**Educator Evaluation Data Advisory Committee:**

**Report to the Massachusetts General Court**

**June 3, 2013**

Table of Contents

[Committee Charge and Membership 1](#_Toc358215517)

[Introduction 3](#_Toc358215518)

[Intended Goals of Data Collection and Analysis 4](#_Toc358215519)

[Existing ESE Data Collection and Reporting Activities 5](#_Toc358215520)

[Recommendations From the Committee 9](#_Toc358215521)

[Recommendations for ESE 9](#_Toc358215522)

[Other recommendations 16](#_Toc358215523)

[Conclusion 17](#_Toc358215524)

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| Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.  *Commissioner* |  |

June 3, 2013

Dear Members of the General Court:

Massachusetts’ new educator evaluation system is reaching a critical milestone. Our districts participating in the federal Race to the Top program are completing their first year of implementation and will begin reporting their results this summer. This will be our first opportunity to see, for the majority of districts statewide, the distribution of educators across the four performance levels set forth in state regulation: exemplary, proficient, needs improvement, and unsatisfactory.

As the results become available publicly, they will advance our state’s discussion on what it means to be an effective educator. They will shed light on where our educators are performing well and where they can improve, and they will help direct state and district choices about how to best support the development needs of all educators.

It is timely that the educator evaluation data advisory committee established in Chapter 131 of the Acts of 2012 is making its recommendations just as we reach the juncture when public reporting will begin. The group’s recommendations are specific, thoughtful, and helpful, and my agency will use them as a touchstone as we deliver the first reports this fall.

I thank the committee for their contributions to our thinking in this area and look forward to continuing to work with them and the organizations they represent on the implementation of the new educator evaluation system.

Sincerely yours,

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed. D.

Commissioner

# Committee Charge and Membership

The Educator Evaluation Data Advisory Committee respectfully submits this report to the Massachusetts General Court, pursuant to Chapter 131 of the Acts of 2012, Section 8:

*“There shall be established a board of elementary and secondary education educator evaluation data advisory committee which shall consist of the commissioner of elementary and secondary education or a designee, who shall serve as chair, the secretary of education or a designee, the senate and house chairs of the joint committee on education or their respective designees and 9 persons to be appointed by the governor from among the organizations which participated in the educator evaluation task force.   
  
The committee shall provide recommendations to the board of elementary and secondary education concerning what information shall be collected for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of district evaluation systems in assuring effective teaching and administrative leadership in public schools and how such information shall be made available to the public.* *Such information may include:*

* *surveys of teachers and administrators and data related to implementation of the district evaluation system and the district evaluation training program,*
* *percentage of staff evaluated,*
* *the number of teachers granted professional teacher status,*
* *the number of teachers and administrators voluntarily and involuntarily leaving employment in the district,*
* *the percentage of teachers and administrators in each performance ranking, and*
* *data tracking aggregate changes in performance ranking.*

*The committee shall file a report not later than December 31, 2012 with the clerks of the senate and house of representatives who shall forward it to the joint committee on education. The report shall include:*

* *recommendations to the board concerning the information to be collected annually,*
* *how such information shall be made available to the public annually and*
* *the advisability of engaging a researcher to study the data and provide a report to the board, together with suggested questions and focus for such research.”*

Governor Deval Patrick nominated the members of the Educator Evaluation Data Advisory Committee (“the committee”) in February 2013. The committee was convened three times, on March 25, May 1, and June 3, 2013. The membership of the committee is as follows:

* ***Carrie Conaway***, Associate Commissioner for Planning, Research, and Delivery Systems, Department of Elementary & Secondary Education. Committee chairperson, designee for Commissioner Mitchell Chester.
* ***Tara Bennett***, Principal, Uxbridge High School, Uxbridge Public Schools. Representing the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association.
* ***Anna Bradfield***, Executive Director for University Initiatives, Bridgewater State University
* ***Sonia Chang-Diaz***, State Senator, Massachusetts General Court
* ***Angela Brooks****,* Chief of Staff, Office of Senator Chang-Diaz. Designee for March 25 meeting.
* ***Tara Christian Clark***, Principal, Zanetti School, Springfield Public Schools. Representing the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association.
* ***Mary Czajkowski***, Superintendent, Barnstable Public Schools. Representing the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents.
* ***Maureen Lovett,*** Information System and Accountability Specialist, Barnstable Public Schools. Designee for March 25 and May 1 meeting.
* ***Candace Hall***, Director of Human Resources, Andover Public Schools. Representing the Massachusetts Association of School Personnel Administrators.
* ***Saeyun Lee***, Policy Director, Executive Office of Education, designee for Secretary of Education Matthew Malone
* ***Dan Murphy***, Director of Education Policy and Programs, AFT-Massachusetts
* ***Alice Peisch***, State Representative, Massachusetts General Court
* ***Angelina Hong,*** Research Analyst, Joint Committee on Education. Designee for March 25 and June 3 meeting.
* ***Dorothy Presser***, Lynnfield School Committee; former president, Massachusetts Association of School Committees
* ***Paul Toner***, President, Massachusetts Teachers Association
* ***Kathie Skinner,*** Director, Center for Education Policy and Practice, Massachusetts Teachers Association. Designee for May 1 meeting.
* ***Jason Williams***, Executive Director, Stand for Children Massachusetts

