

Focus Indicators

FOR TEACHING IN
2023-2024

The *Focus Indicators* are a subset of Indicators from the Model Classroom Teacher Rubric that represent high-leverage practices for supporting students' academic and social-emotional needs and promoting a culturally and linguistically sustaining school environment.

By prioritizing a subset of Indicators, districts can establish shared expectations and supports for practice in key areas and better focus and streamline the evaluation process. Educators and evaluators can use this resource alongside the [Educator Evaluation Implementation Resources](#) to guide goal-setting, evidence-collection, feedback, support, and professional learning around high-priority practices.

FOCUS INDICATORS

CLICK ON AN INDICATOR TO GET STARTED

I-A [Curriculum & Planning](#)

II-A [Instruction](#)

II-B [Learning Environment](#)

III-B [Family Collaboration](#)

IV-A [Reflection](#)

IV-C [Professional Collaboration](#)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Focus Indicators are informed by the following guiding principles:

- Prioritize the **social-emotional wellbeing of students and educators** as the foundation for effective teaching and learning
- Promote **culturally and linguistically sustaining practices** that disrupt patterns of inequities and systems of oppression against Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and multiracial communities.
- Provide all students with the supports they need to **access to grade-level instruction**
- **Engage students and families** in learning through meaningful partnerships

EACH INDICATOR PAGE FEATURES:

