



# **Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation**

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

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This document was prepared by the  
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Commissioner

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## A Letter from the Commissioner

# Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.  
Commissioner

December 1, 2015

Dear Educators and other interested Stakeholders,

I am pleased to re-issue Part III 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 III has been updated to reflect 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](mailto:EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu), and visit the Educator Evaluation webpage at [www.doe.mass.edu/eval/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/). 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).

## **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 administrators<sup>1</sup>. 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

<sup>2</sup> 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).”<sup>3</sup> 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”).

## Purpose of this Guide

Rubrics are critical components of the regulations and are required for every educator. Their use will foster careful analysis and constructive dialogue about performance expectations and how to improve practice.<sup>4</sup> The rubrics describe specific aspects of professional practice. Each aspect of practice—defined as an “element”—is described at four levels of performance: Unsatisfactory, Needs Improvement, Proficient, and Exemplary.

The regulations call for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) to provide a Model System for evaluating all educators.

This guide includes:

- Explanation of the purpose of rubrics and how they serve a critical role in the evaluation cycle for every educator.
- The structure and performance levels of the model rubrics
- Guidance to support educators in using rubrics in evaluation
- Considerations for how to adapt Model Rubrics for use by educators in other roles, including other administrators as well as guidance counselors, nurses, and other specialized instructional support personnel (formerly Appendix E, Role-Specific Indicators)
- Additional resources including links to Model Rubrics for superintendents, administrators, classroom teachers, and specialized instructional support personnel (formerly Appendices A-D), training resources, and role-specific resources

Districts may choose to adopt or adapt the Model Rubrics. Districts also may opt to revise existing rubrics so that they meet the requirements of the regulations. Another option is for districts to adopt rubrics that others have developed. Districts that adopt the Model Rubrics will simply notify ESE that they have done so. The regulations require that the district assure that any alternatives to the Model Rubrics are “comparably rigorous and comprehensive.”

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

<sup>4</sup> A meta-analysis of 75 studies producing empirical research on rubrics found, “rubrics seem to have the potential of promoting learning and/or improving instruction. The main reason...lies in the fact that rubrics make expectations and criteria explicit, which also facilitates feedback and self-assessment” (p. 130). *Source*: Jonsson, A., & Svingby, G. (2007). The use of scoring rubrics: Reliability, validity and educational consequences. *Educational Research Review*, 2(2), 130–144. Retrieved January 5, 2012, from <http://uncw.edu/cas/documents/JonssonandSvingby2007.pdf>

Districts that decide to adapt the model rubrics, revise their existing rubrics, or choose another rubric must submit their rubrics to ESE for review at [EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu](mailto:EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu).

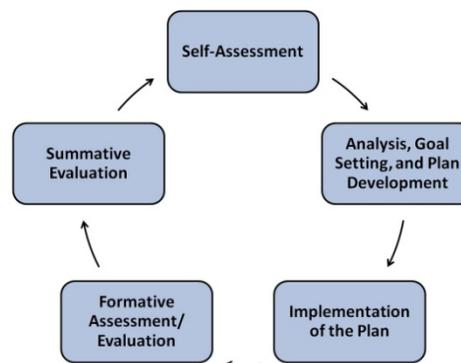
This guide outlines the purpose of rubrics and how they serve a critical role in key steps in the evaluation cycle for every educator. The guide describes the process the Department used to develop the first three Model Rubrics (teacher, administrator, and superintendent) and the process it follows to consider how best to adapt these models for use by educators in other roles, including other administrators as well as guidance counselors, nurses, and other specialized instructional support personnel. The guide offers some “do’s and don’ts” based on the experience of districts and researchers in Massachusetts and elsewhere.

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](mailto:EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu).

## Where the Rubrics Fit Into the Evaluation Process

Under the 5-Step Evaluation Cycle outlined in the regulations, evaluation is a continuous improvement process beginning with Self-Assessment and concluding with Summative Evaluation. Data from the Summative Evaluation become an important source of information for the educator’s subsequent Self-Assessment and Goal Setting.

