



Massachusetts Educator Evaluation

Evidence Collection Toolkit

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Overview

Under the new Educator Evaluation Framework, educators and evaluators share responsibility for collecting and analyzing evidence from multiple sources that represent educator practice. The evidence is one component of rating performance. This is an important departure from previous evaluation systems that typically relied on single observations for an entire rating and rarely provided opportunities for educators to actively contribute to their own evaluations. This shift recognizes that some of the most important work that educators do cannot be easily observed. Further, educators are best positioned to identify high quality evidence that is representative of their practice. Thoughtful and strategic evidence collection ensures:

1. Educators can provide evaluators with a representative picture of their practice, and
2. Evaluators have a more robust body of evidence on which to base their professional judgment of educator performance and on which to offer targeted, actionable feedback.

Regulations

Per [603 CMR 35.07\(1\)](#): “The following categories of evidence shall be used in evaluating each educator:

- a) Multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement...
- b) Judgments based on observations and artifacts of professional practice, including unannounced observations of practice of any duration;
- c) Additional evidence relevant to one or more Performance Standards

When done well, the collection and analysis of evidence is a valuable process that supports educators to reflect on and monitor their own performance and progress.

Purpose: The purpose of this toolkit is to support districts to ensure that the expectations for educators and evaluators about evidence collection and use are clear, consistent, and promote a meaningful process for collection, analysis, and sharing of high quality artifacts.

Audience: The toolkit is intended for use by district leadership in consultation with school leaders and/or an Educator Evaluation Working Group. This toolkit is designed to be helpful to a range of districts, including: districts that do not have a clear policy in place about evidence; districts that are interested in revisiting their policy and/or practices to improve the clarity, quality, consistency, or impact of evidence collection; and districts that need support in effectively communicating expectations to educators.

Content: This toolkit includes guidance and examples of district strategies; a [worksheet](#) for making district decisions; and a [handout](#) of Evidence Collection Tips for Educators.

The recommendations and suggested questions to accelerate decision-making around evidence collection are based on the experience of and emerging best practices from districts that have engaged in problem-solving around this challenge. We thank them for their insights.

Considerations for Effective Evidence Collection

The underlying purpose of evidence collection is to enrich the conversation between educators and evaluators by reflecting together on a representative picture of educator practice. The starting point for district decision-making around evidence collection should be a shared vision of that conversation. District and school evaluators should begin by asking themselves:

What do we want to learn about educator practice and discuss with our educators?

For example, is it important to discuss an educator's performance on every aspect of the rubric or to focus on areas of practice that align to district/school priorities and to the individual's evaluation? Is it important to learn what conclusions an educator has drawn about his/her practice based on the evidence they submit?

The answers to such questions have practical implications for what evidence districts may recommend or require that educators should collect and share with their evaluators. Starting with a vision for what they want to learn and discuss, districts can then backward-map to ensure they are well-positioned to have focused conversations about practice by making concrete decisions about evidence collection, such as: what kinds of evidence and how much should educators collect, when should it be submitted and how, and what kind of reflection or analysis educators should provide to their evaluators.

NOTE: when engaging in this conversation, district and school leaders should be sure to look at the local collective bargaining agreement as some of these details may already be specific in contract language.

Key Questions

The next section of this toolkit will provide guidance on more specific questions ESE recommends districts discuss and decide, particularly drawing on lessons learned from districts during the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years.

What kinds of evidence should we recommend or require educators collect?

In addition to the areas specified in regulation, this may vary depending on what the district identifies as priorities to learn through the evidence and to discuss with educators. That said, there are three main principles ESE recommends districts consider:

1. *Evidence should be aligned to priorities.*
High priority evidence is aligned to district and /or school priorities and the focus of an individual educator's evaluation. From this starting point, evaluator and educators can then use the rubric as an organizing tool. For example, one district identified key areas to focus on based on an analysis of the previous year's observation data, the district's improvement plan, and research about high-leverage instructional strategies.

