

CONNECTICUT GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATOR EVALUATION

Connecticut State Department of Education

June 2012
(updated through May 2014)

Preface

Connecticut's educators are committed to ensuring that students develop the skills and acquire the knowledge they will require to lead meaningful and productive lives as citizens in an interconnected world. This responsibility is shared among students, teachers, administrators, parents, the community, local board of education, the state board of education, and local and state governments. The following educator evaluation guidelines will help ensure that Connecticut's schools develop the talented workforce that it requires to inspire our students to higher levels of performance.

Excellent schools begin with great school leaders and teachers. The importance of highly-skilled educators is beyond dispute, as a strong body of evidence now confirms what parents, students, teachers, and administrators have long known: effective teachers are among the most important school-level factors in student learning, and effective leadership is an essential component of any successful school.

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is committed to raising the overall quality of our schools' workforce. To meet this goal, the state, in partnership with local and regional school districts, aims to create a comprehensive approach to developing Connecticut's educators so that Connecticut prepares, recruits, hires, supports, develops, and retains the best educators to lead our classrooms and schools.

Educator evaluation is the cornerstone of this holistic approach and contributes to the improvement of individual and collective practice, and the growth and development of teachers and leaders. High-quality evaluations are necessary to inform the individualized professional development and support that an educator may require. Such evaluations also identify professional strengths which should form the basis of new professional opportunities. High quality evaluations are also necessary to make fair employment decisions based on teacher and leader effectiveness. Used in this way, high-quality evaluations will bring greater accountability and transparency to schools and instill greater confidence to employment decisions across the state.

Educator evaluation also serves to articulate our priorities. The evaluation and support framework adopted by the Connecticut State Board of Education in consultation with the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council, gives student learning the priority that it deserves. The components of this framework, requiring multiple indicators of student academic growth and development and multiple observations of teacher and leader practice from a variety of perspectives, also aim to ensure that formative and summative ratings are a fair, valid, reliable, useful, and accurate reflection of an educator's work.

The following educator evaluator guidelines provide direction to school districts as they develop and adopt new systems of educator evaluation and support. These guidelines aim to ensure that districts have common and high expectations that educators are evaluated in a fair and consistent manner, and that employment decisions are based on fair, valid, reliable and useful indicators of a educator's work.

Educators in Connecticut are committed to ensuring that all students achieve and develop the skills that will enable them to become lifelong learners and productive citizens in a global world. This shared responsibility must be reached collaboratively in order to help students attain excellence.

Connecticut's *Core Requirements for Educator Evaluation* will assist districts in accomplishing this goal.

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Context

Sections 51 through 56 of P.A. 12-116, signed into law by Governor Dannel P. Malloy on May 15, 2012, and amended by section 23 and 24 of P.A. 12-2 of the June 12 Special Session, requires the State Board of Education to adopt, on or before July 1, 2012 and in consultation with the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC), guidelines for a model teacher evaluation and support program. The PEAC have renamed these guidelines to “Core Requirements.” The following Core Requirements were developed pursuant to this statutory requirement and replace the Connecticut Core Requirements for Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development adopted by the State Board of Education in May of 1999. See appendix for statute language referenced.

Connecticut State Department of Education and national publications form the foundation of the new requirements.

(1) Connecticut’s Common Core Standards, which clearly establishes high expectations for learning for all of Connecticut’s children.

(2) Connecticut’s Common Core of Teaching (CCT), adopted February 1020 (replacing the Common Core of Teaching adopted in 1999), which defines effective teaching practice throughout the career continuum of educators from pre-service to induction to experienced teaching status in six domains:

1. Content and Essential Skills;
2. Classroom Environment, Student Engagement and Commitment to Learning;
3. Planning for Active Learning;
4. Instruction for Active Learning;
5. Assessment for Learning; and
6. Professional Responsibilities and Educator Leadership.

(3) Common Core of Leading: Connecticut Leadership Standards, adopted in June, 2012, which use the national Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (SLLC) standards as their foundation and define effective administrative practice through six performance expectations:

1. Vision, Mission and Goals
2. Teaching and Learning
3. Organizational Systems and Safety
4. Families and Stake holders
5. Ethics and Integrity
6. The Education System

(4) National Pupil Personnel Standards document.

Using these documents as the foundation for educator evaluation establishes critical links among effective teaching, professional learning and increased student achievement. It should be noted that the term “teacher” refers to all individuals in positions requiring certification, including, but not limited to classroom teachers. “Leaders” refers to those individuals in positions requiring an administrative certification, including but not limited to principals.

Pursuant to subsection © of 10-151b of the 2012 Supplement to the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.), as amended by Sec. 51 of P.A. 12-116 and Sec. 23 of P.A. 12-2 the June 12 Special Session, on or before July 1, 2013, the State Board of Education shall adopt, in consultation with the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council,

guidelines for a model teacher evaluation program. Such guidelines shall provide guidance on the use of multiple indicators of student academic growth in teacher evaluations. Such guidelines shall include, but not be limited to: (1) Methods for assessing student academic growth; (2) a consideration of control factors tracked by the state-wide public school information system, pursuant to subsection (c) of section 10-10a of the 2012 Supplement (C.G.S.), that may influence teacher performance ratings, including, but not limited to, student characteristics, student attendance and student mobility; and (3) minimum requirements for teacher evaluation instruments and procedures. Consideration of such control factors and minimum requirements shall be undertaken and accomplished through the joint deliberations and determinations of the goal-setting conference process.

