

The Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation

Evaluating Teachers and Specialized Instructional Support Personnel

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[Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](#)

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Overview

Purpose of this Guide

The Massachusetts Model System is a comprehensive educator evaluation system designed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in concert with a wide range of stakeholders and pursuant to educator evaluation regulations, [603 CMR 35.00](#). The Model System includes tools, guidance, rubrics, and contract language to support the evaluation of all educators.¹ School committees and school districts can adopt the Model System, adapt the Model System, or revise their own evaluation system to align with the regulations.² This guide will:

- Introduce key components of the educator evaluation framework and the requirements set forth in regulations;
- Outline specific action steps, forms, and tools from the Model System specific to the evaluation of classroom teachers and Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP); and
- Highlight considerations, conditions, and systems necessary for effective implementation at the school level.

While much of the content in this guide is applicable across educator roles, its focus is on the evaluation of classroom teachers and specialized instructional support personnel (SISP).³ Guidance specific to evaluating school-level administrators can be found in [Evaluating Principals and School-Level Administrators](#) and for superintendents in [Evaluating Superintendents and District-Level Administrators](#). Critical insights and lessons from the field have been incorporated throughout Model System.

This guide is divided into five sections corresponding to the five steps of the evaluation cycle: Step 1: Self-Assessment, Step 2: Goal Setting and Plan Development; Step 3: Plan Implementation; Step 4: Formative Assessment/Evaluation; and Step 5: Summative Evaluation. Each section is organized as follows:

Overview – describes the step of the cycle

Timeframe – describes the window in which the step occurs during a typical school year/evaluation cycle

Conditions for Effective Implementation – includes important knowledge, capacity, systems, and recommended resources

Step-Specific Deep Dives – in-depth guidance on particular considerations or recommendations that warrant further detail or clarification, such as Strategic Evidence Collection.

¹ “Educator” is used in this guide to refer to classroom teachers and specialized instructional support personnel. “Educator” also refers to administrators when they are engaged in “being evaluated” as distinct from the role of “Evaluator.”

² Further details about adopting, adapting, or revising the Model System can be found in [The Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework: Overview](#).

³ SISP are educators who teach or counsel individual or small groups of students through consultation with a classroom teacher, such as school nurses, guidance or adjustment counselors, speech and language pathologists, and some special education teachers.

Overview

Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework

Educator Evaluation is designed to promote student learning, growth, and achievement by providing educators with feedback for improvement, enhanced opportunities for professional growth, and clear structures for accountability ([603 CMR 35.00](#)).

The MA educator evaluation framework applies to every educator. School committees evaluate superintendents using the MA educator evaluation framework; superintendents apply the same framework when they evaluate assistant superintendents, principals and other district administrators; and principals, in turn, apply the framework when they evaluate teachers, SISP, and school-level administrators.

There are six key features of the Massachusetts educator evaluation framework:

1. **Statewide Standards and Indicators for Effective Administrative Leadership and Teaching Practice.** The Standards and Indicators for both administrators and teachers establish a statewide understanding about what effective administrative leadership and teaching practice looks like.⁴ Each Standard is broken down into 3-6 core Indicators.

Standards for Administrators

Instructional Leadership
Management and Operations
Family and Community Engagement
Professional Culture

Standards for Teachers

Curriculum, Planning and Assessment
Teaching All Students
Family and Community Engagement
Professional Culture

2. **Role-specific rubrics define the Standards and Indicators.** The Standards and Indicators are “translated” into rubrics that describe practice in detail at different levels of proficiency ([603 CMR 35.06](#)). Educators and evaluators use the rubric most appropriate to the role of the educator as a foundation for self-assessment, formative assessment and summative evaluation. Rubrics give substance to the Standards and Indicators. Each Indicator⁵ is broken down into elements that are in turn described at four levels. Rubrics are a tool for making explicit and specific the behaviors and actions present at each level of performance. They prompt careful analysis and foster constructive dialogue about those expectations and how to improve practice. Detailed information about rubrics can be found in the [Guide to Model Evaluation Rubrics](#).

3. **Three Categories of Evidence.** To assess educator performance on the Standards and Indicators, the regulations require use of three types of evidence ([603 CMR 35.07\(1\)](#)):

Multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement, including classroom assessments, common assessments comparable across grade or subject district-wide, and state-wide growth measures where available, including the MCAS Student Growth Percentile (SGP) and ACCESS for English Learners.

Judgments based on observations and artifacts of professional practice, including unannounced observations of practice of any duration; and

⁴ The regulations define the Standards and Indicators for Effective Teaching Practice and for Administrative Leadership Practice ([603 CMR 35.03](#) and [603 CMR 35.04](#)).

⁵ The Student Learning Indicator (I-F for administrators and II-C for teachers) is the only Indicator without corresponding elements or descriptions of practice. Evidence of impact on student learning based on multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement must be taken into account alongside other types of evidence when determining a performance rating for that Standard.

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Additional evidence relevant to one or more Performance Standards, including student feedback as a source of evidence when evaluating teachers, and staff feedback as a source of evidence when evaluating administrators ([603 CMR 35.07\(1\)](#)).

4. **Statewide Performance Rating Scale.** The performance of every educator is rated against the Performance Standards described above. All educators earn one of four ratings: Exemplary, Proficient, Needs Improvement, or Unsatisfactory. Each rating has a specific meaning:

Exemplary performance represents a level of performance that exceeds the already high standard of Proficient. A rating of Exemplary is reserved for performance that is of such a high level that it could serve as a model.

Proficient performance is understood to be fully satisfactory. This is the rigorous expected level of performance; demanding, but attainable.

Needs Improvement indicates performance that is below the requirements of a Standard but is not considered to be Unsatisfactory at the time. Improvement is necessary and expected.

Unsatisfactory performance is merited when performance has not significantly improved following a rating of Needs Improvement, or performance is consistently below the requirements of a standard and is considered inadequate, or both.

5. **Four Educator Plans.** The regulations define four different Educator Plans differentiated for educators by both career stage and performance. The following three plans apply only to “experienced” educators (defined as a teacher with Professional Teacher Status (PTS)) or administrators with more than three years in an administrative position in the school district:

The *Self-Directed Growth Plan* applies to experienced educators rated Proficient or Exemplary and is developed by the educator. Evaluators apply professional judgement to collected evidence of educator performance to place educators on either a one or two-year plan.

The *Directed Growth Plan* applies to experienced educators rated Needs Improvement and is a plan of one school year or less, developed by the educator and the evaluator.

The *Improvement Plan* applies to experienced educators rated Unsatisfactory and is a plan of no less than 30 calendar days and no longer than one school year, developed by the evaluator.

The *Developing Educator Plan* applies to teachers without PTS, an administrator in the first three years in a district, or an educator in a new assignment (at the discretion of an evaluator). This plan is developed by the educator and the evaluator and is for one school year or less.

- Since few new educators are expected to demonstrate Proficient practice on all Standards in their first years, new educators are on Developing Educator Plans in recognition of their initial growth and development within a new role.

6. **Five-Step Evaluation Cycle.** The 5-Step Evaluation Cycle is the centerpiece of the evaluation framework and designed to have all educators play an active, engaged role in their professional growth and development. Every evaluation begins with a Self-Assessment and concludes with a Summative Evaluation. It is a continuous improvement process in which evidence from the Summative Evaluation becomes important information for the educator’s next Self-Assessment and subsequent goal setting.

Overview

Priorities for Implementing the Framework

“Simply put, poor evaluation practices are a missed opportunity for promoting better leading, better teaching, better learning, and better schools.” – Massachusetts Task Force on the Evaluation of Teachers and Administrators

Approaching educator evaluation thoughtfully and strategically requires attention to **coherence** and **collaboration**.

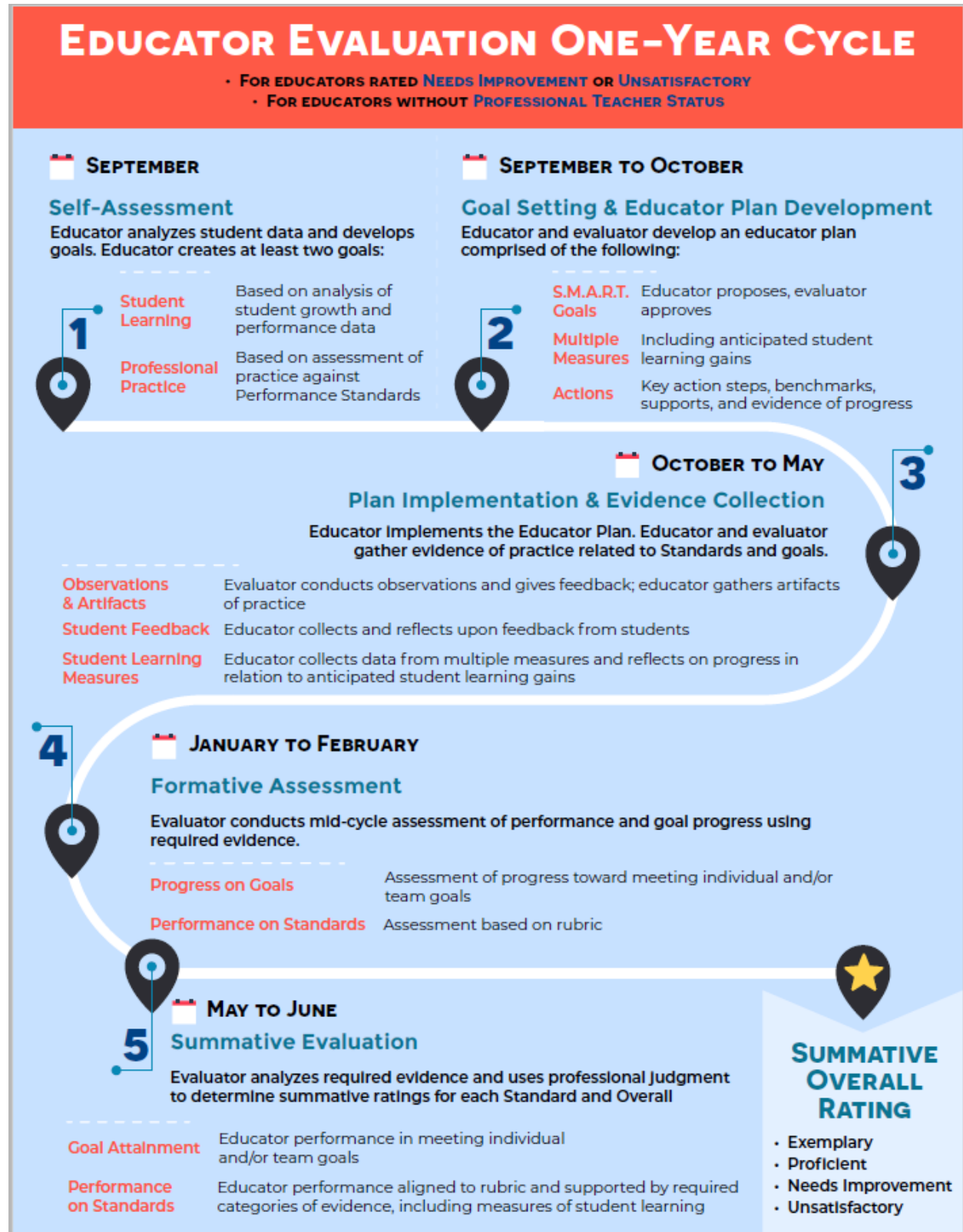
- **Coherence.** Without explicit connections to other priorities and ongoing work, the educator evaluation system will be both perceived and undertaken as an “add on” that is disconnected from daily practice and broader goals for the school and district, thereby limiting opportunities for feedback and growth. Linking data analysis, self-assessment, goal setting, and evidence collection activities required for educator evaluation to key activities already underway in the school is one way to build this coherence.

For example, the evaluation system can be a key lever to build knowledge and support effective implementation of the [Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks](#). Goal setting, observations, and feedback can focus on and reinforce core instructional practices aligned to the frameworks, and student learning data can help teachers and leaders track progress. (See DESE’s [Quick Reference Guide: Educator Evaluation & the MA Curriculum Frameworks](#) for additional tips on building coherence between the evaluation framework and curriculum implementation.)

- **Collaboration.** Creating a shared vision for teaching and learning through reflection and dialogue is at the heart of the educator evaluation process. Grade-level, department and other teams can use the 5-Step Evaluation Cycle to engage in conversations about rubrics, goal-setting, student data, and instructional strategies in order to enhance individual and collective professional growth, refine action steps for improving student learning, and build a shared understanding of effective practice.

