.

Practical Requirements and Considerations

Key Features of the MA Educator Evaluation Framework

The MA educator evaluation framework applies to every educator. School committees will evaluate superintendents using the MA educator evaluation framework; superintendents will apply the same framework when they evaluate assistant superintendents, principals and other district administrators; principals, in turn, will apply the framework when they evaluate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel (SISP),⁴ and school-level administrators.

The framework calls for key features that apply to every educator:

- 1. Statewide Standards and Indicators for Effective Administrative Leadership and Teaching Practice.** The Task Force proposed a set of Standards and Indicators for both teachers and administrators that establish a statewide understanding about what effective teaching and administrative practice look like. The process included an extensive comparison of relevant state and national standards. Each of four Standards for teachers and for administrators is broken down into 3-6 core Indicators. Together, the Standards and Indicators serve as what the Task Force called the “spine” of the educator evaluation framework, and “will do so in the evaluation systems that districts adopt.” The regulations define Standards and Indicators for Effective Teaching Practice and for Administrative Leadership Practice ([603 CMR 35.03](#) and [603 CMR 35.04](#)).

Standards for Administrators

Instructional Leadership

Management and Operations

Family and Community Engagement

Professional Culture

Standards for Teachers

Curriculum, Planning and Assessment

Teaching All Students

Family and Community Engagement

Professional Culture

- 2. Role-specific rubrics define the Standards and Indicators.** The regulations require that the Standards and Indicators be “translated” into rubrics that describe practice in detail at different levels of proficiency ([603 CMR 35.06](#)). Educators and evaluators use the rubric most appropriate to the role of the educator as a foundation for self-assessment, formative assessment and summative evaluation. Rubrics give substance to the Standards and Indicators. Each Indicator is broken down into elements that are in turn described at four levels. Rubrics are a tool for making explicit and specific the behaviors and actions present at each level of performance. They can foster constructive dialogue about those expectations and how to improve practice. The rubrics prompt careful analysis and discussion. Detailed information about rubrics can be found in the [Model System Part III: Guide to Rubrics and Model Rubrics for Superintendent, Administrator, and Teacher](#).
- 3. Three Categories of Evidence.** To assess educator performance on the Standards and Indicators, the Task Force called for three categories of evidence to be used in every district’s educator evaluation system. The regulations describe:

⁴ SISP (previously called “caseload educators”) are educators who teach or counsel individual or small groups of students through consultation with a classroom teacher, such as school nurses, guidance or adjustment counselors, speech and language pathologists, and some special education teachers.

- **Multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement**, including classroom assessments, district-determined measures comparable across grade or subject district-wide, and state-wide growth measures where available, including the MCAS Student Growth Percentile (SGP) and Massachusetts English Proficiency gain scores (MEPA)⁵;
 - **Judgments based on observation and artifacts of professional practice**, including unannounced observations of practice of any duration; and,
 - **Additional evidence relevant to one or more Performance Standards**, including student feedback as a source of evidence when evaluating teachers and administrators, and staff feedback when evaluating administrators ([603 CMR 35.07\(1\)](#)).
- 4. A Statewide Performance Rating Scale.** The performance of every educator is rated against the Performance Standards described above. All educators earn one of four ratings: Exemplary, Proficient, Needs Improvement, or Unsatisfactory. Each rating has a specific meaning:
- *Proficient* performance is understood to be fully satisfactory. This is the rigorous expected level of performance; demanding, but attainable.
 - *Exemplary* performance represents a level of performance that exceeds the already high standard of Proficient. A rating of Exemplary is reserved for performance on an Indicator or Standard that is of such a high level that it could serve as a model. Few educators are expected to earn Exemplary ratings on more than a handful of Indicators.
 - *Needs Improvement* indicates performance that is below the requirements of a Standard but is not considered to be Unsatisfactory at the time. Improvement is necessary and expected. For new educators, Needs Improvement can be understood as “developing” in cases where the educator is “on track” to proficiency within three years.
 - *Unsatisfactory* performance is merited when performance has not significantly improved following a rating of Needs Improvement, or performance is consistently below the requirements of a Standard and is considered inadequate, or both.

The regulations also call for a higher bar for tenure: “Professional teacher status, pursuant to G.L. ch. 71, § 41, should be granted only to educators who have achieved ratings of Proficient or Exemplary on each Performance Standard and overall. A principal considering making an employment decision that would lead to professional teacher status for any educator who has not been rated Proficient or Exemplary on each Performance Standard and overall on the most recent evaluation shall confer with the superintendent of schools by May 1. The principal's decision is subject to review and approval by the superintendent.” (See [603 CMR 35.08\(6\)](#))

⁵ Federal and state laws require that English language learner (ELL) students be assessed annually to measure their proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking English, as well as the progress they are making in learning English. In fulfillment of these laws, ELL students are required to participate in ACCESS for ELLs tests, which replaced MEPA tests in the 2012-2013 school year. See <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/access/>.