1.2 Introduction and Guiding Principals

(1) The primary goal of the Educator evaluation and support system is to strengthen individual and collective practices so as to increase student learning and development. Connecticut's Core Requirements for Educator Evaluation are based on Connecticut's *Common Core of Teaching* and the *Common Core of Leading: Connecticut School Leadership Standards*, which guide the observation of professional practice. The Core Requirements also include multiple indicators of student academic growth and development, stakeholder feedback and the context in which an educator works. Evaluation processes are designed to promote collaboration and shared ownership for professional growth, renewal, and employment decisions.

The Connecticut Core Requirements for Educator Evaluation are based on the following guiding principles:

- a) The primary purpose of educator evaluation is to strengthen individual and collective practices in order to improve student growth;
- b) Educator evaluation is standards-based, using the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching for teacher evaluation, Common Core of Leading: Connecticut Leadership Standards for administrator evaluation, and National Pupil Personnel Services standards documents for evaluation of educators in pupil services;
- c) Connecticut's Common Core Standards, The Connecticut Framework: K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards, the CMT/CAPT Assessments (Smarter Balanced Assessments), as well as locally-developed curriculum standards are the basis for establishing outcomes at the district and school levels;
- d) The Core Requirements foster continuing collaborative dialogue around teaching and learning in order to increase student academic growth and development;
- e) The Core Requirements clearly connect professional learning to the outcomes of the evaluation process.

1.3 Evaluation Approval Process

(1) Educator evaluation and support systems plans or revisions to such plans must be approved annually by the State Department of Education prior to district implementation. Such process will be an interactive one – between the State Department of Education and district superintendent or in the instance of a consortium of districts, superintendents – until the State Department of Education approves the teacher and administrator evaluation and support systems plan. The State Department of Education will inform districts of the approval process timeline.

(2) The State Department of Education will provide models for teachers and administrator evaluation and support systems. These models serve as options for districts that choose to implement pre-approved evaluation systems. Districts may choose to propose variations upon the teacher and administrator model so long as the model is consistent with the Connecticut Core Requirements for Educator Evaluation.

(3) In accordance with the requirement in the 1999 Connecticut Guidelines for Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development, in establishing or amending the local teacher evaluation plan, **the local or regional board of education shall include a process for resolving disputes in cases where the evaluator and teacher cannot agree on objectives, the evaluation period, feedback or the professional development plan.**

Note : Your district plan must include a dispute resolution process; this is not an option.

As **an illustrative example** of such a process (which serves as an option and not a requirement for districts), when such agreement cannot be reached, the issue in dispute may be referred for resolution to a committee of the professional development and evaluation committee (PDEC). In this example, the superintendent and the respective collective bargaining unit for the district may each select one representative from the PDEC to constitute this subcommittee, as well as a neutral party as mutually agreed upon between the superintendent and the collective bargaining unit. In the event the designated committee does not reach a unanimous decision, the issue shall be considered by the superintendent whose decision shall be binding.

This provision is to be utilized in accordance with the specified processes and parameters regarding objectives, evaluation period, feedback, and professional development contained in the document entitled "Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation," dated June 2012. **Should the process established** as required by the document entitled "Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation," dated June 2012 **not result in resolution of a given issue, the determination regarding that issue may be made by the superintendent.** An example will be provided within the State model.

Note : The example given is only an example; your DR process can be any that the PDEC agrees on. That process can include any configuration of a panel, as implied by the language "*Shall include a process...*" Without stipulating what the process must be. The language "Should the process established Not result in a resolution..." implies that the process can be established that requires the panel to reach a resolution. The guidelines don't say the panel can't seek outside assistance in reaching a resolution, so the PDEC can include that in the process if they choose.

1.4 Effect of the Neag Study on the Core Requirements

Upon completion of the study, but not later than January 1, 2014, the Neag School of Education at The University of Connecticut shall submit to the State Board of Education such study and any recommendation concerning validation of the teacher evaluation and support program core requirements adopted by the State Board of Education. The results of the study will help determine any changes needed to the core requirements.

Should pilot districts identify promising practices within the Core Requirements, to implement during the pilot that vary from the established guidelines, those practices must be approved by the State Department of Education in consultation with PEAC and be incorporated into the scope of the Neag study.

Section 2: Core Requirements for the Evaluation of Teachers

As provided in subsection (a) of Section 10-151b (C.G.S.), as amended by Sec. 51 of P.A. 12-116, the superintendent of each local or regional board of education shall annually evaluate or cause to be evaluated each teacher, in accordance with the requirements of this section. Local or regional boards of education shall develop and implement teacher evaluation programs consistent with these requirements. For the purposes of these Core Requirements, the term "teacher" refers to any teacher serving in a position requiring teacher certification within a district, but not requiring 092 certification. What follows are the Core Requirements of the Educator Evaluation System for teachers.

2.1: 4-Level Matrix Rating System

(1) Annual summative evaluations provide each teacher with a summative rating aligned to one of four performance evaluation designators: Exemplary, proficient, Developing and Below Standard.

a) The performance levels shall be defined as follows:

- Exemplary – Substantially exceeding indicators of performance
- Proficient – Meeting indicators of performance
- Developing – Meeting some indicators of performance but not others
- Below standard – Not meeting indicators of performance

The term “performance” in the above shall mean “progress as defined by specified indicators.” Such indicators shall be mutually agreed upon, as applicable. Such progress shall be demonstrated by evidence.