This guide highlights opportunities for collaboration throughout the evaluation cycle, such as in developing team goals or in calibrating around the elements of high-quality instructional practice and feedback to teachers.





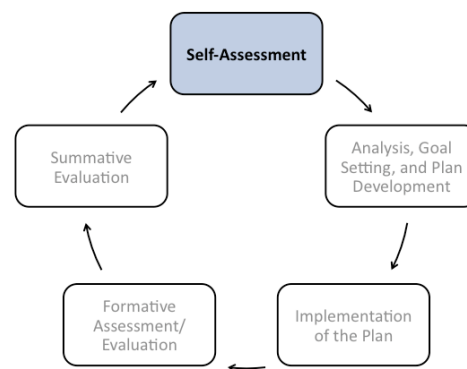
Step 1: Self-Assessment

Step 1: Self-Assessment

Overview

The first step of the Educator Evaluation cycle is self-assessment and goal proposal. In this step, educators:

- 1) **Use data to identify strengths and needs of their students.** Using evidence from standardized, common, and/or classroom assessments, educators identify the performance strengths and learning needs of past and current students in order to get a sense of where to focus their student learning goal.
- 2) **Analyze their own professional practice using the Model Rubric.** Educators use the Model Rubric (or the rubric adopted by their district) to identify strengths and needs related to their own practice. Teachers can use a wide variety of evidence in this analysis, such as feedback from past evaluations, parent or student feedback, or input from peers.
- 3) **Propose student learning and professional practice goals.** Finally, based on this analysis of student learning and assessment of practice against performance Standards, each educator proposes at least two S.M.A.R.T. goals: one student learning goal and one professional practice goal. S.M.A.R.T. goals are specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic and rigorous, and timed and tracked. Goals may be developed individually or in teams. See [Deep-Dive: Setting S.M.A.R.T. Goals](#) for additional guidance.



The self-assessment is a critical moment for educators to take ownership of the process. A guiding principle of the Model System is that evaluation should be done *with* educators, not *to* them. In the words of a Kindergarten teacher in the Boston Public Schools, “Teachers need to take ownership of this process in order for it to be most meaningful.” Embracing the self-assessment process empowers educators to shape the conversation by stating what *they* think their strengths are, the areas on which they want to focus, and what support they need. An educator’s position is made more powerful when backed by specific evidence, clear alignment with school and district priorities and initiatives, and strong use of team goals.

Timeframe

Self-assessment should take place as early as possible in the school year, leaving most of the year for educators to work toward their goals. The time it takes to complete this step might range from two to six weeks, depending on the extent to which team or department goals are included and how quickly those groups of educators can meet to analyze student data and propose collective goals.

The self-assessment step should be informed by a prior Summative Evaluation when available. Given a typical one or two year cycle, most Summative Evaluations occur at the end of a school year—therefore, self-assessment could even begin at the end of one year as educators reflect on their performance, and continue through the beginning of the next year as educators analyze data for their new students.

Step 1: Self-Assessment

Conditions for Effective Implementation

The section below describes conditions for effective implementation to support educators, evaluators, and school leadership teams implement Step 1: Self-Assessment. Educators' ability to effectively engage in this step should be supported by evaluators and school leadership teams through careful planning and the provision of key resources and tools.

- **Communication of school and district priorities, goals, and initiatives.** School leadership teams and evaluators can promote coherence and support educators in prioritizing their self-assessment by establishing and communicating a tightly focused vision of school and district priorities and goals. School leaders and evaluators may want to make explicit connections between school and district priorities and the [Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice](#) and to specific data sources that are priorities for analysis. For example, knowledge of a district priority to increase parent engagement prompts educators to engage in more intensive reflection on Standard III: Family and Community Engagement. Likewise, a school-wide goal of increasing reading comprehension scores may guide educators to look more closely at reading comprehension data that are relevant to their respective roles. Many districts collaborate with the school staff to identify specific “priority” Indicators or elements, giving educators clear direction with regard to how to focus their analysis in alignment with the school's priorities and goals. While this does not mean that the other Standards and Indicators would be ignored over the course of the year, it tightens and intensifies the vision for district- or school-wide improvement, helping to ensure educator and team alignment with school efforts.
- **Access to student data.** In order to create strong, targeted goals that are likely to accelerate student learning, educators need access to student data early in the year, opportunities to collaborate in teams to analyze the data, and ongoing professional development focused on analyzing student data and translating that analysis into S.M.A.R.T. goals for improved student learning and professional practice. The logistics of accessing data can prevent educators from engaging in meaningful and thorough self-assessment early in the year. School leadership can support educators by working to ensure that data is accessible early in the year, particularly for new students. Both individuals and teams need access to data for the students under their responsibility—team data may need to be disaggregated (or aggregated) for effective analysis.
- **Opportunities for team collaboration.** While self-assessment is largely an individual activity, there are many roles for teams to play to strengthen and add meaning to the process, including:
 - Working together over time to “unpack the rubric” and discuss topics such as alignment between performance Standards and school goals, or the definitions of certain Indicators. Such conversations serve to deepen the professional culture around improving practice and contribute to a shared sense of educator empowerment and ownership of their professional growth.
 - Analyzing student data together to mutually strengthen and reinforce one another's skills and deepen their understanding of the data.
 - Proposing shared goals to collectively pursue.⁶

⁶ Team goals may not be appropriate for all educators. For example, new teachers may be focusing on induction goals, and struggling educators will have goals focusing on areas for improvement. Evaluators should also be sensitive to issues that may arise, including confidentiality, if teams include an individual with an Educator Plan that is a year or less (which could indicate a previous rating of Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory). For example, a 2nd grade team may include three teachers on two-year Self-Directed Growth Plans; one teacher on a one-year Directed Growth Plan; and one teacher on an Improvement Plan. In that scenario, the evaluator should consider whether it is appropriate for all teachers to participate in a team goal. All Improvement Plan goals will have to target the areas in urgent need of

Step 1: Self-Assessment

- Exploring ways in which members can contribute to one another's growth and provide feedback for improvement throughout the year.

Teams can work together to propose shared goals and identify opportunities for peer coaching, modeling, feedback and other ways to support one another's professional growth throughout the year. It is particularly important to integrate special educators, staff who support English learners, and professional support personnel such as counselors, school psychologists, and school nurses into these collaborative planning conversations so all educators can benefit from their specialized knowledge in the formation of goals and educator plans.

- **Knowledge of planned professional development and available resources.** While preparing to propose goals, educators should be aware of supports that are available through the school and district. As many schools plan formal professional development opportunities far in advance, it will benefit educators to know the timing and purpose of planned activities. Further, educators will be able to propose stronger goals if they have a sense of what options are realistic for support from the school, such as how much common planning time teams will have throughout the year to work toward shared goals or whether they will have opportunities to observe or be observed by peers.

Recommended Actions and Considerations for Self-Assessment & Goal Proposal

This section includes recommended actions for individual educators, teams, and evaluators/school leadership to effectively implement this step, followed by special considerations for implementation based on both research and lessons learned.

Recommended Action	Individual Educator	Team	Evaluator/ School Leadership	Notes
Communicate school and district priorities and goals, existing and planned initiatives, planned professional development, and other opportunities for support			✓	Clear communication will strengthen collaboration and coherence , enabling educators to propose tightly aligned goals and realistic supports
Communicate expectations for completion of self-assessment			✓	Exact dates are not regulated and may be set through collective bargaining (see Model Collective Bargaining Language)
Identify teams who will collaborate to “unpack the rubric,” analyze student learning, and propose goals		✓	✓	Teams may be organized around department, grade level, or students for whom the team shares responsibility
Assemble and review student learning data for students currently under the responsibility of the team or educator	✓	✓	✓	To save time, evaluators may want to participate in team discussion and goal development

improvement, whereas the teacher on the Directed Growth Plan may be able to more easily tackle both the team goal and individual goals for improvement. If a shared goal is proposed by that team, it should include benchmarks that will be available prior to both the Formative Assessment and the Summative Evaluation for the teacher on the Improvement Plan and the teacher on the Directed Growth Plan.

Step 1: Self-Assessment

Identify student strengths and areas to target for growth	✓	✓		Educators will analyze data for past students while reflecting on performance; goals are for current students
Review Standards and Indicators on the district or DESE rubric	✓	✓	✓	All rubrics must include the Standards and Indicators for Effective Teaching Practice defined in 603 CMR 35.03
Identify professional practices that teams need to engage in to attain student learning goals		✓		Team professional practice goals should be aligned with team student learning goals where they exist as well as performance standards on rubrics
Identify educator performance areas of strength and areas for growth	✓			Educators may choose to rate themselves on the rubric but are not required to submit ratings; they are only required to provide “an assessment of practice against Performance Standards” (603 CMR 35.06(2)(a))
Propose a minimum of one student learning goal and one professional practice goal	✓	✓		Goals may be individual and/or at the team level

Considerations for Goal Proposal

The following questions may arise around proposing meaningful goals.

- ***Why are team goals a priority?***

The regulations require that both educators and evaluators consider team goals; goals can be individual, team, or a combination of both. Setting grade level, department, or other team goals—both for student learning and professional practice—promotes alignment and coherence, focuses effort, and fosters professional collaboration and cooperation, thus enhancing opportunities for professional growth. Team goals also ease the evaluator’s burden of assessing and supporting a high volume of individual educators’ goals. Team goals can also propose a common outcome and measure, but identify differentiated responsibilities and actions for members.

- ***What’s the difference between a student learning goal and a professional practice goal?***

The educator evaluation framework prioritizes both student learning and educator professional growth; therefore, the regulations require a minimum of at least one student learning goal and one professional practice goal. In reality, professional practice is typically closely entwined with student learning which can make it difficult to distinguish between these two different kinds of goals.

Student learning goals are driven by the needs of the students for whom an educator or team has responsibility. On the first day of school, a given classroom of students has a range of learning needs. For example, 40% of the students in a 6th grade class may be reading below grade level. Any teacher that steps into that classroom faces the same array of student learning needs. Student data shapes and informs student learning goals.

Professional practice goals are distinguished in two primary ways: first, the manner in which a teacher is able to support student progress toward learning goals may vary by teacher. A novice teacher is likely to have a different professional focus than a veteran teacher in support of improving the 6th grade students’ reading skills. Second, professional practice goals should support the learning of the teacher—an opportunity to deepen or acquire a skill or knowledge of content, pedagogy, or professional

Step 1: Self-Assessment

leadership, for example. Individual teacher practice and learning shapes and informs professional practice goals.

- ***My students have such different needs – how do I pick just one or two goals to focus on?***
Given the complex array of needs of individual students—let alone classrooms, grades, or a whole school—it is critical that educators prioritize when proposing goals. As noted earlier, one source of guidance is district and school goals and priorities. Another source of guidance is the analysis of educator performance: an educator’s strengths and areas for growth can also inform the selection of student learning goals. For example, a middle school special education teacher may have a history of success in improving the reading comprehension of her students, but may be challenged by students who are increasingly struggling with non-fiction writing. Reading comprehension and writing skills are both important student needs, but in this case, it would make more sense to propose a goal on non-fiction writing to ensure the educator’s focus and the evaluator’s support in this area.

Considerations for Student Learning Goals

Districts may approach student learning goals slightly differently from professional practice goals in terms of both timing and evidence.

- **Timing:** Since many educators will craft a student goal that addresses the learning, growth, and achievement of the students in front of them, the action steps, evidence collection, and projected outcomes often take place within one school year. Therefore, some districts may recommend annual student learning goals even for educators on two-year self-directed growth plans. Assessment of overall goal attainment at the summative evaluation therefore takes into account progress toward two student learning goals, rather than one.
- **Alignment to the Student Learning Indicator:** The Student Learning Indicator describes expectations associated with an educator’s expected impact on student learning, as determined through statewide or common assessments. Districts have considerable discretion in how they relate student learning goals to the Student Learning Indicator. While student learning goals are driven by the needs of the students for whom an educator or team has responsibility, and are therefore intended to be relatively individualized, there may be opportunities to utilize the measures associated with the Student Learning Indicator as evidence for student learning goals as well. This synergy affords educators the opportunity to study and reflect upon evidence of student learning in collaboration with others, particularly when utilizing common assessments, in a way that remains customized to the immediate learning needs of their students.

Aligning student learning goals to the Student Learning Indicator might be an effective and efficient approach for some districts. Other districts might prefer to keep them separate in an effort to reinforce the individualized nature of goal-setting. Both approaches are acceptable and should be considered in light of what meets the needs of the individual district. More information on the Student Learning Indicator is available in the [Deep Dive: Student Learning Measures and Anticipated Student Learning Gains](#).