The final report of the committee was approved by a 10–0 vote on June 3, 2013. Voting members were Carrie Conaway, Tara Bennett, Tara Christian Clark, Candace Hall, Saeyun Lee, Dan Murphy, Dorothy Presser, Paul Toner, and Jason Williams. Absent were Anna Bradfield, Sonia Chang-Diaz, and Alice Peisch. Mary Czajkowski approved the report with reservations regarding the reporting of educator evaluation by the four standards of effective practice, rather than just the summative rating and the rating of impact on student learning.

# Introduction

Strong educators matter. No other in-school element of the education system has as large an impact on student outcomes, and improving educator effectiveness has the potential to dramatically improve results for students.

Yet until recently, in many schools in the Commonwealth, the educator evaluation process—a key lever to support educators in their growth and development—fell short. Too often it was divorced from student learning or professional growth or, worse, did not happen at all. A 2010 study by the National Center for Teacher Quality found that half of Boston educators had not been evaluated in 2007–08 or 2008–09; a quarter of schools did not turn in a single evaluation during that period. Evaluations typically did not effectively differentiate between high and low performing educators, which meant that they could not be used to recognize those performing well or to support those who were struggling.

On June 28, 2011, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted new regulations to guide the evaluation of all educators serving in positions requiring a license: teachers, principals, superintendents, and other administrators. The new regulations were based in large part on recommendations from a 40-member statewide task force charged by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education with developing a new framework for educator evaluation in Massachusetts.

The educator evaluation framework described in the new [regulations](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr35.html) was explicitly developed to support the following goals:

* Promote growth and development of leaders and teachers,
* Place student learning at the center, using multiple measures of student learning, growth and achievement,
* Recognize excellence in teaching and leading,
* Set a high bar for professional teaching status, and
* Shorten timelines for improvement.

The regulations specify several key elements of the new evaluation process. All educators will engage in a five-step evaluation cycle that includes self-assessment; analysis, goal setting, and plan development; implementation of the plan; a formative assessment/evaluation; and a summative evaluation. Throughout this process, three categories of evidence will be collected: multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement, including MCAS where available; judgment based on observations, including unannounced observations; and additional evidence relating to performance.

Ultimately, educators will receive two ratings: a summative rating related to their performance on the statewide standards of effective practice, and a rating of their impact on student learning. The summative performance rating will be categorized into four levels of performance: exemplary, proficient, needs improvement, and unsatisfactory. The impact on student learning will be categorized as high, moderate, or low and will be based on district-determined measures of student growth that include state assessment data where applicable (see pages 4 to 5).

Chapter 131 of the Acts of 2012, which followed the regulatory changes, further ensured that districts were prepared to effectively implement this new framework by requiring that they provide an evaluation training program for all evaluators and all teachers, principals, and administrators required to be evaluated. By 2013–14, every district in the Commonwealth will be in the process of phasing in evaluation processes and procedures that are consistent with the new legislation and regulations.

Both the state regulations and the legislation included data collection and reporting requirements as a mechanism for accountability and transparency and as a means of helping districts to identify priority areas for improvement of their implementation. Chapter 131 also established an educator evaluation data advisory committee to advise the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education on “what information shall be collected for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of district evaluation systems in assuring effective teaching and administrative leadership in public schools and how such information shall be made available to the public…”. This is the report of that committee.

# Intended Goals of Data Collection and Analysis

The new evaluation framework refocuses the evaluation process on promoting educator development and growth as a key mechanism for supporting student learning. Concomitantly, data collection and reporting about evaluation should also support educator growth. To accomplish this, the committee identified three goals related to the collection and analysis of educator evaluation implementation data that guided their recommendations to ESE and districts.

### Report regularly on key components of the evaluation system.

State law and regulations require regular reporting of key components of the evaluation system, such as the percentage of staff evaluated, the percentage in each performance rating, and trends in performance ratings over time. This promotes transparency and public accountability for implementation of the new system and can also help measure whether the state has accomplished its policy objectives.