The SDE will work with PEAC to identify best practices as well as issues regarding the implementation of the 4-Level matrix Rating System for further discussion prior to the 2015-16 academic year.

b) In order to determine summative rating designations for each teacher, districts shall:

1. Rate teacher performance in each of the four categories – indicators of student academic growth and development; observations of teacher performance and practice; parent or peer feedback, which may include surveys; and whole-school student learning indicators or student feedback, which include surveys.
2. Combine the indicators of student growth and development rating and whole-school student learning indicators or student feedback rating into a single rating, taking into account their relative weights; this will represent an overall “outcomes rating” of Exemplary, Proficient, Developing or Below Standard.
3. Combine the observations of teacher performance and practice rating and the peer or parent feedback rating into a single rating taking into account their relative weights; this will represent an overall “practice rating” of Exemplary, Proficient, Developing, or Below Standard.
4. Combine the outcomes rating and practice rating into a final rating. In undertaking this step, the district must assign a summative rating category of Exemplary, Proficient, Developing, or Below Standard. See appendix for example.

Note : There is no requirement for a district to use a ‘box’ matrix to determine a summative rating . The box matrix developed for SEED uses a mathematical formula to determine each rating, and a summative rating. That is not required by the guidelines and opens a district to using a holistic approach throughout the evaluation process. Showing progress over time, as the definitions of the 4 ratings indicate is, in fact, contradictory to the mathematical formula connected to the SEED matrix.

2.2 Teacher Evaluation Process

The annual evaluation process for a teacher shall at least include, but not be limited to, **the following steps, in order:**

(1) Goal-setting conference:

- a) **Orientation on process** – To begin the process, the principal or designee provides the teacher with materials outlining the evaluation process and other information as appropriate and meets and reviews these materials. The orientation shall not occur later than November 15 of a given school year.
- b) **Goal-setting conference** – At the start of the school year, the principal or designee and teacher meet to discuss information relevant to the evaluation process and set goals for the year.
- c) **Evidence collection and review** – The teacher collects evidence about his/her practice and the principal or designee collects evidence about teacher practice to support the review. See 2.3 for details on the Teacher Evaluation Process.

Note : The language in the beginning of this section refers to the steps as occurring in a specified order. To clarify when the evaluation process begins, the SDE sent a memo to superintendents on September 13, 2013 stating *“It is the CSDE’s interpretation that the evaluation process begins with the goal-setting process as prescribed in the Guidelines.”* Goal-setting takes place after the orientation and before evidence collection, which would include observations and reviews of practice.

(2) Mid-year check-ins:

The principal or designee and teacher hold at least one mid-year check-in. See 2.3 for details on the Teacher Evaluation Process.

(3) End-of-year summative review:

- a) Teacher self-assessment – The teacher reviews all information and data collected during the year and completes a self-assessment for review by the principal or designee. This self-assessment may focus specifically on the areas for development established in the Goal-setting conference.
- b) End-of-year conference – The principal or designee and the teacher meet to discuss all evidence collected to date. Following the conference, the principal assigns a summative rating and generates a summary report of the evaluation before the end of the school year. See 2.3 for details on the Teacher Evaluation Process.

(4) Local reporting – The district superintendent shall report the status of teacher evaluations to the local or regional board of education on or before June first of each year.

(5) State reporting – Not later than June thirtieth of each year, each superintendent shall report to the Commissioner of Education the status of the implementation of teacher evaluations, including the frequency of evaluations, aggregate evaluation ratings, the number of administrators and **teachers who have not been evaluated** and other requirements as determined by the Department of Education.

(6) Summative rating revisions – After all data, including state test data, are available, the principal or designee may adjust the summative rating if the state test data may have a significant impact on a final rating. A final rating may be revised when state test data are available, before September 15 of a school year.

Note: It is helpful for PDECs to discuss if and when a teacher will be reported as ‘not rated.’ This is meant to be used in those cases where there are extenuating circumstances, such as a lengthy leave of absence or clear indication before the summative rating is given that the process itself was not followed with fidelity as outlined in the teacher evaluation plan. The PDEC should discuss such issues as they create the plan, but ultimately, it may be best to review such instances on a case-by-case basis.

2.3: Teacher Evaluation Components

(1) Fort-five percent (45%) of a teacher’s evaluation shall be based on attainment of goals and/or objectives for student growth, using multiple indicators of academic growth and development to measure those goals/objectives.

- (a) The process for assessing student growth using multiple indicators of academic growth and development for teacher evaluation will be developed through **mutual agreement** by each teacher and their evaluator at the beginning of the year.
- (b) The process for assessing student growth will have three phases:
1. Goal-setting conference:
 - a. Each teacher, through **mutual agreement** with his/her evaluator, will select at least 1 but no more than 4 goals/objectives for student growth, the exact number based on a consideration of a reasonable number of goals/objectives taking into account teaching responsibilities and teacher experience. For each objective/goal, each teacher, through **mutual agreement** with his/her evaluator, will select indicators of Academic Growth and Development (IAGD) and evidence of the IAGD based on the range of criteria used by the district.

