



Opportunities for Differentiation in the State Model Evaluation System: Guiding Questions and District Examples

Purpose and Use of this Document

Over the past few years, districts have been working diligently to implement the requirements of the Great Teachers and Leaders Act, or Senate Bill 10-191. As implementation continues to progress, the Educator Effectiveness Unit at the Colorado Department of Education, in response to feedback from the field, has created this document to highlight the given flexibilities within the legislation and State Board of Education rules guiding implementation. This document brings together legislative requirement language, guiding questions for districts to ask and reflect on their current evaluation system, and implementation examples from districts across the state.

Districts may use this document to guide the continuous monitoring and evolution of their evaluation system, including both professional practice and measures of student learning. For some readers, the guiding questions may help to serve as a starting point for conversation and policy development. For others, reading and reflecting on the district examples may provide deeper insight into the evaluation process they have in place and lead to meaningful changes in their system. It is important to note that many of the district examples provided in this resource emphasize a “go slow to go fast” approach. By using this approach, districts have worked to put processes and infrastructures in place to build a solid system foundation. While putting these structures in place can take time at the onset, districts are finding these processes result in increased capacity and efficiency.

This document is intended to focus on teacher evaluation and implementation; however, the guiding questions and district examples may be applicable to other educator groups such as principals or specialized service professionals. Readers should use their professional judgment when applying these examples in various contexts.



Professional Practice

NOTE: In order to be concise and explicit, some of the examples combine strategies used at different schools and districts.

Observations	
Guiding Questions	<p>Do you have defined observation protocols in place in your district?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal versus informal • Announced versus unannounced • Use of pre- and post-conferences • Differentiating protocol by defined groups(role, experience, status)
District Examples	<p>Example 1 Instead of formal observations, one district decided to use walk-throughs to capture a full body of evidence throughout the school year and include classroom evidence as well as what educators do outside of the classroom, such as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), parent-teacher conferences and team meetings. Walk-throughs are no more than 15-20 minutes with the focus on getting to every teacher at least once in a two to three week window. Feedback is recorded on a form that is aligned to the rubric and electronically shared with the educator at the end of each day. This district has found this method of observations to be more efficient as it reduces the time required for pre- and post-conferences and a full formal observation.</p> <p>Example 2 Because districts can define what an observation looks like, one district decided to incorporate more informal and unannounced observations by moving away from their traditional model of a pre-conference, formal observation, post-conference that happened two times a year for each educator. To ensure educators were ready for the change, the district communicated the purpose for gathering a full body of evidence and adopted a transition plan for the first school year. In the fall, they scheduled the traditional formal observation with a pre- and post-conference with each teacher. They started doing informal observations in the fall as well with both announced and unannounced walk-throughs. During the spring semester the second formal observation was unannounced with a post-conference and the walk-throughs were all unannounced. The spring focus was based on missing or discrepant evidence after the principals and teachers met at the mid-year review. During the spring semester of this transition year, the district received positive feedback about these changes and plans to repeat this format for next school year.</p> <p>Example 3 Another district no longer uses the formal pre- and post-conference model now that evaluation is more of a process that builds a body of evidence over time rather than an event that occurs once or twice a year. Data is collected through a variety of observation methods including short walk-throughs (15-20 minutes), observing PLCs and full classroom observations. Teachers still have the ability to request a short pre-conference, for example, when they want to inform the evaluator of something they might want feedback on. Likewise, a principal may communicate to a teacher through a variety of informal methods (e.g. email, conversation threads in Colorado Performance Management System [RANDA], in person) about specific areas for which they may be looking. Feedback may be provided similarly after each “observation” or a short informal conference, if desired. Not only has this provided a relief in the amount of time spent in pre- and post-conferencing, but teachers have reported this model feels more like “coaching” and less like “evaluation.” As a result, teachers are engaging in more meaningful conversations with their principal around continuous growth and improvement in their skills.</p> <p>Example 4</p>