### Collect information on the quality and fidelity of implementation during the transition to the new system.

Particularly in the first years of implementing the new evaluation system, it is important to gather data on the quality and fidelity of implementation, such as survey data from practitioners on the quality of the professional development offered to train them on the new system and interviews with educators about their experiences implementing the system. These data can help guide professional development priorities and ensure that the necessary supports are in place to address gaps and provide targeted assistance.

### Report to the public and families about educator effectiveness and student outcomes.

The committee recognizes the importance and value of family, community, and public understanding and support of the educator evaluation effort. Robust, reliable, and timely data on educator evaluation provides an opportunity for dialogue between the public, elected officials, families, schools, and educational partners about supporting educators so that they can continue to improve student outcomes.

# Existing ESE Data Collection and Reporting Activities

### Data collection

Chapter 131 of the Acts of 2012 states that “the board [of elementary and secondary education] shall establish and maintain a data system to collect information from school districts for the purpose of assessing the effectiveness of district evaluation systems in assuring effective teaching and administrative leadership in the public schools. Such information shall be made available in the aggregate to the public.”

Further, state regulations (603 CMR 35.11) require that districts collect and submit the following seven data elements for all educators who are evaluated in a given year:

* An overall summative performance rating (1 data element)
* A rating on each of the four standards of effective practice (4 data elements). The standards for teachers and for principals and other administrators are outlined in Table 1 below.
* An educator’s professional teacher status, where applicable (1 data element)
* The educator’s rating of their impact on student learning (1 data element)

### Table 1. Standards of effective practice

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Principals & Other Administrators | Teachers |
| 1. Instructional leadership 2. Management and operations 3. Family and community partnerships 4. Professional culture | 1. Curriculum, planning, and assessment 2. Teaching all students 3. Family and community engagement 4. Professional culture |

The regulations also include specific timeframes for the submission of these data. Data submission commenced in 2011 with 34 Level 4 schools, the first to implement the new evaluation system, submitting the first ratings for their educators in spring 2012. Data submitted included formative and summative ratings overall and on the four standards of effective practice.

All Race to the Top participating districts, which started implementing the system in September 2012, are required to submit the first six elements for all educators who are evaluated during the 2012–13 school year. Non-Race to the Top districts, which begin implementation in school year 2013–14, will be required to submit the first six data elements for all educators evaluated under the new framework by the end of the 2013–14 school year. Most districts will be required to submit data for the seventh element, impact on student learning growth, starting in the 2015–16 school year.

By September 2013, all districts must submit to ESE the potential district-determined measures (DDMs) the districts will pilot during the 2013–14 school year and the grades and subjects to which they are aligned. As defined by state regulations, DDMs are measures of student growth and achievement that are comparable across schools, grades, and subjects. The DDMs will complement MCAS and other types of statewide assessment data, and these assessments will be used to assess educators’ impact on student learning. In addition, districts will be required to note the grades and subjects for which DDMs have not been identified but for which measures will be piloted in the spring of 2014. By February 2014, districts must submit a final plan for determining impact ratings based on the district-determined measures for all educators by the end of the 2015–16 school year.

ESE also has additional sources of data relevant to educator evaluation, including the state licensure and educator testing systems, statewide surveys, and commissioned research. Thus, ESE is already collecting substantial data related to the implementation and outcomes of the new educator evaluation framework. These data will serve as the foundation for further analysis and public reporting. The sources and types of data collected by ESE are detailed in Table 2.

### Table 2. ESE data collection activities related to educator evaluation

| **Source** | **Data Collected** | **Frequency** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Educator Personnel Information Management System (EPIMS)**  EPIMS is the main source of educator data collection. It is a secure data collection tool for individuals employed in all public schools throughout the Commonwealth. Data has been collected at an individual level through EPIMS since 2007. All data in EPIMS except for the educator’s race, date of birth, reason for leaving a position, and evaluation results are public records. | * MEPID, a unique identifier for each educator in the state * Demographic information, job classifications and work assignments of all educators in MA public schools * Courses taught by teachers, co-teachers, and some instructional support personnel * Date of hire, exit date, and reason for exit at the district level * Beginning in 2012–13: * Educators’ performance ratings[[1]](#footnote-1) * Educators’ ratings on standards 1, 2, 3, 4, and overall * Professional teaching status, if applicable * Beginning in 2015–16, educators’ impact on student learning growth | Semiannually: October and June |
| **Educator Licensure and Recruitment System (ELAR)**  The ELAR system allows current and prospective Massachusetts educators to complete most licensure-related transactions online. Educators’ licensure status is public information. | * All licensure data * Endorsements when an educator completes an approved preparation program | Transactional database (continuously updated) |
| **Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL)**  The MTEL program, in place since 1998, includes tests of communication and literacy skills and of subject matter knowledge. Testing is mandatory for educators seeking prekindergarten to grade 12 licenses in Massachusetts. Individual educators’ test results are confidential, but ESE publishes [aggregate pass rates](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mtel/results.html) for each test administration, and institutions of higher education receive MTEL data for their enrolled candidates. | * Data on test taker background and demographics * Pass rates and individual scores | Data is regularly reported by the testing vendor to ESE throughout the year |
| **TELL Mass**  The TELL Mass (Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning in Massachusetts) survey is a statewide survey aimed at gathering the views of licensed school-based educators on school culture, climate, and environment. Individual responses are confidential, but aggregate data are available for schools and districts with a 50 percent or greater response rate. | * Educator perceptions about conditions of schooling, professional development, leadership, and school culture and climate | Every two years. Survey will be conducted for the third time in 2014. |
| **SRI International (external evaluation)**  ESE has contracted with SRI International, a research consulting firm, to conduct an evaluation of the implementation of the new educator evaluation framework. The research design includes case studies of 10 districts, focus groups in an additional five districts, and an annual statewide survey of teachers and principals. Individual responses to data collections are confidential; reports compile patterns at the district and state levels. See additional information below. | * Evaluation of early implementation efforts and implications of those findings, both for ESE and for those districts currently planning and refining implementation of the new educator evaluation system | SRI will provide 6 quarterly memos to ESE between December 2012 and March 2014. A final report is due in June 2014. |