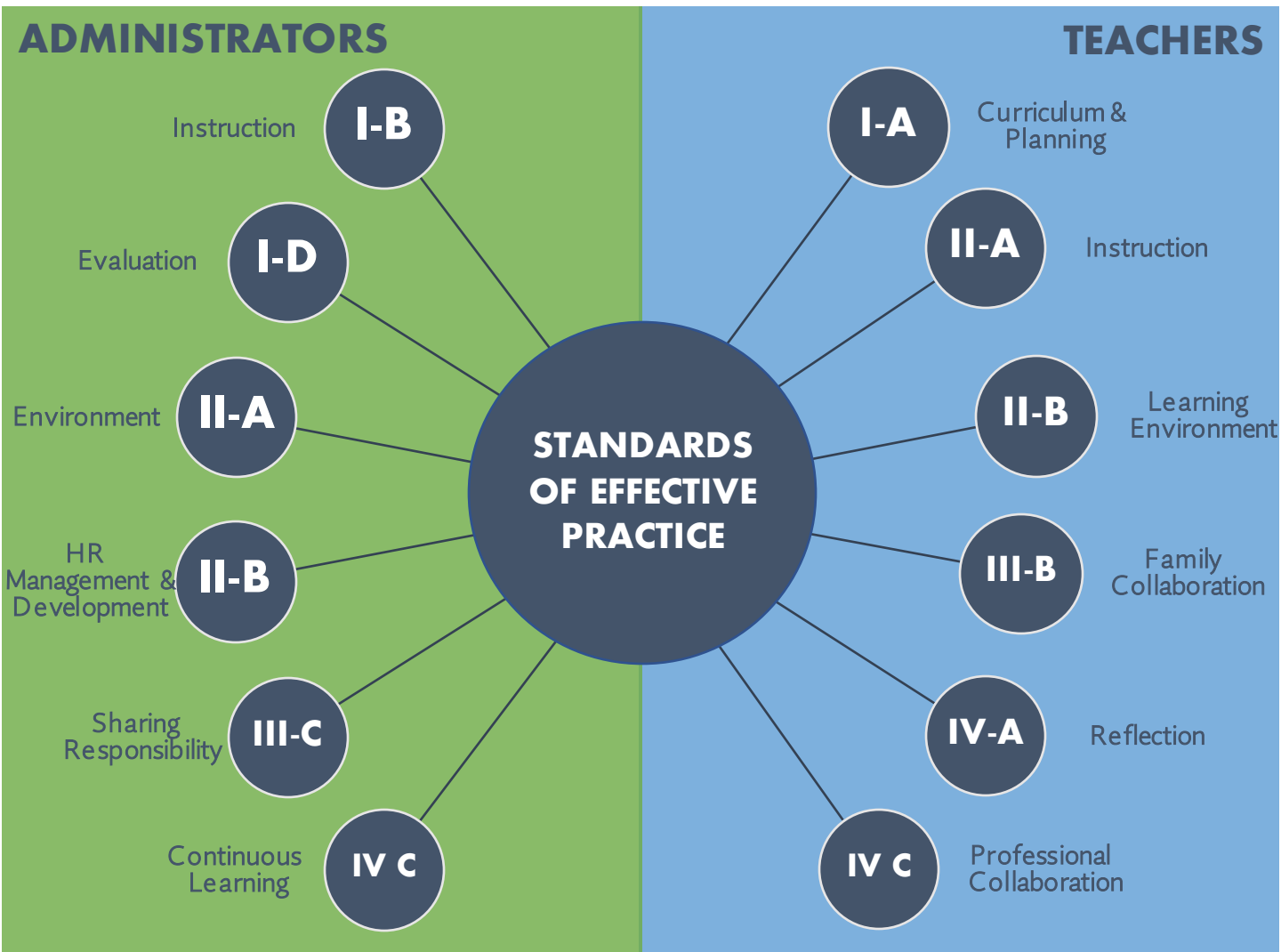


1. **Standard and Indicator Description**
2. **Key Practices**, adapted from elements associated with the Focus Indicator
3. **Focus Points for Feedback, Collaboration, and Support** provide examples of specific practices within the context of this school year
4. **Supportive Resources**

Overview

2023 2024
FOCUS INDICATORS

The Focus Indicators highlight high priority, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices for teaching and leading in SY2023 24. Because teachers and administrators depend on one another to be effective in meeting the needs of every student, the Focus Indicators for teachers and administrators are complimentary.



GENERAL RESOURCES

[DESE's Educational Vision and Catalog of Aligned Supports](#)

[Massachusetts Blueprint for English Learner Success](#)

[Supports and Resources for Educator Evaluation Implementation](#)

[Deeper Learning](#)

[Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices](#)

[MA Tools for Schools](#)

I-A Curriculum & Planning

Knows the subject matter well, has a good grasp of child development and how students learn, and designs effective and rigorous standards based units of instruction consisting of well structured lessons with measurable outcomes.

KEY PRACTICES

Uses evidence based, content specific pedagogical practices that enable students to develop and apply grade level knowledge and skills in authentic contexts.

Builds on and draws from knowledge of their students identities, skills, developmental levels, cultures, languages, and communities to inform curriculum and planning.

Skillfully implements curricular materials using evidence based, inclusive, and culturally and linguistically sustaining instructional methods and activities.

FOCUS FEEDBACK, COLLABORATION, AND SUPPORT ON:

- ▶ Leveraging high-quality, culturally responsive instructional materials as the starting point for tailored instruction
- ▶ Continuously strengthening understanding and application of evidence-based practices in the content area
- ▶ Incorporating opportunities into lessons for students to make connections between the subject matter and real-world issues of impact
- ▶ Constructing student-centered learning experiences that build on students' assets—their identity, cultural and language background, interests, and aspirations—to make the learning relevant and engaging
- ▶ Using high-quality instructional materials to plan units and lessons comprised of evidence-based, inclusive, and culturally sustaining instructional methods and activities
- ▶ Ensuring a coherent instructional approach that builds student learning towards grade-level standards or individual learning goals over time through aligned lesson goals, scope, sequence, and tasks
- ▶ Interrogating curricular materials for bias and supporting students to do so
- ▶ Identifying necessary supplemental resources and/or tiered supports to ensure equitable access to the content
- ▶ Providing differentiated learning experiences that enable all students to exercise social-emotional skills (e.g. self-management and responsible decision-making) and grow academically and social-emotionally

RESOURCES

[Curriculum RATings by TEachers \(CURATE\)](#)

[Next Generation ESL Toolkit](#)

[MASS Literacy](#)

[Deeper Learning](#)

[Appleseeds](#)

[Professional Learning Partner Guide](#) | Rivet Education

[OpenSciEd](#)

[Investigating History](#)

II-A Instruction

STANDARD II TEACHING ALL STUDENTS

Uses instructional practices that reflect high expectations regarding content and quality of effort and work; engage all students; and are personalized to accommodate diverse learning styles, needs, interests, and levels of readiness.

