



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools
Superintendents of Unified School Districts
Directors of Public Charter Schools
Directors of Approved Private Special Education Programs
Executive Directors of Regional Educational Service Centers

FROM: Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner of Education *CRJ*

DATE: May 18, 2023

SUBJECT: Educator Evaluation and Support Plan (EESP) Submission;
Extending the *Flexibilities for Implementing the
CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation 2017* into the
2023-2024 School Year

Background

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section 10-151d, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) reconvened the [Educator Evaluation and Support 2022 Council \(EES Council\)](#), codified in C.G.S. 10-151b as the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC), to begin the process to ‘reimagine’ Connecticut’s educator evaluation and support system.

The EES Council has been meeting since April 2021, first to update the [Flexibilities for Implementing the CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation 2017 for the 2021-2022 School Year](#), and then to conduct an in-depth review of research-based best practices to inform the development of a transformative educator evaluation and support system that:

- is consistent with emerging research and best practices in the field of education;
- includes a renewed focus on professional learning to develop systems of continuous improvement for educator practice and student outcomes; and
- addresses the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students, teachers, administrators, families, and school communities.

The EES Council has developed a draft framework that reflects these priorities.

Next Steps

The CSDE is in the process of seeking adoption of the new, proposed CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation 2023 (CT Guidelines 2023) by the State Board of Education:

- The CSDE presented a draft of the proposed CT Guidelines 2023, as recommended by the EES Council, to the State Board of Education (SBE) Legislation and Policy Development Committee on May 3, 2023.
- Draft materials will be available on the [EES Council Webpage](#) in May, pending approval from the SBE Legislation and Policy Development Committee.
- The CSDE, with the approval of the Legislation and Policy Development Committee, is planning to recommend that the SBE adopt the proposed CT Guidelines 2023, as recommended by the EES Council, during its June 14, 2023 meeting.

- Implementation of the new CT Guidelines 2023 will be implemented beginning in the 2024-25 school year.

Educator Evaluation and Support Plans (EESP) for the 2023-24 School Year

On March 1, 2023, the SBE adopted the EES Council's recommendation for [Extending the *Flexibilities for Implementing the Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation 2017* for the 2023-24 School Year \(*Flexibilities*\)](#).

With the SBE's adoption of extending the *Flexibilities* into 2023-24, LEAs will have consistency in the implementation of educator evaluation and support while providing time for Professional Development and Evaluation Committees (PDECs) to plan for the successful implementation of the revised CT Guidelines 2023 during the 2023-24 school year, pending adoption by the SBE.

Given the timeline for seeking adoption of the new, proposed CT Guidelines 2023, and considering the time needed for districts to plan for the successful implementation of the revised CT Guidelines 2023, LEAs have the option for the 2023-24 school year to implement the *Flexibilities* or to implement the LEAs most recent CSDE-approved EESP.

Adopting the *Flexibilities* for 2023-24

Local education agencies (LEAs) that choose to adopt these *Flexibilities* must do so through the mutual-agreement process of the PDEC and the local board of education. It is intended that districts adopt the *Flexibilities* in their entirety for the 2023-23 school year. LEAs should follow their most recently approved CSDE educator evaluation and support plan (EESP) for all other areas of the [CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation 2017](#) not described in the *Flexibilities*.

If an LEA adopted the *Flexibilities* for 2022-23 school year, the PDEC must determine, through mutual agreement with the local board of education, whether to re-adopt the *Flexibilities* for the 2023-24 school year or confirm continuing with their most recent CSDE-approved EESP.

Confirming Educator Evaluation and Support Option for 2023-24

LEAs should complete the [EESP Checklist](#) prior to October 1, 2023 to confirm:

- Continued use of most recent CSDE-approved EESP
- Adoption of *Flexibilities* for 2023-24

PLEASE NOTE: Submission of a request for an amendment to a district's CSDE-approved EESP for 2023-24 only must be received by July 1, 2022. However, prior to developing amendments for existing plans, the CSDE Talent Office encourages districts to review resources available on the [EES Council Webpage](#) and plan for successful implementation of their EESP aligned to the new CT Guidelines to be implemented in 2024-25.

For questions, please contact Sharon Fuller sharon.fuller@ct.gov.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the evaluation and support of Connecticut's educators.

CRT:smf

Extending the 2021-22 Flexibilities for Implementing the *CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation 2017* for the 2022-2023 School Year
SBE: Adopted June 2, 2021, Extended March 1, 2023

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is extending the 2021-22 *Flexibilities for Implementing the CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation 2017 (Guidelines)* into the 2022-23 school year. Local education agencies (LEAs) that choose to adopt these *Flexibilities* must do so through the mutual-agreement process of the Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC) and the local board of education. It is intended that districts adopt the *Flexibilities for Implementing the CT Guidelines 2017* in its entirety for the 2022-2023 school year. Districts should follow their most recently approved CSDE educator evaluation and support plan (EESP) for all other areas of the *CT Guidelines 2017* not described in the *Flexibilities* below.