Districts should clearly communicate any specific parameters around the timing or focus of student learning goals before educators embark upon their self-assessment.

Suggested Resources

The “Suggested Resources” section lists several resources that will support educators and evaluators to engage in self-assessment and goal proposal thoughtfully and effectively.

Step 1: Self-Assessment

District-Provided Tools and Resources	DESE Tools and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ District and school improvement plans and/or goals▪ Dates and intended outcomes of planned professional development opportunities▪ Specific information on new or ongoing initiatives▪ Growth and achievement data for past and current or incoming students▪ District performance rubric or Model Classroom Teacher Rubric▪ Copy of collective bargaining agreement and/or other evaluation requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Guide to Model Evaluation Rubrics▪ Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting Form▪ Deep-Dive: Setting S.M.A.R.T. Goals▪ Teacher Training Workshop 1 (Rubric Review) and Workshop 2 (Self-Assessment)▪ A Protocol for Developing S.M.A.R.T. Goal Statements

Step 1: Self-Assessment

Deep Dive: Setting S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Good goals help educators, schools, and districts improve. That is why the educator evaluation regulations require educators to develop goals that are specific, actionable, and measurable. They require, too, that goals be accompanied by action plans with benchmarks to assess progress.

This S.M.A.R.T. Goal framework is a useful tool that individuals and teams can use to craft effective goals and action plans:

S	=	Specific and Strategic
M	=	Measurable
A	=	Action Oriented
R	=	Rigorous, Realistic, and Results-Focused (the 3 Rs)
T	=	Timed and Tracked

Goals with an action plan and benchmarks that have these characteristics are S.M.A.R.T.

A practical example some of us have experienced in our personal lives can make clear how this S.M.A.R.T. goal framework can help turn hopes into actions that have results.

First, an example of *not* being S.M.A.R.T. with goals: *I will lose weight and get in condition.*

Getting S.M.A.R.T.er: *Between March 15 and Memorial Day, I will lose 10 pounds and be able to run 1 mile nonstop.*

The **hope** is now a **goal**, that meets most of the S.M.A.R.T. Framework criteria:

It's Specific and Strategic	= 10 pounds, 1 mile
It's Measurable	= pounds, miles
It's Action-oriented	= lose, run
It's got the 3 Rs	= weight loss and running distance
It's Timed	= 10 weeks

S.M.A.R.T. enough: To make the goal really S.M.A.R.T., though, we need to add an action plan and benchmarks. They make sure the goal meets that final criteria, "Tracked." They also strengthen the other criteria, especially when the benchmarks include "process" benchmarks for tracking progress on the key actions and "outcome" benchmarks that track early evidence of change and/or progress toward the ultimate goal.

Key Actions

- Reduce my daily calorie intake to fewer than 1,200 calories for each of 10 weeks.
- Walk 15 minutes per day; increase my time by 5 minutes per week for the next 4 weeks.
- Starting in week 5, run and walk in intervals for 30 minutes, increasing the proportion of time spent running instead of walking until I can run a mile, non-stop, by the end of week 10.

Step 1: Self-Assessment

Deep Dive: Setting S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Benchmarks:

- For Process, maintaining a daily record of calorie intake and exercise
- For Outcome, biweekly weight loss and running distance targets (e.g., After 2 wks: 2 lbs/0 miles; 4 wks: 4 lbs/0 miles; 6 wks: 6lbs/.2 mi; 8 wks: 8 lbs/.4 miles)

Below are more details on the characteristics of S.M.A.R.T. goals as they apply in schools and districts.

S = Specific and Strategic

Goals need to be straightforward and clearly written, with sufficient specificity to determine whether or not they have been achieved. A goal is strategic when it serves an important purpose of the school or district as a whole and addresses something that is likely to have a big impact on our overall vision.

M = Measurable

If we can't measure it, we can't manage it. What measures of quantity, quality, and/or impact will we use to determine that we've achieved the goal? And how will we measure progress along the way? Progress toward achieving the goal is typically measured through "benchmarks." Some benchmarks focus on the process: are we doing what we said we were going to do? Other benchmarks focus on the outcome: are we seeing early signs of progress toward the results?

A = Action Oriented

Goals have active, not passive verbs. And the action steps attached to them tell us "who" is doing "what." Without clarity about what we're actually going to do to achieve the goal, a goal is only a hope with little chance of being achieved. Making clear the key actions required to achieve a goal helps everyone see how their part of the work is connected—to other parts of the work and to a larger purpose. Knowing that helps people stay focused and energized, rather than fragmented and uncertain.

R = Rigorous, Realistic, and Results-Focused (the 3 Rs)

A goal is not an activity: a goal makes clear what will be different as a result of achieving the goal. A goal needs to describe a realistic, yet ambitious result. It needs to stretch the educator, team, school, or district toward improvement but not be out of reach. The focus and effort required to achieve a rigorous but realistic goal should be challenging but not exhausting. Goals set too high will discourage us, whereas goals set too low will leave us feeling "empty" when it is accomplished and won't serve our students well.

T = Timed

A goal needs to have a deadline. Deadlines help all of us take action. For a goal to be accomplished, definite times need to be established when key actions will be completed and benchmarks achieved. Tracking the progress we're making on our action steps (process benchmarks) is essential: if we fall behind on doing something we said we were going to do, we'll need to accelerate the pace on something else. But tracking progress on process outcomes isn't enough. Our outcome benchmarks help us know whether we're on track to achieve our goal and/or whether we've reached our goal. Benchmarks give us a way to see our progress and celebrate it. They also give us information we need to make mid-course corrections.

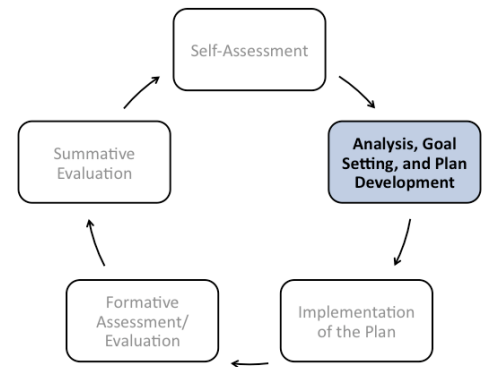
Step 2: Goal Setting and Plan Development

Step 2: Goal Setting and Plan Development

Overview

The second step of the evaluation cycle is goal setting and plan development. Activities involved in Step 2 include:

- 1) **Educators share self-assessments and proposed goals with evaluators and refine proposed goals as needed.** Educators and evaluators refine educator goals to ensure that final goals are needs-driven, specific, action-oriented, and aligned to school and district goals and priorities. Evaluators have final authority over goals.
- 2) **Educators and evaluators develop Educator Plans that identify activities and resources that will support instructional practice, student learning, and progress toward goal attainment.** Educator Plans describe the key actions that educators will take in order to achieve their goals, timeline by which actions will be taken, benchmarks for measuring progress, and the resources and supports needed. The type, duration, and primary developer of the Plan is determined according to the educator's professional status and performance. See [Deep-Dive: Educator Plans](#) for additional guidance.
- 3) **Evaluators and educators identify relevant evidence to be collected throughout the cycle.** During this step, educators and evaluators identify the sources of evidence to be collected, including the mechanism(s) for collecting student feedback, potential artifacts of practice, multiple measures of student learning (including statewide assessments, where available) and anticipated student learning gains associated with those measures. See [Deep Dive: Strategic Evidence Collection](#) and [Deep Dive: Student Learning Measures](#) for additional guidance.



Timeframe

Goal refinement and plan development take place early in the school year so that educators can engage in the actions and activities to which they have committed. While the dates may depend on local bargaining and the timeframe for self-assessment, a good rule of thumb is to finalize all Educator Plans by mid- to late October. Finally, note that observations and other types of evidence collection that do not rely on the completion of Educator Plans and may begin prior to or concurrent with this step.

Step 2: Goal Setting and Plan Development

Conditions for Effective Implementation

The responsibility for developing Educator Plans is typically shared between educators and evaluators. School leadership and evaluators play a unique role, however, in strategic planning for support. The following school-wide knowledge, capacity, and systems will support educators and evaluators to effectively implement this step.

- **Communication of school and district priorities, goals, and initiatives.** The school leadership team and evaluators can promote coherence and support educators in developing strategic goals and Educator Plans by establishing and communicating a tightly focused vision of school and district priorities and goals. Alignment of educator goals and plans with district and school priorities and goals helps schools focus on professional development activities and supports to educators that hold the greatest promise for advancing the school's stated priorities.
- **Support in developing and monitoring S.M.A.R.T. goals.** If proposed goals lack “S.M.A.R.T.” qualities (Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Rigorous and Realistic, and Timed), they will be challenging to implement and monitor and may be more difficult to achieve. By supporting educators in drafting and refining their goals, the evaluator can help ensure that evaluations are grounded in “S.M.A.R.T.er” goals that translate into a focused Educator Plan and increase the likelihood that the educator will be able to monitor progress, adjust practice, and attain the goals.
- **Clearly defined evidence expectations.** Districts may have specific requirements or expectations around strategic evidence collection, including the type or amount of evidence educators should collect, and the use of statewide, common, and/or classroom assessments to be considered relative to the Student Learning Indicator. School leadership should clearly articulate any school-wide and/or role-specific expectations for evidence collection. See [Deep Dive: Strategic Evidence Collection](#) and [Deep Dive: Student Learning Measures](#) for additional guidance.
- **Systems for communication and support.** In developing Educator Plans, both evaluators and educators benefit from a clear understanding of what supports are available and realistic, as fiscal and logistical constraints can impede the implementation of seemingly strong Educator Plans and goals. For example, how much common planning time will be available for teams collaborating on assessment use? Will individuals have opportunities to observe their peers—and if so, with what frequency? Identifying and communicating the parameters around available support enables all parties to plan more strategically. School leadership should have a system in place for collecting, organizing, and reviewing self-assessments and proposed goals as they are submitted to ensure that they can develop a cohesive plan for supporting educators that is realistic and “doable.”
- **Clearly defined evaluation team.** Districts may make different choices regarding the use of school leadership, Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) if locally negotiated, and district support in the evaluation process. If there is more than one evaluator at a school, the members of the evaluation team must have a common understanding of who will be contributing and what their roles are. Further, educators should know who their primary evaluator is, who else will be contributing, and in what capacity.
- **Meeting with teams and individuals.** Evaluators should set aside time to meet with teams prior to meeting with individual educators to the extent possible. These meetings are an opportunity to finalize goals and agree upon planned activities and supports for multiple educators. If the majority of educators have team goals, this may eliminate the need to have individual conferences with many educators, unless the educator or evaluator requests an individual conference.

Step 2: Goal Setting and Plan Development

- Customizing for differences in roles and responsibilities.** This is a key moment for considering distinctions in the roles and responsibilities of educators. While the vast majority of educators are likely to be evaluated against the same performance rubric, evaluators may emphasize or prioritize certain Indicators and elements by role or responsibility. Consider, for example, element I-A-3: Well-Structured Units and Lessons. Although all educators are expected to implement and adapt as needed well-structured, standards-aligned units and lessons, this element may be more heavily emphasized with educators who are new to the district, or with educators in a specific content area working with a newly adopted curriculum.

Recommended Actions and Considerations for Educator Plan Development

This section includes recommended actions for individual educators, teams, and evaluators/school leadership to effectively implement this step, followed by special considerations for implementation based on both research and lessons learned.

Recommended Action	Individual Educator	Team	Evaluator/ School Leadership	Notes
Review professional development that is already planned for the school year	✓	✓	✓	<i>Depending on proposed goals, educators may incorporate pre-planned professional development into the Educator Plan</i>
Evaluator schedules time with teams and educators to review self-assessments and refine goals			✓	<i>Evaluator may want to meet with teams prior to individuals, as individuals on a team will have a shared goal</i>
Evaluator meets with teams and individual educators to review and finalize proposed goals	✓	✓	✓	<i>Team and individual goals shall be consistent with school and district goals, according to the regulations</i>
Evaluator confirms the measures and anticipated student learning gains that will be used to assess an educator's expected impact on student learning	✓		✓	<i>Note that expected impact on student learning is one of many types of evidence included in the evaluation and shall not be the sole determinant of any evaluation</i>
Evaluator and educators work together to plan activities that will support attainment of goals and identify evidence to collect throughout the cycle	✓	✓	✓	<i>Evaluators may want to develop a system for tracking all of the support and resources that they agree to offer educators to ensure capacity</i>
Record final goals and actions the educator must take to attain these goals			✓	<i>Evaluator retains final authority over goals to be included on Educator Plans</i>

Step 2: Goal Setting and Plan Development

Considerations for Refining Goals. Teams and/or individual educators and evaluators may jointly review available data from student performance measures and other relevant sources when finalizing goals. The conversation about the data during the goal setting process is an opportunity to develop a shared understanding between educator and evaluator that the goal is:

- linked directly to the school's priorities;
- rigorous but realistic; and
- clearly measurable by sources of evidence that are either currently being collected or have plans to be collected that year.