	In an attempt to increase efficiency and manage time, educators in one Colorado district agreed to a process differentiated for those teachers who earn a rating of highly effective the previous year. In these cases, observations are a series of walk-throughs rather than a formal observation. Educators have the right to request a formal observation if they feel that would be beneficial. However, most are finding that the shorter, more frequent observations are resulting in more opportunities for evaluators to observe a broad range of professional practices.
Did You Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State Model Evaluation System does not differentiate or define formal/informal observation, timing, or duration of observations...these are all district defined. • Districts have the flexibility to determine when or if pre/post conferences are necessary. • Peers can be an evaluator designee.
Legislative Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-probationary teachers receive at least one observation each year • Probationary teachers receive at least two observations each year • Evaluators must gather sufficient evidence upon which to base ratings • Evaluator designees must be certified by a State Approved Evaluator Training Provider

Use of Peers in Evaluation

Guiding Question	<p>What are some ways to engage peers in observations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can using peers in evaluation build principal capacity within your system? • How can collegial conversations build support for your educators and increase teacher effectiveness?
District Examples	<p>Example 1 One Colorado district values observing peers to promote collegial feedback. To ensure all staff have the time and opportunity to observe a peer, all teachers have committed to giving up one of their planning periods to cover a class so another teacher can observe their peer. The teacher observing then submits the information both to the teacher and the supervisor. The supervisor has the option to use the observation as evidence in the evaluation system. This process has allowed teachers more feedback on their practice, more insight into identifying high quality practice and opportunities for collegial feedback.</p> <p>Example 2 Another district is using a peer coaching model that allows educators to get coaching and feedback from someone with similar expertise in their content area or with others across content areas (e.g. support in integrating reading and math). The school provides release time and arranges schedules so that this can happen at least twice a month. Teachers can ask for feedback and coaching in specific areas of the rubric and this information can be shared with the principal to inform the evaluation.</p> <p>Example 3 One district has a partnership with colleagues from out of state. In order to provide feedback, teachers film themselves and securely share the files with their peers. Their colleagues then provide them with feedback on their practice using the recording. The teacher has the option to link the film and feedback as an artifact to contribute to their body of evidence.</p> <p>Example 4 Many districts throughout the state are utilizing designees who have been trained by State Approved Evaluator Training Providers. These designees are able to conduct all activities related to the evaluation cycle, including observations, providing feedback, mid-year and end-of-year reviews and approving and determining measures of student learning specific to the educators they are supporting. These districts are finding the support of evaluator designees helps reduce the</p>