Rubrics are designed to help educators and evaluators (1) develop a consistent, shared understanding of what Proficient performance looks like in practice, (2) develop a common terminology and structure to organize evidence, and (3) make informed professional judgments about Formative and Summative Performance Ratings on each Standard and overall. As a result, rubrics play a part in all five components of the cycle.



### 1. Self-Assessment:

Educators study the rubric alone and with colleagues during the Self-Assessment component of the cycle to examine their own practice against the Standards and Indicators and to identify areas of strength as well as areas requiring further development.

### 2. Analysis, Goal Setting, and Plan Development:

Educators and evaluators together carefully review the rubric and agree on elements and/or Indicators that will be the focus of their attention during the evaluation cycle and those that may receive only cursory attention for now. In addition, educators and their evaluators develop goals for improving professional practice and student learning. The rubric helps to paint a clear picture of what it will look like to move practice from Proficient to Exemplary in one element or from Needs Improvement to Proficient in another. These distinctions are the starting point for conversation about setting the “specific, measurable, and actionable” professional practice goals called for in the regulations.

### 3. Implementation of the Educator Plan and Data Collection:

The rubric is a tool for organizing data. Evaluators use the rubric to ensure that they are gathering evidence from multiple sources that will enable them to assess fairly the educator’s practice on each

Standard. Educators and teams collect and present evidence, notably evidence of active outreach to families (Standard III) and evidence of fulfillment of professional responsibilities and growth (Standard IV). Evaluators collect evidence by observing practice, examining work products and student work, talking with the educator, and other means. Evaluators should align this evidence with the rubric and share it with the educator as part of their constructive feedback. The detail in the rubric for each Standard and Indicator helps the educator and evaluator to determine what evidence might be the most important to collect and to organize the data for presentation.

*Rubrics are not observation rating tools.* The rubrics are written to support educators and evaluators in making judgments about patterns of evidence, gathered across multiple points in time. Classroom observation is a valuable way to gather evidence on educators' performance against many, but not all, of the Standards and Indicators. The Classroom Teacher Rubric, for example, includes many elements and Indicators than can only be assessed through means other than classroom visits. The rubric has not been designed to be a classroom observation tool and should not be used for that purpose.

#### **4. Formative Assessment/Evaluation and Summative Evaluation:**

The rubric serves as the organizing framework for these conferences and reports as evaluators assess the educator's performance on the continuum of practice described by the rubric.

## **What Is Required in the Regulations?**

The regulations define a rubric as “a scoring tool that describes characteristics of practice or artifacts at different levels of performance” (603 CMR 35.02).

Districts are required to use a rubric when issuing performance ratings for Formative Assessment/Evaluation and Summative Evaluation; they “may use either the rubric provided by the Department in its model system or a comparably rigorous and comprehensive rubric developed by the district and reviewed by the Department” ([603 CMR 35.08\(2\)](#)).

The regulations identify four performance ratings to describe the educators' performance: Unsatisfactory, Needs Improvement, Proficient, and Exemplary.

The regulations permit school committees to “*supplement* the Standards and Indicators with additional measurable performance Standards and Indicators consistent with state law and collective bargaining agreements where applicable” ([603 CMR 35.03](#) and [35.04](#)).

The regulations anticipate the need to adapt the Indicators in some cases: the district “shall adapt the Indicators based on the role of the (educator) to reflect and to allow for significant differences in assignments and responsibilities.” In the case of administrators serving under individual employment contracts, districts may ‘adapt’ the Standards, as well as the Indicators “as applicable to their role and contract.” ([603 CMR 35.03](#) and [35.04](#)).