While a minimum one student learning and one professional practice goal is required, the total number of goals may depend on the teams and departments of which the educator is a member, the professional judgment of the educator, and guidance from the evaluator. In addition to considering the school and district's priorities, capacity for support, and existing or planned initiatives that require educator effort to implement, evaluators should also consider past performance and the extent to which educators need customized or intensive support to accelerate growth.

Considerations for Developing Plans. Conversations between educator and evaluator about the goals and planned activities for the year should also identify which sources of evidence (to determine both progress toward meeting the goals and ratings of performance against the Standards) will be collected and by whom. This is an opportunity to ensure that a plan is in place to collect all the evidence necessary. The plan should include all three required types of evidence, provide evaluators with a representative picture of educator practice, and ensure that evaluators have a robust body of evidence on which to base their professional judgment of educator performance and on which to offer targeted, actionable feedback. If it appears that there are gaps in the evidence being collected, it is important to work together to determine how the educator and evaluator can develop a clear plan to share the work of collecting evidence.

Suggested Resources

The "Suggested Resources" section lists resources that will support educators and evaluators to engage in the development of an educator plan thoughtfully and effectively.

District-Provided Tools and Resources	DESE Tools and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Copies of district and school improvement plans and/or goals▪ Dates and intended outcomes of planned professional development opportunities▪ Information on new and ongoing initiatives▪ Copy of collective bargaining agreement and/or other evaluation requirements▪ Self-assessment and proposed goals▪ Information about required evidence, e.g. a directory of evidence, a list of relevant common assessments, and acceptable mechanisms to collect feedback from students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Deep Dive: S.M.A.R.T. Goals▪ Teacher Training Workshop 3: SMART Goals▪ Teacher Training Workshop 4: Gathering Evidence▪ Evidence Collection Toolkit▪ Self Assessment and Goal-Setting Form▪ Educator Plan Form

Step 2: Goal Setting and Plan Development

Deep Dive: Educator Plans

There are four types of Educator Plans to differentiate evaluation by career stage and performance (see: [What's Required in Regulations?](#)). Educator Plans should be designed to provide educators with opportunities for feedback, professional growth, and leadership; and to ensure educator effectiveness and overall system accountability ([603 CMR 35.06\(3\)](#)).

Emerging directly from an educator's professional practice and student learning goals, an Educator Plan should be comprised of key action steps, evidence the educator and evaluator will collect throughout the duration of the plan, and benchmarks to determine progress toward the goals. During the plan's development, evaluators should also communicate clear expectations for educator impact, including but not limited to anticipated student learning gains for the multiple measures that will be used as evidence of educator performance.

What's in an Educator Plan?

- **Goals:** At least one professional practice goal tied to one or more Performance Standards, and at least one student learning goal to improve the learning, growth and achievement of the students under the educator's responsibility.
- **Actions:** Actions the educator must take to attain these goals, including but not limited to specific professional development activities, self-study, and coursework, as well as other supports that may be suggested by the evaluator or provided by the school or district.
- **Alignment:** Alignment to the Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice or Administrative Leadership Practice, as well as local performance standards, district goals, and school goals. (603 CMR 35.06(3)(f))

Who creates the Educator Plan?

Each type of Educator Plan offers the educator and the evaluator different levels of autonomy. Self-Directed Growth Plans are primarily developed by the educator; Directed Growth Plans should be a collaborative effort between the evaluator and the educator, with special attention to area(s) in need of growth; Improvement Plans are developed by the evaluator, with goals specific to improving the educator's unsatisfactory performance; and Developing Educator Plans are developed by the evaluator and the educator, with a focus on the educator's professional development in a new position.

What role does evidence play?

Evidence of practice and/or goal progress that the educator and evaluator will collect throughout the implementation of the plan can be identified when developing an Educator Plan and then updated as needed. Anticipated evidence can be written into key action steps and benchmarks. Identifying evidence at this early stage in the 5-Step Cycle ensures alignment between evidence and the educator's priorities, while guaranteeing a strategic collection of artifacts that is more manageable for the educator and evaluator and more powerful in demonstrating the educator's practice. More tips about strategic evidence identification are available in DESE's [Evidence Collection Toolkit](#).

Step 2: Goal Setting and Plan Development

Deep Dive: Student Learning Measures & Anticipated Student Gains

Massachusetts educator evaluation regulations require that evaluators consider evidence of an educator's expected impact on student learning when determining performance ratings. For teachers, evidence of student learning informs their performance rating for Standard II: Teaching all Students. Evaluators and teachers should identify the most appropriate student learning measures and anticipated student learning gains associated with those measures when developing the Educator Plan. (*Note: an educator's impact on student learning should be analyzed across *multiple* measures and incorporated into judgments of practice alongside all other required types of evidence.)

Identifying Types of Measures. Identifying appropriate measures for each teacher is the first step. Evidence from the following types of assessments may be used to inform a teacher's evaluation:

- For teachers who are responsible for content assessed by statewide testing, **statewide student growth measures** must be one of the measures used to determine impact on student learning.
- Other teachers should use **common assessments** that are used across the district or multiple classrooms. Common assessments may be measures of learning, growth, or achievement. They should be comparable within grades or subjects and aligned to the MA Curriculum Frameworks or other relevant frameworks.
- For teachers where no common assessments are available, they should use data from **classroom assessments** as evidence of impact on student learning.
- For teachers not responsible for direct instruction, the appropriate measures of the teacher's contribution to student learning, growth and achievement are set by the district.

Each type of assessment provides unique information that educators can use to improve practice and evaluators can use to provide educators with meaningful feedback about their impact.

Determining Anticipated Student Learning Gains. Once you've selected the appropriate measures, the next step is to identify anticipated student learning gains for each measure. How much do you expect students to learn? While it may be challenging to determine anticipated learning gains at the beginning of the evaluation cycle, doing so sets up a richer conversation when educators and evaluators reflect on student results during the later stages of the cycle.

The relationship between the actual and anticipated gains on a given measure is ultimately what the evaluator and teacher examine when considering the teacher's impact on student learning. Teachers and evaluators therefore must have a shared understanding of the anticipated student learning gains associated with these measures.

- **DESE determines anticipated student learning gains for statewide growth measures.** Evaluators must consider student growth percentiles (SGP) for educators who have 20 or more students who have taken statewide assessments. The anticipated student learning gain associated with statewide assessments is a mean SGP between 35-65. A mean SGP of 65 or above exceeds expected growth, and a mean SGP of 35 or lower does not meet expected growth.
- **Districts are responsible for determining anticipated student learning gains for common assessments.** These anticipated student learning gains should be consistent across the district.
- When classroom assessments are used as evidence of an educator's impact on students, **the educator and the evaluator should agree upon the anticipated learning gains.**

More tips and resources for identifying appropriate measures and determining anticipated student learning gains are available on the [DESE Educator Evaluation](#) website.

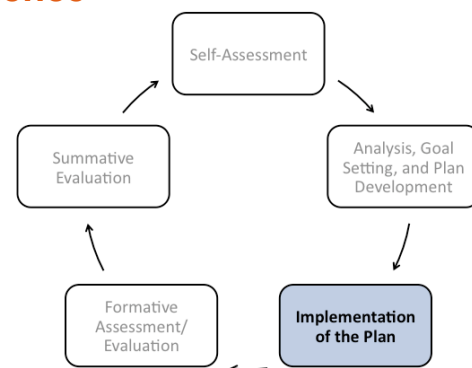
Step 3: Plan Implementation and Collection of Evidence

Step 3: Plan Implementation and Collection of Evidence

Overview

The third step of the evaluation cycle is Implementation of the Educator Plan. Responsibility for this step is divided between educators and evaluators. Activities in this step include:

- 1) **Educators pursue attainment of the goals identified in the Educator Plan.** Using the Educator Plan as a roadmap, educators implement action steps to improve practice and student learning and progress towards goal attainment.
- 2) **Educators and evaluators collect evidence related to practice and student learning.** Evidence is collected throughout the cycle from multiple sources, including announced and unannounced observations, artifacts of practice, measures of student learning, and student feedback. See [Deep Dive: Strategic Evidence Collection](#) and [Deep Dive: Staff and Student Feedback](#) for additional guidance.
- 3) **Evaluators provide educators with timely feedback for improvement and access to planned supports.** See *Special Considerations for Observation and Feedback* for additional guidance.



Timeframe

Step 3 begins as soon as Educator Plans are finalized and continues until the Summative Evaluation occurs. Certain components, however, do not depend on finalized goals or completed plans: evidence collection, including observations, can and should begin as soon as school commences, as educators and evaluators will need adequate time to collect evidence for Standards and Indicators. For example, events welcoming families and students back to school often occur in the opening days or weeks of school and provide valuable demonstrations of educator engagement with families.

Some actions identified in Educator Plans may take place prior to goal setting, as goals may connect to participation in pre-planned professional development—especially if alignment between Educator Plans and school goals and priorities is strong. Once the Educator Plan is complete, evaluators can conduct observations in classrooms and other work environments, review artifacts, and analyze student data with a sharpened focus on goals and high-priority areas of educator performance.

Conditions for Effective Implementation

The purpose of the section below is to help educators, evaluators, and school leadership teams prepare and implement Educator Plans. The responsibility for implementing the Educator Plan is shared between educators and evaluators. The following school-wide knowledge, capacity, and systems will support educators and evaluators to effectively implement this step.

- **Evaluator training on use of rubric.** The locally bargained performance rubric drives evidence collection, analysis of performance, and feedback for improvement. Evaluators should have formal training on using a rubric to evaluate performance (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). For example, they should be aware of common evaluator biases such as the tendency to be a “hard” (or “easy”) grader or an overemphasis on particular knowledge and skills that could influence the rest of an evaluation.
- **Evaluator calibration.** Within both schools and districts, calibration across evaluators is critical. Calibration involves developing and maintaining a shared understanding of effective practice for

Step 3: Plan Implementation and Collection of Evidence

consistent use of rubrics to evaluate performance. Evaluators should continually discuss topics such as distinctions between performance levels, alignment between performance Standards and school goals, or the definitions of certain Indicators. It benefits teams of evaluators to conduct some observations or artifact reviews together. While districts may take the lead in providing support to evaluators, school leadership should ensure that all evaluators have time to engage in professional conversation about what good practice looks like. DESE's calibration training resources can be found [here](#).

- **Strategic evidence collection.** It is essential to establish a clear and shared understanding between educator and evaluator of what constitutes solid evidence that the educator is achieving their student learning and professional practice goals and meeting the Standards for Effective Practice.⁷ Evidence collection should be seen as an opportunity to select a sample of artifacts and other data that fairly represents performance and impact. It is not intended to be a record of all that the educator has done in a year. Evidence should demonstrate progress toward professional practice and student learning goals, practice related to high priority Standards and Indicators, and critical school priorities. Additional guidance on strategic evidence collection is available [here](#), and suggested strategies can be found [here](#).

Evaluators should leverage existing opportunities for collecting evidence and providing feedback. Coordinating the activities required for successful implementation of Educator Plans with existing schedules for interim assessments, team data meetings, short unannounced classroom visits by the principal/evaluator, and other existing activities to track improvements will maximize educators' time and enhance the coherence and impact of everyone's effort.

- **Sharing of evidence.** Evidence must be shared bi-directionally, as both educators and evaluators have responsibility for compiling data points on educator performance. Evaluators should engage in a transparent process of evidence collection, ensuring that educators have full access. If there is more than one evaluator contributing to an educator's evaluation, school leadership should also consider how the evaluators can appropriately and efficiently share information as needed, with full respect for confidentiality. Finally, educators need to know when they are expected to present evidence to evaluators. This could be a few weeks or days prior to the point of formative review or Summative Evaluation, or could be presented during a formative or summative conference. Clearly communicating the expectations for how evidence will be shared, by whom, and when will assist all parties to effectively compile and organize evidence.
- **Systems for frequent observations and high quality feedback.** For Educator Plans to be effectively implemented, schools must ensure that educators are receiving high quality feedback that is specific, timely, actionable, and aligned to the instructional practices of their content area(s). Feedback should be based on (a) observations of practice and performance in or out of the classroom; (b) reviews of student or teacher work such as unit and lesson plans, (c) measures of student learning; and (d) student or staff feedback.