### Data reporting

ESE’s annual assurances to the federal government as a condition of federal grant receipt require that it report publicly the percentage of educators at each overall performance rating or level. Specifically, the state must publish those percentages for teachers aggregated to the school level, and for principals aggregated to the district level.

ESE plans to meet these reporting requirements by adding two reports to its existing, publicly available School and District Profiles website beginning in fall 2013. The first report will list for each district and school in a given year:

* The total number of educators
* The number evaluated
* The percentage of evaluated educators rated as exemplary, proficient, needs improvement, or unsatisfactory on the summative rating or the ratings on the four standards of effective practice
* The percentage of educators not evaluated

Report toggles will allow users to view these aggregate data for all staff, all administrators, principals (a subset of administrators), all non-administrators, and teachers (a subset of non-administrators), as well as to switch between years and between district and school views. A report showing the percentage rated as attaining a low, moderate, or high impact on student learning will be added once data become available. The second report will present all the same data but on a single page rather than a dynamically generated page.

ESE also plans to include educator evaluation data, as it becomes available, in several other existing or newly developed reports, as summarized in Table 3.

### Table 3. Existing and planned reporting

| **Name** | **Availability** | **Audience** | **Description** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School and District Profiles** | Public | Schools, districts, and general public | These [pages](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/) present a variety of aggregate from schools and districts in the state, including data on student and educator characteristics, school finance, and student outcomes. Aggregate educator effectiveness data will be added once available, as described above. |
| **School and district report cards** | Public | Schools, districts, and general public | ESE produces [report cards](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/reportcard/rc.aspx?linkid=38&orgcode=00000000&fycode=2012&orgtypecode=5&) annually as a means of summarizing key data about each school and district in the Commonwealth. These reports can also be used by districts to meet their No Child Left Behind public reporting requirements. ESE will be redesigning these reports for fall 2013. |
| **District Analysis and Review Tools (DARTs)** | Public | Schools, districts, and general public | The [DART tools](http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/) turn the Department's data into valuable, easily consumable information. The DARTs offer snapshots of district and school performance on a wide range of measures, allowing users to easily track select data elements over time, and make meaningful comparisons to the state or to comparable organizations. |
| ***Status of the Educator Workforce* report** | Public | Schools, districts, educator preparation programs, and general public | A [report](http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/reports/1211edworkforce.doc) published biennially to help the Commonwealth support its educators by providing a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in Massachusetts’ current educator workforce. It includes data on educator demographics, years of service, retention, preparation, supply and demand, shortage areas, and so forth. The next *Status of Educator Workforce* report will be published in December 2013. |
| **Educator preparation program profiles** | Public | Educator preparation programs, schools, districts, and general public | ESE is building a web-based public reporting system that will make key indicators and outcome data on preparation program effectiveness publicly available. This will include placement of graduates, faculty and staff data, exit from program and persistence rates, and aggregate evaluation ratings. Most components of the educator preparation program profiles will become available in June 2013; the remainder will be rolled out between fall 2013 and June 2014. |
| **Edwin Analytics** | Non-public; available to authorized district and school personnel | Authorized district and school personnel | A component of the new Massachusetts teaching and learning platform, [Edwin Analytics](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edwin/) is a powerful reporting and data analysis tool that gives authorized district and school personnel (including teachers) access to new information and reports that specifically support improvements in teaching and learning. Edwin Analytics is unique because it integrates longitudinal data from pre-kindergarten through public post-secondary education. The system will include confidential data not included in public reports, such as individual educators’ ratings. Districts will determine who is legally authorized to see which data. For instance, teachers may only see their own data, while evaluators may see data for the specific educators they are responsible for evaluating. |

# Recommendations From the Committee

The committee submits the following recommendations for consideration by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. While the group’s primary charge was to provide recommendations related to state data collection and reporting, the committee also included some general recommendations for districts and educator preparation programs.