Note : The term ‘mutual agreement’ is used several times in the guidelines. The 2013 SEED document also said that goals and indicators were proposals until they were approved by the evaluator. ‘Approval’ is contradictory to mutual agreement, and the SDE has removed the approval language from the 2014 version of SEED. Approval of goals and indicators is not required, and violates the guidelines. The plan must be clear that mutual agreement is the standard. Mutual agreement may also be viewed differently than ‘consensus,’ depending on how the PDEC defines ‘consensus.’ To be sure there is no confusion, it’s best to use the term mutual agreement.

- b. Each goal/objective will:
 - i. Take into account the academic track record and overall needs and strengths of the students the teacher is teaching that year/semester;
 - ii. Address the most important purposes of a teacher’s assignment through self-reflection;
 - iii. Be aligned with school, district and state student achievement objectives;
 - iv. Take into account their students’ starting learning needs vis a vis relevant baseline data when available.
 - v. Pursuant to section 10-151b (C.G.S.), as amended by subsection © of Sec. 51 of P.A. 12-116, such guidelines shall include consideration of control factors tracked by the state-wide public school information system that may influence teacher performance ratings, including, but not limited to, student characteristics, student attendance and student mobility and minimum requirements for teacher evaluation instruments and procedures. Consideration of such control factors and minimum requirements shall be undertaken and accomplished through the joint deliberations and determinations of the Goal Setting process. (Also see 1.1.)
2. Mid-year check-ins:
 - a. Evaluators and teachers will review progress toward the goals/objectives at least once during the school year, which is to be considered the midpoint of the school year, using available information, including agreed upon indicators. This review may

result in revisions to the strategies or approach being used and/or teachers and evaluators may mutually agree on mid-year adjustment of student learning goals to accommodate changes (e.g., student populations, assignment).

3. End-of-year summative review:

- a. Teacher Self-Assessment – The teacher reviews all information and data collected during the year and completes a self-assessment for review by the principal or designee. This self-assessment may focus specifically on the areas for development established in the Goal-setting conference.
- b. End of Year Conference – The teacher shall collect evidence of student progress toward meeting the student learning goals/objectives. This evidence will be produced by using the multiple indicators selected to align with each student learning goal/objective. The evidence will be submitted to the evaluator, and the teacher and evaluator will discuss the extent to which the students met the learning goals/objectives. Following the conference, the evaluator will rate the extent of student progress toward meeting the student learning goals/objectives, based on criteria for 4 levels of performance. If state test data may have a significant impact on a final rating, a final rating may be revised before September 15 when state test data are available.

(c) 45% Student Growth Component – **One half** (22.5%) of the indicators of academic growth and development used as evidence of whether goals/objectives are met

* shall **not** be determined by a single, isolated standardized test score,

* but shall be determined through the comparison of data across assessments administered over time, including the state test for those teaching tested grades and subjects

* or another standardized indicator for other grades and subjects where available.

* A state test can be used **only** if there are interim assessments that lead to that test,

* and such interim assessments shall be included in the overall score for those teaching tested grades and subjects.

* Those without an available standardized indicator will select, through mutual agreement, subject to the local dispute-resolution procedure as described in section 1.3, an additional non-standardized indicator.

Note : Summary points:

1. no use of single test score
2. must use assessments over time
3. standardized assessments must have interim assessments that lead to the final assessment
4. final 'score' must use all assessment results collectively

- a. For the 2014 – 2015 academic year, the required use of state test data is suspended pending federal approval, pursuant to PEAC's flexibility recommendation on January 29, 2014 and the State Board of Education's action on February 6, 2014.
- b. Prior to the 2015-2016 academic year, the SDE will work with PEAC to examine and evolve the system of standardized and non-standardized student learning indicators, including the use of interim assessments that lead to the state test to measure growth over time.

For the other half (22.5%) of the indicators of academic growth and development, there may be:

- a. A maximum of one additional standardized indicator, if there is mutual agreement, subject to the local dispute resolution procedure as described in section 1.3.
- b. A minimum of one non-standardized indicator.

(d) **Examples** of indicators that may be used to produce evidence of academic growth and development include but are not limited to:

1. Standardized indicators;
 - a. Standardized assessments are characterized by the following attributes:
 - i. Administered and scored in a consistent – or “standard” – manner;
 - ii. Aligned to a set of academic or performance “standards;”
 - iii. Broadly administered (e.g. nation-or statewide);
 - iv. Commercially produced;
 - v. Often administered only once a year.
 - b. Standardized assessments include, but are not limited to:
 - i. AP exams;
 - ii. SAT--;
 - iii. DRA 9adminstered more than once a year);
 - iv. DIBELS (administered more than once a year);
 - v. Trade certification exams;
 - vi. Standardized vocational ED exams;
 - vii. Curriculum based assessments taken from banks of state-wide or assessment consortium assessment item banks.
2. Non-standardized indicators
 - a. Non-standardized indicators include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Performances rated against a rubric (such as: music performance, dance performance);
 - ii. Performance assessments or tasks rated against a rubric (such as: constructed projects, student oral work, and other written work);
 - iii. Portfolios of student work rated against a rubric;
 - iv. Curriculum-based assessments, including those constructed by a teacher or team of teachers;
 - v. Periodic assessments that document student growth over time (such as: formative assessments, diagnostic assessments, district benchmark assessments);
 - vi. Other indicators (such as: teacher developed tests, student written work, constructed project).