A key strategy to ensure the provision of high-quality, content-specific feedback is the implementation of [distributed leadership](#). In a distributed leadership model, responsibilities for providing feedback and

⁷ [603 CMR 35.07\(1\)\(c\)](#) notes that educators' collection of evidence should include: "Evidence of fulfillment of professional responsibilities and growth, such as: self-assessments; peer collaboration; professional development linked to goals and or educator plans; contributions to the school community and professional culture" and "Evidence of active outreach to and ongoing engagement with families."

Step 3: Plan Implementation and Collection of Evidence

support to teachers are shared by the principal and other school and/or district staff. This feedback may be given by a wide variety of educators—from peers to coaches to administrators—and be used formatively for self-reflection, collaborative planning, and/or formally used in evaluation.

- Use of student data and feedback.** The ongoing and systematic collection, analysis, and use of student data and feedback is integral to effective implementation of the Educator Plan. School leaders can leverage faculty meetings, common planning times, one-on-one observation debriefs, and other opportunities to support teachers in reflecting and acting upon student outcome data and student feedback in order to drive instructional decision-making and make adjustments to the Educator Plan as needed to meet goals.

Recommended Actions and Considerations for Implementation of the Educator Plan

This section includes recommended actions for individual educators, teams, and evaluators/school leadership to effectively implement this step, followed by special considerations for implementation.

Recommended Action	Individual Educator	Team	Evaluator/ School Leadership	Notes
Review actions in Educator Plans and make agreed-upon supports and resources available to educator teams and individuals			✓	<i>For many educators, key supports will be those provided through teams; evaluators need to have a system for monitoring that these supports are provided.</i>
Meet with teams to identify common artifacts all or most educators will be expected to collect and analyze	✓	✓	✓	<i>Educators are required to provide evidence of “fulfillment of professional responsibilities…” and “active outreach to and ongoing engagement with families.”</i>
Collect evidence of educator and team practice and progress toward goals	✓	✓	✓	<i>At least some portion of the evidence should be collected by and through teams.</i>
Collect evidence of student learning in relation to anticipated student learning gains	✓	✓	✓	<i>Evidence of student learning associated with statewide, common, and/or classroom assessments should be collected and analyzed</i>
Collect student feedback	✓	✓		<i>Educators may use student feedback to reflect on practice.</i>
Provide regular, high quality feedback to teams and individual educators		✓	✓	<i>Feedback should be specific, timely, and actionable</i>
Monitor alignment of educator actions and goals with school and district goals			✓	<i>Accelerated school improvement is more likely with strong vertical alignment of goals</i>

Step 3: Plan Implementation and Collection of Evidence

Special Considerations for Observations and Feedback. Observations and feedback play an important role throughout the evaluation cycle.

- **Frequent, unannounced observations.** Frequent observations of classroom practice are essential to understanding and supporting a teacher's practice, but only feasible if most observations are short, unannounced and followed by brief, focused feedback. There will be times when the visit needs to be extended, but a visit of approximately 10 minutes can yield a great deal of useful information. With short, unannounced visits, evaluators can collect many more samples of practice and engage in many more powerful conversations about teaching practice. When the typical observation of classroom practice is 10 minutes in duration and does not have to be preceded by a pre-observation conference or followed by a period-long post-observation conference, then evaluators can reasonably be expected to conduct two to five such observations on a typical day.

Three observations conducted each day on 150 of the 180 days in a school year translate to 450 observations each year, or 10 observations per year for each of 45 teachers. Seven to ten brief observations followed by focused feedback should be a sufficient number to secure a representative picture of practice and promote the reflection and discussion needed to support improving practice.

Feedback can be provided during a conversation or in writing. Providing feedback through conversation promotes discussion of practice; providing feedback in writing creates an opportunity for the educator to more easily reflect on the feedback on an ongoing basis. Whenever possible, an evaluator should have a conversation with the educator and follow up with brief written feedback summarizing the conversation and/or offering targeted advice for improvement.

It should be noted that not all observations can or should be 5 to 15 minutes. There will be circumstances where longer observations are appropriate. Novice or struggling teachers may benefit from longer observations on occasion, together with more extended debriefs.

- **Observations outside of the classroom.** Observations can take place inside and outside of the classroom. Conferences with individual teachers or teacher teams that focus on unit planning, or ways the team is responding to interim assessment data, can yield useful information and provide important opportunities for feedback and growth. They can also be well-aligned with school and team goals. Most schools have goals that depend on effective collaboration among educators, so observing educators in settings where they are developing their collaboration skills can support school-wide goals. That said, care needs to be taken to ensure that an observation does not interfere with the free exchange of ideas that is important in any healthy collegial environment. Therefore, collecting, reviewing and giving feedback on specific artifacts from department and team meetings can also serve a purpose similar to observation of meetings. Similarly, observing educators with parents and/or reviewing a team's analysis of representative samples of home-school communications can support collaborative work, reinforce school goals, and provide opportunities for useful feedback.

Observations of practice in settings other than the classroom are also essential for educators whose primary responsibilities are carried out elsewhere, such as school nurses, administrators, or department heads.

Step 3: Plan Implementation and Collection of Evidence

Suggested Resources

In order to help educators and evaluators implement Educator Plans with the appropriate supports, it is critical that educators have clear and easy access to certain types of information. The “Suggested Resources” section lists resources that will support educators and evaluators to engage in the development of an Educator Plan thoughtfully and effectively.

District-Provided Tools and Resources	DESE Tools and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Copies of school and district improvement plans and/or goals▪ Copies of Educator Plans▪ Tools for tracking professional development activities and attendance▪ Tools for organizing data collection▪ Completed Educator Plan Form or locally adopted form▪ District performance rubric or Model Classroom Teacher Rubric▪ Copy of collective bargaining agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Model Student Feedback Surveys▪ Teacher Leadership Resources▪ Calibration Training Tools and Resources▪ Observation and Feedback Resources

Step 3: Plan Implementation and Collection of Evidence

Deep Dive: Strategic Evidence Collection

Educators and evaluators collect evidence from multiple sources in order to form a holistic, multi-dimensional view of educator performance. Evidence collection should be meaningful for both the educator and the evaluator – educators should benefit from reflecting on authentic artifacts of their practice, and evaluators should learn something new about the educator’s practice that helps inform their judgments.

The regulations call for three categories of evidence:

1. Multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement (including statewide, common, and/or classroom assessments. See [Deep Dive: Student Learning Measures and Anticipated Student Learning Gains](#) for more information on selecting these measures).
2. Products of practice (including observations and artifacts of planning or instruction).
3. Additional evidence relevant to one or more Performance Standards (including student and/or staff feedback).

Key principles of meaningful evidence collection:

- **Quality over quantity.** Many districts have found that assembling large binders of evidence can be burdensome and may not meaningfully contribute to productive dialogue between educators and evaluators or help evaluators make informed judgments. Instead, evidence should be a strategic and representative sample of artifacts that tell a story about educator practice.
- **Aligned to priorities.** Rather than collect evidence on every element, educators and evaluators benefit when evidence is focused on school or district priorities or demonstrative of progress towards student learning or professional practice goals.
- **Authentic to an educator’s practice.** Evidence artifacts should not be manufactured for the sake of evaluation but instead should be illustrative of an educator’s work.

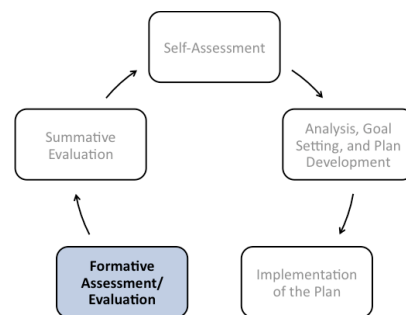
Tips for Educators	Tips for School and District Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ When developing the educator plan, identify the evidence that will demonstrate progress toward goal(s)▪ Combine multiple pieces of evidence to “tell a story” about practice▪ Evidence should be naturally-occurring artifacts of the practice▪ Create a folder (electronic or paper) to add evidence throughout the year, but be selective in the end	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Identify priority elements or Indicators within the rubrics and support evidence collection in those areas▪ Identify common pieces of evidence across roles and create a library of high quality examples▪ Support policies and practices that promote discussions between educators and evaluators around meaningful evidence▪ Support the sharing and celebration of evidence of exemplary practice

Step 4: Formative Assessment/Evaluation

Step 4: Formative Assessment/Evaluation

Overview

Step 4 of the evaluation cycle is Formative Assessment/Evaluation, which is a mid-cycle opportunity to take stock of progress, provide feedback, and make adjustments as needed. In this step, evaluators:



- 1) **Review evidence collected by both the evaluator and educator.** The evaluator reviews evidence collected to date and uses it to form a preliminary picture of educator performance. It is not necessary to have evidence for every Indicator by the Formative Assessment or Evaluation, but there should be sufficient evidence, based on artifacts and observations of educator practice, to be able to discuss progress towards attaining goals set forth in Educator Plans, as well as performance related to the [Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice](#).
- 2) **Assess performance on the rubric.** Based on this analysis of evidence aligned to the rubric and using their own professional judgment, the evaluator makes a formative determination of performance in each Standard¹, and shares this assessment along with feedback for improvement with the educator. The educator has the opportunity to respond in writing.
- 3) **Identify and support midcourse adjustments as needed.** If needed, the evaluator and educator may use this as an opportunity to make adjustments to the plan, such as identifying additional activities or supports for improved practice, student learning, and goal attainment.

The Formative Assessment/Evaluation is most valuable when it is used to prompt reflection, promote dialogue between educators and evaluators, and plan changes to practice, goals, or planned activities when necessary. At a minimum, Step 4 should be a mid-cycle opportunity of taking stock, implemented through a review of evidence collected by both the educator and the evaluator. If there are patterns of evidence that demonstrate performance that is either unsatisfactory or in need of improvement, this is a critical time for evaluators to discuss this evidence so there are “no surprises” during the Summative Evaluation and more importantly, to provide the educator with the opportunity to address areas of concern.

Timeframe

The Formative Assessment/Evaluation can occur at any time during the evaluation cycle, however, it typically occurs at the midpoint of an educator’s Educator Plan. For educators on plans that are one year or less in duration, a *Formative Assessment* occurs at the midpoint of the cycle, during which evaluators assess progress toward goals and performance on Standards. *Formative Evaluations* take place at the end of Year 1 for educators on 2-year self-directed growth plans, at which point evaluators assess goal progress and provide formative ratings on each of the four Standards and an overall performance rating.

¹ Formative ratings on each Standard and overall are only required for educators on 2-year self-directed growth plans and may default to the prior Summative Evaluation Ratings unless significant evidence demonstrates otherwise. This acknowledges the expertise of experienced, proficient educators and eases the evaluator burden of developing *new* ratings at the Formative Evaluation unless absolutely necessary.

Step 4: Formative Assessment/Evaluation

Conditions for Effective Implementation

The purpose of the section below is to help educators, evaluators, and school leadership teams prepare for and engage in Formative Assessment and Evaluation, including the collection and analysis of evidence, the assessment of practice, conferencing, adjustments to goals and/or plans, and the supports and resources the school will provide. The following school-wide knowledge, capacity, and systems will support educators and evaluators to effectively implement this step.

- **Training of and calibration across evaluators.** Prior to assessing an educator against performance Standards, it is critical that evaluators have training, at a minimum, in the use of a rubric and have begun the process of calibrating their use of a rubric with other evaluators within the school and/or across the district. Educators and evaluators are well-served by having some commonality in their understanding of, for example, distinctions between performance levels (Exemplary versus Proficient) or alignment between Performance Standards and school goals. The process of assigning Formative or Summative Evaluation Ratings is both art and science. The “science” of evaluation is the collection of evidence and data that capture an accurate sample of an educator’s performance. The “art” of evaluation comes when evaluators apply their professional judgment to the evidence before them in order to assign performance ratings. More information on establishing performance ratings is available in DESE’s guidance on [Rating Educator Performance](#).
- **Use of formative conferences as applicable.** The regulations do not require that a conference take place as part of a Formative Assessment or Evaluation. As these details may be addressed through collective bargaining, school and leadership teams may suggest strategic requirements for conferences. For example:
 - If some educators have only developed team goals, individual conferences may not be necessary for *all* of those educators.
 - Conferences may be optional for educators on two-year Self-Directed Growth Plans whose ratings have not changed but required for educators on Improvement or Directed Growth Plans.
 - Other considerations include the timing of the conference: a conference could occur prior to issuing the Formative Assessment Report to jointly review and discuss evidence, or it could occur after the Report to discuss the contents. If members of a team had distinct responsibilities and contributions, it would make sense to meet first with teams to discuss progress on team goals and then hold individual conferences.

