



MASSACHUSETTS  
Department of Elementary  
and Secondary Education

# **Model Rubric for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) Evaluation: School Social Worker/School Adjustment Counselor**

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## SISP RUBRIC for EDUCATOR EVALUATION

The model rubrics for educator evaluation are grounded in DESE's Educational Vision for effective teaching and leadership, and reflect input from educators, students, and families across Massachusetts on antiracist, inclusive, and equitable practices that support *all students* to attain academic knowledge and skills, understand and value themselves and others, and engage with the world.<sup>1</sup>

**Role-specific Model SISP Rubrics** were developed by representatives from state-level professional associations<sup>2</sup> in consultation with DESE and will be piloted during the 2025-26 school year. These role-specific Model SISP Rubrics support educators in the following roles:

- School Counselor
- School Librarian
- School Nurse
- School Psychologist
- School Social Worker/School Adjustment Counselor
- Speech and Language Pathologists

Each rubric includes evidence-based, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices across four Standards:

- Standard I: Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment
- Standard II: Teaching All Students
- Standard III: Family and Community Engagement
- Standard IV: Professional Culture

These four Standards guide the development of Massachusetts educators from preparation through employment, articulating the key knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential of all educators in public schools in Massachusetts to disrupt patterns of inequity and well serve richly diverse student bodies with varied educational needs.

NOTE: In this rubric, "**all students**" represents *each and every student*, with particular focus on students who have been historically marginalized or underserved by our education systems, including but not limited to those who identify as Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Indigenous, and Multiracial students, students with disabilities, multilingual learners, LGBTQIA+ students, students experiencing homelessness and/or financial insecurity, and students who are undocumented.

**Culturally and linguistically sustaining practices** affirm and value students' cultures, prior experiences, and linguistic resources to make learning more relevant and effective, promote academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical awareness, and value multilingualism as an asset. These practices are essential for all students in the classroom, regardless of their background, culture, or identity. All students benefit from an approach that is intended to meet the needs of diverse learners; from expanded cultural competence and sociopolitical consciousness; and from explicit instruction in the functions of language.

<sup>1</sup> DESE's Educational Vision: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/commissioner/vision/>.

<sup>2</sup>Massachusetts School Counselors Association (MASCA), Massachusetts School Library Association (MSLA), Massachusetts School Nurse Organization (MSNO), Massachusetts School Psychologists Association (MSPA), Massachusetts Speech-Language Hearing Association (MSHA). For a list of educators who supported the development of this rubric, please see *Acknowledgements*.

## Using the SISP Rubric in the Educator Evaluation Process

The Model SISP rubrics are designed to elevate and highlight effective practices in specific SISP roles in order to guide a meaningful and supportive evaluation process. Evaluators should identify and use the rubric most closely aligned with the role of the educator. As SISP educators work in different contexts and undertake different responsibilities (e.g., a school counselor in one school may be responsible for career counseling whereas another may focus on social-emotional support), districts may consider further customizing the rubric by emphasizing and prioritizing certain Indicators and elements.

Rubrics are designed to help educators and evaluators (1) develop a consistent, shared understanding of what Proficient performance looks like in practice, (2) develop a common terminology and structure to organize evidence, and (3) make informed professional judgments about Formative and Summative Performance Ratings on each Standard and overall. As a result, rubrics play a part in all five components of the evaluation cycle.

1. **Self-Assessment:** Educators use the rubric to examine their own practice and to identify areas of strength as well as areas for further growth and development.
2. **Analysis, Goal Setting, and Plan Development:** Educators and evaluators together review the rubric and agree on Indicators that will be the focus of their attention during the evaluation cycle. In addition, educators and their evaluators develop goals for improving professional practice and student learning. The rubric helps to paint a clear picture of what it will look like to demonstrate proficiency. This description is the starting point for conversations about specific, measurable, actionable, and equity-focused goals.
3. **Implementation of the Educator Plan:** Educators and evaluators use the rubric to ensure that they are gathering evidence from multiple sources that will support a fair and comprehensive assessment of the educator's practice on each Standard. The elements of effective practice defined in each Proficient descriptor can be used as a guide for feedback, professional learning, and the collection of evidence. Given the breadth and depth of practices represented, it is recommended that educators and evaluators prioritize certain Indicators aligned to educator, school, and district goals for professional learning, feedback, support, and evidence collection.

*Note:* The rubrics are written to support educators and evaluators in making judgments about evidence gathered across multiple measures, such as observations, artifacts of practice, student and family feedback, and evidence of student learning. The model rubrics were not designed to be observation tools and should not be used for that purpose.

In addition, in some cases, SISP educators' work activities are protected by privacy laws that prohibit an evaluator without the appropriate licensing from directly observing certain activities. For these educators, observations of practice can occur in settings such as classroom presentations, IEP/504 meetings, faculty or team meetings, and public settings. For further information, please consult the section on this [Commonwealth of Massachusetts webpage](#) on "Heightened Duty of Confidentiality in Mental Health" as well as the other sources listed in the Resources for Ethical Guidelines and Legal Responsibilities section of this document.