## Structure of the Model Rubrics

Each Model Rubric is structured as follows:

- Standards:** Standards are the broad categories of knowledge, skills, and performance of effective practice detailed in the regulations. There are four Standards for both teachers and administrators:

Teachers	Administrators
Standard I: Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment	Standard I: Instructional Leadership
Standard II: Teaching All Students	Standard II: Management and Operations
Standard III: Family and Community Engagement	Standard III: Family and Community Engagement
Standard IV: Professional Culture	Standard IV: Professional Culture

- Indicators:** Indicators describe specific knowledge, skills, and performance for each Standard. For example, there are three Indicators in Standard I of the teacher rubric: Curriculum and Planning; Assessment; and Analysis. There are five Indicators in Standard I for principals: Curriculum; Instruction; Assessment; Evaluation; and Data-Informed Decision-Making. Altogether, there are 16 Indicators in the teacher rubric and 21 Indicators in the school-level administrator and superintendent rubrics.
- Elements:** The elements are subcategories of knowledge and skills specific to each Indicator. The elements further break down the Indicators into more specific aspects of educator practice and provide an opportunity for evaluators to offer detailed feedback that serves as a roadmap for improvement. Altogether, there are 33 elements in the teacher rubric and 44 in the school-level and superintendent rubrics.
- Descriptors:** Performance descriptors are observable and measurable statements of educator knowledge and skills aligned to each element and serve as the basis for identifying the level of teaching or administrative performance in one of four categories: Unsatisfactory, Needs Improvement, Proficient, or Exemplary.

Although teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, school-based administrators, and superintendents will be evaluated using different rubrics, the basic structure of all of the rubrics is the same:

Standards → Indicators → Elements → Descriptors of four levels of performance

**The 4 Standards, 16 Indicators, and 33 elements in the Model Rubric for teachers:**

<b>Standard I: Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment</b>	<b>Standard II: Teaching All Students</b>	<b>Standard III: Family and Community Engagement</b>	<b>Standard IV: Professional Culture</b>
<p><b>A. Curriculum and Planning Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Subject Matter Knowledge</li> <li>2. Child and Adolescent Development</li> <li>3. Rigorous Standards-Based Unit Design</li> <li>4. Well-Structured Lessons</li> </ol> <p><b>B. Assessment Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Variety of Assessment Methods</li> <li>2. Adjustments to Practice</li> </ol> <p><b>C. Analysis Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analysis and Conclusions</li> <li>2. Sharing Conclusions With Colleagues</li> <li>3. Sharing Conclusions With Students</li> </ol>	<p><b>A. Instruction Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Quality of Effort and Work</li> <li>2. Student Engagement</li> <li>3. Meeting Diverse Needs</li> </ol> <p><b>B. Learning Environment Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Safe Learning Environment</li> <li>2. Collaborative Learning Environment</li> <li>3. Student Motivation</li> </ol> <p><b>C. Cultural Proficiency Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respects Differences</li> <li>2. Maintains Respectful Environment</li> </ol> <p><b>D. Expectations Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clear Expectations</li> <li>2. High Expectations</li> <li>3. Access to Knowledge</li> </ol>	<p><b>A. Engagement Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parent/Family Engagement</li> </ol> <p><b>B. Collaboration Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learning Expectations</li> <li>2. Curriculum Support</li> </ol> <p><b>C. Communication Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Two-Way Communication</li> <li>2. Culturally Proficient Communication</li> </ol>	<p><b>A. Reflection Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reflective Practice</li> <li>2. Goal Setting</li> </ol> <p><b>B. Professional Growth Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professional Learning and Growth</li> </ol> <p><b>C. Collaboration Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professional Collaboration</li> </ol> <p><b>D. Decision-Making Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Decision-making</li> </ol> <p><b>E. Shared Responsibility Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Shared Responsibility</li> </ol> <p><b>F. Professional Responsibilities Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Judgment</li> <li>2. Reliability and Responsibility</li> </ol>

## Descriptors for a single element in the Model Rubric for administrators:

### Standard I: Instructional Leadership

Indicator 1-D: Evaluation				
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Exemplary
Element I-D-1  Educator Goals	Does little to support educators to develop professional practice and student learning goals, review the goals for quality, and/or support educators to attain them.	Supports educators and teams to develop professional practice and student learning goals, but does not consistently review them for quality and/or monitor progress.	<b>Supports educators and teams to develop and attain meaningful, actionable, and measurable professional practice and student learning goals.</b>	Supports educators and teams to develop and attain meaningful, actionable, and measurable professional practice and student learning goals, and models this process through principal's own goals. Is able to model this Element.

