

Quick Reference Guide: Educator Plans

Overview

The final component of Step 2 of the 5-Step Evaluation Cycle is the development of the Educator Plan. Educator Plans should be designed to provide educators with opportunities for feedback, professional growth, and leadership; and to ensure educator effectiveness and overall system accountability (603 CMR 35.06(3)). Emerging directly from an educator’s professional practice and student learning goals, an Educator Plan should be comprised of key action steps, evidence the educator and evaluator will collect throughout the duration of the plan, and benchmarks to determine progress toward the goals.

Four Types of Educator Plans

The four types of Educator Plans differentiate evaluation by career stage and performance.

Experienced Educators. The following three plans apply only to “experienced” educators, defined as teachers with Professional Teacher Status (PTS) or administrators with more than three years in administrative positions in the district:

1. The **Self-Directed Growth Plan** is developed by the educator and applies to educators rated Proficient or Exemplary during their previous evaluation cycle. Self-Directed Growth Plans for strong educators acknowledge their experience by placing them in the driver’s seat, giving them opportunities to work toward more long-term goals, while simultaneously ensuring that their professional growth needs are met. When the Student Impact Rating is available, educators rated moderate or high will be on two-year plans; educators rated low will be on one-year plans.
2. The **Directed Growth Plan** is developed jointly by the educator and the evaluator and applies to educators rated Needs Improvement. Evaluators determine the length of Directed Growth Plans, which can be up to one year in duration, and work with the educator to focus plan activities on areas in need of improvement. At the conclusion of a Directed Growth Plan, the educator must either earn at least a Proficient rating in the summative evaluation, or shall be rated Unsatisfactory and placed on an Improvement Plan.
3. The **Improvement Plan** is developed by the evaluator and applies to educators rated Unsatisfactory. An Improvement Plan can be anywhere from 30 days to one year in duration and should focus on the educator’s areas in need of improvement.

Performance Rating	Exemplary	1-year Self-Directed Growth Plan	2-year Self-Directed Growth Plan	
	Proficient			
	Needs Improvement	Directed Growth Plan (up to 1 year)		
	Unsatisfactory	Improvement Plan (30 days to 1 year)		
		Low	Moderate	High
		Impact Rating		

New Educators. The fourth plan applies to teachers without PTS, administrators in their first three years in a district, or educators in a new assignment (at the discretion of an evaluator). Since few new educators are expected to demonstrate Proficient practice on all Standards in their first years, new educators are automatically placed on Developing Educator Plans, independent of performance or impact ratings, in recognition of their initial growth and development within a new role.

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

To offer suggestions, pose questions, or receive updates on ESE’s implementation efforts, please email EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu.

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What's in an Educator Plan?

- **Goals:** At least one professional practice goal tied to one or more Performance Standards, and at least one student learning goal to improve the learning, growth and achievement of the students under the educator's responsibility.
- **Actions:** Actions the educator must take to attain these goals, including but not limited to specific professional development activities, self-study, and coursework, as well as other supports that may be suggested by the evaluator or provided by the school or district.
- **Alignment:** Alignment to the [Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice](#) and/or [Administrative Leadership Practice](#), as well as local Performance Standards, district and school goals. ([603 CMR 35.06\(3\)\(f\)](#))

FAQ's

1. **Who creates the Educator Plan?** Each type of Educator Plan offers the educator and the evaluator different levels of autonomy. Self-Directed Growth Plans are primarily developed by the educator; Directed Growth Plans should be a collaborative effort between the evaluator and the educator, with special attention to area(s) in need of growth; Improvement Plans are developed by the evaluator, with goals specific to improving the educator's unsatisfactory performance; and Developing Educator Plans are developed by the evaluator and the educator, with a focus on the educator's professional development in a new position.
2. **What role does evidence play?** Evidence of practice and/or goal progress that the educator and evaluator will collect throughout the implementation of the plan can be identified when developing an Educator Plan and then updated as needed. Anticipated evidence can be written into key action steps and benchmarks. Identifying evidence at this early stage in the 5-Step Cycle ensures alignment between evidence and the educator's priorities, while guaranteeing a strategic collection of artifacts that is more manageable for the educator and evaluator and more powerful in demonstrating the educator's practice. More tips about strategic evidence identification are available in ESE's [Evidence Collection Toolkit](#).
3. **How does my Student Impact Rating affect my Educator Plan?** The Student Impact Rating affects Educator Plans differently. Experienced educators who are rated Exemplary or Proficient and receive a Student Impact Rating of moderate or high will be placed on 2-year Self-Directed Growth Plans; if they receive an Impact Rating of low, their Self-Directed Growth Plan will be 1 year in length in order to address the discrepancy between student learning and educator practice, and shall include one or more goals related to elements of practice that may be contributing to this low impact. For all other educators (those on Directed Growth, Improvement, or Developing Educator Plans), evaluators shall use evidence of educator performance and impact on student learning, growth, and achievement to set goals and establish the content of the Educator Plan.
4. **What is the purpose of the Developing Educator Plan?** The Developing Educator Plan is one year in length and is specifically designed to support new teachers and administrators. An educator's Summative Performance Rating and Student Impact Rating help shape the content of the plan, but these ratings do not affect the plan's duration or trigger movement to a different type of plan.
5. **Can Educator Plans and Individual Professional Development Plans (IPDPs) be the same plan?** Yes, 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.

ESE Resources to Support Educator Plans:

- Educator Plan Forms ([General](#) and [Updated](#))
- [Educator Plan Addendums](#) (for license renewal)
- [Module 4: S.M.A.R.T. Goals & Educator Plan Development \(including example plan\)](#)
- [Teacher Workshop 4: Gathering Evidence](#) (with sample plan & template)

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