Note : The PDEC should discuss what they consider to be good examples of standardized and non-standardized indicators that can be used within the plan. When discussing standardized tests, they need to remember that any standardized test used must have interim assessments that are also used that align with the final assessment. There is no requirement in the guidelines that, when writing goals and selecting indicators, a teacher has to include any specific number or percentage of students, or any numerical target for growth. There is no requirement that any numerical values be used at all. How to approach this is left to the PDEC to decide, and then, if the plan indicates so, it would be determined through mutual agreement of the teacher and evaluator.

(e) When selecting indicators used to gauge attainment of goals/objectives, teachers and their evaluators shall agree on a balance in the weighting of standardized and non-standardized indicators as described in 2.3.d.

(f) Within the process, the following are descriptions of selecting indicators of academic growth and development: In the context of the evaluation of a teacher's performance, 2.3.f.1 is an opportunity to evaluate the degree to which the teacher provides students fair opportunity and opportunity to evaluate the degree to which the teacher provides students fair opportunity and 2.3.f.2 is an opportunity to evaluate the context in which the teacher is working to show that the teacher is given fair opportunity. Indicators of academic growth and development should be fair, reliable, valid and useful to the greatest extent possible. These terms are defined as follows:

1. Fair to students – The indicator of academic growth and development is used in such a way as to provide students an opportunity to show that they have met or are making progress in meeting the learning objective. The use of the indicator of academic growth and development is as free as possible from bias **and stereotype**.
2. Fair to teachers – The use of an indicator of academic growth and development is fair when a teacher has the professional resources and opportunity to show that his/her students have made growth and when the indicator is appropriate to the teacher's content, assignment and class composition.
3. Reliable – Use of the indicator is consistent among those using the indicators and over time.
4. Valid – The indicator measures what it is intended to measure.
5. Useful – The indicator may be used to provide the teacher with the meaningful feedback about student knowledge, skills, perspective and classroom experience that may be used to enhance student learning and provide opportunities for teacher professional growth and development.

Note : The issues of validity and reliability are important when choosing indicators that, ultimately, are tied to the teacher's level of evaluation. Research that supports any specific standardized or non-standardized indicators as being valid or reliable for use in teacher evaluation is scarce or non-existent. Therefore, the best a PDEC can do when designing a teacher evaluation plan is ask *"What types of indicators, used over time and examined collectively, will provide the most clear connections between what the teacher did to design instruction that led to the student results seen?"* Because grade levels, subject areas, and different teacher roles vary greatly within a school and district, it is helpful for the PDEC to build flexibility into the evaluation plan, and give clear examples of appropriate indicators for different settings.

(2) Forty percent (40%) of a teacher's evaluation shall be based on observation of teacher practice and performance.

(a) Teacher evaluation programs developed and implemented by local or regional boards of education shall ensure that processes related to observation of teacher practice and performance:

1. Facilitate and encourage effective means for multiple in-class visits necessary for gathering evidence of the quality of teacher practice;
2. Provide constructive oral and written feedback of observations in a timely and useful manner;

3. Provide on-going calibration of evaluators in the district;
4. Use a combination of formal, informal, announced, and unannounced observation;
5. Consider differentiating the number of observations related to experience, prior ratings, needs and goals.
6. Include pre-and post-conferences that include deep professional conversations that allow evaluators and teachers to set goals, allow administrators to gain insight into the teacher's progress in addressing issues and working toward their goals, and share evidence each has gathered during the year.

(b) Observations of teacher practice and performance shall meet the following minimum criteria:

1. Observation models must be standards-based. Examples of acceptable standards based frameworks include, but are not limited to the Danielson, Marzano and Marshall frameworks, or locally developed frameworks based on best practice.
2. Observation models must be aligned to the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching. Districts that do not adopt the state model must specify how district-selected or developed models demonstrate this alignment.
3. Observations must be rated using rubrics that have four performance levels.

(c) First and second year teachers shall receive at least three in-class formal observations. Two of the three observations must include a pre-conference, and all of the observations must include a post-conference with timely written and verbal feedback.

(d) Teachers who receive a performance evaluation designation of below standard or developing shall receive a number of observations appropriate to their individual development plan, but no fewer than three in-class formal observations. Two of the three observations must include a pre-conference, and all of the observations must include a post-conference with timely written and verbal feedback.

(e) Teachers who receive a performance evaluation designation of proficient or exemplary shall receive a combination of at least three formal observations/reviews of practice, one of which must be a formal in-class observation. The exact combination shall be mutually agreed upon by the teacher and evaluator at the beginning of the evaluation process. Examples of non-classroom observations or reviews of practice include but are not limited to: observations of data team meetings, observations of coaching/mentoring other teachers, review of lesson plans or other teaching artifacts.

