At its core, evidence collection in the educator evaluation process is an opportunity to **understand, support, recognize, and develop an educator’s practice through meaningful feedback**.

This feedback, support, and recognition is more important than ever as educators and students are navigating the challenges and complexities of teaching and learning amid a global pandemic and renewed attention on systemic racism and inequity. Educators are also quickly shifting their practice to accommodate in-person, remote, and hybrid settings in new and innovative ways.

This unique context provides the opportunity to reexamine the purpose of and systems for collecting and reflecting on evidence of teaching and learning, including:

**WHY is evidence of teaching and learning important to collect?**

**HOW should educators be thinking about collecting evidence this year?**

**WHAT evidence is most helpful in supporting and informing practice?**

This resource will help educators and evaluators think about **evidence collection** not as separate from the work of teaching and leading, but as an important piece of **ongoing reflection and continuous improvement during a year of collective learning, innovation, and refinement**.

The following pages include key considerations, best practices, and resources on:

- **Collecting Evidence of Teaching and Learning**
- **Observations & Feedback**
- **Student, Staff & Family Feedback**
- **Student Learning Measures**

*This resource was informed by input from the 2020-21 Teacher and Principal Advisory Cabinets.*
Collecting Evidence of Teaching and Learning

Evidence collection is a collaborative effort between the evaluator and the educator to identify specific types of evidence aligned to the educator’s goals and identified Focus Indicators that will demonstrate progress and student learning throughout the year.

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS for 2020-21:**

- **Identify an authentic, targeted set of evidence**, aligned to educators’ goals and identified Focus Indicators, that will be *most meaningful or informative* relative to the educator’s practice or student learning outcomes. Targeting evidence collection to only that which is most important is an essential way to simplify and streamline the evaluation process this year.

- **Look beyond observations** and include evidence from a wide variety of sources. Given the importance of relationship-building and social-emotional support throughout this year, combined with the fact that many related aspects of an educator’s practice may be less readily observable in hybrid or virtual settings, the 2020-21 school year necessitates an increased emphasis on a holistic collection of evidence using new and different sources, such as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHERS</th>
<th>ADMINISTRATORS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Student and family feedback through surveys, end-of-lesson reflections, or informal conversations</td>
<td>- Staff, student, and family feedback through surveys, one-on-one interviews, or small group discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A teaching cycle of an assignment, student work, teacher feedback to a subset of students, and teacher reflection</td>
<td>- A coaching cycle of pre-conference, observation, feedback, and reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Reflections on a video-recorded lesson</td>
<td>- Artifacts of collaboration with other administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lesson plans supporting students’ social-emotional learning and well-being</td>
<td>- Professional learning offerings responsive to the teaching and learning needs of this year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Artifacts from digital tools or technology used for community-building</td>
<td>- Differentiated induction and mentoring supports for new teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Adjustments to practice based on student assessment or feedback</td>
<td>- Examples of ongoing, culturally responsive family communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Collaboratively developed units implemented across in-person and remote settings</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The list above includes examples of evidence aligned to Focus Indicators. It is meant to guide—not prescribe—the collection of evidence, and should not be considered comprehensive, nor should an educator or evaluator attempt to gather all the examples.*

- **Recognize and mitigate bias.** Collecting and analyzing specific evidence helps ensure that feedback is grounded in actual practice, rather than perception. An evaluator must be mindful of the biases they bring to the interpretation of, and judgments around, evidence and work to mitigate them in the evaluation process.

  "We all absorb and internalize prejudices that influence our automatic actions and beliefs. The absorption of these biases is not a conscious process and in fact, can run counter to what we think we believe. Framing our work with the concept of unconscious racial bias allows us to decouple intention from racism. It allows us to focus on what’s most important: the impact on students."

  Excerpt from *Unconscious Bias in Schools* by Tracey A. Benson and Sarah E. Fiarman

  "There’s often a mentality of ‘if we didn’t see it, it didn’t happen,’ so teachers would need multiple chances and ways of demonstrating effectiveness."

  PAC/TAC Member
Observations and Feedback
Observations of educator practice provide an opportunity for supportive coaching and feedback, whether in- person, remote, or hybrid.

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS for 2020-21:**

- **Prioritize relationship-building and communication.**
  
  Remember that this school year presents a learning curve as educators, students, and families adjust to new technology and ways of teaching and learning. Educators’ strengths and areas for growth may be different this year than in previous years. Take time to solidify relationships and communication with educators to understand how best to provide meaningful support and feedback.