## Recommendations for ESE

### *Create reports that promote improvement at all levels, keep student learning at the center, and foster continuous dialogue on enhancing student outcomes.* Several members of the advisory committee were concerned that reporting educator evaluation ratings too early in the process could undermine the hard work educators are doing to implement the new framework with fidelity. They felt it would focus too much attention on the distribution of educators across levels at a time that educators are still learning from early implementation and adjusting their systems, and they also worried that the public might make incorrect comparisons and reach inappropriate conclusions about the meaning of the results. Other members were concerned that not reporting the data publicly would enable districts to avoid making needed changes in their evaluation practices, since reporting is the only way the public knows whether or not a district is implementing the new system.

### Nonetheless, all agreed that reports on educator evaluation should promote the same values and outcomes as the regulatory framework itself: to promote growth and development of leaders and teachers; to place student learning at the center; to recognize excellence in teaching and leading; to set a high bar for professional teaching status; and to accelerate improvement. Reports should encourage frank and open conversations among educators and should support effective implementation of the new evaluation framework. The committee made several specific recommendations to accomplish these objectives.

### Show trends over time. ESE should build reports that show the change in aggregated performance ratings over time. For instance, ESE could publish reports that shows the trend in the percentage of educators in a district or school that were rated in each performance level over the course of several years. This allows districts to demonstrate improvement in the quality of their educators and supports the principle that the educator evaluation framework is meant to promote growth and development.

### Ensure that reports are consistent across sectors. ESE should ensure consistency across the reports for the pre-K–12 and higher education sectors. If an educator preparation report includes breakdowns by the demographics of the students served by their program graduates, for example, pre-K–12 reports should include the same breakdown. This allows educators from all sectors to identify common areas of concern and work together on improvement.

1. **Correlate performance and impact ratings.**Reports should make apparent whether educators’ summative performance ratings are correlated to their ratings of their impact on student learning. For instance, a report could array the number of educators rated as exemplary, proficient, needs improvement, or unsatisfactory on the summative performance rating against the number rated as having low, moderate, or high impact on student learning. One would expect to find that many (though not necessarily all) of the educators who have been rated as exemplary on their summative rating also have high impact on student learning, and that many of the educators rated needs improvement or unsatisfactory also have a low impact on student learning.

This analysis provides an opportunity for accountability and transparency in the rating system, as it may reveal issues with consistency of implementation. Where unexpected patterns emerge, the state should review its technical assistance materials and guidance and work with its professional development vendors to ensure that they support administrators in implementing the evaluation system with fidelity. The state should also provide technical assistance to districts with particularly unusual results.

### Gather data on the type of improvement plan for each educator. ESE should gather data on which type of improvement plan an educator is on: a developing educator plan, a self-directed growth plan, a directed growth plan, or an improvement plan.[[2]](#footnote-2) This will provide insight on which educators are new in their roles (i.e., those on developing educator plans) as well as an additional measure of accountability for implementation of the system.

1. **Investigate the practicality and feasibility of additional data reporting options.**

The committee deliberated over several alternative ways of displaying educator evaluation data. One suggestion was to provide more detailed data about educators in the Needs Improvement rating—specifically whether to separately report the number of educators with that rating who do and do not have professional teacher status. Another was to add information on reports regarding the district’s stage of implementation of the new system: e.g., whether the district and union have collectively bargained the new system and/or at what point in the year an agreement was reached, to provide a sense of how long the district has had to implement. The committee recommends that ESE investigate these options, considering both the value of the information these reports would include but also the consequences for confidentiality, clarity, data availability, and so forth.

1. ***Ensure that reports are clear, relevant, and reflective of local context.***

The state’s new evaluation system is complex and still unfamiliar to most observers. Thus, whether reports focus on the K–12 sector or on educator preparation programs, ESE’s approach to reporting should pay particular attention to clarity and context. This will reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation and incorrect conclusions or comparisons.