	workload of principals by creating opportunities for teacher leaders and allows evaluators to spend more time in classrooms providing quality feedback.
Did You Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peers may submit observations/artifacts to the evaluator who can choose to add it as evidence for the educator. • Peers can be an evaluator designee.
Legislative Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required to collect teacher performance data related to professional practice; one option being peer feedback • School districts and BOCES encouraged to provide training to teachers so that they may conduct peer coaching observations in order to support other teachers by providing action feedback • Evaluator designees must be certified by a State Approved Evaluator Training Provider
Professional Development and Quality Feedback	
Guiding Questions	<p>How are you using information gained through observations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the final written evaluation report • Inform professional development • Provide timely, actionable feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In what ways can the feedback be communicated with teachers?
District Examples	<p>Example 1 One principal shared their Evaluator Assessment in Colorado Performance Management System (RANDA) at the beginning of the year with all of their educators. Having this working rubric open and shared with each teacher from the beginning of the year, the principal felt that it led to a more transparent process and an increase in trust. As this principal gathered data throughout the year, formal and informal data points were added into the system that could be seen, not only in notes, but also as aligned to the rubric practices. The principal and teachers expressed added clarity around areas of growth and increased teacher engagement in the evaluation. More principal invitations to observe targeted areas were reported, resulting in deeper conversations about their practice.</p> <p>Example 2 Because the focus of the rubric is on evidence of high quality practice, many districts incorporated a variety of strategies for gathering evidence. Staff shared evidence with the educator’s evaluator from district instructional walk-throughs, collegial feedback, formal and informal observations. This not only saved time for the evaluator, it integrates and honors all the work the staff is doing to support each other while focusing on continuous growth.</p> <p>Example 3 One district has had a walk-through form for a number of years that teachers and administration valued. They cross-walked the walk-through “look-fors” to the teacher rubric and invested district resources for a customization to the Colorado Performance Management System (RANDA). Walk-through observations were indicated as an icon as a part of the Evaluator Assessment rubric. This allows the district to continue to utilize a tool they value and have it easily incorporated into the State Model system as evidence. Principals no longer had a stack a walk-through forms to review, analyze and manually enter into the system.</p> <p>Example 4 Many districts are beginning to use the detailed reports at the Element and Standard level to identify specific areas of professional development at the individual teacher level. They are also able to use the reports to quickly identify educators who are strong in a particular area and who can help other educators grow their practice. They find that they increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their professional development by personalizing the professional development in this way.</p>
Did You Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By using the reports feature in the Colorado Performance Management System (RANDA) you can identify opportunities for differentiated professional development focused on the building, evaluator, and individual.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluator designees can be used for professional development and quality feedback. • Cross district PLCs can be used to bring principals together to build capacity for quality feedback. • Peer coaches can be used to provide quality feedback based on expertise in content area or instructional practices.
Legislative Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School districts and BOCES required to collect and analyze data on multiple occasions in order to provide actionable feedback • Teacher development plans should link evaluation and performance standards with professional development opportunities

Artifacts as Evidence

Guiding Question	<p>How can artifacts be a useful component in evaluation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When artifacts are used, what purpose are they serving? • In what instances would it be beneficial to use artifacts in evaluation?
District Examples	<p>Example 1 One Colorado district has not required teachers to submit or attach any artifacts until at least their mid-year review. This gives evaluators time to complete some observations and determine whether any are necessary. The principal has shared the evaluator assessment rubric at various stages of completion, making teachers aware of which practices have not been observed. At this point, they can either provide an artifact or schedule a more targeted observation to support their belief that specific elements within the rubric are part of their professional practice. The district reduced time for teachers and administrators by not requiring an artifact for each professional practice or element.</p> <p>Example 2 Another district moved away from their prior practice of requiring a great deal of artifacts from each educator in a portfolio to now only asking for artifact evidence if there is a discrepancy between the evaluator’s evidence and the teacher’s perception of a practice. This reduction in creating, collecting, and reviewing a large quantity of artifacts has led to more time for the evaluator to be in classrooms observing teachers and in non-traditional observation times (e.g. PLCs, parent-teacher conferences.) This district believes the time gained has led to more productive conversations between principals and their teachers and has been appreciated by both the evaluators and educators.</p>
Did You Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Besides the legislative requirement listed below, no additional artifacts are required for the State Model Evaluation System. This is a discrepancy model and you can go through an entire evaluation without one additional artifact. • Sharing the evaluator assessment rubric with educators allows them to be informed of best practices evaluators have observed and can lead to a high level of collaboration and engagement in the evaluation process. • Use of the mid-year review or self-assessment can be used as a starting point of the discrepancy model identifying if there is a need for artifacts.
Legislative Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Districts and BOCES shall collect teacher performance data related to Professional Practice using observations and at least one of the following measures: (a) student perception measures (e.g. surveys), where appropriate and feasible, (b) peer feedback, (c) feedback from parents or guardians; or (d) review of Teacher lesson plans or student work samples



Measures of Student Learning

NOTE: In order to be concise and explicit, some of the examples combine strategies used at different schools and districts.