5. Rating Educator Impact on Student Learning. Every educator earns a second rating that reflects his/her impact on student learning. The Board added this more explicit focus on student learning by requiring that the impact on student learning of every educator be rated High, Moderate or Low based on trends and patterns in learning gains on state and district-determined measures of student learning, growth and achievement. Each district identifies “district-determined measures of student learning which must be comparable across grade or subject district-wide.” The rating of impact on student learning is distinct, however, from the use of multiple measures as a category of evidence to rate educator performance.

6. Four Educator Plans. The Task Force prioritized differentiating evaluation by both career stage and performance. The regulations define four differentiated Educator Plans. The following three plans apply only to “experienced” educators, defined as a teacher with Professional Teacher Status (PTS) or an administrator with more than three years in an administrative position in the district:

- The *Self-Directed Growth Plan* applies to educators rated Proficient or Exemplary and is developed by the educator. Educators with a Moderate or High Student Impact Rating are on a two-year plan; educators with a Low Student Impact Rating are on a one-year plan.
- The *Directed Growth Plan* applies to educators rated Needs Improvement and is a plan of one school year or less developed by the educator and the evaluator.
- The *Improvement Plan* applies to educators rated Unsatisfactory and is a plan of no less than 30 calendar days and no longer than one school year, developed by the evaluator.

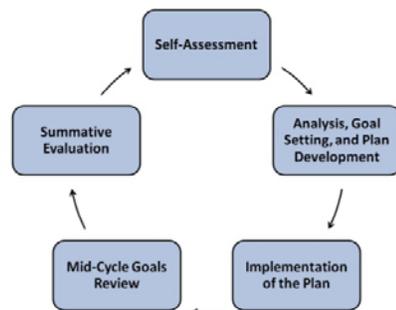
Few new educators are expected to be Proficient on every Indicator or even every Standard in their first years of practice. Therefore, the fourth plan applies to teachers without Professional Teacher Status, an administrator in their first three years in a district, or an educator in a new assignment (at the discretion of an evaluator):

- The *Developing Educator Plan* is developed by the educator and the evaluator and is for one school year or less.

7. Five-Step Evaluation Cycle with Goals for Student Learning and Professional Practice.

Every educator participates in a one- or two-year, five-step cycle of continuous improvement. The 5-Step Evaluation Cycle is the centerpiece of the new regulations designed to have all educators play a more active, engaged role in their professional growth and development. For every educator, evaluation begins with self-assessment. The Self-Assessment leads to establishing at least two goals, one focusing on student learning and another focusing on improving the educator’s own practice.

The cycle concludes with the Summative Evaluation. It also is a continuous improvement process in which evidence from the Summative Evaluation becomes important information for the educator’s next Self-Assessment and subsequent goal setting. [603 CMR 35.06](#).



More details about the regulations appear in other components of the ESE Model System, including the [School-Level Planning and Implementation Guide \(Part II\)](#) and the [Model Collective Bargaining Contract Language \(Part IV\)](#). For more information on the regulations, please see ESE’s Educator Evaluation website: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/eдеval/>.

The ESE Model System

Purpose, Components and Development

ESE developed the Model System for educator evaluation to support effective state-wide implementation of the educator evaluation framework. The ESE Model System is fully aligned with the regulations and includes:

- A process and procedure for evaluating **superintendents** with directions, a rubric, a form and resources;⁶
- A process and procedure for evaluating **principals** with directions, a rubric, forms and resources;⁷
- A process and procedure for evaluating **teachers** and **SISP** with directions, rubrics, contract language, suggested forms, and an extensive implementation guide with resources.⁸

The processes, procedures and resources developed for principals, teachers and SISP can be adapted for evaluating **district- and school-level administrators**, subject to local collective bargaining agreements and the role of the administrator.

To develop the ESE Model System, ESE worked with 11 early adopter districts,⁹ ten districts implementing the framework in their Level 4 schools,¹⁰ and four Education Collaboratives chosen as pilot sites for early implementation.¹¹ ESE engaged a wide range of stakeholders from state associations as well.¹² They have provided invaluable advice and counsel. The model is not finished. The regulations anticipate learning from the field and from research. Therefore, they require ESE to update the model “regularly.” ESE has issued supplements to the ESE Model System and expects to continue supplementing the Model as best practices emerge and lessons are learned from the field.

Superintendent Evaluation

The ESE Model System applies the educator evaluation regulations to superintendent evaluation, adapting them to meet the requirements of the open meeting and public records laws. The requirement in

⁶ See Part VI of the Model System for Educator Evaluation, *Implementation Guide for Superintendent Evaluation*

⁷ See Part V of the Model System for Educator Evaluation, *Implementation Guide for Principal Evaluation*. See also Part III, *Guide to Rubrics and Model Rubrics for Superintendents, Administrators and Teachers*.