1. **Provide definitions of and details on performance ratings.**To increase public understanding of the performance ratings, the committee recommends that each report of evaluation data include the definitions of performance from state regulations:
   * *Exemplary* shall mean that the educator’s performance consistently and significantly exceeds the requirement of a standard or overall.
   * *Proficient* shall mean that the educator’s performance fully and consistently meets the requirements of a standard or overall.
   * *Needs improvement* shall mean that the educator’s performance on a standard or overall is below the requirements of a standard or overall, but is not considered to be unsatisfactory at this time. Improvement is necessary and expected.
   * *Unsatisfactory* shall mean that the educator’s performance on a standard or overall has not significantly improved following a rating of needs improvement, or the educator’s performance is consistently below the requirements of a standard or overall and is considered inadequate, or both.

This definition should also note that it would not be unusual for an educator new to the field or to a role to receive a Needs Improvement rating.

Further, reports should include a link to the [statewide rubrics](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/rubrics/) for classroom teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, school level administrators, and superintendents. The rubrics present specific indicators of each level of professional practice that further specify the meaning of each performance category.

1. **Include data about the district, school, and preparation program context.**

To promote appropriate comparisons across districts, schools, and educator preparation programs, additional reports should be made available on contextual factors[[3]](#footnote-3) such as:

### the demographic characteristics, academic performance, and program participation of the students in the school or district;

### the accountability level of the school or district;

### the professional status or experience of educators in the school or district;

### regional, state, and national comparisons where available; and

### trends over time.

This will help provide a broader picture of the school, district, or preparation program in which to situate its particular pattern of educator evaluation ratings. Wherever possible, reports should include data displays that use visual representations to convey information, to overcome language barriers for some members of the public.

1. **Include data about educator workforce diversity.**

As our student population becomes increasingly diverse, it is critical that the education workforce diversify to better serve the needs of all the state’s students. Thus, the committee felt that it was important for both district and preparation program reports to include breakdowns of evaluation results by educators’ racial/ethnic group. Highlighting this in reports will call additional public attention to the complex issues around educator workforce diversity.

1. **Provide written guidance for how to use the data.**

ESE should provide written guidance to districts and educator preparation programs for using the data, such as best practices in connecting results to professional learning programs, implementation strategies, and use of professional development funding. This guidance should be informed by frequent conversations with and feedback from educators in the pre-K–12 and educator preparation sectors.

1. ***Convey consistent messages about the appropriate and accurate use of educator evaluation data.***  
   The effort to build appropriate reports and ensure their clarity and accessibility will be for naught if the messaging around the public reports of these data do not support the goals of the educator evaluation framework. ESE should take every opportunity to set the tone statewide for how these reports are used.   
     
   Whether communicating with educators, families, other stakeholders, or the public at large, ESE should emphasize the following themes:
   1. Strong educators matter. No other in-school element of the education system has as large an impact on student outcomes. Improving educator effectiveness has the potential to dramatically improve results for students.
   2. The new educator evaluation framework places student learning at the center and promotes the growth and development of all teachers and administrators.
   3. The definition of practice that is exemplary, proficient, needs improvement, or unsatisfactory is established in state regulation and is consistent statewide. The state has also developed rubrics that many districts are using to further specify the specific behaviors and actions that define effective practice.
   4. Most educators in Massachusetts are already strong or are on the path to becoming so, but even educators rated as proficient or exemplary can still improve their practice. The evaluation system supports all educators in their professional growth by identifying specific areas for improvement.
   5. Some educators may be rated as needs improvement or unsatisfactory in some areas of their professional practice or in their overall rating. This is a signal that the educator needs support to improve, and the evaluation system specifies how this will happen and on what timeline.
   6. When interpreting evaluation data, local context is important. The distribution of ratings in a district or school may reflect workforce composition, local priorities, or other issues and should be considered with that perspective. Further, districts may be at different stages of implementation and may vary in which elements of the system they have emphasized in their initial implementation.
   7. The state is early in its implementation of this new framework. As districts calibrate their evaluation systems, we should expect to see changes in the patterns of ratings statewide. This is cause not for alarm but for applause, as it means we are learning from our early work and strengthening our implementation over time.
2. ***Report evidence of implementation and impact on practice.***Reports should make clear which districts are using the system effectively to differentiate performance and support educators’ growth, including districts that have been successful in improving educator performance “from good to great.” Data from required reporting and from research studies will show whether districts have reached the goal of differentiating practice and supporting continuous learning for all educators. Evidence of successful implementation will also be manifest in reports from surveys or focus groups that indicate that educators feel the system is fair and that their evaluations accurately reflect their performance. Trends over time will provide evidence of whether districts have been able to improve the effectiveness of their educators by providing appropriate professional development and growth opportunities. Mini-case studies of successes and challenges in implementation in districts and schools will enhance understanding of the implementation process and will allow ESE to identify particularly effective practices that can be shared statewide.
3. ***Maintain confidentiality of individual educators’ ratings.***

Building support among educators for the new educator evaluation system hinges upon assuring that no individual educators’ rating will be reported publicly. State law already ensures that educators’ individual ratings are confidential. Chapter 131 of the Acts of 2012 states, “Such information [about educators’ ratings] shall be made available in the aggregate to the public; provided, however, that any data or information that school districts, the department or both create, send or receive in connection with educator evaluation that is evaluative in nature and which may be linked to an individual educator…shall not be subject to disclosure.”   
  
