



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents

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

SB

DATE: April 10, 2014

SUBJECT: Updates

Dear Colleagues,

In our ongoing effort to keep districts apprised of the most current information regarding educator evaluation and support, this newsletter addresses questions that have been posed recently by superintendents across the state.

Updates featured in this newsletter include:

- Submission of District Plans for 2014-15 Educator Evaluation and Support
- The Annual Evaluation Process for Teachers Who Will Be Non-Renewed
- Ongoing Support of BloomBoard

District Plan Submission

As you know, according to the Guidelines for Educator Evaluation (Guidelines), district plans for Educator Evaluation and Support or revisions to such plans must be approved annually by the State Department of Education prior to implementation. Although we are working to develop a timeline for the submission of the 2014-15 district plans and a process for approval of those plans, at this time we are not able to set a due date for submission given the current discussion among stakeholders about proposed revisions to the Guidelines. While we do not expect substantial changes to the Guidelines, we are unable to provide further guidance or establish a submission date until we have a final resolution regarding the Guidelines.

In the meantime, we are encouraging you to convene your district Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC) to review the 2013-14 implementation of your district plan and discuss areas for revision.

As soon as we are able to do so, we will provide districts with a specific timeline and process for submitting and reviewing 2014-15 district evaluation and support plans.

The Annual Evaluation Process for Teachers Who Will Be Non-Renewed

Section 10-151(c) of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that teachers receive written notice of non-renewal decisions by May 1, each year. How do districts handle this process given the timing of the educator evaluation and support system process?

Districts must adhere to the statutory timelines regarding the non-renewal of teachers. In particular, Connecticut law provides that a teacher whose contract will not be renewed for the upcoming school

year must receive written notification of this fact by May 1. Thus, a teacher should be notified in writing by May 1, 2014, if his/her contract with the school district will be non-renewed for the 2014-15 school year. In addition, the district must adhere to any additional non-renewal deadlines as set by local policy or collective bargaining.

Non-renewal decisions are personnel decisions to be made at the local level by individual school districts. Districts should continue to use their own criteria for making these personnel decisions and may choose to make such decisions based on information and evidence that they have collected to date, as they have in the past. While information and evidence collected through the evaluation process can be used to inform personnel decisions, **it is not a requirement that a summative evaluation form be completed prior to notice of non-renewal.** However, the district should still complete a summative form at the end of the year for any non-renewed teachers by June 30.

Do districts still need to conduct an End-of-Year Summative Conference for non-tenured teachers, even after May 1?

Conducting an End-of-Year Conference for all certified educators is required, as outlined within Section 2.2(3) of the Guidelines for Educator Evaluation. It is recommended that the End-of-Year Conference take place towards the end of the school year once any necessary data and evidence is available. Non-tenured teachers can be non-renewed for any reason; it does not rest solely on the final summative evaluation rating.

Ongoing Support of BloomBoard

As districts continue planning for the 2014-15 academic year, we have received questions regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) ongoing support of BloomBoard. The CSDE, in collaboration with the Connecticut Association of Schools, funded perpetual licenses for all districts in the state. As such, there will never be a cost to the district to host their evaluation data with BloomBoard. BloomBoard's unique model allows all districts to manage the data associated with the evaluation and support system completely free of charge, into perpetuity, while simultaneously using the data to inform recommendations for professional learning support and development through the open marketplace. The professional learning credits issued to districts in 2013-14 do not expire and can be carried over from year to year.

While the CSDE committed to funding professional learning credits in the 2013-14 academic year (for all districts who opted-in), the funding for professional learning credits in 2014-15 is contingent on budget appropriations. If available appropriations do not support the professional learning credits, it is important to note that any professional learning credits beyond those issued in 2013-14 would need to be supported, in full, at the district level, but there would be no cost for the data management system for the educator evaluation data.

The CSDE continues to review district experiences with BloomBoard and continues to work with BloomBoard on continuous improvement to ensure a smooth system of support for districts in the implementation of educator evaluation and support.

The Talent Office staff is committed to providing timely information and answers to your questions. Please do not hesitate to contact us for assistance at 860-713-6868.