4. **Formative Assessment/Evaluation and Summative Evaluation:** The rubric serves as the organizing framework for these conferences and reports as evaluators assess the educator's performance on the continuum of practice described by the rubric.

For each Standard, there are Indicators that describe specific knowledge, skills, and performance at four levels. Distinctions by performance level are determined based on variations in quality (the ability to perform the skill, action, or behavior), scope (the scale of impact), and consistency (the frequency that skill, action, or behavior is demonstrated with quality). Continued growth and reflection are expected across all levels of performance, as described below:

Proficient		
The educator's performance fully meets the requirements. This is the expected, rigorous yet attainable level of performance for most educators.		
Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Exemplary
The educator's performance is consistently below the requirements and has not shown improvement.	The educator's performance is below the requirements but not considered to be Unsatisfactory at this time. Improvement is necessary and expected.	The educator's performance exceeds requirements and consistently demonstrates high-quality practice with impact in the classroom, clinical setting, or beyond.

## Additional Guidance for the Evaluation of SSW/SAC

The development of this rubric was informed by professional practice standards within the fields of school social work and mental health counseling such as conveyed by the [School Social Work Association of America](#), the [National Association of Social Workers](#), the [American Counseling Association](#), and the [National Board for Certified Counselors](#). In addition, social emotional and mental health standards within the [2023 Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Framework](#) also informed the development of the rubric.

**Applicability within Varied Settings:** This rubric is designed to evaluate the professional growth and skill development of the School Social Worker (SSW) or School Adjustment Counselor (SAC). It aims to provide a comprehensive framework for assessing various competencies, behaviors, and outcomes associated with the role. However, it is important to recognize that not all aspects of the rubric may be directly applicable to every individual role or the specific responsibilities at your school. Adaptations may be necessary to align with your school's unique needs, priorities, assignments, and expectations for the SSW/SAC position.

**The Evaluation Process:** Evaluation is most appropriate and productive in supporting the professional growth of the SSW/SAC when the evaluator provides meaningful, specific and actionable feedback. To this end, it is best practice that, when possible, the evaluator for educators in SSW/SAC roles have experience in this field in support of role-specific goal-setting and effective counseling practice.

**Observation for Evaluation:** Direct observation of individual, group or family counseling or any other activity (i.e. review of counseling notes, consultation with other service providers) that are protected by privacy laws should solely be conducted by a clinician licensed by the appropriate board (i.e. LICSW, LMHC, SSW/SAC), with express permission of the student/guardian) and with careful consideration of

the impact of an observer on the therapeutic relationship and process. Opportunities for direct observation that are not in conflict with privacy law include:

- Interview of SSW/SAC and review of case notes with redaction of identifying information, data report on counseling activities
- Participation at meetings such as MTSS, IEP/504, team, faculty, disciplinary, school emergency response, etc.
- Observation in public settings

**Evidence for Evaluation:** The evaluatee might consider indicating on submitted evidence where components align directly with the most relevant indicators. Evidence submitted to non-counseling licensed evaluators must ensure compliance with legal and ethical guidelines by redacting all potentially identifying information. Depending on the specific responsibilities assigned to the SSW/SAC, possible sources of evidence for submission might include:

- Case notes, progress notes, summaries/assessments, reports
- Activity logs, schedule
- Summary activity reports
- Crisis/risk assessments
- Safety Plans
- IEP goals, service logs, progress data, BSE PLAAFP
- 504 or other behavioral health accommodation plans
- Behavior plans, contracts
- Child abuse reports
- Copies of releases of information
- Progress monitoring tools
- Assessment and outcome data such as universal screening and evidence-based behavioral health evaluation tools
- Implementation schedules, written communications, other documentation related to planning and administration of universal screening and behavioral health evaluation
- Mediation agreements
- SEL program implementation schedules, fidelity data, outcome data
- Copy of school emergency response plan, incident report, meeting/activity documentation
- Communications from students, families, collateral contacts
- Written communication to parents/students with resources and referrals
- Logs of communication/outreach efforts (phone, email, etc) with families regarding behavioral health
- Statements of appreciation by staff, students, families, etc.
- Memorandum of Understanding with community-based organization
- Agenda, minutes from community meetings
- Drafted or written policies, newsletter articles, curricular materials, grants, etc.
- Certificates from completed professional development, coursework, licensing attainment
- Notes, resources developed during collaboration meetings
- Meeting agendas, minutes
- Documentation of professional training including evidence-based assessment/screening tools and intervention strategies
- List of resources created for teams
- Grant applications, reports
- Presentation agenda, materials, schedule