Meeting Measures of Student Learning Legislative Requirements

Guiding Questions	<p>How is your Measure of Student Learning (MSL) system designed to meet the legislative requirements outlined in SB 10-191 and HB 15-1323?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What considerations has your district made to ensure measures are available at least two weeks prior to the last day of school? • How does your district’s MSL system protect against high opt-out rates?
District Examples	<p>Example 1 A number of districts have found that three of the four requirements for MSLs are met (collective attribution, statewide assessment results, and results from Colorado Growth Model) when they use School and/or District Performance Frameworks (SPF/DPF). Some districts set SPF/DPF targets as a change in overall percent of points earned on the SPF/DPF from year to year while others use the performance data from the SPF/DPF sub-indicators to guide school targets. Additional sample approaches and considerations for each is located in the Use of School and District Performance Frameworks in Educator Evaluations.</p> <p>Example 2 A single measure can be used for both the individual and the collective attribution requirements (i.e. state and/or vendor-based assessments). For example, one district uses Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Math as school collective measure (as math is indicated as a performance priority in their Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) and all teachers are expected to incorporate math into their curriculum). This district also uses NWEA Math as an individual measure for their math teachers. When this approach is taken, districts should be aware of the implications for “double-dipping” which can result in a disproportionate influence of one measure on the overall rating.</p> <p>Example 3 To ensure MSL results are available two weeks before the end of the school year, some districts have moved away from the traditional evaluation cycle being the school year and to an evaluation cycle spanning from April to April. These districts have found this provides for more in-depth and productive coaching conversations around final ratings and goal-setting.</p> <p>Example 4 In districts where there is a high state assessment opt-out, districts have found putting more weight on local assessments creates stability in the MSL system and they use the statewide data to inform conversations about local measure results. Districts have found the assessments they have already been using, whether at the district, school, or classroom level, have high value with teachers and students to inform instruction and monitor student progress and can be easily used as an MSL. One district has moved toward student led conferences where students set and monitor their own growth goals on local measures which emphasize reaching goals that kids care about.</p>
Did You Know?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By using the bulk “Collective Measures Rating” feature in the Colorado Performance Management System, evaluators can rate collective measures for all educators at one time. • Unlike teacher evaluations, principal and Specialized Service Professionals (SSP) evaluations do NOT have a collective or individual attribution requirement. • Two teachers collaborating on a class project or performance can fulfill the collective attribution requirement if they use each other’s student



	<p>results in an MSL.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIDA ACCESS achievement results are generally available two weeks prior to the last day of school. • The PSAT and SAT are scored on the same scale; therefore, results from the PSAT can be used to set meaningful SAT goals. Growth data should also be available. • Rules 3 & 4 do not apply to many teachers in Colorado due to the lack of availability of state tests and Colorado Growth Model (CGM) in all subjects/grades.
<p>Legislative Requirement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Attribution (Student results are attributed to one licensed person) • Collective Attribution (Student results on a measure are attributed to more than one licensed person) • Statewide Assessment Results, when available • Results from the Colorado Growth Model(CGM), when available
<h2>Aligning Measures of Student Learning with Instructional Priorities</h2>	
<p>Guiding Questions</p>	<p>Does your MSL system reflect the district’s instructional goals and priorities? Does your MSL system reflect what students should know and be able to do as outlined in the Colorado Academic Standards? Are you concerned your system is encouraging teaching to one particular assessment (e.g. State or vendor-based assessments)?</p>
<p>District Examples</p>	<p>Example 1 To streamline efforts, many districts merged their Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) process with the development of appropriate measures which are aligned with school performance priorities. Interim and benchmark measures which are identified in the UIP were also used as part of their MSL systems.</p> <p>Example 2 To encourage teacher buy-in and deter too much emphasis on a single measure, some districts aligned their MSLs to class units or trimester goals which are spread out throughout the year. One district piloted a process with their middle school language arts and math teachers where teachers identify what they want students to know and be able to do in learning progressions throughout the year. Teachers were heavily invested and ultimately created a Student Learning Objective (SLO) in the service of learning, not simply for the purpose of evaluation.</p> <p>Example 3 One district has brought role-alike educators together collaboratively in existing PLC-type scenarios (Professional Development, UIP, etc.) where there are discussions about the teaching and learning cycle to develop their MSLs. Administrators and teachers have come together to discuss a process that allows teachers to create and submit a MSL for approval to be used in their evaluation. Administrators have reported that this process and the conversations brought a different perspective to the process and allowed them to utilize the knowledge and talents of teachers in the process. This alleviated the burden on administrators to feel the need to create the whole structure and provided the opportunity to capitalize on these conversations.</p>
<p>Did You Know?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can be creative...if a measure is grounded in the Colorado Academic Standards, you can use it! <input type="checkbox"/> MSL systems and structures are an evolving process and can be changed. <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers are already doing the work. Find opportunities to capitalize on the great work teachers are already doing to maximize student outcomes. Share! • Districts who have incorporated any level of teachers’ voices overwhelmingly report a higher level of fidelity of implementation and buy-in from