## How to “Read” a Rubric

Rubrics can be overwhelming. Because they are designed to capture critical aspects of an extraordinarily complex craft, they need to be comprehensive and detailed. Most experts suggest that you start “reading” a rubric by “unpacking” a single Standard.

Scan the Indicators in the Standard. Select one of interest to you. Look at the titles of the elements for that Indicator to get a sense of how they fit together yet describe distinct aspects of the Indicator. Choose an element. Think about your own performance or the practice of someone you know fairly well. Begin by reading the Proficient performance descriptor for that element, as it is the expected standard of performance. Determine whether the practice you are thinking about exemplifies this performance level. If not, then read the performance descriptor that is one level higher (Exemplary) or one level lower (Needs Improvement). Fill out the descriptor for each level in your mind by asking yourself, “What might an educator be doing or saying?” After you have thought through one element, go on to another element for the same Indicator if there is one, or on to another Indicator in the same Standard.

“Reading” a rubric can help educators and evaluators see new dimensions of practice or put words to aspects of practice that they intuitively know but have not considered in a structured way. For educators new to the profession, a rubric can be an indispensable resource for learning the craft, with detailed expectations for effective practice. When read together with colleagues at a meeting of a department, a grade level, faculty, or administrators, “unpacking” an Indicator or a Standard can be a powerful way to develop a rich, detailed and shared picture of what effective practice looks like. That shared understanding is a foundation for strong professional cultures that can support the growth and development of every educator.

## Performance Levels in the Model Rubrics

The performance descriptors in the ESE Model System’s rubrics differentiate levels of educator performance along a continuum of professional practice. Experienced educators are expected to demonstrate performance at the Proficient level in each Standard and overall. Proficient performance is assumed to be fully satisfactory.

The regulatory language for each performance rating is provided below in italics followed by a deeper explanation of each descriptor.

<p><b>Exemplary</b></p>	<p><i>The educator’s performance consistently and significantly exceeds the requirements of a Standard and could serve as a model of practice districtwide.</i></p> <p>The Exemplary level represents the highest level of performance. It 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 for educators in the school, district, or state. Few educators—superintendents included—are expected to earn Exemplary ratings on more than a handful of Indicators.</p>
<p><b>Proficient</b></p>	<p><i>The educator’s performance fully and consistently meets the requirements of a Standard.</i></p> <p>Proficient is the expected, rigorous level of performance for educators. It is a demanding but attainable level of performance for most educators. At the Proficient level, educators integrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for effective content-area instruction or leadership.</p>
<p><b>Needs Improvement</b></p>	<p><i>The educator’s performance on a Standard is below the requirements of a Standard but is not considered to be Unsatisfactory at this time. Improvement is necessary and expected.</i></p> <p>Educators whose performance on a Standard is rated as Needs Improvement may demonstrate inconsistencies in practice or weaknesses in a few key areas. They may not yet fully integrate and/or apply their knowledge and skills in an effective way. They may be new to the field or to this assignment and are developing their craft.</p>
<p><b>Unsatisfactory</b></p>	<p><i>The educator’s performance on a Standard ... has not significantly improved following a rating of Needs Improvement, or the educator’s performance is consistently below the requirements of a Standard ... and is considered inadequate or both.</i></p> <p>Educators whose performance on a Standard is rated as Unsatisfactory are significantly underperforming as compared to the expectations. Unsatisfactory performance requires urgent attention.</p>