If, however, a pattern of evidence has emerged that suggests that an educator is on track to receive a lower rating than at his/her previous Summative Evaluation, it is critical for the evaluator and educator to discuss the evidence and feedback for improvement.

Step 4: Formative Assessment/Evaluation

Recommended Actions and Considerations for Formative Assessment/Evaluation

This section includes recommended actions for individual educators, teams, and evaluators/school leadership to effectively implement this step, followed by special considerations for implementation based on both research and lessons learned.

Recommended Action	Individual Educator	Team	Evaluator/ School Leadership	Notes
Schedule time to have formative conferences with enough advance notice to allow both the educator and evaluator to prepare.			✓	<i>Evaluators may not need a conference with all educators; some conferences may be with a team.</i>
Communicate expectations about educators' roles in sharing evidence during the conference.			✓	<i>Be explicit about how much documentation or evidence the educator is expected to bring to the conference and when.</i>
Review evidence and artifacts for Standards and Indicators.	✓	✓	✓	<i>Read through the evidence chronologically, within or across Standards and/or Indicators.</i>
Check in on student learning and assess student progress if available.	✓	✓	✓	<i>Ensure that educators are on track to administer selected assessments and have clearly articulated anticipated student learning gains for each.</i>
Briefly record analysis of evidence.			✓	<i>Evaluators should wait to finalize ratings until the educator has had the opportunity to present evidence.</i>
Determine provisional Formative Ratings and progress toward goals.			✓	<i>Ratings on performance are only required for Formative Evaluations, and default to prior Summative Evaluation ratings unless significant evidence suggests a change in rating.</i>
Finalize Formative Performance Ratings.			✓	<i>Required for Formative Evaluations; not required for Formative Assessments.</i>

Step 4: Formative Assessment/Evaluation

Considerations for Conducting a Formative Conference. Although the regulations do not require that a conference take place as part of a Formative Assessment or Evaluation, there will be occasions when a conference is warranted, such as when an evaluator and educator want to address recent changes in performance that may result in ratings that warrant a new plan. In addition to sharing the Standard-by-Standard summary of evidence, the formative conference is an opportunity to review and discuss the educator's progress toward the goals that were set at the beginning of the evaluation cycle, as well as student learning in relation to the anticipated student learning gains associated with each measure of student learning. It is likely that the educator has more information about goal attainment and student progress than the evaluator does. Therefore, evaluators may use the Formative Assessment/Evaluation conference to gather additional evidence about performance on specific Indicators, the educator's progress toward goals, and his/her impact on student learning. After the conference, this evidence should be used to adjust the provisional Standard-level ratings as necessary.

The following example outlines the steps an evaluator and educator may follow to plan, conduct, and complete a formative evaluation conference.

- The educator and evaluator choose to have a conference for a *Formative Evaluation* which will result in assigned ratings on Standards. The educator prepares a brief analysis of evidence and brings both the analysis and the evidence to the conference.
 1. Evaluator brings the Formative Evaluation Report or locally adopted form with the following items **completed**:
 - a. Summary of evidence under each Standard
 - b. Provisional ratings for each of the four Standards
 2. Evaluator brings Formative Evaluation Report Form with the following items **left blank**:
 - a. No level of progress on goals, to allow teacher to provide evidence and encourage discussion
 - b. No rating in the "overall performance rating" section
 3. Evaluator is prepared to offer 2-3 concrete suggestions for improvement in one or two high-impact areas that may be discussed during the conference
 4. Educator brings evidence of practice (including evidence of student learning and feedback from students, if available), summary of evidence, and analysis
 5. The evaluator may learn information during the Formative Evaluation conference that may change the provisional formative ratings; evaluators should complete the report as soon after the conference as possible to finalize the Formative Standard-level Ratings and assess the educator's progress toward goals

Note: if the educator had shared the evidence with the evaluator prior to the conference in the scenario above, it would still be wise to consider ratings given prior to the conference to be provisional pending the formative conversation between the educator and evaluator.

Step 4: Formative Assessment/Evaluation

Considerations for Changing the Educator Plan after a Formative Assessment or Evaluation.

Occasionally, an educator’s performance has significantly changed from the last Summative Evaluation. When this happens, the evaluator and the educator may need to create a new Educator Plan with goals targeted toward the specific areas in need of improvement.

Use the following chart to determine if a teacher should move to a different Educator Plan⁹:

Previous Summative Performance Rating	New Formative Performance Rating	Change in Educator Plan?	Duration of New Plan and Evaluation Cycle
Exemplary	Proficient	No	N/A
Exemplary or Proficient	Needs Improvement	Yes (Directed Growth Plan)	Up to one school year
Exemplary or Proficient	Unsatisfactory	Yes (Improvement Plan)	Up to one school year
Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Yes (Improvement Plan)	At least 30 calendar days and no more than one school year

If a new Educator Plan is warranted, evaluators and educators should set up a time to talk about developing the new Plan. The new, shorter evaluation cycle take effect immediately and will require another Formative Assessment prior to the end date of the new Plan (and accompanying Summative Evaluation).

Suggested Resources

In order to provide ongoing feedback for improvement, it is critical that educators have clear and easy access to certain types of information. The “Suggested Resources” section lists tools and resources that support educators and evaluators in Formative Assessment or Evaluation.

District-Provided Tools and Resources	DESE Tools and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Benchmark data on goals ▪ Goals and Educator Plans to review and assess progress ▪ District performance rubric or Model Classroom Teacher Rubric ▪ Collective bargaining agreement and/or other evaluation requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation Tracking Sheet ▪ Formative Evaluation/Assessment Report Form ▪ Educator Response Form

⁹ Note: novice educators in their first three years in the role are on a Developing Educator Plan, regardless of performance ratings.

Step 4: Formative Assessment/Evaluation

Deep Dive: Staff and Student Feedback

The Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework is designed to include information about educator practice from a wide and representative range of sources. Student and staff feedback, which is a required type of evidence, offers a unique and important perspective on educator effectiveness. When taken together with other information sources, feedback from students and/or staff helps to provide a more accurate and detailed picture of an educator's practice.

Feedback from students and staff plays a key role in teaching and learning in schools throughout the Commonwealth. Whether it's a third grade teacher using weekly exit slips to gather student input on learning activities, a principal convening a group of teachers to collect feedback on a new initiative, or a librarian canvassing students for input on diverse texts, the use of feedback to shape and refine practice is a familiar idea for many educators.

Student feedback informs teachers' evaluations, and staff feedback informs administrators' evaluations. By including student and staff feedback in the evidence that educators will collect, the Massachusetts educator evaluation framework ensures that this critical perspective is used to support professional growth and development.

Identifying Feedback Instruments

Districts have flexibility in the identification of feedback instruments for educators. They may choose to utilize district-wide feedback instruments, such as student or staff surveys, or they may create processes by which educators and evaluators can identify feedback instruments at the individual educator level. These approaches are not mutually exclusive, and districts may settle on a combination of district-wide and educator-specific instruments in order to best meet the needs of all educators.

The following principles offer best practices for districts to consider when making decisions about student and staff feedback instruments; they are intended to be applicable regardless of the method for collecting student and/or staff feedback.

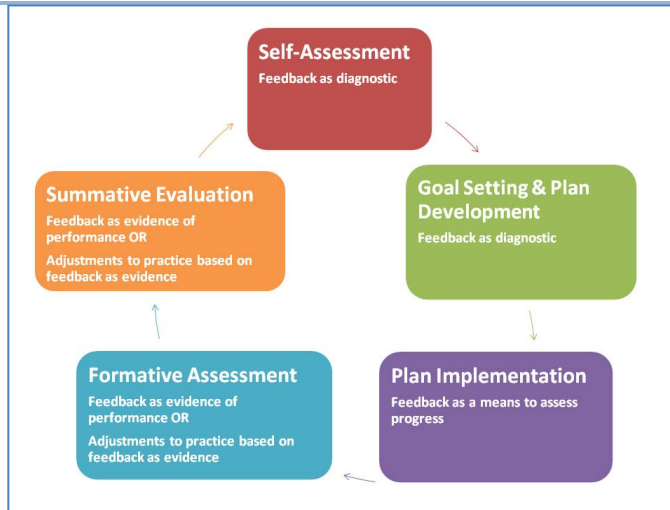
- Feedback should be aligned to one or more [MA Standards and Indicators for Effective Teaching Practice](#) or [Administrative Leadership](#) so that it yields information that is relevant to an educator's practice.
- Feedback should be informative and actionable.
- Instruments must be accessible to all potential respondents so that the information they provide allows educators to draw valid conclusions.

Incorporating Feedback into the 5-Step Cycle of Evaluation

There is no point value or numerical weight associated with feedback in an educator's evaluation. Districts have the flexibility to determine how student feedback informs the Summative Performance Rating. Student feedback may be gathered at multiple points in the 5-step evaluation cycle and considered formatively, summatively, or both.

Step 4: Formative Assessment/Evaluation

Deep Dive: Staff and Student Feedback



The most meaningful and actionable ways an educator may incorporate student feedback into the evaluation cycle is through an educator's self-assessment, as a tool to shape his or her goal-setting process, and/or as a means to demonstrate changes in practice over time.

Key Messages

- **Feedback should be meaningful and actionable.**
- **Feedback collection tools can take many forms (not just surveys).**
- **Feedback is one component of an evaluation framework that draws on many different types of evidence.**
- **There are no weights or formulas associated with feedback.**

DESE's Model Feedback Surveys

DESE's [model feedback surveys](#) are designed to assist districts in this work. Student feedback surveys for classroom teachers are available for grades 3-12 in standard, short, and mini forms. Staff surveys for school-level administrators are available in standard and short forms.

The surveys were designed in accordance with the same key principles of effective feedback outlined above and give districts a feasible, sustainable, cost effective tools for educator to use. Districts may adopt or adapt these surveys, and/or choose to use other feedback instruments.

More information on student and staff feedback in educator evaluation, including examples of feedback methods and uses, is available on the [DESE Staff and Student Feedback](#) webpage.

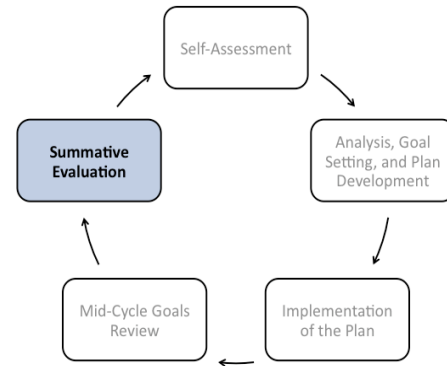
Step 5: Summative Evaluation

Step 5: Summative Evaluation

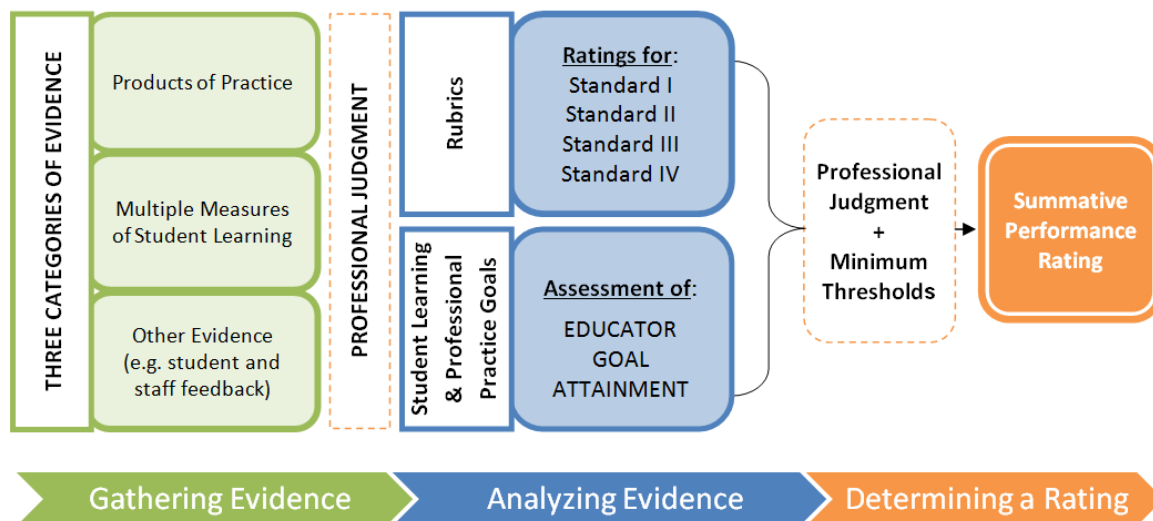
Overview

The final step of the cycle is the Summative Evaluation. In this step, the evaluator:

- 1) **Analyzes evidence that demonstrates the educator's performance against performance Standards and attainment of the goals in the Educator Plan.** The evaluator considers evidence from three required categories: products of practice, multiple measures of student learning, and other evidence such as student feedback. Based on evidence from these three distinct categories, the evaluator applies his/her professional judgment to (1) an evaluation of the educator's practice within each of the four Standards, and (2) an assessment of the degree to which the educator met his/her student learning and professional practice goals.
- 2) **Arrives at Summative Performance Ratings based on evidence and the evaluator's professional judgment.** The evaluator determines a rating for each of the four Standards and comes to an assessment of overall goal progress. In conjunction with the appropriate [minimum threshold requirements](#), the evaluator then uses professional judgment to determine an overall Summative Performance Rating of *Exemplary*, *Proficient*, *Needs Improvement* or *Unsatisfactory* and assigns the educator to the Educator Plan appropriate to that rating for the next evaluation cycle.