⁸ See Part II of the ESE Model System, *School-Level Planning and Implementation Guide*, Part III, *Guide to Rubrics and Model Rubrics for Superintendents, Administrators and Teachers*, and Part IV, *Model Collective Bargaining Contract Language*.

⁹ Ashland, Attleboro, Everett, Franklin, Greater Lawrence Regional Vocational Technical High School, Mashpee, Reading, Revere, Wachusett, Wareham and Whitman-Hansen

¹⁰ Boston, Chelsea, Fall River, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, Springfield and Worcester

¹¹ BiCounty, Collaborative for Educational Services, Lower Pioneer Valley, and South Coast

¹² State associations whose representatives worked with ESE staff include, in alphabetical order: American Federation of Teachers, Massachusetts (AFT-MA), Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), Massachusetts School Counselors Association (MASCA), Massachusetts Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (MASCD), Massachusetts Association of School Personnel Association (MASPA), Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators (MAVA), Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA), Massachusetts School Nurses Organization (MSNO), Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association (MSSAA), Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA), Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators (MAVA).

the framework for every educator to propose at least one goal related to student learning and one to professional practice is expanded for superintendents to include proposing 3-5 district improvement goals, thereby making setting and meeting ambitious goals a more central aspect of superintendent evaluation. Including district-wide goals is also designed to help school committees and superintendents collaborate to establish a coordinated plan for addressing high priority district needs. The guide provides guidance for effective goal setting and examples of professional practice, student learning, and district improvement goals. The guide also suggests adaptations of the process for new superintendents.

The regulations anticipated that the Standards and Indicators for Effective Administrative Leadership Practice may be adapted for superintendents because those Standards and their Indicators have a school-level focus. The ESE Model Rubric for Superintendents makes modest changes to the Indicators, capturing the district-wide focus of the superintendent's work. With minor revisions, the Superintendent Rubric may be used for assistant superintendents and, subject to local collective bargaining, other district administrators.

The model evaluation for superintendents was developed by representatives of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS) with feedback from the two state principal associations, the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA) and the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association (MSSAA), and from leaders with the MTA's Center for Educator Policy and Practice.

Principal Evaluation

Like the model for superintendent evaluation, the model for principal evaluation places a greater emphasis on goals. It calls on principals, in collaboration with superintendents, to develop 3-5 school improvement goals to complement student learning and professional practice goals required in the framework. The rubric is based entirely on the Standards and Indicators detailed in the regulations. The 20 Indicators are broken down into 42 elements, each with descriptors of practice at four levels of proficiency. With few, if any, modifications, the rubric can be applied to other school-level administrators, again, consistent with local collective bargaining. The guide also details a protocol for the superintendent's observation of the principal's practice at the school site.

The Implementation Guide for Principal Evaluation was developed in close collaboration with representatives from MESPA and MSSAA. Representatives of MASS and leaders from MTA's Center for Educator Policy and Practice offered feedback as well. The three organizations see strengthening principal evaluation as an opportunity for superintendents and principals to model the culture and practices of collaboration and accountability that are at the heart of the new framework.

Teacher and SISP Evaluation

Staff members in early adopter districts, Level 4 schools and early adopter collaboratives offered valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges of implementing the framework at the school level. So, too, did staff from the MTA and AFT-MA. These early lessons and practitioner insights are captured in the Model System Part II: School-Level Planning and Implementation Guide, a rich resource for practical tools and thoughtful strategies designed to make teacher evaluation deliver on the promise of educator growth and development. Model contract language is available in Part IV, developed by ESE legal staff with the help of candid advice and feedback from the state associations representing school committees, superintendents, human resource administrators, and teachers: MASC, MASS, MASPA, MTA, and AFT-MA.

The school-level guide helps district leaders develop a realistic understanding of what is required at the school level to make the system work in ways that will support educator growth and development. In addition to giving practical guidance about implementing each step in the 5-Step Evaluation Cycle, the guide addresses a number of topics of interest at the district level, including:

- Key Components to Establishing and Sustaining Effective Teams
- Suggestions for Refining Goals and Developing Educator Plans
- Evaluating Educators Serving in Multiple Roles¹³
- Aligning Educator Plans and Individual Professional Development Plans¹⁴
- Strategies and Suggestions for Observations
- Changing the Educator Plan after a Formative Assessment or Evaluation

Appendix A of the school-level guide also includes ten forms that are fully aligned with the regulations and the model contract and can support consistent, thoughtful implementation of each step of the educator evaluation cycle.

Evaluation of Other School-Level Administrators and “Non-Unit A” Educators

While the school-level guide focuses attention on evaluation of teachers and SISIP, it also offers examples and practical tools for school-level administrators who will be evaluated using the framework. As mentioned above, the rubric developed to describe the Standards and Indicators for Effective Administrative Leadership Practice is well-matched to the responsibilities of most school-level administrators, and the evaluation process and forms detailed in the guide are also applicable. Model contract language for school-level administrators and other “non-Unit A” educators is available in Part IV of the Model System.