Overview of Flexibilities

While Connecticut continues to recover and adjust from the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the *Flexibilities* support a balanced approach to supporting educators, staff, and students while maintaining an emphasis on teaching, learning and professional growth. As such, extending the *Flexibilities* for 2023-24 continue to prioritize the need to focus on:

- social and emotional learning and overall well-being of students, staff, and educators;
- equitable learning opportunities for all students;
- culturally responsive teaching and learning practices;
- academic achievement; and
- engagement with families.

These flexibilities are provided to facilitate support, feedback, and growth for Connecticut educators, in order to best meet the needs of students.

Student Learning Indicators and measures of accomplishment will prioritize students with the most significant needs and will align with the following:

- the school’s focus on social and emotional learning;
- school and/or district improvement goals;
- addressing identified areas of need based on current data;
- performance skills in courses such as career technical trades, music, art, or physical education; or
- content-related standards.

Student Learning Indicators (45%)

Justification: As educators begin the new school year, it is important for educators to focus on:

- supporting the wellness of the whole child;
- equitable learning opportunities for all students; and
- providing support to students who have challenges in attaining learning goals.

It is also important for school and district leaders to focus on supporting educators and staff, as well as to be supported, regarding their overall well-being and that of their staff.

Key Definitions

Holistic Indicators of Student Growth: Student growth towards goal indicators should be measured through a holistic review of evidence, mutually agreed upon between the teacher and evaluator, which may include artifacts, district created formative assessments, student work samples/portfolios, student surveys, mastery-based demonstrations of academic achievement, etc.

Measures of Accomplishment: Measures of Accomplishment could be demonstrated by implementation of individual, grade-level, or school-wide strategies mutually agreed upon between the teacher and evaluator. The following are examples of demonstrating measures of accomplishment. This list does not preclude other methods that are mutually agreed upon.

- Evidence of implementing a new strategy throughout the year to address an identified area(s) of need;
- Evidence of analyzing data, developing and implementing strategies to improve learning for students with the most significant needs;
- Evidence of engaging parents throughout the year in supporting the learning process for students;
- Evidence of strategies implemented to increase the engagement of students in the learning process;
- Evidence of incorporating culturally responsive teaching strategies into daily lessons; or
- Measuring academic achievement of students.

Mutual Agreement: Goals and corresponding indicators must be reached through mutual agreement between the educator and evaluator. Goals should be informed by a thorough review of available data including but not limited to baseline performance data, district and/or school based goals, climate survey results, family and/or community feedback or SEL needs. When the evaluator and the educator cannot agree on goal/objective, evaluation period, feedback or the professional development plan, follow the dispute resolution steps of the district's most recently approved CSDE-EESP.

Teachers will develop one student learning goal with a minimum of two indicators, or measures of accomplishment, focused on:

- social and emotional learning for students,
- student engagement,
- engaging families,
- cultural responsiveness, or
- academic achievement.

While only one student learning goal is required, teachers are able to develop more than two indicators or measures of accomplishment to expand the areas of progress, growth, or accomplishment addressed through one student learning goal. Indicators or measures of accomplishment must be mutually agreed upon between the teacher and evaluator during the goal-setting process and could be demonstrated by implementation of school-wide, grade-level, or individual strategies. Administrators will develop two student learning indicators, or measures of accomplishment, including, but not limited to:

- supporting the health, safety, and social and emotional well-being, of staff and students,
- ensuring equity for the most vulnerable students and their families,

- mastery-based learning, or
- developing systematic approaches to incorporating social and emotional practices and/or culturally responsive practices into the teaching and learning process.

Indicators or measures of accomplishment could be demonstrated by implementation of district-wide or individual strategies that are mutually agreed upon between the administrator and evaluator during the goal-setting process.

Observation of Performance and Practice (40%)

Justification: As the social and emotional well-being of students and staff will continue to be a priority during 2023-24, it is recommended that observations of performance and practice, site visits, and reviews of practice/artifacts be formative in nature, and take place more frequently and for shorter amounts of time throughout the school year for the purpose of providing feedback and support. Evaluators are encouraged to focus on educator practice that supports social and emotional learning, the health and well-being of staff and students, and student learning.

Written feedback from observations should be based on evidence collected and current CSDE-approved rubrics. Feedback should be formative in nature and include recommendations for growth and professional learning. Please reference the [At-a-Glance Crosswalks for Social and Emotional \(SEL\) Core Competencies, SEL Teaching Practices, and the CCT Rubric for Effective Teaching 2017 Alignment](#), as well as the [CT Learning Hub](#), that includes resources for social and emotional learning for students, student engagement, family engagement, cultural responsiveness, and academic achievement.

