



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
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, Acting Commissioner of Education *CRJ*

DATE: June 9, 2021

SUBJECT: **Flexibilities for Implementing the *CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation 2017* for the 2021-2022 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 \(EES 2022\)](#), known in C.G.S. as the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC), to begin the process to ‘reimagine’ Connecticut’s educator evaluation in its entirety for the academic year 2021-22 and beyond. The first step in the process of ‘reimagining’ educator evaluation was to update and revise the current *Flexibilities for Implementing the CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation 2017 (Guidelines) in 2020-21* to what is allowable within the current *Guidelines* and in alignment with C.G.S. Section 10-151b considering that Governor Lamont’s Executive Order 7C will have expired for the 2021-22 school year.

Therefore, EES 2022 recommended updates to the *Flexibilities* for the school year 2021-22. The CSDE then recommended to the Connecticut State Board of Education (SBE) to approve the updated *Flexibilities* for the school year 2021-22. On June 2, 2021, the SBE approved the [Flexibilities for Implementing the CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation 2017 for the 2021-2022 School Year](#) for district adoption for the 2021-22 school year.

Flexibilities 2021-22

As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues into the 2021-22 school year, a balanced approach to returning educators, staff, and students back to in-person teaching and learning, and to support student and educator growth and improvement, will be necessary. As such, the attachment, [Flexibilities for Implementing the CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation 2017 for the 2021-2022 School Year \(Flexibilities 2021-22\)](#), 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.

A summary of the components described in the Flexibilities 2021-22 are described below. For further detail, please refer to the attachment:

- Student Learning Indicators (45%) for both teachers and administrators
- Observation of Performance and Practice (40%) including definitions for informal observations, formal observations, in-class observations, and reviews of practice
- Stakeholder Feedback (10%)
- Whole-School Student Learning Indicators/Teacher Effectiveness Outcomes (5%)
- 4-Level Matrix Rating System including end-of-year summative reviews, holistic review of evidence, and reporting of aggregate evaluation ratings due to the CSDE by September 15, 2022

Adopting the Flexibilities 2021-22

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 2021-22 in their entirety for the school year. Districts should follow their most recently approved CSDE educator evaluation and support plan (EESP) for all other areas of the [Guidelines 2017](#) not described in the Flexibilities 2021-22.

If an LEA adopted the Flexibilities for 2020-21 school year, the PDEC must determine, through mutual agreement with the local board of education, whether to adopt the Flexibilities for the 2021-22 school year or continue with their most recent CSDE-approved EESP. *The Flexibilities in place for the 2020-2021 school year will not apply for the 2021-2022 school year as Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7C will have expired.*

Submitting to Adopt Flexibilities 2021-22 or an Amendment Request

LEAs intending to adopt the Flexibilities for the 2021-22 school year or submit a request for an amendment to their CSDE-approved EESP should complete the [EESP checklist](#) prior to October 1, 2021.

Contact the CSDE consultant assigned to your region to discuss questions from your PDEC.

- Sharon Fuller- sharon.fuller@ct.gov – (CES, EDADVANCE, LEARN)
- Kimberly Audet- kimberly.audet@ct.gov – (ACES, CREC, EASTCONN)

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

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Attachment

ATTACHMENT

Flexibilities for Implementing the *CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation 2017* for the 2021-2022 School Year (Flexibilities 2021-22) June 2, 2021

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is providing flexibilities to the fundamental requirements of the *CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation 2017 (Guidelines)* for the 2021-22 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 *Guidelines 2017* in its entirety for the 2021-2022 school year. Districts should follow their most recently approved CSDE educator evaluation and support plan (EESP) for all other areas of the *Guidelines 2017* not described in the Flexibilities below.

Overview

As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will continue into the 2021-22 school year, a balanced approach to returning educators, staff, and students back to in-person teaching and learning, and to support student and educator growth and improvement, will be necessary. As such, the Flexibilities for Implementing the [*Guidelines 2017*](#) for 2021-22 (*Flexibilities 2021-22*) 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, following a year that has been very different from the traditional approach to teaching and learning, 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 be a priority during 2021-2022, 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 2018-19 school year and/or maintained Proficient or Exemplary practice during 2020-2021.
- 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 2020-2021.

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 2018-19 school year and/or maintained Proficient or Exemplary practice during 2020-2021.
- 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 2020-2021.

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 of focus 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 2021-2022 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, 2022.
- The reporting of aggregate evaluation ratings will be due to the CSDE by September 15, 2022.

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 potential for varied teaching and learning environments due to the monitoring of COVID-19 factors.

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