## SISP Rubric: Social Worker/Adjustment Counselor – At-a-Glance

Standard I: Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment	Standard II: Teaching All Students	Standard III: Family and Community Engagement	Standard IV: Professional Culture
<b>A. Curriculum and Planning</b> 1. Professional Knowledge 2. Knowledge of Students 3. Curriculum Literacy  <b>B. Assessment</b> 1. Purposeful Assessment 2. Accessible Assessment  <b>C. Analysis</b> 1. Analysis and Conclusions 2. Adjustments to Practice 3. Sharing Progress with Students and Families 4. Sharing Progress with Colleagues	<b>A. Instruction</b> 1. High Expectations and Support 2. Engaging Practices 3. Inclusive Practices 4. Effective Behavioral Health Modalities 5. Crisis Intervention 6. Social Emotional Learning  <b>B. Learning Environment</b> 1. Positive Relationships 2. Safe Counseling and Learning Environment 3. Collaborative Learning Environment 4. Student Ownership of Skill Development 5. Critical Thinking	<b>A. Communication</b> 1. Communication with Families 2. Communication with Community Service Providers  <b>B. Engagement</b> 1. Family Engagement  <b>C. Collaboration</b> 1. Collaboration on Student Learning and Well-being	<b>A. Reflective Practice and Professional Growth</b> 1. Reflective Practice 2. Goal-Setting 3. Professional Learning and Growth  <b>B. Shared Responsibility, Collaboration, and Decision-Making</b> 1. Shared Responsibility 2. Professional Collaboration 3. Professional Consultation 4. Professional Advocacy 5. Decision-Making  <b>C. Professional Responsibilities</b> 1. Judgment 2. Professional Responsibilities

NOTE: Some Indicators (such as Reflective Practice and Professional Growth) are grouped together where and when they represent similar or complementary practices. Practices associated with the Cultural Proficiency Indicator are represented throughout the rubric as integral to performance across the Standards.

## STANDARD I: Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment

*The educator promotes the learning and growth of all students by providing high-quality and coherent instruction, designing and administering authentic and meaningful student assessments, analyzing student performance and growth data, using this data to improve instruction, providing students with constructive feedback on an ongoing basis, and continuously refining learning objectives.*

### Proficient

#### I-A: Curriculum & Planning

1. **Professional Knowledge:** Demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of professional content and delivery through the use of evidence-based educational and/or counseling practices that enable all students to develop social emotional skills and psychological well-being and to support their application of grade-level knowledge and skills in relevant and real-world contexts, such as<sup>3</sup>:
  - Knowledge and application of principles of therapeutic relationships\*
  - Understanding the diagnosis and evidence-based treatment of learning and mental health disorders across developmental stages, including possible medications, such as neurodevelopmental disorders and depressive, anxiety, trauma and stressor related, and behavior disorders\*
  - Knowledge of strategies used for the prevention and treatment of addiction, maltreatment and neglect, violence and trauma informed practices\*
  - Skills to effectively consult and collaborate with all stakeholders: students, families, caregivers, teachers, school personnel, administrators, community members, and outside agencies/institutions\*
  - Knowledge of and coordination with outside systems and agencies (such as Department of Youth Services, Department of Children and Families, etc.) that intersect with children, youth, and families, as well as understanding the impact these systems/agencies might have on students and their families\*
  - Knowledge and application of ethical practices, regulations and laws (federal, state, and school) including Federal and state special education laws, Section 504 and IEPs\*
  - Knowledge and application of evidenced-based group interventions and strategies.\*
  - Knowledge of research in counseling (statistics, research design, data collection and program evaluation)\*
  - Knowledge and skill in assessment, stabilization and intervention with children and adolescents in crisis such as child abuse, suicidal risk, risk of violence, mental status, behavioral health status, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Subject Matter Knowledge Requirements for the School Social Worker/School Adjustment Counselor Educator License are delineated with an asterisk, with some adaptations for the purpose of this rubric.

- Skills in culturally and linguistically responsive counseling, identity development, social justice, and advocacy, including the understanding of the historical and social role of schools and schooling in perpetuating causal inequities due to individual and systemic racism\*
2. **Knowledge of Students:** Builds on and draws from knowledge of their students' identities, skills, developmental levels, cultures, languages, communities and personal and family histories to provide relevant and differentiated learning and counseling experiences that enable all students to develop and exercise social-emotional skills (e.g. self-management and making responsible decisions) and progress towards behavioral health and grade-level standards. This knowledge includes:
- The psychology of learning (cognitive, social, physical, mental illness, and emotional development)\*
  - How a student is affected socially and emotionally by environment, history, identified mental health issues, learning disabilities etc.
3. **Curriculum Literacy:** Skillfully uses curricular and instructional materials, when applicable, to support and guide counseling interventions and/or tiered classroom social emotional learning (SEL)/behavioral health support by:
- Demonstrating skills in culturally and linguistically responsive counseling, identity development, social justice, and advocacy, including the understanding of the historical and social role of schools and schooling in perpetuating causal inequities due to individual and systemic racism\*
  - Determining strengths and weaknesses of materials and adapting as necessary to plan evidence-based, inclusive, and culturally sustaining individual or group activities or sessions, including identifying opportunities to create meaningful, relevant connections rooted in the local context.
  - Identifying necessary supplemental resources and/or tiered supports to provide all students access to individual or group activities or sessions.
  - Utilizing a coherent counseling intervention and/or social-emotional learning (SEL) approach that builds student progress towards SEL and behavioral health standards and individual goals over time through aligned lesson goals, scope, sequence, and tasks.

Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Exemplary
Does not demonstrate adequate progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, or performance is consistently below the standard.	Demonstrates some progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, with areas for growth in quality, scope, or consistency.	Exceeds Proficient expectations through consistent high-quality practice with impact in the classroom or counseling setting or beyond.

**I-B:  
Assessment**

**Proficient**

1. **Purposeful Assessment:** Uses a variety of formal and informal assessments, based on knowledge of behavioral, emotional, intellectual, and social development assessments, and/or collects data for specific purposes, such as for:
  - Understanding students' SEL and behavioral health strengths and areas for growth in order to identify and provide tiered supports such as through universal screeners.
  - Measuring and monitoring all students' understanding throughout instruction and interventions and their progress toward social emotional and behavioral health standards and individual student goals.
  - Assisting in decision-making about counseling interventions
  - Assessing needs along with the child's developmental stage in order to create, share, or gather curriculum, therapeutic tools, and/or other materials
  - Assessing for the purpose of crisis stabilization and intervention with children and adolescents such as specific to child abuse, suicidal risk, risk of violence, mental status, behavioral health status, etc.
  - Incorporating evidenced based tools and assessment into SEL and behavioral health programs within the school such as counseling, counseling groups, classroom SEL.
2. **Accessible Assessment:** Implements assessments that are accessible to all students by:
  - Creating opportunities for students to be able to draw from their cultural and linguistic knowledge and personal experiences.
  - Providing multiple ways and opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning.
  - Ensuring that assessment tasks, methods and instruments maintain the rigor and high expectations outlined in the grade-level standards and do not perpetuate racial, cultural, or linguistic bias.

**Unsatisfactory**

Does not demonstrate adequate progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, or performance is consistently below the standard.

**Needs Improvement**

Demonstrates some progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, with areas for growth in quality, scope, or consistency.

**Exemplary**

Exceeds Proficient expectations through consistent high-quality practice with impact in the classroom or counseling setting or beyond.

<b>I-C: Analysis</b>	<b>Proficient</b>		
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Analysis and Conclusions:</b> Analyzes disaggregated data from a wide range of assessments and data sources to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gain information about students’ progress towards individual learning social emotional and behavioral health goals, including trends across students or student groups.</li> <li>Reflect on tiered supports and interventions and identify actions to reduce disparate outcomes and improve learning for all students.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Adjustments to Practice:</b> Uses analysis and conclusion from a wide range of assessment data and feedback from colleagues, students, parents/caregivers to adjust practice and implement differentiated and tiered supports to improve equitable student outcomes.</li> <li><b>Sharing Progress with Students and Families:</b> Collaboration with students, families, and caregivers through inclusive written and verbal communication to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate specific, timely, and asset-based feedback on student progress towards individual student SEL and behavioral health goals.</li> <li>Identify ways to build on students’ strengths and support further growth.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Sharing Progress with Colleagues:</b> Collaborates with appropriate colleagues (e.g., student support personnel, special educators, English learner educators, paraeducators, general educators, and related service providers) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share student progress towards individual students’ social-emotional and behavioral health goals to identify ways to build on students’ strengths and support further growth.</li> <li>Seek feedback about student progress with skills and strategies learned from counseling and practices that will support student growth and development.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>		
	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
	Does not demonstrate adequate progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, or performance is consistently below the standard.	Demonstrates some progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, with areas for growth in quality, scope, or consistency.	Exceeds Proficient expectations through consistent high-quality practice with impact in the classroom or counseling setting or beyond.

## STANDARD II: Teaching All Students

*The educator promotes the learning and growth of all students through instructional practices that establish high expectations, create a safe and effective classroom environment, and demonstrate cultural proficiency.*

