



Making Educator Evaluation Meaningful and Manageable

Problem:

Implementing educator evaluation, while continuing the freedoms afforded to MCCPS as a charter school, has presented challenges. Several of the evaluators are department heads *and* teachers, and they serve on the school's Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). To navigate these uniquely complex roles, evaluation processes seemed cumbersome and labor-intensive for our staff.

Solution:

Several steps in the educator evaluation system have always been integral to our practices. We kept that in mind to ensure that our new evaluation processes weren't perceived as separate or redundant. We streamlined the various processes to keep them *manageable, meaningful*, and positioned as learning opportunities.

STEPS

1 Take ownership of the elements and rubrics
Administrators and teachers carefully examined the rubric developed by ESE and took ownership of educator evaluation. We identified elements that directly aligned with the school's mission and priorities. In place of collecting samples of evidence for *each and every element*, the reformatted tool allowed MCCPS evaluators and educators to focus their evidence-collection and discussions on fewer elements.

2 Create a shared system to capture data
MCCPS evaluators recorded classroom visits using *Google Docs*. In this way, evaluators easily tracked the frequency and location of classroom visits. The shared system also enabled robust discussions among evaluators – particularly about the types of observations they were conducting and expectations during observation sessions.

MCCPS is also piloting the use of *TeachPoint* with approximately half of its faculty. This technology may be a useful tool for tracking educator's professional practice and student growth goals from year to year – a task that has traditionally been a difficult challenge.



Suburban charter school in Essex County. Level 1 School.



3 Encourage a shared learning experience

We worked on building a shared understanding and common language for educator evaluation. Discussions at ILT meetings focused on clarifying protocols for classroom visits, timelines, expectations, and documentation. We developed forms and protocols enabling evaluators to learn how others approached similar tasks.

"We wanted to ensure that these new evaluation processes were not perceived as separate or redundant."

*Nina Cullen-Hamzeh,
Head of School*

In order to document details of observations and feedback to educators, the evaluators devised a simple form focusing on *"claims, evidence, and recommendations."* For training, evaluators first viewed a short video of a class. They went on to share observation notes and brainstormed possible feedback and next steps. To calibrate, we shared our *"claims and evidence"* of subsequent classroom visits at an ILT meeting.

4 Use professional development (PD) to analyze evidence

PD offerings and department meetings were spent identifying, collecting, and analyzing evidence of student learning and growth. Using the *Validation Protocol*, teachers took turns presenting their work to fellow teachers.

We used other PD sessions to examine class sets and conduct case studies. Examining *class sets* involves a team of teachers reviewing a sample of completed student work for an entire class. The *case study* exercise was an opportunity for teachers to look at samples of student work across content classes. The exercise allowed teachers to examine a particular student's learning profile and identify necessary supports.

Reflections on the Process:

Learning continues for all. We are now attempting to document and streamline processes so that evaluation activities are integrated with, and not separate from, everyday teaching and learning. Several important takeaways include the following:

- Communicate expectations and deliver messages in multiple formats and doses. Resources to support effective implementation must be carefully examined and repackaged to be appropriate to our own school context.
- Engage evaluators and educators in the decisions that impact them. When educator evaluation is viewed as a learning opportunity, we can expect real growth to occur in professional practice and student performance.