The picture below illustrates the entire process by which an evaluator determines a Summative Performance Rating.



The Summative Evaluation completes a full evaluation cycle. The meaning behind this step does not lie in the end of one cycle, however, but in the beginning of the next. A thoughtful Summative Evaluation offers feedback for improvement, providing educators with valuable information that strengthens the self-reflection and analysis educators engage in as they continue through the improvement cycle with Step 1: Self-Assessment and Goal Proposal.

Step 5: Summative Evaluation

Timeframe

The Summative Evaluation occurs at the end of each educator's individualized Educator Plan and guides plan development for the subsequent cycle. Most educators receive a Summative Evaluation near the end of a school year, although educators on a Directed Growth Plan or Improvement Plan may have more than one Summative Evaluation in a single year.

Conditions for Effective Implementation

The section below includes information on school-wide knowledge, capacity, and systems that will support Step 5. Note that many aspects of Step 5: Summative Evaluation are similar to Step 4: Formative Assessment & Evaluation. For additional Conditions for Effective Implementation, refer to the section above.

- **Assessing performance across all four Standards.** At this stage, evaluators should have multiple data points for every Standard (the preponderance of evidence for a particular Standard may fall within a specific Indicator if it was an area of focus or priority). This evidence can come from both the evaluator and the educator and must include multiple measures of student learning, evidence of practice (including artifacts and observations), and feedback from students.
- **Assessing Goal Progress.** Overall goal attainment reflects progress across all goals. While evidence and professional judgment drive an evaluator's assessment of an educator's goal attainment, districts are encouraged to develop clear protocols evaluators can use in assessing goal progress, as well as business rules for combining measures of goal attainment across multiple goals. This helps to ensure district-wide consistency in the assessment of goal progress. Examples of how goal attainment informs the Summative Performance Rating are available in [Rating Educator Performance: The Summative Performance Rating](#).
- **Applying Evidence-Based Professional Judgment.** With its emphasis on professional judgment, the Massachusetts model gives evaluators more flexibility in determining individual performance ratings than they would otherwise have under a system that imposes numerical weights or values to individual components of an evaluation. In contrast to formulaic systems that calculate ratings based on set values or percentages, this framework allows evaluators to be responsive to local context or individual needs, emphasize trends and patterns of practice rather than rely on individual data points, and better target feedback and resources to individual educators. All of these factors should contribute to a more holistic, comprehensive assessment of educator practice that promotes an ongoing cycle of continuous improvement.

In order to ensure thoughtful, consistent implementation, districts should devote time and resources to supporting evaluators in their use of a performance rubric and pay special attention to calibrating evaluator judgments of practice across multiple measures of teacher effectiveness. It is also essential for districts to cultivate and promote a strong culture of transparency and communication around educator evaluation and its role in supporting both educator growth and student learning. More information and supports, including DESE calibration training resources, are available at [Evaluator Calibration](#).

Step 5: Summative Evaluation

Recommended Actions and Considerations for Summative Evaluation

This section includes recommended actions for individual educators, teams, and evaluators/school leadership to effectively implement this step, followed by special considerations for implementation based on both research and lessons learned.

Recommended Action	Individual Educator	Team	Evaluator/ School Leadership	Notes
Schedule times of summative conferences with enough advance notice to allow both the educator and evaluator to prepare	✓	✓	✓	<i>Make sure the educator knows the purpose of the meeting, how to prepare, and the expected outcomes of the discussion</i>
Communicate expectations about educators' roles in sharing evidence during the conference			✓	<i>Be explicit about how much documentation or evidence the educator is expected to bring to the conference and when</i>
Review evidence and artifacts for each Standard	✓		✓	<i>Make sure there is evidence from all three required categories sufficient to inform judgments in each of the four Standards</i>
Review Formative Assessment/Evaluation	✓		✓	<i>Formative assessments provide additional evidence of feedback the educator has received as well as a record of evidence of progress, performance, and patterns</i>
Briefly record analysis of evidence			✓	<i>Evaluators should wait to finalize ratings until the educator has had the opportunity to present evidence</i>
Determine provisional summative ratings and progress toward goals			✓	<i>A summative conference, if any, may reveal information that affects ratings</i>
Finalize summative ratings for each Standard and for the Overall Summative Rating			✓	<i>Standard II rating takes into consideration evidence of an educator's impact on student learning; Overall Summative Rating also takes progress on goals into consideration</i>

Step 5: Summative Evaluation

Considerations for Professional Judgment. How does an evaluator know how to rate an educator on a specific Standard? How does one assess goal progress? How does this translate into an overall Summative Performance Rating?

There are no numbers or percentages that dictate ratings on Standards, the assessment of educator goal attainment, or the overall Summative Performance Rating for an individual educator. Rather than adopt a more mechanistic, one-size-fits all approach to supervision and evaluation, the Massachusetts evaluation framework encourages evaluators to look for trends and patterns in practice across multiple types of evidence and apply their professional judgment based on this evidence when evaluating an educator.¹ **The role of evidence and professional judgment in the determination of ratings on performance Standards and an overall Summative Performance Rating is paramount in this process.** Formulaic or numerical processes that calculate outcome ratings and preclude the application of professional judgment are inconsistent with the letter and the spirit of the evaluation framework.

The use of professional judgment based on multiple types of evidence promotes a more holistic and comprehensive analysis of practice, rather than over-reliance on one individual data point or rote calculation of practice based on predetermined formulas. Evaluators are also encouraged to take into account how educators respond to or apply additional supports and resources designed to promote student learning, as well as their own professional growth and development. Finally, professional judgment gives evaluators the flexibility to account for a wide variety of factors related to individual educator performance, such as: school-specific priorities that may drive practice in one Standard; an educator's number of goals; experience level and/or leadership opportunities; and contextual variables that may impact the learning environment, such as unanticipated outside events or traumas.

That said, professional judgment does not equate to a “black box” from which evaluators can determine a performance rating. Regular collaboration and calibration with other evaluators (both within *and* across schools) around standards- and content-aligned practice is critical to ensuring that one's professional judgment is reinforcing a shared vision of effective teaching.

Considerations for Moving Forward. The Summative Evaluation step marks the end of one evaluation cycle and kicks off a new cycle of self-assessment, goal setting, and plan development. When well-implemented, educators will leave the Summative Evaluation conference with a good idea of their next steps for the following evaluation cycle. The new cycle will coincide with the new school year for educators on a Development Plan or Self-Directed Growth Plan, but it may begin midyear for educators on a Directed Growth Plan or Improvement Plan.

The *Summative Rating* categories can guide evaluators in determining the appropriate Educator Plan for each educator:

Evidence and professional judgment shall inform:

- a) the evaluator's ratings of Performance Standards and overall educator performance; and
- b) the evaluator's assessment of the educator's impact on the learning, growth, and achievement of the students under the educator's responsibility. [603 CMR 35.07\(2\)](#)

¹ “[T]he evaluator determines an overall rating of educator performance based on the evaluator's professional judgment and an examination of evidence that demonstrates the educator's performance against Performance Standards and evidence of the attainment of the Educator Plan goals” ([603 CMR 35.06\(6\)](#)); see also [DESE Model Teacher & Caseload Educator Contract, Section 14\(b\)](#)); “The professional judgment of the primary evaluator shall determine the overall summative rating that the Educator receives” ([DESE Model Teacher & Caseload Educator Contract, Section 14\(c\)](#)).

Step 5: Summative Evaluation

- Educators without Professional Teacher Status (PTS) and those in a new assignment (at the discretion of the evaluator) – **Developing Educator Plan**
- Educators with PTS rated Proficient or Exemplary – **Self-Directed Growth Plan**
- Educators with PTS rated as Needs Improvement – **Directed Growth Plan**
- Educators with PTS rated as Unsatisfactory – **Improvement Plan**, with goals specific to improving the educator’s unsatisfactory performance

In consultation with district leadership teams, evaluators will determine whether a one- or two-year Self-Directed Growth Plan is warranted for each educator rated Proficient or Exemplary and holding PTS. For example, a district may decide that veteran teachers new to a school should be placed on a one-year plan to ensure necessary supports during acclimation; or an evaluator may choose to place a veteran teacher on a one-year plan to focus on a discrepancy between proficient practice and insufficient student learning growth. In other instances, it might be helpful for school leadership teams and evaluators to consider the frequency of check-ins with an educator around specific areas for growth.

Suggested Resources

In order to ensure a transparent and comprehensive Summative Evaluation, it is critical that educators have clear and easy access to certain types of information. The “Suggested Resources” section lists several concrete tools and resources that support educators and evaluators in the Summative Evaluation.

District-Provided Tools and Resources	DESE Tools and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Up-to-date record of evidence and brief analysis▪ Benchmark and final data on goals▪ Evidence of student learning, growth, and achievement from statewide, common, and classroom assessments▪ District performance rubric or Model Classroom Teacher Rubric▪ Collective bargaining agreement and/or other evaluation requirements▪ Completed Educator Plan Form or locally adopted form▪ Completed Formative Assessment/Evaluation Report Form or locally adopted form	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Evaluation Tracking Sheet▪ Summative Evaluation Report Form▪ Educator Response Form

Step 5: Summative Evaluation

Deep Dive: Minimum Threshold Requirements

MINIMUM THRESHOLDS FOR SUMMATIVE PERFORMANCE RATINGS

An educator's ratings on each of the four Standards and an assessment of his/her overall goal attainment inform the educator's Summative Performance Rating. The evaluator is responsible for determining the Summative Performance Rating based on these factors. However, the regulations put forth minimum threshold requirements for educators to earn an overall Summative Performance Rating of *Proficient* or *Exemplary*. These minimum performance expectations create a common understanding of performance thresholds to which all educators are held.

To receive a Summative Performance Rating of *Proficient* or *Exemplary*, a teacher must be rated *Proficient* or *Exemplary* on both Standard I: Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment, and Standard II: Teaching all Students. Similarly, for an administrator to receive a Summative Performance Rating of *Proficient* or *Exemplary*, he/she must be rated *Proficient* or *Exemplary* on the Standard I: Instructional Leadership.²

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS	
Teachers and Specialized Instructional Support Personnel	School and District Administrators
Curriculum, Planning & Assessment*	Instructional Leadership*
Teaching All Students*	Management and Operations
Family & Community Engagement	Family & Community Engagement
Professional Culture	Professional Culture

* Standards requiring *Proficient* rating or above to achieve overall Summative Performance Rating of *Proficient* or above

Minimum Requirements for Earning Professional Teacher Status. To receive Professional Teacher Status, pursuant to G.L. ch. 71, § 41, a teacher must be rated *Proficient* or *Exemplary* on all four Standards of Effective Teaching Practice and for their overall Summative Performance Rating during their most recent summative evaluation. A principal considering making an employment decision that would lead to professional teacher status for any educator who has not met this minimum requirement must confer with the superintendent of schools by May 1. The principal's decision is subject to review and approval by the superintendent. [603 CMR 35.08\(6\)](#)

² As defined in [603 CMR 35.03](#) and [603 CMR 35.04](#).