### II-A: Instruction<sup>4</sup>

#### Proficient

1. **High Expectations and Support:** Supports all students to meet or exceed high expectations for social-emotional learning (SEL) and behavioral health by:
  - Using evidence-based, culturally and linguistically sustaining SEL and counseling practices to provide equitable opportunities for grade-level learning.
  - Providing flexible and responsive supports, scaffolds, and tools to meet students' needs.
  - Communicating clear criteria for progress monitoring tools (e.g., models, rubrics, exemplars, pre/post paired surveys).
  - Reinforcing perseverance and effort with challenging skills and tasks.
2. **Engaging Practices:** Engages all students as active participants in SEL and counseling experiences that are relevant, real-world, and interactive by:
  - Providing opportunities for students to make choices, explore topics and apply skills in culturally and linguistically sustaining ways, and through real-world, interactive contexts.
  - Building on students' strengths, interests, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and prior knowledge to support and motivate skill development.
  - Facilitating purposeful student-to-student discourse with equitable student participation in discussion.
  - When available, integrating digital tools and educational technology that enhance learning experiences and promote the development of digital literacy skills.
3. **Inclusive Practices:** Accommodates and supports individual differences in all students' learning needs, abilities, interests, and levels of readiness, including those of students with disabilities (in accordance with relevant IEPs or 504 plans), English learners and former English learners, academically advanced students, and students who have been historically marginalized. This will be supported by:
  - Using appropriate inclusive practices, such as tiered mental health and behavioral supports, educational and assistive technologies, scaffolded instruction, and leveraging of students' native language and linguistic resources, to make grade-level skills accessible and affirming for all students.
  - Providing students with multiple ways to learn skills and demonstrate understanding, as appropriate.
4. **Effective Behavioral Health Modalities:** Supports student growth and behavioral health by:
  - Maintaining currency with and implementing evidence-based individual and group counseling strategies and programs with fidelity.
  - Incorporating a trauma-responsive approach in counseling, classroom work, family interactions, and teacher consultation.

<sup>4</sup> Note: In this rubric, instruction and instructional practices may refer to individual or group activities, sessions, interventions, or counseling practices.

- Developing, implementing and monitoring effective transition plans for students experiencing disruptions in school participation through personal crises, behavioral health hospitalizations, emergency foster care, etc.
- Delivering counseling services to students as identified with emotional or mental health concerns.
- Providing behavioral health expertise about the social, emotional, and behavioral health needs of students during IEP, 504 and other accommodation team planning meetings and collaborating with those teams to provide appropriate school-based behavioral health services
- Collaborating with the school emergency response team in the development of the Emergency Operations Plan and in the preparation, planning, response and recovery of emergencies that impact the school community.
- Providing counseling/referral services to the school community in response to schoolwide emergencies.
- Collaborating with school leadership to provide professional development to support the behavioral health of students.

5. **Crisis Intervention:** Supports students experiencing acute emotional distress by:

- Intervening with students experiencing personal crises using evidence-based assessment tools and therapeutic approaches (when available). Crises may include issues such as suicide risk, mental illness, child abuse, relationship violence, targeted violence/harassment, bereavement, trauma, etc.
- Developing, implementing and monitoring effective student safety and crisis intervention plans.
- Periodically/routinely following up with students post-acute crisis and with collateral contacts and caregivers.

6. **Social Emotional Learning:** Supports systemic efforts to foster prosocial skill development of all students, such as by:

- Collaborating with school leadership and tiered support teams in the selection and implementation of effective, tiered social-emotional learning curriculum and programs.
- Collaborating with school leadership to plan professional development to support SEL.
- Delivering or co-teaching (per fidelity indicators), tier I interventions such as SEL, bullying prevention, suicide prevention, etc.
- Modeling social emotional skills and language during interactions with students, families and colleagues.

Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Exemplary
Does not demonstrate adequate progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, or performance is consistently below the standard.	Demonstrates some progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, with areas for growth in quality, scope, or consistency.	Exceeds Proficient expectations through consistent high-quality practice with impact in the classroom or counseling setting or beyond.

**II-B:  
Learning  
Environment**

**Proficient**

1. **Positive Relationships:** Contributes to students' sense of belonging through building caring, trusting relationships where students feel valued, respected and equitably supported by:
  - Applying the principles of therapeutic relationships in the counseling setting.
  - Modeling or teaching SEL skills throughout various school environments.
2. **Safe Counseling and Learning Environments:** Creates and maintains safe, supportive, and inclusive environments by:
  - Establishing, with student input, routines and systems to support student behavioral health and social emotional skill development.
  - Modeling and reinforcing respect for and affirmation of differences related to background, identity, language, strengths, and challenges (self- and social awareness).
  - Supporting student accountability for the impact of their actions.
  - Encouraging students to take academic risks and share ideas freely.
  - Seeking feedback from students on their experience of their counseling and school environment and making aligned adjustments to practice.
3. **Collaborative Learning Environment:** Develops students' relationship and communication skills by:
  - Providing students with frequent opportunities to interact with peers, make sense of complex ideas together, and develop language when engaged in classroom SEL or counseling interventions.
  - Supporting students to engage with differences and diverse perspectives, respectfully challenge each other's thinking, and address interpersonal conflicts as they arise.
4. **Student Ownership of Skill Development:** Guides students to self-assess, problem-solve, ask for support, access resources when needed, and demonstrate leadership and/or positively contribute within the classroom, school setting, and or counseling setting.
5. **Critical Thinking:** Develop students' abilities to think critically by asking questions, communicating and problem solving effectively, and evaluating perspectives and biases using skills developed through the counseling relationship.

