

# Alternative Pathways for Evaluating Educator Impact

## Overview

The Massachusetts [Educator Evaluation Framework](#) is designed to promote educator growth and development while keeping student learning at the center. Opportunities for educators and evaluators to analyze and reflect on student outcomes are critical to sustaining a reflective education workforce and are essential to the process of determining [Student Impact Ratings](#). The Alternative Pathways Proposal explained in this QRG is designed to be responsive to districts' needs so that all districts can move forward establishing structures to better understand educator impact on student learning.

## Alternative Pathways Proposal

There is nothing more fundamental to the roles of teachers, administrators, and support personnel than student success. Having access to rigorous, objective information about where, how much, and in what ways students are progressing is a critical piece of feedback that all educators need to refine their practice and best support students. Identifying the tools necessary to provide educators with this feedback is complex, but essential. The Alternative Pathways Proposal provides flexibility in how educators and districts collect and use student outcomes to inform Student Impact Ratings.

### Why Alternative Pathways?

Based on discussions with stakeholders, ESE is learning that districts are interested in using alternative methods for evaluating an educator's impact on student learning. The Alternative Pathways Proposal acknowledges that there are many potential ways to reach the goal of a Student Impact Rating that is based on a robust collection of student outcome evidence and provides meaningful feedback to educators.

### Which Districts Should Submit Requests?

**Requesting a new pathway is optional and completely up to each district.** Districts that have made strong progress developing and implementing common measures should continue on their current course. Some districts may be interested in exploring a new process. Other districts might simply need more time to develop and refine their measures. Still others may be interested in both a new process and more time to get it off the ground. The goal of the Alternative Pathways Proposal is to provide all districts with a way to move the work forward, while honoring educators' efforts to date to identify and build common measures.

### What is the Process for Submitting a Request?

Districts may submit a request to ESE to implement an alternative, but equally rigorous, pathway for incorporating evidence of educator impact into a Student Impact Rating. By the end of April, ESE will release a DDMS Implementation Update template that will be due from all districts by June 30, 2015. The template will include an alternative pathway request form. Districts interested in an alternative pathway should use this form to submit a request. All approved pathways will adhere to the 5 Core Principles for Evaluating Educator Impact (see callout box at right).

### 5 Core Principles for Evaluating Educator Impact

In developing the three alternative pathways, ESE adhered to five core principles of evaluating educator impact on student learning:

1. Evaluating an educator's impact on student learning must be at the center of the educator evaluation process.
2. Districts must be able to provide educators with a rating based on their impact on students and report the rating to ESE.
3. Judgments about educator impact must be based on multiple, high quality measures, including at least one common measure. SGPs from statewide assessments must be used, where available.
4. As a form of checks and balances, evaluation systems must be able to juxtapose educator practice with impact on student learning.
5. Evaluation systems must respect the professional judgment of evaluators and educators.

## Alternative Pathways for Evaluating Educator Impact

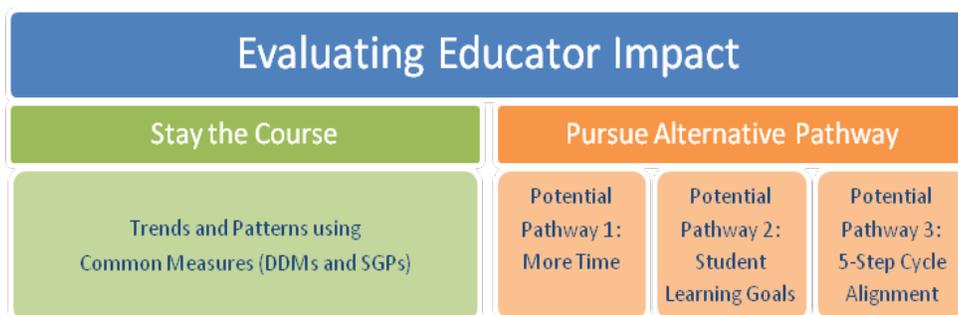
The educator evaluation regulations grant the Commissioner the authority to modify dates for implementing regulatory requirements for good cause ([603 CMR 35.11\(10\)](#)). When a district submits a request to use an alternative pathway to evaluate educator impact, the Commissioner will review the request and determine if good cause has been established. If so, the Commissioner will establish a revised implementation schedule that extends the deadline for complying with the DDMs provisions of the regulations on the condition that during the intervening years the district is evaluating educator impact in a manner consistent with the 5 Core Principles. Successful requests that establish good cause will include the following:

- Evidence that the district has made a good faith effort to identify/implement DDMs;
- A description of the alternative pathway the district will implement and the district's plans for moving this work forward during the 2015-16 school year;
- A Student Impact Rating reporting schedule; and
- A statement indicating that the district is submitting the request with the knowledge and support of the local union.