¹³ See Appendix A in this guide

¹⁴ See Appendix B in this guide

District Options: Adopt the Model, Adapt it, or Revise Existing Systems

No district is compelled to adopt the ESE Model System. School committees and school districts can adopt the ESE Model System, adapt the ESE Model System, or revise their existing evaluation systems to align with the framework. That said, the Board established a critical role for ESE:

*All evaluation systems and changes to evaluation systems shall be subject to the Department's review to ensure the systems are consistent with the Board's Principles of Evaluation.*¹⁵

In the case of rubrics, the regulations require that ESE assure that any alternatives to the ESE Model Rubrics are “comparably rigorous and comprehensive.” In addition, the Board established that “the model system developed by the Department need not be submitted for review... if the district implements it as written”¹⁶.

The educator evaluation regulations apply to four educators or groups of educators:

1. Superintendents and other district administrators serving under employment contracts;
2. Principals;
3. Teachers/SISP (caseload educators); and,
4. Other administrators represented through collective bargaining.

For each group of educators, a district has three options:

- **Adopt** – A district that adopts the ESE Model System for one or more groups of educators will be using the rubrics and protocol created by ESE without making any changes. When ESE updates the rubrics or protocol, the district will follow the implementation timeline detailed by ESE for transitioning to the new components of the model.
- **Adapt** – A district that adapts the ESE Model System for one or more groups of educators will be using the model rubrics and protocol as its starting point, then altering them in some way(s).
- **Revise** – A district with an existing system for one or more groups of educators that it considers stronger than the ESE Model System may choose to revise that system to ensure alignment with all of the principles of educator evaluation detailed in the regulations.

ESE's Review Process

Districts that adopt the rubrics and protocols that are in the ESE Model System simply notify ESE of this decision via email to ContractAgreements@doe.mass.edu.

Districts that decide to adapt the ESE Model System or revise their existing system for one or more groups of educators will need to submit the adapted or revised system for each group to ContractAgreements@doe.mass.edu. Submissions must include the proposed protocol and rubric(s), including any relevant contract language for review.

¹⁵ See CMR 603 35.11(2)

¹⁶ See CMR 603 35.1 (3).

Collective Bargaining

The procedures for conducting educator evaluation are a mandatory subject of collective bargaining in Massachusetts.¹⁷ As such, all districts engage in collective bargaining in order to implement the framework for teachers, SISPs and administrators represented by bargaining agents. Formal negotiations are only one step in an ongoing process of collaboration that is needed to build, monitor, update, and revise an educator evaluation process that is fair, transparent, credible, and leads to educator growth and development.

Districts approach educator evaluation differently. Some include every detail of the evaluation process in their collective bargaining agreements. Others include some aspects of the process in the contract and others in side letters or other documents. Still other districts bargain more general procedures and some of the details lie outside of formal agreements. The [Model Collective Bargaining Contract Language](#) developed by ESE (Part IV of the Model System for Educator Evaluation) contains very specific language. A district that chooses to adopt the ESE Model System adopts the contract language in its entirety. Districts may choose to adapt it to local conditions by adding, deleting and/or revising language. Still others may choose not to use the model language as a starting point. They may choose to revise their existing contract language to make sure it conforms with the regulations. As with other components of the ESE Model System, districts that choose to adapt the ESE Model System or revise their existing system need to submit their collective bargaining agreement via email to ContractAgreements@doe.mass.edu.

Technical Assistance and Professional Development

The Task Force and Board assigned to ESE substantial responsibility for supporting effective implementation of the framework in the districts and schools of the Commonwealth. ESE takes that responsibility seriously and works closely with Massachusetts schools and districts to learn what support is most needed.

To that end, ESE developed two training programs: [Training Modules](#) and [Training Workshops for Teachers](#). These resources provide an overview of the statewide evaluation framework. Districts may choose to supplement or adapt these materials to align with local priorities and local evaluation systems. Although intended for slightly different audiences (evaluators and non-evaluators), ESE encourages districts to train educators on evaluation through collaborative and transparent approaches.

ESE evaluation **training modules** were designed to prepare school leadership teams and evaluators to implement the Massachusetts educator evaluation framework in their schools through the following intended outcomes:

- Make the 5-Step Cycle concrete and actionable for educators and their evaluators.
- Support school leadership teams in developing a common understanding of the educator evaluation framework and the opportunities for professional growth and development.
- Provide participants with implementation tips and strategies to help schools make educator evaluation meaningful and doable.

The **training workshops** for non-evaluators include an orientation and four workshop sessions designed to prepare teachers and other educators to be active participants in their evaluation.

¹⁷ M.G.L. c 71 s 38. See Appendix C

Workshops were developed in partnership with Massachusetts teachers and were designed to be led by a department head or grade/team lead in a small group setting, such as common planning time.