## Design of the Model Rubrics

The regulations call for “rigorous and comprehensive” rubrics. With assistance from staff from American Institutes for Research (AIR), ESE staff reviewed numerous rubrics<sup>5</sup> and incorporated aspects of several into the Model Rubrics. ESE issued draft principal and teacher rubrics and sought feedback from early users, practitioners from Early Adopter Districts, experts, and other interested stakeholders including representatives from state teachers, principals, and superintendents organizations. With AIR’s assistance, ESE collected and analyzed the feedback and made a number of changes, notably tying the elements more explicitly and tightly to the language of the Indicators, reducing modestly the number of elements, and clarifying the distinction between performance levels.

Decisions about structure, language, and level of detail have been intentional. For example, there are fewer elements in the Model Rubric for teachers than in most published teacher rubrics.<sup>6</sup> This choice underscores the interconnectedness of related behaviors and practices, maintains the comprehensiveness of the rubrics, and ensures that they conform to the regulations. The decision to include fewer elements also ensures that educators in local districts will be able to play an active role in developing important details of the descriptions of practice as they work together to “unpack” the rubrics. Additional design choices are detailed in the following subsections.

### Standards and Indicators from the regulations.

State regulations on educator evaluation are very clear that educators must be evaluated using the Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice ([603 CMR 35.03](#)) or Standards and Indicators of Effective Administrative Leadership Practice ([603 CMR 35.04](#)), as applicable (a fuller explanation follows in the next section on “Adapting Rubrics for Different Role and Responsibilities”). These can be supplemented but not reduced. Therefore, Standards and Indicators dictate the basic structure of the Model Rubrics.

### Elements break down the Indicators into more manageable, measurable aspects of educator practice.

A key purpose of the educator evaluation regulations is to provide educators with more useful feedback to inform their professional growth. Useful, detailed feedback requires fine-grained descriptions of educator practice. Therefore, Indicators are broken down into more specific elements that describe a discrete educator behavior or related set of behaviors. The detailed descriptors of each element allow educators and evaluators to prioritize specific areas for evidence-gathering, feedback, and evaluation. The result is a more transparent and manageable process.

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<sup>5</sup> For a sampling of teacher and principal rubrics, see the approved rubrics for teachers and principals for New York State at <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/teachers-leaders/practicrubrics/home.html>. For a sample superintendent rubric, see <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/profdev/training/superintendent/>.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Charlotte Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* (2011 Revised Edition) has the equivalent of 4 Standards, 22 Indicators, and 76 Elements, in contrast to ESE’s model, which has 13 Indicators and 33 elements. See [http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/teachers-leaders/practicrubrics/Docs/Teachscape\\_Rubric.pdf](http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/teachers-leaders/practicrubrics/Docs/Teachscape_Rubric.pdf).

## **Distinctions among levels of performance are distinctions of consistency, quality, and scope of impact.**

The Model Rubrics distinguish among all four levels of performance on the basis of consistency, quality, and scope of impact. Without attention to all three, distinctions between different levels of performance are likely to be superficial. It is not Proficient practice, for example, if a principal “consistently” does something but rarely does it well or reaches few students. Likewise, classroom teachers may consistently offer high-quality instruction to some students, but struggle to meet the needs of others, such as academically advanced students, English Language Learners, students with disabilities, or those who present behavioral challenges.

Similarly, Exemplary performance requires demonstrating a behavior with greater regularity, at a higher level of quality, and/or with greater scope of impact than is expected at the Proficient level. The Model Rubrics make those differences clear.

## Adapting Rubrics for Different Roles and Responsibilities

The Standards and Indicators for Effective Teaching Practice and Effective Administrative Leadership Practice reflect the belief that “it is critical to develop and adopt a common statewide understanding about what effective teaching and administrative leadership looks like.”<sup>7</sup>

The regulations anticipate, however, that the Standards and Indicators—and the rubrics that flow from them—may need to be adapted to address different contexts, roles, and responsibilities: “the district shall adapt the Indicators based on the role of the (educator) to reflect and to allow for significant differences in assignments and responsibilities” ([603 CMR 35.03](#) and [35.04](#)).