- **Keep educator voice at the center of the process** by soliciting input in advance on a specific focus for the observation and feedback and to gain additional context on the lesson and classroom learning environment.

- **Frequent, informal visits can lower the stakes of an individual observation as well as normalize the evaluator’s presence for students.**

- **Observing video-recorded lessons,** in addition to live instruction, may be a supportive approach to conducting observations for both educators and evaluators (Kane et al., 2020):
  - The educator can choose a specific lesson for feedback,
  - The evaluator has more flexibility around when to observe and provide feedback, and
  - The educator and evaluator can co-watch and discuss the lesson together.

Consult local requirements around securing student/caregiver permissions and ensuring video security and confidentiality.

**MITIGATING BIAS**

*Engaging in anti-bias, anti-racist practice is lifelong work and requires sustained learning and reflection.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN INDIVIDUAL OBSERVATIONS</th>
<th>IN ONGOING PRACTICE</th>
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</table>
| **Before:** Have a conversation to get a sense of the educator’s goals, priorities, and needs. Co-create and share a set of ‘what to look for’ criteria to guide subsequent observations.  
**During:** Write down observations, not judgments, about what you notice during the lesson, focusing on the ‘what to look for’ criteria and educator goals.  
**After:** Have a collaborative conversation with the educator, providing specific feedback on their goal(s) and evidence of student learning.  
| **Reflect on ways your bias will show up in observations:**
What are your instructional (or leadership) preferences? What culture-specific notions or assumptions do you have about what good practice can or should look like?  
**Extend grace and humility:** Keep in mind that many factors, such as mental and physical well-being and formal power dynamics, will play a role in how the observer and the educator show up in observations and pre- and post-conversations.  
**Reflect on your feedback over time:** Are there patterns along lines of gender, race, ethnicity, content area, etc.? |
Observations and Feedback [CONTINUED]

Observations of educator practice provide an opportunity for supportive coaching and feedback, whether in-person, remote, or hybrid.

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS for 2020-21:**

“*It’s really important for the evaluator to know individual teacher goals for their practice and instruction...it’s important for the evaluators to have a chance to hear the teacher’s voice and goals before the evaluative observation.*” – PAC/TAC Member

- Adapt observations and feedback to the **learning setting** and different focal areas and considerations for each:

**SYNCHRONOUS REMOTE**

- Establish agreements with the educator around accessing and participating in the class (e.g., utilizing the waiting room, entering the meeting early to indicate your arrival, turning off your video and muting yourself to avoid causing any distractions).
- Observe in gallery view so that all participants may be visible. Note that not all students may use their webcam, so consult with the educator on alternative means of assessing student engagement.
- Focus on lesson structure, strategic use of technology and digital tools, and methods of encouraging student collaboration and discourse, but be flexible if technology does not operate as intended.
- Take advantage of observing video-recorded lessons in addition to live instruction.

**ASYNCHRONOUS REMOTE**

- Focus on lesson delivery, pacing, and use of technology and digital tools to support student engagement with the content.
- Ask the educator about strategies they are using to support and provide feedback to students as they work independently.
- Use the opportunity to study and debrief the lesson together and refine a shared understanding of effective practice aligned to Focus Indicators.

**SYNCHRONOUS IN-PERSON**

- Observations and feedback may focus on optimizing in-person instructional time for relationship-building, social-emotional support, direct instruction that prepares students for remote learning, and facilitation of culturally responsive, academic discourse.
- Work with the educator in advance to identify any limitations or restrictions on the number of individuals allowed in a room, as well as the physical placement of students, the teacher, and an observer.

**RESOURCES:**

- **Online Platform for Teaching and Informed Calibration (OPTIC)**
  DESE | Upload videos and other artifacts of practice, or use the 100+ videos in the platform, to support calibration around practice and feedback.

- **Implicit Bias Test**
  Project Implicit | A free online test assessing implicit associations and biases.

- **Culturally Responsive Instruction Observation Protocol**
  The Collaborative Center for Literacy Development and The Center for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

- **Virtual Learning Walk**
  The Danielson Group | Protocol for teacher teams to look at instructional practice in virtual settings.

- **Classroom Observation Tool**
  Coalition of Essential Schools | Protocols for pre- and post-observation conversations.

- **Principal Supervisor School Visit Protocols**
  DESE | A 10-step process for conducting meaningful and effective school visits.

Student, Staff, and Family Feedback

Feedback from students, staff, and families provides valuable information about teaching and learning, as well as insights into anti-racist and culturally responsive and sustaining practices that can be used to inform and strengthen practice going forward.