Ongoing feedback from schools and districts is critical to ensure that ESE resources are relevant. To that end, ESE used RTTT funding to support a longitudinal evaluation by an independent third party organization to provide ESE with candid information about its own and others' efforts to support effective implementation.

Reporting Requirements and Educator Confidentiality

The regulations require districts to provide ESE with individual educator evaluation data for each educator. The regulations are explicit that educator evaluation data for each educator will not be made public. The single exception is the superintendent whose evaluation must be conducted in public and whose summative evaluation is a public document, consistent with state open meeting and public records laws. For all other educators, the regulations guarantee that any information concerning an educator's formative assessment, formative evaluation or summative evaluation is considered personnel information and is not subject to disclosure under the public records law. However, aggregate data that do not identify individual educators may be made public. Appendix D details district reporting requirements.

Strategic Choices and Opportunities

Coherence Among District Initiatives

Implementing the educator evaluation framework can be seized as an opportunity to establish coherence among district initiatives rather than as “one more district initiative.” The framework is built on a foundation of high leverage strategies for growth and development including self-assessment, data analysis, goal setting, observation with feedback, examination of artifacts, and rubrics. One way to build coherence among district initiatives is to link these strategies to critical work already underway. Each offers opportunities to link district initiatives in ways that create synergy, support and coherence.

For example, strong vertical alignment between individual, team, school and district goals will accelerate improvement. All schools and districts are implementing the MA Frameworks in Mathematics and English Language Arts. Team goal setting in the evaluation cycle can be used to advance this work: teacher teams can share the common professional practice goal of learning “backwards design” principles and applying them to design together units that align with the Frameworks. Department, grade level, and/or faculty meetings can provide opportunity to share and critique models. Similarly, principals across the district can share the same professional practice goal of learning to observe classroom instruction more consistently and provide more useful, targeted feedback. Districts hard at work to incorporate global skills into their curriculum can establish district-wide professional practice and student learning goals related to more effective and extensive use of appropriate technologies.

More guidance on integrating implementation of the educator evaluation framework with the MA Curriculum Frameworks is available in the [Quick Reference Guide: Educator Evaluation & the MA Curriculum Frameworks](#).

“Unpacking” rubrics also helps educators develop a deep, shared understanding of what proficient leadership or teaching practice looks like. Working together with rubrics offers an opportunity for teams of administrators and teachers to learn together and sets the stage for individual and collective growth as educators see more clearly what will be involved to develop their practice to the next level and identify colleagues who can help get them there. A key to having the rubrics contribute to coherence rather than fragmentation will be in the choice of what Indicators and elements to focus on. Linking that choice to other district priorities is important. Similarly, analyzing student learning data together at administrative teams sharpens each member’s insights and can lead to decisions to refine the action steps for district-wide learning goals. Creating time and space for these conversations at district administrator meetings is an important way to create synergy and coherence for they will help create the shared vision of effective practice that is the critical ingredient for nearly every strong and improving district and school.

Collaboration: Not Always Easy or Comfortable, but Essential

Ever since the formation of the Task Force, ESE has been challenged to work in new ways to engage stakeholders. We have reached out to leaders of many state associations, including, but certainly not limited, to these (in alphabetical order):

- American Federation of Teachers-Massachusetts (AFT-MA)
- Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC)
- Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS)
- Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA)
- Massachusetts Secondary School Principals Association (MSSAA)
- Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA)

These have not always been easy conversations. We have worked to make time and space for candid conversation and invited stakeholders to challenge long-held assumptions of their own, of others and of ours at ESE. We have worked to place BOTH student learning AND educator growth and development at the center of our conversations. We have worked hard to bring traditional adversaries “to the table” to seek common ground. We have not always reached agreement, but we have always learned. The ESE Model System is far more promising because of the challenging questions posed, suggestions made, and assumptions challenged. We believe the same will be true at the local level: the conversations will not always be easy; but they are essential.

Addressing Feasibility

Task Force Member, in a meeting: “Whatever model for evaluation is adopted, it needs to be practical. We need to have the conversation – is this doable?”

Task Force Member, in reply: “I would slightly change the question from ‘Is it doable?’ to ‘How can we make it doable? What will it take to make it possible?’”

A singular strength of the MA educator evaluation framework is that it relies on practices that hold great promise for enhancing educator growth and development. At the same time, many of these same practices help make the framework “doable” and desirable from the perspectives of both the educator and evaluator.