ESE is committed to continuously learning from districts about the effectiveness of the Model Rubrics and the challenges districts face in implementing them. District use of the Model Rubrics may reveal that it is necessary to have a greater number of rubrics that further differentiate between roles. At this time, however, ESE has chosen to develop only four core rubrics: Superintendent, School-Level Administrator, Teacher, and Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP).<sup>8</sup>

## Customizing Rubrics for Different Contexts, Roles, and Responsibilities

A comprehensive array of rubrics customized for distinctions in educator roles and responsibilities may seem like a desirable way to ensure that evaluation tools are applicable and meaningful for all educators. The decision to supplement Standards or Indicators should not be taken lightly, however. Having a wide variety of rubrics can dilute the power of a shared vision of effective practice and create unnecessary distinctions between educators. Many special education teachers and administrators, for example—both nationally and across the Commonwealth—are wary of creating “two systems” for evaluating educators in general versus special education settings.

Therefore, when preparing to evaluate educators working in different contexts, assuming different roles, or undertaking different responsibilities, districts and schools should consider the extent to which the use of existing rubrics can be *customized* through a differentiated emphasis on and prioritization of Indicators and Elements.

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<sup>7</sup> Massachusetts Task Force on the Evaluation of Teachers and Administrators. (2011, March). *Building a breakthrough framework for educator evaluation in the Commonwealth*. Malden, MA: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

<sup>8</sup> The SISP rubric was originally referred to as the “caseload educator” rubric. This title, however, implied that the role of such educators was limited to the direct support of a subset of students. ESE recognizes that effective school counselors, nurses, psychologists, and others in similar roles make critical contributions to the whole school in support of improvement, planning, and professional development for staff. The National Alliance of Pupil Services Organizations (NAPSO) recently released a position statement<sup>8</sup> on evaluating staff in these roles which they collectively refer to as: “**Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP)**.” NAPSO members include the Natl. Association of School Nurses (NASN), the Natl. Association of School Psychologists (NASP), the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), and many others. Therefore, the Model rubric is titled by the term selected and agreed upon by NAPSO.

Consider the Expectations Indicator<sup>9</sup>: “Plans and implements lessons that set clear and high expectations and make knowledge accessible for all students.” Making knowledge accessible is critical for educators who work with students who are English language learners (ELLs) or have disabilities (or are ELLs with disabilities). Although most educators have responsibility for at least some ELLs or special education students, this Indicator should be more heavily emphasized for educators who, for example, primarily teach students with individual education plans (IEPs), especially those whose disabilities require modifications of curriculum, instruction, or learning outcomes.

Similar customization should be discussed between educators and evaluators as they consider the impact of differences in classrooms based on level (elementary, middle, and secondary), content, and/or population of students served. If the evaluator and educator agree to place a heavier emphasis on particular elements or Indicators, this should be noted in the Educator Plan.

In teams, with the faculty or administrative team as a whole, and/or individually, the educator and evaluator should consider reviewing the rubric together. The purpose of a joint review is to help clarify expectations and adapt the rubric to the specific context. During the review, educators and evaluators focus on the elements within each Indicator, asking questions such as these:

- Are there any elements for which Proficient performance will depend on factors beyond the control of the educator? If so, how will those dependencies be accounted for in the evaluation process?
- Are there any Standards, Indicators, or elements that will be weighted more heavily than others in rating the educator’s performance?
- Are there specific Indicators or elements that will be the focus of attention this year?