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS for 2020-21:**

- **Ask families for their feedback** to gain insight into their values and priorities for this school year, better understand the cultural strengths that they and their children bring to the learning, and identify adjustments to improve practice.
  - Caregivers are playing a more visible and concrete role in their child's education this year, so seeking to better understand and be responsive to their contexts and experiences with different learning settings will help form a mutually beneficial partnership and strengthen teaching and learning.
  - Communicate and collaborate with families in ways and formats that are asset-based, accessible and supportive for them (e.g., video calls, texts, or emails; materials translated into home languages).

- **Create systems and routines to collect student feedback on an ongoing basis, in a variety of ways,** on their experiences within different learning settings.
  - Student feedback is critical to better understanding the impact of teaching practice on students' learning experiences, and even more so in this context of experimenting with and adopting new approaches.
  - In addition to formal surveys, student feedback can come from exit tickets, reflections on daily lessons, polling, virtual “chats” or discussion boards, and other informal methods.

- **Be specific** on the information to be collected via student or family feedback and the ways that it will yield actionable improvements to practice. Potential focal areas for feedback across different settings may include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN-PERSON/HYBRID</th>
<th>REMOTE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transitions</td>
<td>Accessing and navigating technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between or integration of in-person and remote teaching</td>
<td>Virtual community-building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical, social, and emotional safety and well-being</td>
<td>Lesson structure, pacing, and student engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusivity, accessibility, and cultural responsiveness</td>
<td>Communication systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Ask staff for feedback** to monitor and support access to instructional supports and resources, and to gain insight into their well-being. For example:
  - **What successes are staff having across different learning models, and how can best practices be shared widely?**
  - **In what areas would staff benefit from additional support or resources with regards to instruction, technology, social-emotional well-being, or other areas?**
  - **Are there opportunities to increase collaboration or differentiate roles to further support instructional planning, family engagement, or other priorities?**

**RESOURCES:**

- **2020-21 Adapted Model Feedback Surveys**
  - DESE | A K-2 discussion protocol, student surveys for grades 3-5 and 6-12, and a staff survey aligned to the 2020-21 Focus Indicators.

- **COVID Check-In Survey**
  - Making Caring Common | An example of a daily “temperature check” survey to students.

- Remote Teaching Modules: Learning Environment and Family Collaboration
  - DESE | Interactive professional learning modules defining best practices and providing concrete tools to support remote teaching and learning.
KEY CONSIDERATIONS for 2020-21:

➢ Where statewide growth measures are not available, identify the most appropriate assessments to be used to assess student progress toward grade-level content standards and an educator’s impact on that learning.

- Student learning measures may include district-wide common assessments, classroom assessments, or other measures as set by the district.
- Start with curriculum-embedded assessments from high-quality instructional materials, which often include curriculum-specific strategies to adapt and adjust instruction to accelerate student learning.
- Consider the sources of student learning data that will be most timely, relevant, and actionable in supporting student learning of grade-level standards.
  - In Mathematics, gauge prior learning throughout the year rather than frontloading at the beginning and avoid assessments without a clear purpose or intended target.
  - In K-3 Literacy, screen for a range of foundational skills to identify areas where targeted instruction is necessary. In secondary grades, use high-quality, short assessments to identify which students have reading comprehension and writing skills below grade level and the type of intervention required.

➢ Determine anticipated student gains. What are the expectations for student performance on this assessment?

- Identify the supports and scaffolds needed to maintain and support grade-level expectations. Avoid over-remediation of previous grade-level learning, as this may exacerbate existing inequities.
- Maintain an asset-based, rather than deficit-based, approach. What strengths do students bring to their learning this year, and how can educators best leverage those strengths to support their growth?

“...The typical approach to remediation—providing work better suited for earlier grades—won’t come close to catching students up and will likely compound the problem....The students stuck in this vicious cycle are disproportionately the most vulnerable: students of color, from low-income families, with special needs, or learning English.”


RESOURCES:

3 Principles for Assessments During Instructional Recovery and Beyond
Achievement Network | Recommendations for collecting and using student data.

Screen and Diagnostic Assessments
DESE | DESE-approved screener and diagnostic assessments available at no cost to MA schools and districts.

Early Literacy Screening Assessments
DESE | Guidance on universal screening and approved literacy screening assessments.

Working Towards Culturally Responsive Assessment Practices
National Council on Teaching English | A blog post on culturally responsive assessment.