### Potential Pathways

ESE has outlined three potential pathways for district discussion and consideration. These pathways are not an exhaustive set of ideas, but rather provide a sense of the types of processes that adhere to the 5 Core Principles, but may look different

from the current process for determining Student Impact Ratings. **When submitting a request, districts are free to propose a pathway that draws from one or more of the potential pathways that follow or a process that looks entirely different, so long as the proposed pathway is grounded in the 5 Core Principles.**



### Why Common Measures?

The current process and all three potential pathways include the use of common measures. Common measures have been in place in many districts for years. They support collaborative assessment development and data inquiry. They also create opportunities for focused, informed conversations about student learning and help educators and evaluators understand where students are growing at more or less than expected levels.

- **Let common sense prevail.** There are cases where districts have needed to develop rigorous measures for single educators, such as with the lone teacher of a particular content area (see ESE's guidance on singletons [here](#)). There may be also be cases where using identical measures is not in the best interest of teaching and learning, such as in districts where schools have been given autonomy over curricula and assessment. The goal should be to use a set of measures that are comparably rigorous within and across grades/subjects.
- Measures of student growth are preferred because they allow educators to look at student improvement, which accounts for prior student ability. However, achievement measures may be used where the district deems them to be the best measures available.
- Common measures should be accompanied by district [parameters](#) for high, moderate, and low growth or achievement in order to communicate shared expectations for student performance.

To offer suggestions, pose questions, or receive updates, please email [EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu](mailto:EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu).

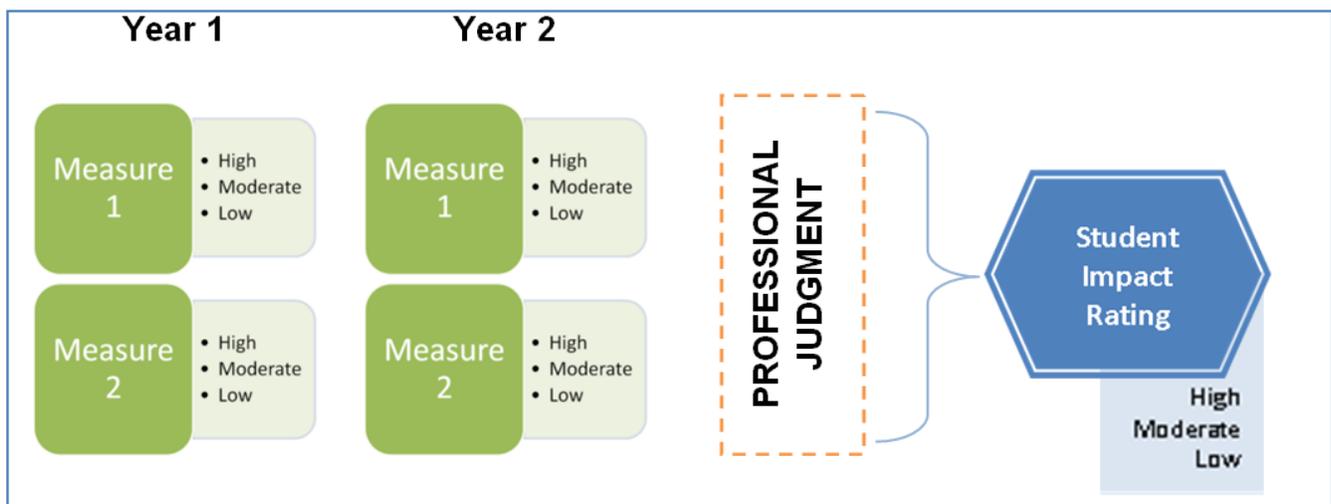
# Quick Reference Guide: Alternative Pathways for Evaluating Educator Impact

## Pathway 1: More Time

Districts that have made progress developing/identifying and implementing common measures, but would benefit from additional time before reporting Student Impact Ratings may find Pathway 1 most helpful. The process for determining Student Impact Ratings is no different from the current process. The only difference between staying the course and pursuing Pathway 1 is that the timing of Student Impact Rating reporting could shift as much as 2016-17 for most educators and 2017-18 for all educators.<sup>1</sup>

### Details:

- Student Impact Ratings are based on patterns and trends in student learning, growth, and achievement.
- To establish patterns, evaluators and educators collect data from at least two measures administered during the same school year.
- To establish trends, evaluators and educators collect data during at least two consecutive school years.
- Median student growth percentiles (SGPs) from state assessments must be used as one measure for educators responsible for ELA or math instruction in grades 4-8.
- For each measure, student results are compared to district-established [parameters](#) for high, moderate, and low growth or achievement.
- At a minimum, an educator’s Student Impact Rating is based on four data points from at least two years.