Note : The flexibility options in section 2.9 allow for more creative use of an observation cycle, although there are many possibilities that still exist within the parameters outlined above. For example, when discussing in-class observations, the guidelines are silent on the issue of whether or not teachers must be evaluated using every indicator in every domain of the rubric used. When the guidelines are silent on an issue, the decision is left to the PDEC. The CCT Review Committee, which revised the CCT rubric early in 2014, came to 2 conclusions as a result of their work: (1) It is impossible for an evaluator to gather enough rich data pertaining to every indicator in every domain during observations; and (2) when a teacher has been rated proficient or exemplary, it is not necessary

for that teacher to be evaluated again using every indicator in every domain. During the goal-setting conference, when the teacher and evaluator discuss the student goals for the year, they should also discuss which indicators in the rubric domains will be the best focus for observations and reviews of practice. The teacher's work that connects to these indicators should support what s/he does in the classroom that will help support student progress in reaching the student goals. If the evaluator focuses only on those indicators during formal observations, the chances of getting more rich data are greater, and more valuable to the evaluation and growth process.

(f) Districts shall provide all evaluators with training in observation and evaluation, and how to provide high quality feedback. Districts shall describe how evaluators must demonstrate proficiency on an ongoing basis in conducting teacher evaluations.

(3) Five percent (5%) of a teacher's evaluation shall be based on whole-school student learning indicators or student feedback.

(a) For districts that include whole-school student learning indicators in teacher evaluations, a teacher's indicator ratings shall be represented by the aggregate rating for multiple student learning indicators established for the administrator's evaluation rating.

Note : The PDEC should discuss this issue. There is a misperception that WSLI for the administrator's evaluation rating is based solely on standardized test scores, and in 2014-2015, when many districts are not using any standardized testing at all in evaluation, there is nothing left to base the WSLI on. This is not true. WSLI is composed of several factors, so a discussion on the PDEC about how this can be most appropriately used should be held before a decision is made as to whether to use WSLI or student feedback.

(b) For districts that include student surveys:

1. Student responses must be anonymous.
2. Surveys must demonstrate properties of fairness, reliability, validity and usefulness.
3. School governance councils shall assist in the development of whole-school surveys, if applicable, in order to encourage alignment with school improvement goals.
4. An age-appropriate student survey must be administered to each student. Both the language used in the survey and the administration protocol (e.g., paper or on-line; read by student or read by an adult) shall be appropriate for the grade level.
5. Results from surveys addressed by teachers should align with student learning goals.
6. For whole-school s student surveys, ratings may be used on one or two options:
 - a. Evidence from teacher developed student level indicators of improvement in areas of need as identified by the school level survey results; or
 - b. Evidence of teacher's implementation of strategies to address areas of need as identified by the survey results.
7. Teacher ratings in this area may be based on a teacher's improvement in performance goals based on student feedback or on the criteria found in Domain 6 (Professional Practice) of the Common Core of Teaching. See appendix for details.

(c) Approaches such as focus groups, interviews, or teachers' own surveys may be used to collect information from students.

(d) whole-school student learning indicators rating or student feedback rating shall be among four performance levels.

(4) Ten percent (10%) of a teacher's evaluation shall be based on parent or peer feedback, including surveys.

(a) For districts that include parent surveys:

1. Parent responses must be anonymous.
2. Surveys must demonstrate properties of fairness, reliability, validity and usefulness.
3. School governance councils shall assist in the development of whole-school surveys, if applicable, in order to encourage alignment with school improvement goals.
4. Survey is administered to each parent either on-line or paper version.
5. Results from surveys addressed by teachers should align with student improvement goals.
6. For whole-school parent surveys, ratings may be based on one of two options:
 - a. Evidence from teacher developed student level indicators of improvement in areas of need as identified by the school level survey results; or
 - b. Evidence of teacher's implementation of strategies to address areas of need as identified by the survey results.
7. Teacher ratings in this area may be based on a teacher's improvement in performance goals based on parent feedback or on the criteria found in Domain 6 (Professional Practice) of the Common Core of Teaching. See appendix for details.

(b) Approaches such as focus groups, interviews, or teachers' own surveys may be used to collect information from parents.

(c) Peer observation or peer focus groups may be developed.

(d) The parent or peer feedback rating shall be among four performance levels.

Note : Many PDECs are under the impression that 'peer feedback' means 'peer evaluation,' which is inaccurate. There are many ways peers can provide feedback to each other without it being evaluative. 'Performance level ratings' can be determined in ways that don't involve teachers 'evaluating' each other.

2.4 Evaluation-based Professional Learning

Districts and schools shall provide professional learning opportunities for teachers, pursuant to subsection (b) of Sec. 10-220a of the 2012 Supplement (C.G.S.), based on the individual or group of individuals' needs that are identified through the evaluation process. These learning opportunities shall be clearly linked to the specific outcomes of the evaluation process as it relates to student learning results, observation of professional practice or the results of stakeholder feedback. See appendix for statutory language referenced.

2.5 Individual Teacher Improvement and Remediation Plans

Districts shall create plans of individual teacher improvement and remediation for teachers whose performance is developing or below standard, collaboratively developed with such teacher and his or her exclusive bargaining representative for certified teachers chosen pursuant to section 10-153b of the 2012 Supplement (C.G.S.) and that (A) identify resources, support and other strategies to be provided by the local or regional board of education to address documented deficiencies, (B) indicate a timeline for implementing such resources, support, and other strategies, in the course of the same school year as the plan is issued, and (c) include indicators of success including a summative rating of proficient or better at the conclusion of the improvement and remediation plan.