ESE plans to further assure confidentiality in public reports by not reporting aggregate results for any group with fewer than six members. For instance, aggregate data on principals’ ratings would not be published for a small district with fewer than six principals, and similarly, aggregate data on teachers’ ratings would not be published at the school level in schools with fewer than six teachers. This is the same minimum sample size that ESE uses for reporting student demographic data. The committee supports ESE’s plan for maintaining confidentiality of these data.

1. ***Support research on implementation and outcomes of the educator evaluation framework.***  
   Analyses comparing the quality and fidelity of implementation across districts and across schools within a district is also critical for program improvement at the state and local levels. A focus on implementation data will help support improvement for all educators, a guiding principle behind the educator evaluation framework. This type of information goes beyond the publicly reported quantitative data discussed earlier. While the quantitative data can describe what is happening, only qualitative data can explain why and what it means.

ESE has contracted with SRI International, a research consulting firm, to conduct a two-year study of the implementation and early outcomes of the new educator evaluation framework. The study focuses on the following research questions:

* **Implementation**: How does implementation of the educator evaluation framework vary within and across districts? What factors influence this variation and in what ways?
* **Professional development and supports**: What information and resources are districts using to implement their local evaluation systems, and what additional guidance and documentation are needed?
* **Scale-up and sustainability**: What factors contribute to districts’ ability to scale up the new educator evaluation framework? What factors contribute to their ability to sustain the new framework?
* **Outcomes**: In what ways has the new educator evaluation system contributed to improvements in teaching and learning?
* **Confluence of initiatives**: What is the impact of other district initiatives on implementation of the new evaluation system?

Data collection activities include site visits in 10 case study districts, focus groups in an additional five districts, and a statewide sample survey of teachers and principals. Each of these activities will be conducted at least twice during the study to allow for comparisons over time. ESE will receive quarterly reports summarizing results from the most recent data collection activities as well as a final summative report.

1. **Continue to evaluate implementation and secure funding for research post-2014.**

The committee recommends that ESE continue this study past its current planned end date of June 2014 to gather ongoing information that will allow for further refinement of the state’s implementation work. The study should continue through at least 2015–16, when districts will have fully implemented all aspects of the evaluation system including the district-determined measures and the ratings of impact on student growth.   
  
It is critical that the state avoid relying on the required data elements as the only source of systematic information on fidelity of implementation, especially in the early years as districts adjust their systems. Thus, the committee recommends that ESE secure funding for this study after June 2014, when the current funding source for the work will no longer be available.

1. **Consider additional research questions.**

As the educator evaluation initiative matures and as the state learns more about where challenges lie in implementation, the focus of the research questions should shift as well. Additional questions recommended by the committee for inclusion in future surveys, focus groups, and/or interviews include:

* Are educators receiving their midyear and final evaluation ratings and other feedback in a timely manner?
* How do educators select the evidence they use to support the formative and summative rating process?
* How does that evidence and the associated rating inform educators’ professional development choices?
* How effective are evaluators at assisting educators with making appropriate professional development choices given their goals and needs?
* How much time does it take educators to participate in evaluations?
* How are districts integrating their implementation of educator evaluation with their implementation of the curriculum frameworks?
* What has been the impact of educator evaluation on other processes and systems within districts?

1. **Share findings publicly, where possible.**

Currently SRI’s reporting to the state is intended primarily for internal quality improvement purposes, with the exception of the final report due in June 2014. The state should consider publicly reporting some interim findings, where appropriate, particularly those with statewide relevance. For instance, if the study found that the majority of educators felt the new evaluation system was fair, it would be powerful to be able to report that publicly as a means of building buy-in.

1. **Coordinate data collection activities.**

Beyond the state’s efforts in this area, other organizations, including the state teachers unions and advocacy groups, are also conducting or planning similar data-gathering activities. The committee recommends that, where possible, the entities gathering data on implementation should share information across studies and work together, to avoid duplication of effort and confusion in districts about who is collecting data for what purpose.

1. ***Conduct additional analyses.***  
   ESE should annually analyze patterns in evaluation results, including a data quality analysis to ensure comparability of data across districts and schools. An analysis of changes in professional development spending patterns is also important, since the evaluation system is intended to improve the connection of professional development activity to what educators need to know and be able to do to become more effective practitioners. Finally, ESE should also work with leadership from educator preparation programs and the pre-K–12 sector to determine the best way to connect educator evaluation results back to preparation programs to inform program design and improvement.