**Unsatisfactory**

Does not demonstrate adequate progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, or performance is consistently below the standard.

**Needs Improvement**

Demonstrates some progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, with areas for growth in quality, scope, or consistency.

**Exemplary**

Exceeds Proficient expectations through consistent high-quality practice with impact in the classroom or counseling setting or beyond.

## STANDARD III: Family and Community Engagement

*The educator promotes the learning and growth of all students through effective partnerships with families, caregivers, community members, and organizations.*

III-A: Communication	<b>Proficient</b>		
	<p><b>1. Communication With Families:</b> Establishes regular, two-way communication with families that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is culturally and linguistically sustaining and aligned with family preferences, in language(s) that families understand, and in approachable language and formats.</li> <li>Shares timely information about student growth and performance.</li> <li>Supports the behavioral health needs of students through referral for community-based services, crisis assessment and response, transition planning after disruption in school participation, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. Communication with Community Service Providers:</b> Develops effective relationships with community providers in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify community resources that support the behavioral health of students and families.</li> <li>Facilitate referral and service delivery to students and families.</li> <li>Support the development of school-based behavioral health services.</li> <li>Collaborate in the development of Memorandums of Understandings for school-based behavioral health services during the school day, student crises and school emergency response.</li> </ul>		
	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
	Does not demonstrate adequate progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, or performance is consistently below the standard.	Demonstrates some progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, with areas for growth in quality, scope, or consistency.	Exceeds Proficient expectations through consistent high-quality practice with impact in the classroom or counseling setting or beyond.

III-B: Engagement	Proficient		
	<p>1. <b>Family Engagement:</b> Engages with families in a way that is equitable and collaborative by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building positive relationships with families characterized by mutual trust and respect.</li> <li>• Providing a variety of frequent, inclusive, and culturally and linguistically responsive opportunities for all families to engage as partners in the learning community.</li> <li>• Clearly communicating information that is accessible to all about family engagement opportunities.</li> </ul>		
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Exemplary
	Does not demonstrate adequate progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, or performance is consistently below the standard.	Demonstrates some progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, with areas for growth in quality, scope, or consistency.	Exceeds Proficient expectations through consistent high-quality practice with impact in the classroom or counseling setting or beyond.

III-C: Collaboration	Proficient		
	<p>1. <b>Collaboration on Student Learning and Well-Being:</b> Partners with families to support students' learning and well-being by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leveraging families' cultural and linguistic knowledge and expertise as assets.</li> <li>• Engaging with families about student performance and expectations for student progress.</li> <li>• Collaboratively identifying, and seeking family input on, strategies and resources for supporting student learning and growth in and out of school.</li> </ul>		
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Exemplary
	Does not demonstrate adequate progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, or performance is consistently below the standard.	Demonstrates some progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, with areas for growth in quality, scope, or consistency.	Exceeds Proficient expectations through consistent high-quality practice with impact in the classroom or counseling setting or beyond.

## STANDARD IV: Professional Culture

*The educator promotes the learning and growth of all students through ethical, culturally proficient, skilled, and collaborative practice.*

<b>IV-A: Reflection &amp; Professional Growth</b>	<b>Proficient</b>		
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Reflective Practice:</b> Reflects on the effectiveness of counseling practice and how one's identities, biases, and practices impact student learning and well-being; and works to improve practice and eliminate learning inequities across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability and ability, and other aspects of student identities, such that all students can meet or exceed grade-level standards.</li> <li><b>2. Goal-Setting:</b> Sets professional practice and student goals that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are challenging and measurable.</li> <li>Are based on thorough self-assessment, analysis of student data, and feedback from students and families.</li> <li>Promote more inclusive and equitable learning experiences and outcomes for all students.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>3. Professional Learning and Growth:</b> Seeks out, implements, and engages in ongoing cycles of professional development to strengthen equitable practice, refine evidence-based counseling techniques, and improve student learning; applies new knowledge, theories, and skills into practice, and monitors impact on student outcomes.</li> </ol>		
	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
	Does not demonstrate adequate progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, or performance is consistently below the standard.	Demonstrates some progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, with areas for growth in quality, scope, or consistency.	Exceeds Proficient expectations through consistent high-quality practice with impact in the classroom or counseling setting or beyond.

<b>IV-B: Shared Responsibility, Collaboration, &amp; Decision- Making</b>	<b>Proficient</b>		
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Shared Responsibility:</b> Shares responsibility for schoolwide culture and learning expectations that promote: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● An equitable and culturally and linguistically sustaining school community</li> <li>● School-wide social emotional growth and positive behavioral health</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. <b>Professional Collaboration:</b> Collaborates and communicates with colleagues on tasks in support of shared goals for student behavioral health and/or SEL such as examining student growth and planning appropriate scaffolds, interventions, and supports.</li> <li>3. <b>Professional Consultation:</b> Consults with administrators and educators to provide expertise regarding behavioral health, SEL, trauma responsive practices, etc.</li> <li>4. <b>Professional Advocacy:</b> Advocates on behalf of the behavioral health needs of students and broader school issues that impact SEL and wellness.</li> <li>5. <b>Decision-Making:</b> Contributes ideas and expertise to planning and decision making at the school, department, and/or grade level to advance effective, equitable, inclusive and digitally appropriate instruction for all students.</li> </ol>		
	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
	Does not demonstrate adequate progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, or performance is consistently below the standard.	Demonstrates some progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, with areas for growth in quality, scope, or consistency.	Exceeds Proficient expectations through consistent high-quality practice with impact in the classroom or counseling setting or beyond.