Note : The guidelines and statutory language are out of alignment in their wording. Statute states that the remediation plan is developed “*in consultation with*” the teacher and his/her exclusive bargaining unit representative; the guidelines state that the remediation plan is developed “*collaboratively*” with the teacher and his/her exclusive bargaining representative. Whichever language the district plan uses, one thing is clear: the inclusion of the bargaining unit representative is not an option, it is mandatory. Plans should not use language that indicates the teacher ‘may request’ bargaining unit representation in the process, or ‘may have’ such representation. That language is permissive, and both statutory and guidelines language is mandatory.

2.6 Career Development and Growth

Districts must provide opportunities for career development and professional growth based on performance identified through the evaluation process. Examples of opportunities include, but are not limited to: observation of peers; mentoring/coaching early-career teachers; participating in development of teacher improvement and remediation plans for peers whose performance is developing or below standard; leading Professional Learning Communities for their peers; differentiated career pathways; and targeted professional development based on areas of need.

2.7 Orientation Programs

The local or regional board of education or regional educational service center for the school district shall offer annual orientation programs regarding the teacher evaluation and support system to teachers who are employed by such local or regional board of education and whose performance is being evaluated.

Note : This language aligns to the description of what the orientation must include, which is in section 2.2. Many districts confuse the orientation with the goal-setting conference. Orientation is more general, and reviews the evaluation process and materials, and gives teachers the opportunity to ask questions about it. If there are few changes in the evaluation plan from year to year, the orientation might not go into a lot of detail about those portions that haven’t changed. However, for teachers new to the district, there must be a full orientation about the plan.

2.8 Defining Effectiveness and Ineffectiveness: Evaluation Audit and Validation

(1) Each district shall define effectiveness and ineffectiveness utilizing a pattern of summative ratings derived from the new evaluation system.

Note : This is a concept that PDECs should discuss. PDECs should discuss and agree on their definition of ‘pattern,’ how this applies when there are extenuating circumstances for a teacher, and how those circumstances might affect how the definition has or doesn’t have flexibility. This helps avoid the plan becoming a ‘gotcha.’

(2) At the request of a district or employee, the State Department of Education or a third-party entity approved by the SDE will audit the evaluation components that are combined to determine an individual’s summative rating in

the event that such components are significantly dissimilar (i.e. include both exemplary and below standard ratings) to determine a final summative rating.

(3) The State Department of Education or a third-party designated by the SDE will audit evaluations ratings of exemplary and below standard to validate such exemplary or below standard ratings by selecting ten districts at random annually and reviewing evaluation evidence files for a minimum of two educators rated exemplary and two educators rated below standard in those districts selected at random, including at least one classroom teacher rated exemplary and at least one teacher rated below standard per district selected.

2.9 Flexibility Components

Local and regional school districts may choose to adopt one or more of the evaluation plan flexibility components described within Section 2.9, **in mutual agreement with district's professional development and evaluation committee** pursuant to 10-151b(b) and 10-220a(b), to enhance implementation. Any district that adopts flexibility components in accordance with this section in the 2013-14 school year shall submit their plan revisions to the State Department of Education within 30 days of adoption of such revisions by its local or regional board of education, and no later than March 30, 2014. For the 2014-15 and all subsequent school years, the submission of district evaluation plans, including flexibility requests, shall take place no later than the annual deadline set by the State Department of Education.

- a. Each teacher, through **mutual agreement** with his/her evaluator, will select **1 goal/objective for student growth**. For each objective/goal, each teacher, through **mutual agreement** with his/her evaluator, will select indicators of Academic Growth and Development (IAGD) and evidence of the IAGD based on the range of criteria used by the district. **For any teacher whose primary responsibility is not the direct instruction of students, the mutually agreed upon goal/objective and indicators shall be based on the assigned role of the teacher.**

Note : This language clearly confirms that mutual agreement on goals and indicators is the standard. The last sentence especially pertains to support specialists, whether they provide direct support to students or don't work with students at all. One point of confusion that has arisen in the past is this: Many districts were under the impression that all teachers – including support specialists who provide support to students OR who don't work with students or teachers at all – had to write goals and choose indicators that directly spoke of student academic growth. That doesn't make sense. A specialist who provides other types of support for students, or doesn't work with students at all, and isn't the prime provider of academic instruction, is too far removed from student academic performance to make such an evaluation of the teacher valid. Those specialists must write goals and indicators that directly pertain to their role and what they do in the school or district.

- b. One half (or 22.5%) of the indicators of academic growth and development used as evidence of whether goal/objective is met shall be based on standardized indicators other than the state test (CMT, CAPT, or SBAC) for the 2014-15 academic year, pending federal approval. Other standardized indicators for other grades and subject, where available, may be used. For the other half (22.5%) of the indicators of academic growth and development, there may be:
 1. A maximum of one additional standardized indicator other than the state test (CMT, CAPT or SBAC) for the 2014-15 academic year, pending federal approval. If there is mutual agreement, subject to the local dispute resolution procedure as described in 1.3.
 2. A minimum of one non-standardized indicator.
- c. Teachers who receive and maintain a performance evaluation designation of proficient or exemplary and who are not first or second year teachers shall be evaluated with **a minimum of one formal in-class**

observation no less frequent than once every three years, and three informal in-class observations conducted in accordance with Section 2.3(2)(b)(1) and 2.3(2)(b)(2) in all other years, and shall complete one review of practice every year. 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. 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). All Other teachers, including first and second year teachers and teachers who receive a performance evaluation designation of below standard or developing, will be evaluated according to procedures in 2.3(2)(c) and 2.3(2)(d). All observations shall be followed with timely feedback. Examples of non-classroom observations or reviews of practice include but are not limited to observations of data team meetings, observations of coaching/mentoring other teachers, reviews of lesson plans or other teaching artifacts.