- **Rubrics** describe administrative and teaching practice in detail across different levels of performance. For educators, rubrics help describe what skillful practice looks like and what steps the educator needs to take to move further along the continuum of practice toward Exemplary performance. For both educators and evaluators, rubrics help make explicit and transparent the next steps the educator needs to take. For the evaluator, rubrics mean that s/he no longer has to write from a blank page to describe details of practice, so the time spent crafting useful, specific feedback is reduced.
- **Educator Self-Assessment** gives the educator the initial opportunity to use the rubric and data about student learning to assess their own strengths and impact on student learning, thereby taking more control of their own growth and development. For the evaluator, an educator’s thoughtful self-assessment paves the way for a clear focus for observation and feedback.
- **Educator-Proposed Goals** again give the educator the opportunity to take charge of identifying how s/he wants to grow as a professional. When well-crafted, goals give both the educator and the evaluator a straightforward way to assess progress.
- **Team Goals** give educators the opportunity to learn with and from colleagues as they tackle challenging problems of practice together. For evaluators, team goals are an efficient way to organize school improvement and give specific, focused evaluation feedback to educators.
- **Brief, Unannounced Classroom Observations with Brief Feedback** are encouraged by the regulations which require “unannounced observations of practice of any duration.” Brief, unannounced observations followed by brief feedback give educators the opportunity to receive frequent, focused feedback based on an authentic understanding of their classroom practice. For evaluators, short observations followed by brief feedback are a realistic and efficient way to gain knowledge of an educator’s practice and provide meaningful feedback. Brief, unannounced visits fit the hectic schedule of a school administrator. Experts have estimated that an evaluator can make as many as eight 10-15 minute, unannounced observations and provide useful feedback for each in the time it could have taken him/her to do a single traditional full-period announced observation with scheduled pre- and post-conferences and lesson write up.
- **Educator Collection of Evidence** means that the educator and evaluator share responsibility for assembling the evidence that will be used to assess progress. Once again, the educator—working individually and with a team—can examine evidence and assess his/her own growth and development. At the same time, the evaluator can make efficient use of the evidence presented by the individual and the team to draw conclusions about the educator’s performance and progress in achieving goals.

- **Two-year Self-Directed Growth Plan** is the plan that will be used by most experienced educators. Ratings for the mid-cycle Formative Evaluation - at the end of the first year - are assumed to be the same as the ratings from the previous year unless there has been a significant change in performance. For educators, the two-year plan brings the opportunity to work with their teams and on their own to pursue extended goals. For evaluators, two-year plans for most of their educators with professional teacher status mean that they can concentrate their attention on new and struggling educators.
- **Distributed Leadership** is contemplated in the regulations which invite districts to establish peer assistance and review systems (PAR) in which highly skilled teachers assume leadership roles as observers, mentors and coaches for peers. For educators, PAR means opportunities for recognition, growth and leadership. For evaluators, PAR means assistance in the observing and supporting teachers.

Supporting Teachers and Leaders at the School and Classroom Level

Translating the MA educator evaluation framework into practice at the school and classroom level requires district leaders to work together to support teachers and school-level administrators in their work. That support is most effective when union leaders and district administrators make this a joint effort and connect it to other district priorities.

Given the active, engaged role envisioned for every educator in the MA educator evaluation framework, the voice of every educator needs to have a place in the conversation. District leaders should work with teachers, principals and department heads in the ongoing implementation and refinement of the educator evaluation system. No teacher, principal or department head wants the educator evaluation framework done “to them.” Instead, they want it done “with them.”



Appendices: Information & Resources to Support Effective Implementation



Appendix A. Evaluating Educators in Multiple Roles

Districts may elect, subject to their bargaining obligations, how they will choose to evaluate educators who serve in multiple roles. However, simplicity and commonsense are useful guideposts when creating sustainable evaluation systems. In many instances it would be a burden to both the educator and the district to conduct separate evaluations for each role that an educator might have in a school or district. Rather than attempt to do so, ESE suggests that the District and the Association/Union agree on the educator's primary role based on a review of the educator's course load and other assignments. Where a primary role is not suggested by such an analysis, the parties could designate a primary role, subject to confirmation by the evaluator's supervisor. Notwithstanding, districts may evaluate educators for each of their multiple roles if they so choose, subject to their collective bargaining agreements.

Whichever approach the district adopts, the role-appropriate Standards, Indicators, rubrics, and student performance measures to be used in evaluating the educator should be discussed as part of the goal-setting and plan development component in the 5-Step Evaluation Cycle, so expectations are clear and agreed upon before evaluation begins.

Example

A large high school has an educator serving in the supervisor/director role as chair of a math department of five teachers. As part of her workload, the educator also teaches two sections of math. The evaluator and educator determine her evaluation will focus on her supervisory, professional development, and team development responsibilities, and designate her department chair duties as her primary role for the purpose of evaluation. Conversely, an educator serving in the supervisor/director role in a small high school with just two math teachers (including the educator) might have a more extensive teaching load. The evaluator and educator conclude that her evaluation will focus on her teaching responsibilities, not her supervisory duties.

Alternately, subject to the requirements of the evaluation system the district adopts, the parties may determine that it is more appropriate to evaluate the educator in both her roles (supervisory and teaching). The parties could create a hybrid rubric including Standards, Indicators, elements, and/or descriptors from both the teacher rubric and the administrator rubric appropriate to the responsibilities of the educator. Should this approach be taken, the parties are advised not to increase the number of elements, but rather to select those Indicators and elements that best apply to the educator's role and responsibilities.