## Adapting Rubrics for Different Roles and Responsibilities

In some instances, however, customizing an existing rubric will not sufficiently capture differences in roles and responsibilities. When making decisions with regard to adapting rubrics to better reflect differences in roles and responsibilities, districts and schools should consider the following:

- Will the changes increase the difficulty of creating team goals that are tied to performance Standards and Indicators?
- How many educators will be evaluated against the adapted rubric?
- Has a representative group of the educators who will be evaluated against the adapted rubric had the opportunity to closely review and discuss the existing rubrics to determine whether or not the modifications are necessary?
- Will the number of rubrics place undue burden on the evaluator? To effectively assess educator performance against a rubric, evaluators need to become familiar with the content of the rubrics and adept with using each one for evaluation purposes.

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<sup>9</sup> Indicator D within Standard II, Teaching All Students from the *Standards and Indicators for Effective Teaching Practice* as defined in [603 CMR 35.03](#)

If the district has decided to adapt a rubric for particular roles and/or responsibilities, recommended options for adapting a rubric include:

**1. Modifying, adding, or removing elements.**

Although the elements are, by definition, “subcategories of knowledge and skills specific to each Indicator,” (see page 7 of this Guide) certain elements may not be comprehensive or specific enough for an educator’s role and/or responsibilities. As elements are not defined in the regulations, districts have the flexibility to modify elements to better reflect the local context, specific educator roles, or different responsibilities. For example, a district participating in an initiative to increase family and community engagement such as the Wrap-Around Zones may want to add an element to Standard III to better reflect the responsibilities of educators contributing to the initiative. When making changes to the elements and descriptors, districts are encouraged to consider the distinctions of quality, consistency, and scope of impact (described on page 12 of this Guide).

**2. Creating a “hybrid” rubric that includes Standards, Indicators, and elements from both the Standards and Indicators for Effective Teaching Practice and the Standards and Indicators for Effective Administrative Leadership.**

Some educators may be in a role that combines the responsibilities of both a classroom teacher and an administrator, such as a department head. In this scenario, the parties<sup>10</sup> could create a hybrid rubric including Standards, Indicators and elements or descriptors from both the teacher rubric and the administrator rubric appropriate to the responsibilities of the educator. Depending on the primary role of the educator, it may make sense to begin with the teacher rubric and add components of the administrator where appropriate, or vice versa. (For example, a department head in a small school with an extensive teaching load may identify the teacher rubric as representing their “primary” role and the administrator responsibilities as “secondary.”) In this approach, the team developing the rubric should be mindful of increasing the number of elements, and should prioritize those Indicators and elements that best apply to the educator’s role and responsibilities.

**3. Adding additional Indicators or modifying existing Indicators.**

An additional Indicator may be added to address a specific role, with elements describing the responsibilities of the role. . For example, a district may want to develop a Coaching Indicator for teachers, administrators, or other specialists who spend a significant amount of time coaching other educators.

Another option is to add an Indicator addressing a specific responsibility, with Elements describing aspects of the responsibility. For example, a teacher rubric may be supplemented with a “Committee Chair” Indicator for any educator that has the responsibility of chairing a committee, with 2-3 elements describing specific components of that responsibility.

A third option is to modify the existing Indicators, as per 603 CMR 35.03 and 35.04: “the district shall adapt the Indicators based on the role of the (educator) to reflect and to allow for significant differences in assignments and responsibilities.” This option should only be exercised when absolutely necessary, and all other options should be considered first. However, there are some roles that have such significant differences in assignments and responsibilities that to not adapt one or more Indicators would lead to a more superficial

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<sup>10</sup> The decision to create such a rubric may be made through an agreement between the District and the Association/Union to ensure that all educators in this role will be evaluated consistently across a district.

evaluation. Modifications to Indicators must meet the criteria of “supplement but not reduce.”<sup>11</sup>

As an example of these modifications, the Model Rubrics for administrators and teachers use the exact wording of the Standards and Indicators, whereas the Model Rubric for superintendents adapts the language modestly to accommodate the districtwide responsibilities of superintendents.