IV-C: Professional Responsibilities	Proficient		
	<p>1. <b>Judgment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adheres to the school or district’s existing code of ethics and protects student confidentiality appropriately, including student data privacy related to digital tools.</li> <li>Adheres to the legal requirements and the codes of ethics within the appropriate licensing bodies.</li> </ul> <p>2. <b>Professional Responsibilities:</b> Fulfills all routine professional responsibilities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performing duties of the role in accordance with school and district guidelines.</li> <li>Connecting students to needed academic, behavioral health and social-emotional supports as available.</li> <li>Engaging with all colleagues with respect and civility.</li> <li>Adhering to district attendance policies.</li> </ul>		
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Exemplary
	Does not demonstrate adequate progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, or performance is consistently below the standard.	Demonstrates some progress towards meeting Proficient expectations, with areas for growth in quality, scope, or consistency.	Exceeds Proficient expectations through consistent high-quality practice with impact in the classroom or counseling setting or beyond.

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## Glossary of Terms

**Academic Achievement:** Attainment of academic skills and knowledge to meet or exceed grade-level standards in a comprehensive and diverse range of subjects with ability to apply competencies in relevant, real world contexts.

**All Students:** This rubric frequently references “all students,” which represents each and every student, with particular focus on students who have been historically marginalized or underserved by our education systems, including but not limited to, those who identify as Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Indigenous, and Multiracial students, students with disabilities, English learners, LGBTQIA+ students, students experiencing homelessness and/or financial insecurity, and students who are undocumented.

**Anti-racist Teacher and Leader:** Believes racial groups are equals in all their differences and continually engages in self-reflective work that leads to educational policies, practices, conditions, and cultures that resist and dismantle inequities due to individual and systemic racism to advance racial equity. ([Guidelines for the Preparation of Administrative Leaders](#))

**Asset-Based:** Asset-based approaches intentionally build on the strengths and capacities that learners bring to school, including their languages, cultures and experiences versus deficit-based thinking that views differences as weaknesses.

**Behavioral Health** is a broad term that can encompass emotional, cognitive and mental health as well as substance use. According to the [American Medical Association](#) “Behavioral health generally refers to mental health and substance use disorders, life stressors and crises, and stress-related physical symptoms. Behavioral health care refers to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of those conditions.”

**Bias:** A disproportionate weight that may be created intentionally or unintentionally in favor of or against an idea, thing, individual, or group. ([Guidelines for the Preparation of Administrative Leaders](#))

**Crisis Intervention in Behavioral Health:** The [American Psychological Association](#) defines crisis intervention as a psychological intervention provided on a short-term, emergency basis for individuals experiencing mental health crises. Crisis Intervention focuses on stabilization and de-escalation; safety; symptom reduction and a return to adaptive functioning or facilitating access to continued care.

**Cultural Broker:** Individuals who act as bridges between schools and diverse families and collaborate with families to support the school’s goals to improve student achievement ([Massachusetts Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals 2.0](#)).

**Cultural Competence:** Individuals’ affirmation in their own culture and identity and respect and understanding for different cultures and identities.

**Culturally Responsive Practice:** Cultural responsiveness is an approach to viewing students’ culture and identity (including race, ethnicity, multilingualism, and other characteristics) as assets, and creating learning experiences and environments that value and empower them. ([Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices](#))

**Culturally Relevant:** Aligned with and affirming to students’ cultures, backgrounds, and identities. Culturally relevant pedagogy promotes students’ academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical awareness. ([Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices](#))

**Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining:** Affirming and valuing students’ prior experiences and supporting them to sustain their cultures and linguistic resources to make learning more relevant and effective, promote academic

achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical awareness; valuing multilingualism as an asset. ([Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices](#))

**Curricular materials** are resources teachers use to facilitate sequences of learning experiences (e.g., lesson and unit plans, texts); also called adopted or written curriculum, or instructional materials. ([Curriculum Matters](#))

**Curriculum:** a sequence of student learning experiences teachers facilitate, may use curricular materials as a foundation; also called enacted or taught curriculum. ([Curriculum Matters](#))

**Digital Literacy:** The ability to use digital technology, communication tools or networks to locate, evaluate, use, and create information; the ability to understand and use information in multiple formats from a wide range of sources when it is presented via computers; and the ability to perform tasks effectively in a digital environment. Literacy includes the ability to read and interpret media, reproduce data and images through digital manipulation, and evaluate and apply new knowledge gained from digital environments ([Digital Literacy and Computer Science Framework](#)).