Per [603 CMR 35.07\(1\)\(c\)1](#), educators must compile and present:

1. Evidence of fulfillment of professional responsibilities and growth, such as: self-assessments; peer collaboration; professional development linked to goals and or educator plans; contributions to the school community and professional culture;
2. Evidence of active outreach to and ongoing engagement with families.

After identifying these priorities, the district then connected each of these to a specific part of the rubric to help organize the collection and analysis of artifacts as well as observation data.

Districts typically ask educators to collect evidence on specific parts of the performance rubric. Using the language of the [MA Model Rubrics](#), a collection of artifacts of teacher practice and student work that are aligned to priorities will:

- provide evidence of performance on elements the school and/or district identified as priorities;
- provide evidence on elements that are a focus of an educator’s evaluation identified in his/her self-assessment and educator plan; and,
- demonstrate progress toward an educator’s student learning and professional practice goals.

Strategically-selected artifacts of practice often provide evidence of all of the above, particularly where educator goals are aligned to district and/or school priorities.

2. *Evidence should be high quality.*

High quality evidence tells a rich story about educator practice. Educators should consider compiling multiple pieces of evidence that together illustrate an important aspect of their practice. For example, if an educator wanted to showcase his/her skill at using formative assessment data to drive instruction, a collection of evidence might include a lesson plan, a reflection on formative assessment data, a subsequent lesson plan demonstrating a specific instructional practice used in response to the data, and a sample of improved student work.

3. *Evidence should be a strategic and representative sample.*

While educators and evaluators should ensure that they have together collected some evidence for each of the four Standards, many districts have found that collecting evidence for *every* element of the rubric is neither a focused nor meaningful experience for the educator. Likewise, it is challenging for an evaluator to thoughtfully review and provide feedback on a body of evidence this size. When evidence is high priority and high quality, educators can create a collection of artifacts that is smaller in number but more powerful in demonstrating practice. A common strategy for decreasing the amount of evidence while ensuring that the sample is representative is to select pieces of evidence that demonstrate practice on multiple high priority parts of the rubric.

How much evidence should we recommend or require educators collect?

While the primary focus of conversations about evidence collection should be on what kinds of evidence are valuable to collect and share, it is also critical for educators to have clear expectations about *how much* evidence they should provide to their evaluators.

Some districts have chosen to set a minimum and/or maximum number of artifacts. However, there may be important reasons why this would vary by educator role. For example, many aspects of a classroom teacher’s practice are easily observable. However, for a school psychologist, it may be more difficult to observe her/him in practice because of confidentiality concerns. Therefore, evaluators may need to rely more heavily on artifacts of a school psychologist’s practice than they would for a classroom teacher.

Specifying a range is one strategy that allows for some variation by educator role while ensuring that the expectations are generally consistent across evaluators.

What kind of reflection on or analysis of the body of evidence should educators do? How should that be shared?

One lesson some districts have learned is when evaluators examine evidence provided by an educator, it can be challenging to know what the educator intends to demonstrate about his/her practice without insight from the educator. It is critical educators reflect on and analyze the evidence; in many cases, educators have done this work but did not realize there was an expectation to provide the analysis to evaluators. Therefore, some districts are beginning to ask educators to share their thinking. For example:

- One district asks educators to submit a brief, written reflection. The emphasis is on reflecting on and highlighting specific areas of practice as demonstrated by the body of evidence, such as: growth toward a goal or on a particular part of the rubric; a pattern of strong practice; or the effectiveness of specific instructional strategies he/she implemented.
- Another school decided to prioritize a discussion of evidence between the evaluator and the educator. The principal asks each teacher to walk him through the evidence he/she has uploaded before he considers the evidence and writes his formative and summative evaluation reports. This provides an opportunity for evaluators to ask probing questions of the educator, such as, “Why did this piece of evidence stand out to you as a high priority to share? What do you think this piece of evidence demonstrates about your practice?”