## Implementing Role-Specific Indicators and/or Elements

If districts choose to incorporate role-specific Indicators and/or elements into their evaluation process, each should be associated with a Standard and/or Indicator defined in the regulations and considered when rating an educator’s performance against the respective Standard. If a district has chosen to supplement the Standards defined in the educator evaluation regulations with additional local standards, supplementary Indicators may fall under those local standards as well. In that case, performance on the supplementary role-specific Indicators and/or elements should be considered when rating an educator’s overall performance.

Implementing role-specific Indicators and/or elements allows for evaluation to incorporate components specific and possibly unique to a certain role. Using role-specific Indicators/elements to supplement a “base” rubric such as the Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) rubric preserves that opportunity for specificity while simultaneously emphasizes commonalities across roles. In addition, the division between the “base” rubric and the role-specific Indicator(s) creates a structure through which it may be more feasible for evaluation to be shared by multiple evaluators. For example, principals are typically more qualified to assess a school nurse’s contributions to school culture than they are to evaluate the nurse’s clinical skills. In that situation, a principal may be the primary evaluator for the majority of the Standards on the Model SISP rubric while a head nurse or non-core supervisor/director might be a contributing evaluator with responsibility for assessing performance on role-specific Indicators specific to the school nurse.

## Additional Approaches to Role-Specific Resources

Developing role-specific Indicators and/or elements may not be the appropriate strategy for some educator roles. One alternative strategy is to adapt a Model Rubric in small but strategic ways to better align performance descriptors to specific roles and responsibilities. The Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials (MASBO), for example, adapted the Superintendent Model Rubric to reflect the role of a school business administrator.<sup>12</sup>

ESE also strongly encourages districts and organizations to consider developing resource documents in support of the Model Rubrics that identify role-specific educator behaviors and “look-for’s” aligned to the

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<sup>11</sup> While districts always have the option to supplement the Standards with locally developed Standards, there is less flexibility to modify the Standards. In the case of *superintendents, principals, and other administrators under individual employment contracts*, districts may adapt the Standards “as applicable to their role and contract” as per 603 CMR 35.05.

<sup>12</sup> ESE reviewed MASBO’s rubric to ensure it met regulatory requirements for comparable rigor and comprehensiveness. The MASBO rubric is available on its website [here](#).

descriptions of practice in a Model Rubric. Developing a resource document supports a common understanding of educator practice while also promoting strong role-specific practices.

ESE is grateful to statewide organizations that have taken a leading role in developing role-specific resources, including school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, school librarians, and others to develop role-specific materials to meet the needs of all educators.

# Resources

## ESE Model Rubrics

[Appendix A: Superintendent Rubric](#)

[Appendix B: School Level Administrator Rubric](#)

[Appendix C: Teacher Rubric](#)

[Appendix D: Specialized Instructional Support Personnel Rubric](#)

## Rubric Resources

- Quick Reference Guide: [Performance Rubrics](#)
- Training Module 2: Unpacking the Rubric ([Facilitator Guide](#), [PowerPoint Presentation](#), [Participant Handouts](#))
- Teacher Workshop 1: Rubric Review ([Facilitator Guide](#), [Participant Handouts](#))

## Role-Specific Resources

ESE is grateful to the statewide organizations that have taken a lead role in developing role-specific resources, including school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, school librarians, and others to develop role-specific materials to meet the needs of all educators. We look forward to opportunities for continued collaboration with these organizations and partnering with other organizations in the future.

Adapted Rubric

- [MASBO Adapted Rubric for School Business Officials](#)

Role-Specific Indicators and Elements

- [MASCA Role-Specific Indicators for School Counselors](#)
- [MSPA School Psychologist Rubric with Role-Specific Elements](#) (I.C.4. Intervention Monitoring and Evaluation, and III.C.3. Community Connections)
- [School Nurses' Resource Document](#) to Support Implementation of SISP Model Rubric
- [MSLA School Librarians' Resource Document](#) to Support Implementation of Teacher Rubric
- [MSHA Speech Language Pathologists Resource Document](#) to Support Implementation of SISP Rubric