Observation Process for Teachers:

Key Definitions

Informal Observation: In-class observations less than 20 minutes, with verbal and/or written feedback within a timely manner.

Formal Observation: In-class observations of at least 20 minutes, with verbal and/or written feedback within a timely manner.

In-Class Observation: Observations of the interaction between educators and students in the learning environment most reflective of the educator’s assignment. In order to capture an authentic view of practice and to promote a culture of openness and comfort with frequent observations and feedback, it is recommended that evaluators use a combination of announced and unannounced observations.

Reviews of Practice: Reviews of Practice/non-classroom observations include, but are not limited to, observations of data team meetings, observations of coaching/mentoring other teachers, student work, or other teaching artifacts.

NOTE:

Non-Classroom-Based Educators, who are being evaluated using the SESS rubric, reviews of practice may be used in place of informal observations. Reviews of practice/non-classroom observations for non-classroom-based educators may also include, but are not limited to, diagnostic reports, summary of counseling strategies used and impact on student progress, evidence of supporting students with the most significant needs, summary of coaching and training provided for colleagues and impact of training.

Districts may adjust the requirement for formal in-class observations, as appropriate, if shorter, more frequent observations will take place. For first and second-year teachers, and teachers on an improvement and remediation plan, a post-conference is recommended.

- A minimum of two informal observations and a minimum of one review of practice for teachers with more than two years of experience and who were rated Proficient or Exemplary during the 2022-23 school year.
- A minimum of three informal observations and a minimum of one review of practice for first and second year teachers and teachers who demonstrated Developing or Below Standard practice during the 2022-23 school year.

Evaluators are encouraged to provide additional opportunities to check in with staff regarding social and emotional well-being and support, and may implement additional observations and/or reviews of practice as needed.

Observation Process for Administrators:

Artifact reviews may replace one of the required site visits required in the *Guidelines 2017*.

- A minimum of two site visits and one artifact review for administrators with two or more years of experience and who were rated Proficient or Exemplary during the 2022-23 school year.
- A minimum of three site visits and two artifact reviews, with additional site visits/artifact reviews, as needed, for administrators who are new to the profession or the district, or who demonstrated Developing or Below Standard practice during the 2022-23 school year.

Evaluators are encouraged to provide additional opportunities to check in with administrators regarding social and emotional well-being and support, and may implement additional site visits/artifact reviews as needed.

Stakeholder Feedback (10%)

Justification: Engaging with families continues to be essential in supporting the social and emotional well-being of students and their academic learning. The CSDE is committed to supporting educators in their support of, and engagement with, the families of our students. It is recommended that educators prioritize the focus on implementing strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with families.

Whole-School Student Learning Indicators/Teacher Effectiveness Outcomes (5%)

Flexibility is provided to districts, with consensus of their PDECs, to:

- follow their most recently approved CSDE-EESP, or
- for educators to focus on one of the following special areas to support their professional practice and/or to support a school-wide area of focus, including, but not limited to:
 - social and emotional learning,
 - providing equitable learning opportunities for all students,
 - professional learning to improve practice,
 - professional learning communities, or
 - best practices for hybrid or remote learning.

4-Level Matrix Rating System

Summative ratings will be required for the 2023-24 school year.

- End-of-year summative reviews shall include a teacher/administrator self-assessment, supporting documentation/artifact review and an end-of-year conference.
- Summative ratings shall be determined by:
 1. a holistic review of evidence in each component,
 2. combining the rating for student learning goals and whole-school student learning indicators/educator effectiveness/special area of focus for an **Outcomes Rating**,
 3. combining educator practice and stakeholder feedback for a **Practice Rating**, and
 4. combining the **Outcomes Rating** and the **Practice Rating** to a **Final Rating** aligned to one of four performance designations (See Sample Summative Form Template attachment):
 - Exemplary
 - Proficient
 - Developing
 - Below Standard

Example: Teacher Holistic Rating



Example: Administrators Holistic Rating



- Districts shall report to their local or regional board of education the status of educator evaluations by June 1, 2024.
- The reporting of aggregate evaluation ratings will be due to the CSDE by September 15, 2024.

Within the current rating system, districts may consider performance levels based on levels of engagement/implementation of strategies to accomplish goals.

Evaluation-based Professional Learning

It is recommended that Professional Learning needs be discussed during the goal-setting conference, and be reviewed as part of mid-year check-ins. This will ensure ongoing support as educators adapt and adjust to the localized needs of schools and districts as Connecticut continues to support positive teaching and learning environments.

Individual Improvement and Remediation Plans

Communication between evaluators, educators, and the exclusive bargaining representative should take place regarding the status of existing plans. Primary evaluators should provide formative documentation when developing a plan in consultation with the educator and exclusive bargaining representative