[ESE Forms for Educator Evidence Collection](#)

Educators can use the “[Artifact Cover Page](#)” for an individual artifact or the “[Educator Collection of Evidence Form](#)” for a body of evidence. ESE encourages districts to use these forms for educators to present an analysis of their evidence by reflecting on what their evidence demonstrates about their practice, e.g., growth, areas of strength, patterns of behavior, use of strategies, etc. Either form can be adapted to better fit local systems.

Tips from Districts

The following district strategies have created clarity and increased the value of evidence collection:

- Develop a list of suggested artifacts connected to specific parts of the rubric. (See examples in “Resources” section on page 5.)
- Collect artifacts to use as a resource for calibrating expectations and analysis of evidence across evaluators.
 - Use technology platforms to identify existing artifacts.
- Share examples and exemplars with educators and evaluators.
 - Prioritize examples and exemplars aligned to high priority initiatives such as curriculum maps, unit plans, and lesson plans aligned to the Common Core standards, artifacts from the development of district-determined measures, or evidence connected to RETELL.
- Provide mid-cycle feedback to educators on the evidence that they have collected, with regard to whether the evidence is high priority, high quality, and representative of their practice as well as feedback on what the evidence demonstrates about educator practice and progress toward goals.
- Support educators to reflect on their evidence by providing a few questions to briefly respond to; these should be connected to what the district/ school wants to learn about educator practice.

Resources

ESE Training Materials and Forms

- [Teacher Workshop 4: Gathering Evidence](#)

This training workshop introduces participants to the three types of evidence required in an evaluation and provides tips and strategies for determining high quality artifacts of practice and measures of student learning. Participants will identify sources of evidence related to practice outlined in their educator plans to demonstrate performance. Resources include a facilitator guide and participant handouts.

- [Module 5: Gathering Evidence](#)

This training module focuses on the collection and organization of evidence by Standard and Indicator and engages participants in thinking strategically about gathering high quality artifacts to demonstrate performance. Resources include a facilitator guide, PowerPoint, and participant handouts.

- [Evidence Collection Forms for Educators](#)

See page 4 for details.

Resources in Toolkit

- [Evidence Collection Worksheet](#)

This worksheet asks a series of questions aligned to the Considerations for Effective Evidence Collection on pages 2-4. It is designed to support district leadership, in consultation with school leaders and/or the district's Educator Evaluation Working Group, to make strategic decisions regarding educator collection of evidence.

The worksheet is also designed such that district leaders can use their notes from answering each question to easily generate a memo, email, or set of guidelines for educators and evaluators that sets clear expectations for evidence collection.

- [Tips for Educators](#)

This resource is designed to be a stand-alone document that can be disseminated to educators to support their understanding of evidence collection.

Resources from MA School Districts

- **Lowell Public Schools:** [Teacher Elements with Knowledge and “Look Fors”](#)

This resource focuses on a subset of elements of Lowell’s teacher performance rubric and lists examples of possible evidence for each element; the resource also identifies pedagogical skill/knowledge related to the element.

- **Boston Public Schools:** [Teacher Rubric with Suggested Teacher and Student “Look Fors”](#)

This resource focuses on a subset of elements from Standards I and II of the [MA Model System Teacher Rubric](#) and describes what evaluators could look for in both teacher *and student* work. This tool would be useful for identifying potential artifacts of student work.

- **New Bedford Public Schools:** [Evidence Collection Guide and sample Evidence Forms](#)

The Evidence Collection Guide identifies potential evidence for all elements on the teacher performance rubric. The Evidence Forms include an example of a completed Educator Collection of Evidence Form for each Standard. (Click on the name of the Standard under the “Teacher Evidence Collection” link in the right-hand navigation to access each sample.)

- **Springfield Public Schools:** [Brief Newsletter Article](#)

The January 2014 newsletter provides tips for educators to guide evidence collection on page 2.

Disclaimer: These resources are intended to serve as examples of district work. References to any district work are for the information and convenience of the public and do not constitute endorsement or recommendations by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Evidence Collection Worksheet

Work with your team to answer the following questions. Your responses should help you to establish clear expectations for evidence collection for educators across your district.