	educators.
Legislative Requirement	N/A

Connecting Professional Practice with Measures of Student Learning

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Connecting Professional Practice with Measures of Student Learning	
Guiding Questions	<p>What feedback loops are in place in your district to make the MSL and PP more efficient by using them to inform each other? How have your conversations with teachers about their professional practices supported understanding of MSL? Are professional practice ratings and MSLs ratings correlated? Why or why not?</p>
District Examples	<p>Example 1 Districts who use teams already in place (PLCs, literacy, etc.) to develop and approve local measures report a greater degree of teacher buy-in with the MSL side of their evaluations. This method accounts for professional development and frequently provides more rigorous measures as districts report teachers tend to set higher expectations for students. Creating year-long PLCs where teachers and administrators collaborate on the process and the level of engagement in these processes can inform the professional practice portion of teacher evaluations.</p> <p>Example 2 During the mid-year conversation, one district discussed progress and performance on MSL goals and connected them to professional practices observed at that point in the year. The teacher was able to make explicit connections across MSL and professional practice expectations and the evaluator used the mid-year conversation more efficiently by discussing both sides of the evaluation. In addition, the teacher was highly engaged in the SLO/ MSL process, which then informed progress on specific professional practices.</p> <p>Example 3: Many districts utilize the charts and reports feature in the Colorado Performance Management System to determine if teacher professional practice ratings and MSL ratings are correlated. This data point is then used to guide discussions with both teachers and evaluators about how these ratings are interrelated. For example, if MSLs are rated high and professional practices are rated low, this may indicate MSL rating criteria are not rigorous enough or that evaluators are being too tough on teachers. Regardless, this data point is used to drive the “why” discussion.</p>
Did You Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the professional practice rubric, Element 3h (use of assessment) has been one of the lowest rated elements two years in a row. By using appropriate methods to assess what each student has learned and then using the assessment results to plan further instruction can inform both MSL and Professional Practices. You can see the alignment between overall Professional Practices and MSLs by using the matrix of professional practices and MSL report feature in the Colorado Performance Management System. You can use this information to inform discussions around these two sides of educator evaluations.
Legislative Requirement	N/A



Where can I learn more?

- [Senate Bill 10-191](#)
- [Colorado State Board of Education Rules for Written Evaluation Systems](#)
- The [District Questions to Consider](#) document is a series of questions for districts to support their work in determining measures of student learning.
- The [CEI MSL Guiding Questions](#) document, which presents questions for districts to consider while developing and improving their systems.
- Use of CGM in Educator Evaluations [Executive Summary/Technical Report](#): NCIEA/CADRE resources for districts considering alternative methods for using CGM results in educator evaluations.
- [Use of the SPF/DPF in Educator Evaluations](#) (when SPF/DPF are available)
 - [User's Guide for Evaluating Colorado's Educators](#)
- The Educator Effectiveness [Tools and Materials Guide](#) provides an overview and brief description of additional resources available for use.