### Benefits:

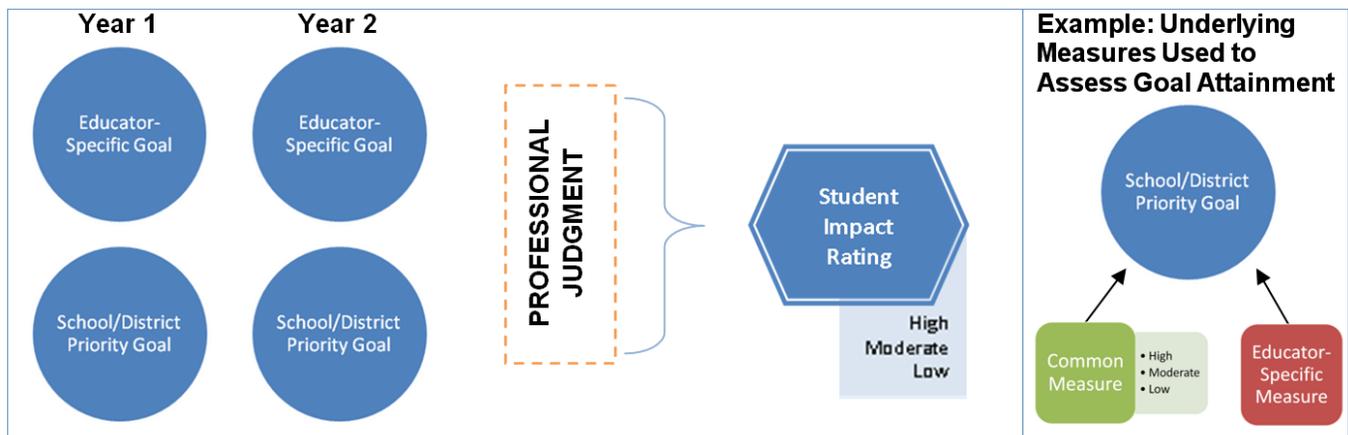
- Retains the current process, but addresses concerns about using new measures by providing time to try them out before using them to determine Student Impact Ratings.
- Keeps the focus on multiple comparable measures to ensure fairness to students and educators.

## Pathway 2: Student Learning Goals

Some districts have expressed interest in using student learning goals as evidence of impact on student learning. These districts may find Pathway 2 responsive to their interests. Pathway 2 calls for the use of two student learning goals to generate the evidence necessary to determine Student Impact Ratings. Like the current process, this Pathway results in a separate Student Impact Rating based on patterns and trends.

### Details:

- To establish patterns, evaluators and educators collect data from at least two student learning goals implemented during the same school year.
- To establish trends, evaluators and educators collect data from at least two consecutive school years.
- Student learning goals focus on student learning and should, therefore, be written in terms of increasing learning, not scores on particular assessments. However, results from student assessments are the primary source of evidence of goal attainment. Multiple measures should be used whenever possible.
- Student Learning Goal 1: One of the two goals implemented each year is a goal proposed by the individual educator based on her/his students' needs. At the time the evaluator confirms the goal, the educator and evaluator should discuss the measures that will be used to assess goal attainment. These measures may include classroom, district, or statewide measures.
- Student Learning Goal 2: The second goal is aligned to school and district priorities and must be measured in part by a common measure to foster collaboration and ensure comparable rigor across educators. Common measures may be supplemented with other measures. District-established parameters for high, moderate, and low growth or achievement must be in place for each common measure.
- Districts and educators determine what types of measures underlie each goal, subject to the common measure requirement above (see example in callout box below). Median SGPs from state assessments satisfy the common measure requirement and must be used as one source of evidence of goal attainment for educators responsible for ELA or math instruction in grades 4-8. At a minimum, an educator's Student Impact Rating is based on four data points.



### Benefits:

- The two differently configured student learning goals leverage an existing component of the educator evaluation framework and balance the benefits of promoting educator autonomy with retaining comparability across the district.
- Reduces the need to develop common measures and the associated district parameters for determining high, moderate, and low growth to one measure per educator.