Appendix B. Aligning Educator Plans and the Individual Professional Development Plan

How can the professional development activities in an Educator Plan count toward an Educator's Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)?

The regulations for license renewal ([603 CMR 44.04 \(1\) \(c\)](#)) do allow for these plans to be the same. Given the license renewal cycle is a five year period and multiple evaluation cycles will occur during that time, there can be some challenges to combining these plans. ESE has released several [example forms](#) to help bring these two plans into alignment, including a version of an Educator Plan form and an Educator Plan Addendum. If a district is interested in working with ESE to bring these two plans into greater alignment, please contact EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu.

Are districts required to align approval and endorsement of IPDPs with the Evaluation Cycle?

No. However, in many cases it will make sense to do so and, where appropriate and possible, combining the two processes will reduce the administrative burden on both educators and administrators.

How can the activities in an Educator Plan count toward an Educator's IPDP?

Though governed by two different statutes, both plans must be consistent with the educational needs of the school and district, be approved by the educator's supervisor, strengthen the educator's knowledge and skills, and enhance the educator's ability to promote student learning. The Educator Plan specifies the kinds of PD educators will pursue to improve their performance and promote student learning.

Not all of the professional development undertaken pursuant to an Educator Plan under [603 CMR 35.00](#) (evaluation) may meet the requirements of [603 CMR 44.00](#) (license renewal). However, in many instances the educator's professional development activities will meet these requirements so that successful completion of the professional development activities undertaken pursuant to the educator's Educator Plan may contribute to the satisfaction of the educator's PDP requirements for license renewal.

ESE recommends Educators and Evaluators:

- Use a goal setting and plan development conference at the beginning of the evaluation cycle to review and approve IPDPs and to conduct the bi-annual check-in and end of renewal cycle endorsement that are required under [603 CMR 44.00](#) during the Evaluation Cycle, if practicable.
- Maintain a running record (by the educator) of the professional development activities undertaken pursuant to their Educator Plan under [603 CMR 35.00](#) to identify activities that meet the PDP requirements for license renewal under [603 CMR 44.00](#) and its accompanying **guidelines** 
ESE's **Educator Plan Form**   includes a column for educators to track activities eligible for PDPs. The [Educator Plan Addendums](#) are resources intended to guide conversations between educators and evaluators when completing Educator Plans.

Can I receive and use PDPs for attaining the professional practice goal(s) or student learning goal(s) of my Educator Plan under the 603 CMR 35.00?

If the underlying activities required to meet those goals are consistent with [603 CMR 44.00](#) (license renewal) and ESE's guidance on license renewal, you may receive PDPs for these activities. Similarly, you may be able to receive PDPs for the underlying activities required to attain Team Goals included in an Educator Plan under [603 CMR 35.00](#), if they are consistent with [603 CMR 44.00](#) (license renewal) and ESE's guidance on license renewal.

Appendix C. Educator Evaluation and Collective Bargaining

Excerpts from M G.L. c. 71, § 38.

The superintendent, by means of comprehensive evaluation, shall cause the performance of all teachers, principals, and administrators within the school district to be evaluated using any principles of evaluation established by the board of education pursuant to section one B of chapter sixty-nine and by such consistent, supplemental performance standards as the school committee may require, including the extent to which students assigned to such teachers and administrators satisfy student academic standards or, in the case of a special education student, the individual education plan, and the successful implementation of professional development plans required under section thirty-eight Q; provided, however, that such principles and standards be consistent with the anti-discrimination requirements of chapter one hundred and fifty-two B. The superintendent shall require the evaluation of administrators and of teachers without professional teacher status every year and shall require the evaluation of teachers with professional teacher status at least once every two years. The procedures for conducting such evaluations, but not the requirement for such evaluations, shall be subject to the collective bargaining provisions of chapter one hundred and fifty E.

Performance standards for teachers and other school district employees shall be established by the school committee upon the recommendation of the superintendent, provided that where teachers are represented for collective bargaining purposes, all teacher performance standards shall be determined as follows: The school committee and the collective bargaining representative shall undertake for a reasonable period of time to agree on teacher performance standards. Prior to said reasonable period of time, the school district shall seek a public hearing to comment on such standards. In the absence of an agreement, after such reasonable period, teacher performance standards shall be determined by binding interest arbitration. Either the school district or the teachers' collective bargaining representative may file a petition seeking arbitration with the commissioner of education. The commissioner shall forward to the parties a list of three arbitrators provided by the American Arbitration Association. The school committee and the collective bargaining representative within three days of receipt of the list from the commissioner of education shall have the right to strike one of the three arbitrators' names if they are unable to agree upon a single arbitrator from among the three. The arbitration shall be conducted in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association to be consistent with the provisions of this section. In reaching a decision, the arbitrator shall seek to advance the goals of encouraging innovation in teaching and of holding teachers accountable for improving student performance. The arbitrator shall consider the particular socioeconomic conditions of the student population of the school district. Both the parties and the arbitrator may adopt performance standards established by state or national organizations. The performance standards shall be incorporated into the applicable collective bargaining agreement; provided, however, that any subsequent modification of the performance standards shall be made pursuant to the procedures set forth in this section.