Step 5: Summative Evaluation

Continuous Improvement

School leadership teams, evaluators, and educators should ensure that time is set aside to consider the information and lessons gleaned from this process in three key areas:

- **School-wide data analysis and reflection**, through Formative and Summative Evaluations, also provides school leadership teams with valuable information that can strengthen the professional development and opportunities for growth that are offered to the school.
- **Implementation of educator evaluation.** To increase the effectiveness of evaluations in the upcoming school year and/or evaluation cycle, leadership teams and the faculty should discuss the successes and challenges experienced by different members of the school, strategies for improving the process, and supports needed for more effective implementation. See [Quick Reference Guide: Opportunities to Streamline](#).
- **Connections between educator progress and school and district goals.** Well-aligned goals are emphasized as a priority for the purpose of accelerating school progress. School leadership should examine the connections between educator progress on goals and school or district progress on goals. This information can be used to prioritize certain Standards, Indicators, and/or elements for the next school year. All members of the school should engage in conversation on attainment of *school goals*, including areas still in need of improvement and opportunities to scale up or replicate success. These conversations—including a focused review of progress on short term goals—enable the school to work strategically toward long term goals.

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Appendix A: Forms for Educator Evaluation

DESE forms are provided to support each step of the 5-Step Cycle. All forms are *optional* and may be adapted as needed to meet the needs of the district and/or individual educator. Additional pages may be attached as needed. All evaluation forms are located on DESE’s Educator Evaluation [webpage](#).

<p>Step 1: Self-Assessment and Goal Setting</p>	<p>Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting Form. To be completed by the educator, this form supports an educator’s self-assessment related to student learning needs and professional practice, and provides additional space to propose goals.</p>
<p>Step 2: Educator Plan Development</p>	<p>Educator Plan Form. This form is intended to be used in support of Step 2: Goal Setting and Plan Development. It will either be completed by the educator for a <i>Self-Directed Growth Plan</i>, by the educator and the evaluator together for a <i>Directed Growth Plan</i> and a <i>Developing Educator Plan</i>, and by the evaluator for an <i>Improvement Plan</i>.</p>
<p>Step 3: Plan Implementation</p>	<p>Evaluation Tracking Sheet. This form is intended to be used to track the completion of each step throughout the educator’s evaluation process. It will be completed by the educator in conjunction with his/her primary (and possibly supervising) evaluator.</p>
<p>Step 4: Formative Assessment/Evaluation</p>	<p>Formative Evaluation/Assessment Report Form. This form is intended to be used in support of an educator’s Formative Evaluation or Assessment (Step 4) at the mid-point of the evaluation cycle. It will be completed by the evaluator. Evaluators assess both progress toward goals and performance on Standards and provide a brief narrative of progress that includes feedback for improvement. <i>For Formative Evaluations only</i>, the evaluator provides Standard-level ratings and an overall rating, however these are assumed to be the same as the prior Summative Evaluation unless evidence demonstrates a significant change in performance leading to a change in Overall Rating and, possibly, Educator Plan. If there is a change in rating, evaluators must provide comments on each of the four Standards briefly describing <i>why</i> the rating has changed, the <i>evidence</i> that led to a change in rating, and offering <i>feedback for improvement</i> (evaluators are encouraged to provide comments even if there is no change to ensure that educators have a clear sense of their progress and performance and receive feedback for improvement). Educators sign off to indicate that they have received a copy of the report and may use the Educator Response Form to provide a written response. Completion of this form will be noted and initialed on the Evaluation Tracking Sheet.</p>
<p>Step 5: Summative Evaluation</p>	<p>Summative Evaluation Report Form. This form is intended to be used for Step 5: Summative Evaluation. This form applies to all Educator Plans. It will be completed by the evaluator. The evaluator must complete all sections, which are: “Attainment of Student Learning Goal(s),” “Attainment of</p>

<p>Step 1: Self-Assessment and Goal Setting</p>	<p>Self-Assessment and Goal-Setting Form. To be completed by the educator, this form supports an educator’s self-assessment related to student learning needs and professional practice, and provides additional space to propose goals.</p>
	<p>Professional Practice Goal(s),” “Rating on each Standard,” “Overall Performance Rating,” and “Plan Moving Forward.” Evaluators must provide comments on the student learning goal(s), professional practice goal(s), each of the four Standards, and the overall rating briefly describing the level of attainment or performance rating, the <i>evidence</i> that led to the level of attainment/rating, and offering <i>feedback for improvement</i>. Educators sign off to indicate that they have received a copy of the report and may use the Educator Response Form to provide a written response. Completion of this form will be noted and initialed on the Evaluation Tracking Sheet.</p> <p>Educator Response Form. This form is intended to be used in support of the educator, should he/she want to have a formal response to any part of the evaluation process kept on record. It will be completed by the educator; the evaluator will sign to acknowledge receipt. If the form is submitted in response to the Formative Assessment/Evaluation or to the Summative Evaluation, receipt of the response will also be noted and initialed on the Evaluation Tracking Sheet.</p>

Appendix B: What's Required in the Regulations

Step 1: Self-Assessment

The regulations on educator evaluation require that educators conduct a self-assessment addressing the Performance Standards and Indicators defined in [603 CMR 35.03](#) or [35.04](#), and any additional local standards established through collective bargaining or included in individual employment contracts as per [603 CMR 35.06\(2\)](#). During this phase of the evaluation cycle, each educator is responsible for gathering and providing to the evaluator information on his or her performance, which is to include:

- an analysis of evidence of student learning, growth, and achievement for students under the educator's responsibility;
- an assessment of practice against Performance Standards; and
- proposed goals to pursue to improve practice and student learning, growth, and achievement, which include
 - a minimum of one individual or team **professional practice goal** to improve the educator's professional practice tied to one or more statewide Standards and Indicators defined in 603 CMR 35.00 and any additional local performance standards, and
 - a minimum of one individual or team **student learning goal** to improve the learning, growth and achievement of the students under the educator's responsibility.

The educator provides this information to the evaluator in the form of a self-assessment at the point of goal setting and plan development.

Step 2: Goal Setting & Plan Development

The regulations on educator evaluation require that each educator have an Educator Plan as per [603 CMR 35.06\(3\)](#).

An Educator Plan outlines a course of action that an educator will take to pursue goals. Educator Plans must include a minimum of one individual or team goal to improve the educator's professional practice tied to one or more Performance Standards and a minimum of one individual or team goal to improve the learning, growth, and achievement of the students under the educators' responsibility. Evaluators have final authority over goals.

The Plan must outline actions that educators will take in order to attain these goals, including but not limited to professional development activities, self-study, and coursework, as well as other supports and resources for completing these actions.

Educator Plans must be aligned with Statewide Standards and Indicators defined in 603 CMR 35.00 and any additional local performance standards; they must be consistent with school and district goals; they must be designed to provide educators with feedback for improvement, professional growth, and leadership; they must be designed to ensure educator effectiveness and overall system accountability.

There are four types of Educator Plan. The type, duration, and developer of each Plan is established according to status and performance as follows:

- **Developing Educator Plan** (developed by the educator and the evaluator)

This plan is for an administrator with less than three years of experience in a district; an educator without Professional Teacher Status (PTS); or an educator in a new assignment (at the discretion of the evaluator). This plan is for one school year or less.

- **Self-Directed Growth Plan** (developed by the educator)

This plan is for an “experienced” educator (defined as an administrator with more than three years in an administrative position in the school district or a teacher with Professional Teacher Status) with an Exemplary or Proficient performance rating on the previous Summative Evaluation. Evaluators will apply professional judgement to collected evidence of educator performance to place educators on either a one or two-year plan.

- **Directed Growth Plan** (developed by the educator and the evaluator)

This plan is for an experienced educator rated as Needs Improvement on the previous Summative Evaluation. This plan is for one school year or less.

- **Improvement Plan** (developed by the evaluator)

This plan is for an experienced educator rated as Unsatisfactory on the previous Summative Evaluation. This plan is for no less than 30 calendar days and no longer than one school year.

Step 3: Plan Implementation

The regulations on educator evaluation require the following **categories of evidence** to be used in evaluating each educator as per [603 CMR 35.07](#):

For educators responsible for direct instruction, multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement, which shall include:

1. Measures of student progress on classroom assessments that are aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks or other relevant frameworks and are comparable within grades or subjects in a school;
2. Measures of student progress on learning goals set between the educator and evaluator for the school year;
3. Statewide growth measure(s) where available, including the MCAS Student Growth Percentile and the Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment.
4. Common assessments of student learning, growth, and achievement.

For educators whose primary role is not as a classroom teacher, the appropriate measures of the educator's contribution to student learning, growth, and achievement are set by the district.

Judgments based on observations and artifacts of professional practice, including unannounced observations of practice of any duration;

Additional evidence relevant to one or more Performance Standards, including, but not limited to:

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1. Evidence compiled and presented by the educator including:
 - a. Evidence of fulfillment of professional responsibilities and growth, such as: self-assessments; peer collaboration; professional development linked to goals and or educator plans; contributions to the school community and professional culture;
 - b. Evidence of active outreach to and ongoing engagement with families.
 2. Student feedback (with respect to teachers and support personnel) collected by the district.
 3. Staff feedback (with respect to administrators) collected by the district.
 4. The Department shall research the feasibility and possible methods for districts to collect and analyze parent feedback as part of educator evaluation.
 5. Any other relevant evidence from any source that the evaluator shares with the educator.

Evidence and professional judgment shall inform the evaluator's ratings of Performance Standards and overall educator performance.

Step 4: Formative Assessment/Evaluation

The educator evaluation regulations require every educator to have a Formative Assessment or a Formative Evaluation. The regulations differentiate between a “Formative Assessment” and a “Formative Evaluation” (as per [603 CMR 35.02](#) and [35.06\(5\)](#)) in the following way:

A **Formative Assessment** is the process used to assess progress towards attaining goals set forth in Educator Plans, performance on performance Standards, or both. While Formative Assessment is ongoing and can occur at any time during the evaluation cycle, it typically occurs at least mid-cycle.

A **Formative Evaluation** is an evaluation at the end of year one for educators on two-year Self-Directed Growth Plans used to arrive at a rating on progress towards attaining the goals set forth in the plans, performance on performance Standards, or both.

- An experienced educator on a Self-Directed Growth Plan (rated Proficient or Exemplary in the last Summative Evaluation) will maintain the same overall rating in the subsequent Formative Evaluation, unless there is evidence of a significant change in performance.

In rating educators on Performance Standards for the purposes of Formative Assessment or Formative Evaluation, districts may use either the rubric provided by the Department in its Model System or a comparably rigorous and comprehensive rubric developed by the district and reviewed by the Department.

The educator shall have the opportunity to respond in writing to the Formative Assessment or evaluation.

Changing the Plan

If an educator receives performance ratings during the Formative Assessment or Formative Evaluation that differ from the most recent Summative Performance Ratings, the evaluator may place the educator on a different Educator Plan, appropriate to the new rating.

Minimum standards for Proficiency

The regulations ([603 CMR 35.08\(4\)](#)) specify minimum standards for overall Proficient ratings. Educators must be rated Proficient or Exemplary in Standard I: Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment **and** Standard II: Teaching All Students to be eligible for an overall Proficient rating.

Step 5: Summative Evaluation

The educator evaluation regulations require that every educator have a Summative Evaluation as per 603 CMR 35.06.

The Summative Evaluation is used to arrive at a rating on each Standard, determine an overall rating, and serve as a basis for making personnel decisions. Every educator must be rated as Exemplary, Proficient, Needs Improvement, or Unsatisfactory. In rating educators on performance Standards for the purposes of Summative Evaluation, districts may use either the rubric provided by the Department in its Model System or a comparably rigorous and comprehensive rubric developed by the district and reviewed by the Department.

To be rated Proficient overall, a teacher must have been, at minimum, rated as Proficient on the Standard 1: Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment, and Standard 2: Teaching all Students as defined [in 603 CMR 35.03](#). To be rated Proficient overall, an administrator must have been, at a minimum, rated Proficient on the Standard 1: Instructional Leadership as defined in [604 CMR 35.04](#).

The Summative Evaluation rating must be based on evidence from multiple categories of evidence. MCAS growth scores cannot be the sole basis for a Summative Evaluation rating.

Evidence and professional judgment shall inform the evaluator's rating of performance standards and the overall rating.

Educators have the opportunity to respond to the Summative Evaluation in writing.

Professional Teacher Status

“Professional teacher status, pursuant to G.L. ch. 71, § 41, should be granted only to educators who have achieved ratings of Proficient or Exemplary on each Performance Standard and overall. A principal considering making an employment decision that would lead to professional teacher status for any educator who has not been rated proficient or exemplary on each Performance Standard and overall on the most recent evaluation shall confer with the superintendent of schools by May 1. The principal's decision is subject to review and approval by the superintendent.” (See [603 CMR 35.08\(6\)](#))