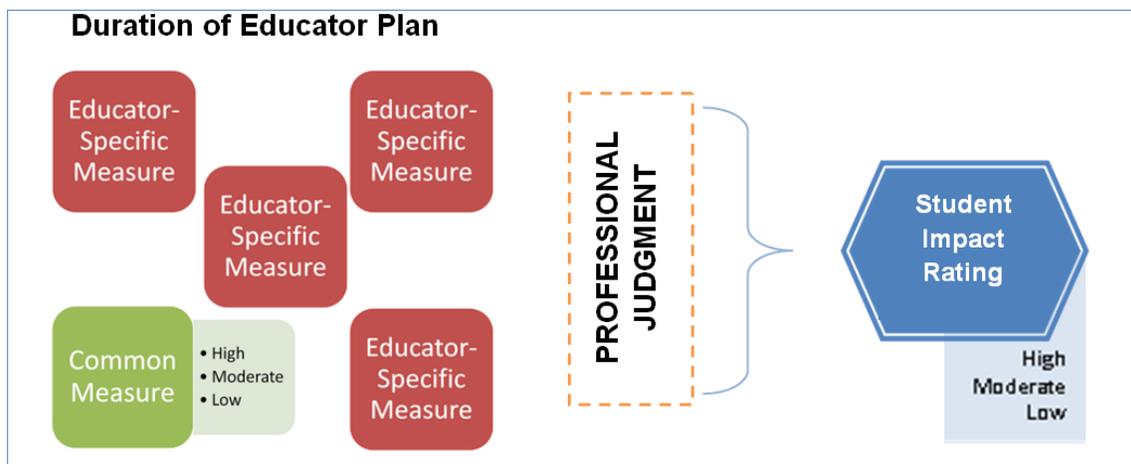
## Alternative Pathways for Evaluating Educator Impact

### Pathway 3: 5-Step Cycle Alignment

Some districts have expressed interest in syncing the collection of evidence of educator impact with that of educator practice. Pathway 3 responds to this interest by aligning the Student Impact Rating to the 5-Step Cycle. Pathway 3 calls for the use of evidence from multiple measures of student learning, growth, or achievement to inform a separate Student Impact Rating.

#### Details:

- Student Impact Ratings of high, moderate, or low are based on evidence from multiple measures of student learning, growth or achievement. As with all pathways, the Student Impact Rating and Summative Performance Rating are *separate* but linked ratings.
- Evidence of student outcomes to support a Student Impact Rating is collected alongside evidence to support performance ratings on Standards I through IV throughout the 5-Step Cycle and must include results from at least one common measure. District-established parameters for high, moderate, and low growth or achievement must be in place for each common measure.
- Median SGPs from state assessments satisfy the common measure requirement and must be used as one piece of evidence used to determine the Student Impact Rating for educators responsible for ELA or math instruction in grades 4-8.
- At the point of Educator Plan finalization, the educator and evaluator should discuss the measures that will comprise the evidentiary base for the Student Impact Rating.
- To determine a Student Impact Rating of high, moderate, or low, evaluators use professional judgment and consider the body of evidence collected throughout the 5-Step Cycle. All evidence used for the Student Impact Rating must be outcomes-based evidence of educator impact on student learning.<sup>ii</sup>



#### Benefits:

- Aligns the collection of evidence of impact on student learning to the 5-Step Cycle to create a cohesive evaluation process for educators, while still preserving the ability for educators and evaluators to juxtapose practice and impact.
- Reduces the need to develop common measures and the associated district parameters for determining high, moderate, and low growth to one measure per educator
- Affords evaluators and educators wide latitude in determining the evidence that will be used to assess educator impact on student learning, while still holding evaluators accountable for using their professional judgment.

# Quick Reference Guide: Alternative Pathways for Evaluating Educator Impact

## Conclusion

The Alternative Pathways Proposal is designed to be responsive to districts' needs so that all districts can move forward establishing structures to develop meaningful ratings of educator impact. It does not change the role of the Student Impact Rating in the overall framework (see graphic below). ESE encourages districts to use this opportunity to engage stakeholders to determine whether staying the course or developing an alternative pathway best meets district needs.

Performance Rating	Exemplary	1-yr Self-Directed Growth Plan	2-yr Self-Directed Growth Plan	
	Proficient			
	Needs Improvement	Directed Growth Plan		
	Unsatisfactory	Improvement Plan		
		Low	Moderate	High
		Impact Rating		

If you have any questions about the Alternative Pathways Proposal, please contact us at [EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu](mailto:EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu).

<sup>i</sup> In order to be considered, requests must include a timeline for Student Impact Rating reporting that establishes 2015-16 as Year 1 of data collection for most educators and will result in *all* educators receiving Student Impact Ratings no later than the end of the 2017-18 school year.

<sup>ii</sup> Since the collection of evidence for the Student Impact Rating aligns to the educator's plan, districts will have to decide whether to set requirements related to including evidence from multiple years for educators on plans of one-year or less in duration.