What do we want to learn about educator practice from a collection of evidence? What do we want to be able to discuss with our educators?

How might we support educators and evaluators to come to a common understanding of high priority, high quality evidence that is representative of educator practice?

Consider identifying and disseminating examples and exemplars with some explanation of why they were selected

To what extent can or should the expectations for the amount and type of evidence collected be consistent across all educators? What will we determine at the district-level and what can be decided at the school-level or between the educator and evaluator?

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| <p>Do we want to recommend or require that educators provide evidence on specific Standards, Indicators, and/or elements (e.g., “power elements” identified by the district)?</p> <p><i>Note - All educators are responsible for providing evidence of fulfillment of professional responsibilities and growth, such as: self-assessments; peer collaboration; professional development linked to goals and or educator plans; contributions to the school community and professional culture; and evidence of active outreach to and ongoing engagement with families</i></p> | <p>Y N</p> |
| | |
| <p>Are there any “must haves” or pieces of evidence that all educators must submit (e.g., lesson plans, unit plans)?</p> | <p>Y N</p> |
| | |
| <p>Will we specify minimums, maximums, and/or a range for the number of pieces of evidence educators should provide to their evaluators? How can we ensure that there are opportunities for appropriate differentiation?</p> | <p>Y N</p> |
| | |
| <p>Will we ask educators to provide a reflection or analysis of their body of evidence, and if so, how? (e.g., a written summary or during a meeting with their evaluator)</p> | <p>Y N</p> |
| | |
| <p>NEXT STEP: use the notes from this worksheet to develop a memo, email, or guidelines to share directly with educators to set clear expectations for evidence collection. This may be accompanied by the “Tips for Educators” handout</p> | |

Educator Evaluation Evidence Collection: Tips for Educators

Under the new Educator Evaluation Framework, educators and evaluators share responsibility for collecting and analyzing evidence from multiple sources that represent educator practice. The evidence is one component of rating performance. This is an important departure from previous evaluation systems that typically relied on single observations for an entire rating and rarely provided opportunities for educators to actively contribute to their own evaluations. This shift recognizes that some of the most important work that educators do cannot be easily observed.

Most importantly, educators are best positioned to identify high quality evidence that is representative of their practice. When done well, the collection and analysis of evidence is a valuable process that supports educators to reflect on and monitor their own performance and progress.

The collection of artifacts is an opportunity to select a *sample* of artifacts and other data that well-represents your performance and impact. It is not intended to be a record of all that you have done in a year. It should be focused on your goals, high priority Standards and Indicators, and any critical school priorities not addressed by the professional practice and student learning goals.

- **When developing your educator plan, make notes about what kinds of evidence will demonstrate progress toward your goal**

Consider ahead of time which artifacts you might want to collect and submit. This will help you to plan what you will need throughout the year. Check with your evaluator to ensure that the types of evidence you anticipate collecting are aligned to his/her expectations.

- **Combine multiple pieces of evidence to “tell a story” about your practice**

For example, a lesson plan, results from a formative assessment, student work samples, and a second lesson plan could demonstrate how you adjusted practice based on student data.

- **Focus on going from “evidence to rubric,” not “rubric to evidence.”**

Rather than searching for a piece of evidence to demonstrate your performance on a particular part of the rubric, first select pieces of evidence that are highly representative of your practice, then identify the Standard(s), Indicator(s), and/or element(s) to which they connect. Many artifacts demonstrate your performance on multiple parts of a rubric.

- **Evidence should be artifacts of the work you’re already doing**

Your daily work is the best representation of your practice. You know best what exemplifies your practices in areas such as planning, use of data, professional learning, and your work with students, colleagues, and parents.

- **Create a folder (electronic or paper) to add evidence throughout the year**

The collection of evidence should be an ongoing process. When you are preparing to submit evidence to your evaluator for your formative assessment or summative evaluation, you may want to go through your folder and select a subset of artifacts to share with your evaluator that are a representative picture of your practice and performance.