Note : There are several things the PDEC must assure that teachers understand when they use an observation cycle: (1) the cycle doesn't have to be based on fewer than 3 years; (2) the PDEC can decide the number of formal observations that occur during that particular year; (3) the PDEC should clearly define what 'formal' and 'informal' observations are; how long they last; whether or not data will be formally collected during an informal observation; whether or not observation ratings are given, and if so, if those are on the indicator or domain level; and what a 'timely' manner is for receiving feedback. If a district also uses walk-throughs, the plan should clearly describe the difference between those and other observations, and what the expectations are for walk-throughs.

2.10 Data Management

- a. On or before September 15, 2014 and each year thereafter, professional development and evaluation committees established pursuant to 10-220a shall review and report to their board of education the user experience and efficiency of the district's data management systems/platforms being used by teachers and administrators to manage evaluation plans.

Note : There are several things a PDEC should discuss in connection with a data management system: (1) the district isn't required to use an electronic system; (2) if an electronic system is used, the PDEC should make sure the mechanics of using the system align with the requirements of the district plan (e.g., if the district uses a holistic approach to evaluation, then entering numbers into the system and having it calculate ratings may not be in alignment; in that case, the electronic system should be configured differently for the district); teachers and evaluators will need training in how to use the system.

- b. For implementation of local evaluation plans for the 2014-15 school year, and each year thereafter, data management systems/platforms to be used by teachers and administrators to manage evaluation plans shall be selected by board of education with consideration given to the functional requirements/needs and efficiencies identified by professional development and evaluation committees.
- c. For implementation of local evaluation plans for the 2014-15 school year, and each year thereafter, educator evaluation plans shall contain guidance on the entry of data into a district's data management system/platform being used to manage/administer the evaluation plan and on ways to reduce paperwork and documentation while maintaining plan integrity. Such guidance shall
 1. Limit entry only to artifacts, information and data that is specifically identified in a teacher or administrator's evaluation plan as an indicator to be used for evaluating such educators, and to optional artifacts as mutually agreed upon by teacher/administrator and evaluator;
 2. Streamline educator evaluation data collection and reporting by teachers and administrators;

3. Prohibit the State Department of Education from accessing identifiable student data in the educator evaluation data management systems/platforms, except as needed to conduct the audits managed by C.G.S. 10-151b© and 10-151i, and ensure that third-party organizations keep all identifiable student data confidential;
 4. Prohibit the sharing or transference of individual teacher data from one district to another or to any other entity without the teacher or administrator's consent, as prohibited by law;
 5. Limit the access of teacher or administrator data to only the primary evaluator, superintendent or his/her designee, and to other designated professionals directly involved with evaluation and professional development processes. Consistent with Connecticut General Statutes, this provision does not affect the State Department of Education's data collection authority;
 6. Include a process for logging the names of authorized individuals who access a teacher or administrator's evaluation information.
- d. The State Department of Education's technical assistance to school districts will be appropriate to the evaluation and support plan adopted by the district, whether or not the plan is the state model.

Section 4: Core Requirements for the Evaluation of Student and Educator Support Specialists

Note : This is an original section of the teacher evaluation guidelines. The issue of writing goals and indicators that are based on the specialist's role is clarified in section 2.9 (flex options).

(1) Student and Educator Support Specialists shall have a clear job descriptions and delineation of their role and responsibilities in the school to guide the setting of indicators of academic growth and development, feedback and observations.

(2) Because of the unique nature of the roles fulfilled by Student and Educator Support Specialists, districts shall be granted flexibility in applying the Core Requirements of teacher evaluation in the following ways:

(a) Districts shall be granted flexibility in using Indicators of Academic Growth and Development to measure attainment of goals and/or objectives for student growth. The Goal-setting conference for identifying the IAGD shall include the following steps:

1. The educator and evaluator will agree on the students or caseloads that the educator is responsible for and his/her role.
2. The educator and evaluator will determine if the indicator will apply to the individual teacher, a team of teachers, a grade level or the whole school.
3. The educator and evaluator should identify the unique characteristics of the population of students which would impact student growth (i.e. high absenteeism, high mobile population in school).
4. The educator and evaluator will identify the learning standard to measure: the assessment, data or product for measuring growth; the timeline for instruction and measurement; how baseline will be established; how targets will be set so they are realistic yet rigorous; the strategies that will be used; and the professional development the educator needs to improve their learning to support the areas targeted.

(b) Because some Student and Educator Support Specialists do not have a classroom and may not be involved in direct instruction of students, **the educator and evaluator shall agree to appropriate venues for observations and an appropriate rubric for rating practice and performance at the beginning of the school year.** The observations will be based on standards when available. Examples of appropriate venues include but are not limited to: observing Student and Educator Support Specialist staff working with small groups of children, working with adults, providing professional development, working with families, participation in team meetings or Planning and Placement Team meetings.

(c) When student, parent and/or peer feedback mechanisms are not applicable to Student and Educator Support Specialists, districts may permit local development of short feedback mechanisms for students, parents, and peers specific to particular roles or projects for which the Student and Educator Support Specialists are responsible.