**Equity:** Placing a heightened focus on groups, particularly racial groups, experiencing disproportionate impact through the development of systems to remediate disparities in their experiences and outcomes.

**Evidence-based:** Practices or programs that have evidence to show that they are effective at producing results and improving outcomes when implemented as supported by valid and reliable research. ([US Department of Education, Every Student Succeeds Act](#))

**Families:** DESE defines family in the broadest and most diverse way. The constellation of family structures include but is not limited to: two parent families, which includes two mothers or two fathers; single parent families; blended families; multi-generational families; grandparents raising grandchildren; gay, lesbian bisexual, and transgender families; extended families; siblings, adoptive families; foster families; emancipated youth; family by choice/felt families; kinship/neighbors. ([Prenatal Through Young Adulthood Family Engagement Framework for Massachusetts](#))

**Historically Marginalized Groups:** Groups and communities that systematically experience discrimination and exclusion (social, political, economic and financial) because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions. These groups include but are not limited to race, culture, language, LGBTQ+, gender, and ability. Significant disparities exist for marginalized people.

**High-quality Instructional Materials:** High-quality materials exhibit a coherent sequence of target skills and knowledge, empirical evidence of efficacy, and other characteristics such as engaging content and inclusive design. Some factors in quality are nonnegotiable, while others vary by context: for example, compatibility with a school's technology infrastructure or cultural relevance to its student population. ([Curriculum Matters](#))

**Inclusive Practices:** Pursuing deliberate actions to create welcoming environments and ensure differences are actively sought and heard, and that every individual feels a sense of belonging and a role in impacting decision-making, practices, and policies.

**Instruction:** In regards to SISP educator roles, Instruction and instructional practices may refer to individual or group activities, sessions, interventions, or counseling practices.

**Linguistically Responsive:** Aligned with and affirming to students' and families' linguistic backgrounds and skills. This includes use of high-quality translation and interpretation, as well as translanguaging (see below). ([The Massachusetts Blueprint for English Learner Success](#))

**Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS):** The [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](#) defines MTSS as “a framework for how school districts can build the necessary systems to ensure that each and every student receives a high-quality educational experience. It is designed to support schools with proactively identifying and addressing the strengths and needs of all students by optimizing data-driven decision-making, progress monitoring, and the use of evidence-based supports and strategies with increasing intensity to sustain student growth.”

**Non-Academic Student Outcomes:** Outcomes associated with students’ capacity to understand and value self (know their own strengths, interests, and areas of growth, be self-aware, be a self-advocate, and make responsible decisions), understand and value others (understand differences and multiple perspectives, empathize with others, and build connections with peers and adults), and engage with the world (understand and think critically about local, national, and world events and societal systems; and create positive change through civic action).

**Restorative Practice:** A framework of processes that schools can use to prevent and address conflict and poor behavior, including, but not limited to, restorative circles, family group conferences, social and emotional learning, and informal practices such as affective questioning. Rather than implementing a program, restorative practices focus on building and maintaining healthy relationships among individuals and maintaining a sense of community. In the case of a disciplinary infraction, restorative practices allow individuals to take full responsibility for their behavior by addressing the individual(s) affected by the behavior. Through these practices, individuals come to understand how their behavior affected others, recognize that their behavior was harmful to others, move toward repairing the harm, and work on not repeating that behavior again. ([National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments](#))

**Social Emotional Learning (SEL):** [CASEL](#) defines SEL as “the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.”

**Sociopolitical Awareness:** The ability to identify, analyze, and work to solve real-world problems by thinking critically and drawing conclusions about complex issues related to equity, identity, power, or bias.

**Translanguaging:** The process whereby multilingual speakers utilize all of their languages as an integrated communication system to learn. ([The Massachusetts Blueprint for English Learner Success](#))

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** is intended to increase access and engagement in learning by reducing physical, cognitive, intellectual, and organizational barriers, and other obstacles. It includes providing learners with multiple means of engagement, representation, action, and expression. ([Multi-Tiered System of Support](#))

**Resources for Ethical Guidelines and Legal Responsibilities:**

American Counseling Association Ethical and Professional Standards

[Commonwealth of Massachusetts:](#)

[Guide on the disclosure of confidential information: Health care information \(includes Mental Health\)](#)

DESE webpage for State and Federal Student Records Laws

Ethical Standards for MA LMHC license and all Allied Mental Health Practitioners licensed by the Board of Registration of Allied Mental Health and Human Services (includes confidentiality, records, etc.)

[NASW \(National Association of Social Workers\) Code of Ethics](#)

NASW (National Association of Social Workers) Standards for Ethical School Social Work Practice

National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) Code of Ethics

National School Social Work Model by the School Social Work Association of America