## Other recommendations

### The charge of the committee was to provide recommendations to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding state data collection and reporting practices. Nonetheless, during its deliberations, the committee also identified additional general recommendations for K–12 districts and for educator preparation programs. These are detailed below.

### Recommendations for districts

### Promote the use of educator evaluation data to enhance student learning. District leaders should use educator evaluation data to target professional development and educator supports and to improve instructional and administrative practices by focusing on the areas of greatest needs. For instance, if many educators in a school are rated as Needs Improvement on Standard 3 (family and community engagement), a principal might consider devoting professional development time to that issue school-wide. By contrast, if this standard is a challenge for just one or a few educators in the building, the principal might instead provide a different, more individualized set of supports. To support this goal, district leaders should ensure that data are consistently reported across schools within the district and should help their educators to understand how evaluation data can be used to enhance student learning.

### Use data from educator goals to further prioritize district supports.

Beyond the data reported to ESE, districts also have access to educators’ professional practice and student learning goals and their success in attaining them. District administrators and evaluators should analyze these data for patterns so that they can further prioritize their supports to educators and refine their strategies for instructional improvement.

### Look for unexpected patterns in the data and follow up to improve implementation. As districts begin to implement the new framework, they will undoubtedly discover unexpected results: for example, situations where an educator’s summative performance rating is out of sync with his or her rating of impact on student learning, or where ratings in one school appear to be systematically higher or lower than those in other schools. Where unexpected and unusual patterns emerge, districts should review their practices to ensure that administrators are implementing the evaluation system with fidelity.

### Use data and regular reporting to engage school committees, families, the community, and other partners in informed discussions about educator quality.

District and school administrators should share educator evaluation data regularly with the public in their community to foster informed discussions about educator quality. Information should be clear, relevant, and timely and should encourage dialogue about how to support high-quality instruction and instructional leadership and improved student outcomes.

### Recommendations for educator preparation programs

### Use the evaluation data for their program graduates to improve program quality. ESE will soon be able to link educators’ evaluation ratings back to their preparation programs, which will provide useful insight on how program graduates perform once they enter practice in districts. Educator preparation programs should use this information to strengthen their curriculum and improve program quality, so that newly minted educators arrive in districts better prepared to succeed. This will be most effective when districts and educator preparation programs partner to identify common problems and work together to solve them.

### Prepare students to understand and use the evaluation system for improving their practice.

Educator preparation programs have a responsibility to prepare their students for success in all aspects of their roles as educators. Massachusetts-based programs can play a major part in supporting the transition to the new evaluation system by ensuring that their graduates, who compose the majority of the Massachusetts educator workforce, are familiar with the new state requirements and understand how to use the evaluation process to continuously improve their practice.

# Conclusion

Massachusetts’ new educator evaluation system makes clear that performance matters and that student learning is the ultimate objective. The system builds in opportunities for educators to set goals, work with colleagues, and share evidence of goal attainment. It emphasizes differentiation of performance and continuous improvement for all educators. In the coming years, it will contribute to instruction that better serves our students, to opportunities to learn from the best of the profession, and to accelerated improvement in achievement.

Clear, relevant reports about educator evaluation results that provide appropriate context for findings and assure educators’ confidentiality will support the objectives of the new system and will provide accountability and transparency about implementation. Consistent messages from the state about appropriate use of the data will mitigate against inaccurate or misleading interpretations, and research on implementation and impact of the new system will help improve the quality of implementation statewide. Ultimately, the reporting mechanisms that accompany the new system should support the objective of the educator evaluation system itself: to promote improvement at all levels, keep student learning at the center, and foster continuous dialogue on enhancing student outcomes.

1. Each year ESE will collect formative performance ratings for educators on year 1 of a two-year self-directed growth plan and summative ratings for all other educators. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Educator plans define the growth or improvement actions identified as part of each educator’s evaluation. The type and duration of the plan is determined by the evaluator. State regulations define four types of educator plans:

   Developing educator plan: A plan developed by the educator and the evaluator for one school year or less for an administrator in the first three years in the district; or for a teacher without Professional Teacher Status; or, at the discretion of an evaluator, for an educator in a new assignment.

   Self-directed growth plan: A plan of one to two years developed by the educator, for experienced educators who are rated proficient or exemplary.

   Directed growth plan: A plan of one school year or less for educators who are in need of improvement, developed by the educator and the evaluator.

   Improvement plan: A plan of at least 30 calendar days and no more than one school year for educators who are rated unsatisfactory, developed by the evaluator with goals specific to improving the educator’s unsatisfactory performance. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. In the case of reports on educator preparation programs, these would refer to the characteristics of the schools or districts served by the preparation programs’ graduates. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)