Appendix D. Reporting Requirements and Educator Confidentiality

The regulations require districts to provide ESE with individual educator evaluation data for each educator. The regulations are explicit that educator evaluation data for each educator will not be made public. The single exception is the superintendent whose evaluation must be conducted in public and whose summative evaluation is a public document, consistent with state open meeting and public records laws. For all other educators, the regulations guarantee that any information concerning an educator's formative assessment, formative evaluation or summative evaluation is considered personnel information and is not subject to disclosure under the public records law. However, aggregate data that do not identify individual educators may be made public. ESE will also produce detailed collection guidance for the ongoing school year implementations.

The Massachusetts Education Personnel Identifier (MEPID) is used to uniquely identify an educator. ESE will require the following seven (7) data elements for each educator MEPID:

Required Data	Data Element
District Level Educator's Professional Teacher Status Educator's professional teacher status as of the end of the school year for which evaluation ratings are being reported.	Yes, No
Overall Annual Summative Evaluation or Formative Evaluation Rating Educator's current school year overall summative evaluation rating or formative evaluation rating.	Unsatisfactory, Needs Improvement, Proficient, Exemplary
Standard (1) Evaluation Rating Educator's current school year evaluation rating on Standard (1).	Unsatisfactory, Needs Improvement, Proficient, Exemplary
Standard (2) Evaluation Rating Educator's current school year evaluation rating on Standard (2).	Unsatisfactory, Needs Improvement, Proficient, Exemplary
Standard (3) Evaluation Rating Educator's current school year evaluation rating on Standard (3).	Unsatisfactory, Needs Improvement, Proficient, Exemplary
Standard (4) Evaluation Rating Educator's current school year evaluation rating on Standard (4).	Unsatisfactory, Needs Improvement, Proficient, Exemplary
Impact on Student Learning Growth Rating * Educator's current school year rating on impact on student learning growth.	Low, Moderate, High

*Reporting Student Impact Ratings of High, Moderate and Low: Initial Student Impact Ratings of High, Moderate or Low will be determined following the 2015-16 school year and reported to ESE in October of 2016. Districts that have agreed to determine Student Impact Ratings using three-year trends will report initial Student Impact Ratings based on a two-year trend in 2015-16 and may use a three-year trend thereafter.

Appendix E. Implementation Timetable

Implementation Timetable

The regulations called for districts to phase in components of the educator evaluation framework over several years:

- **Phase I:** Rate every educator based on attainment of goals and performance against the four Standards defined in the educator evaluation regulations.
- **Phase II:** Rate every educator's impact on student learning gains based on trends and patterns on state and district-determined measures of student learning.
- **Phase III:** Use feedback from students and (for administrators) staff as evidence in the evaluation process.

The Board's decision to phase in different components of the framework over a two year period was designed to permit ESE and districts to learn from early adopters, practitioners and researchers both here in Massachusetts and in other states. For example, recent national research has confirmed that survey data measuring students' perception of what happens in classrooms in terms of student relationships, teacher expectations, and academic press is significantly correlated with student achievement gains.¹⁸ ESE's direction on student surveying, required by June 2014, was informed by that research and continued dialogue with practitioners in the field. Just as importantly, having additional time gave ESE the ability to develop the ESE Model Feedback Surveys, which makes it easier and less costly for schools to collect and use this important source of information.

Below is the schedule for key ESE and district action over the first three years of implementation:

January 2012: ESE publishes first components of ESE Model System

Winter/Spring 2012: Race to the Top (RTTT) districts begin collective bargaining

August 2012: ESE provides guidance on rating educator impact on student learning based on state and district-determined measures

September 2012: RTTT districts submit their proposed educator evaluation systems to ESE for review, including collective bargaining agreements for teachers and administrators represented by bargaining units

September 2012: RTTT districts begin implementation of educator evaluation for superintendents, principals, teachers and other administrators

By January 2013: All remaining districts begin collective bargaining

September 2013: All districts are implementing the educator evaluation framework in ways consistent with the educator evaluation regulations

Summer 2013: Districts begin training for evaluators and develop plans for a process to identify, develop and/or adopt district-determined measures

¹⁸ See, for example: T. Crow, The View from the Seats, Student input provides a clearer picture of what works in schools, *Journal of Staff Development* 32 (6), December 2011.

By September 2014: All districts submit to ESE plans for district-determined measures and their proposed processes for rating educator impact on student learning and using student and staff feedback

July 2014: ESE issues direction on collecting and using student and staff feedback

September 2014: Districts begin incorporating student and staff feedback as evidence in the evaluation framework

June 2016: Districts begin submitting the ratings of educator impact on student learning for all educators