



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents

FROM: Sarah J. Barzee, Ph.D., Chief Talent Officer *SB*
Talent Office

DATE: February 10, 2014

SUBJECT: Update on Flexibilities to the Guidelines for Educator Evaluation (June 2012)

Dear Colleagues:

As you may be aware, on Wednesday, January 29, 2014, the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) reached consensus on the provision of flexibility regarding several components of the Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation (2012). Subsequently, on February 6, 2014, the State Board of Education (SBE) approved and adopted PEAC's proposed flexibilities with some minor edits. The final SBE version of the flexibility language is contained in the attached document. Please consult only this final version in considering and pursuing these flexibilities.

Local and regional school districts, in mutual agreement with their Professional Development and Evaluation Committees, may choose to adopt one or more of the following flexibility components. These flexibility components represent new and alternative minimum requirements within the Guidelines. Districts may opt to pursue variations upon these specific flexibilities so long as they satisfy the minimum requirements. Districts, with their Professional Development and Evaluation Committees, may apply for flexibility during the remainder of this academic year or for next year (or for both).

Adopted Flexibilities to the Guidelines for Educator Evaluation

- 1. Number of Student Growth Goals**
- 2. Decoupling of State Test Data in 2014-2015**
- 3. Number of Observations**

1. The first area of flexibility relates to the number of goals/objectives educators are required to set. While the existing Guidelines allow for at least one (1) but no more than four (4) goals/objectives for student growth, the amendment clarifies and emphasizes that the minimum number of goals/objectives required for each educator can be **one (1)**. For each goal/objective, each teacher, through mutual agreement with his/her evaluator must select multiple Indicators of Academic Growth and Development (IAGD).
2. The second area of flexibility pertains to the use of state standardized test data in compiling educators' summative ratings. As noted above, for each goal/objective, each teacher, through mutual agreement with his/her evaluator, will select Indicators of Academic Growth and Development (IAGD). One half (22.5%) of the IAGDs shall be based on available standardized state test data (CMT, CAPT or SBAC). However, pending federal approval, districts now have the option of decoupling state standardized test indicators from educator evaluation in 2013-2014 and in 2014-2015 school years.

3. The third and final area of flexibility addresses the specific requirements for the number of observations based on teachers' experience and performance ratings. PEAC recommended providing districts with the flexibility to reduce the number of required formal observations for teachers. Specifically, teachers who are not first- or second-year teachers and who receive and maintain an exemplary or proficient annual summative rating (or the equivalent annual summative rating in a pre-existing district evaluation plan) may receive a minimum of one (1) formal in-class observation at least every three years and three (3) informal in-class observations in all other years. In all years, at least one (1) review of practice is required. For non-classroom teachers, the above frequency of observations shall apply in the same ways, except that the observations need not be in-classroom (they shall instead be conducted in appropriate settings). Teachers with proficient or exemplary designations may receive a formal in-class observation if an informal observation or review of practice in a given year results in a concern about the teacher's practice.

In addition, the SBE approved language that addresses the use of data management systems as a part of the educator evaluation and support process in order to address system efficiencies and ensure confidentiality and security. While not a requirement, many districts have procured a data management system to assist with the management of evaluation data. On or before September 15, 2014, Professional Development and Evaluation Committees are responsible for reviewing feedback and reporting to their boards of education on the user experience and efficiency of the district's data management systems/platforms being used by teachers and administrators to manage evaluation plans. The data management systems/platforms shall be selected by boards of education with consideration given to the functional requirements/needs and efficiencies identified by professional development and evaluation committees.

For implementation of local evaluation and support plans for the 2014-2015 school year, and each year thereafter, educator evaluation and support plans shall contain guidance on the entry of data into a district's data management system/platform being used to manage/administer the evaluation and support plan and on ways to reduce paperwork and documentation while maintaining plan integrity.

Additional language has been added that addresses the security of identifiable student data, access of teacher or administrator data and the sharing or transference of individual teacher data as a part of the evaluation and support system.

All amendments are outlined in detail within the attached document, entitled, **"Flexibilities to the Guidelines for Educator Evaluation."** **When you are able, please ensure that you review all language in the attached so as to ensure that you are familiar with all new provisions.**

Additionally, in 2013-2014, the following educational entities were exempt from implementation of the new educator evaluation and support:

- Adult Education
- USD #1 and #2

- Approved Private Special Education Facilities
- Pre-K
- Central Office and Charter School administrators

Given their unique structures and considerations, PEAC recommended that the educators in the aforementioned educational entities receive an additional one year exemption from implementation of the Guidelines for Educator Evaluation (2012) in the 2014-2015 school year. However, those systems that are ready to proceed would be enabled and encouraged to conduct permissive pilots. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) will work with those districts to gather data about the pilot experience throughout the 2014-2015 school year.

Districts that wish to implement any of the approved flexibilities must convene their Professional Development and Evaluation Committee to consider the options and come to mutual agreement with their board of education. Per existing policy, if mutual agreement cannot be achieved, then pursuant to section 10-151b of the General Statutes, as amended by Public Act 13-245 section 1(b), “such board of education and such professional development and evaluation committee shall consider the model teacher evaluation and support program adopted by the State Board of Education.” If the Professional Development and Evaluation Committee and local or regional board of education cannot mutually agree on the adoption of such model teacher evaluation and support program, the board of education may make the final determination. All changes to a district evaluation plan must be approved and adopted by the local or regional board of education.

To request new flexibility, please complete the “**Flexibility Request Submission Form**” (see attached) and submit it to the CSDE for review and approval at SDE.SEED@ct.gov by **March 30, 2014**. Please reference “**{District Name}**: Flexibility Amendments for 2013-2014” in the subject line. Once approved, you will receive notification to the email address provided on the attached submission form.

If you would like to review any aspect of these flexibilities, request explanations of the revised minimum requirements and discuss your possible variations upon them, or if you have general questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Talent Office Staff at 860-713-6868.

SB/gs

Attachments: Flexibilities to the Guidelines for Educator Evaluation
2013-2014 Flexibility Request Submission Form