KEY PRACTICES

Supports all students to meet or exceed high standards, produce high quality work, and develop self awareness and skills for independent learning

Engages all students as active participants in their own learning of meaningful, standards aligned content

Accommodates and supports individual differences in all students learning

Develops students abilities to think critically, ask questions, and analyze sources, perspectives, and biases

FOCUS FEEDBACK, COLLABORATION, AND SUPPORT ON:

- ▶ Using evidence-based pedagogical practices to provide equitable opportunities for grade-level learning.
- ▶ Providing supports, scaffolds, and tools to meet students' needs
- ▶ Providing clear criteria for success (e.g., models, rubrics and exemplars)
- ▶ Reinforcing perseverance and effort with challenging content and tasks
- ▶ Providing opportunities for students to make choices, explore topics and apply learning in culturally relevant, real-world, and interactive contexts
- ▶ Building on students' strengths, interests, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and prior knowledge to motivate learning and support students' information processing
- ▶ Facilitating cooperative learning with equitable student participation in discussion
- ▶ Integrating digital tools and educational technology that enhances learning experiences and promotes the development of digital literacy skills
- ▶ Using appropriate inclusive practices, such as tiered supports, scaffolded instruction, technology, and Universal Design for Learning principles to make grade-level content accessible and affirming for all students
- ▶ Using multilingual students' native language(s) to support instruction, such as through cognates and translanguageing practices
- ▶ Providing students with multiple ways to learn content and demonstrate understanding
- ▶ Seeking out the perspectives, feedback, and voices of all students and families in the classroom learning community and incorporating those voices into decision-making around teaching and learning environments

RESOURCES

[Deeper Learning](#)

[MASS Literacy](#)

[Next Generation ESL Toolkit](#)

[Universal Design for Learning Guidelines](#) | CAST

[Translanguageing](#) | WIDA

[Ready for Rigor Framework](#) | Zaretta Hammond

[The Opportunity Myth](#) | TNTP

II·B

Learning Environment

STANDARD II TEACHING ALL STUDENTS

Creates and maintains a safe and collaborative learning environment that motivates students to take academic risks, challenge themselves, and claim ownership of their learning.

KEY PRACTICES

Builds positive, caring relationships with students

Creates and maintains a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment

Develops students relationship and communication skills through collaborative learning

Supports students to take ownership of their learning.

FOCUS FEEDBACK, COLLABORATION, AND SUPPORT ON:

- ▶ Prioritizing relationship-building to ensure all students feel valued, respected, equitably supported, and a sense of belonging in the classroom community
- ▶ Co-creating meaningful rituals and routines with students
- ▶ Supporting student accountability for the impact of their actions through equitable and logical consequences and use of restorative practices
- ▶ Enabling students to take academic risks and share ideas freely
- ▶ Modeling and reinforcing respect for and affirmation of their own and others' differences related to background, identity, language, strengths, and challenges (self- and social awareness)
- ▶ Interrupting moments of bias or racism, whether spoken or read, and using those moments to model for students how to understand and address them going forward
- ▶ Providing opportunities for students to reflect on and discuss historical and contemporary sociopolitical issues of impact in the students' communities and the world
- ▶ Seeking feedback from students on their experience of the classroom learning environment and making aligned adjustments to practice
- ▶ Providing students with frequent opportunities to interact with peers, make sense of complex ideas together, and develop academic language
- ▶ Supporting students to engage with differences and diverse perspectives, respectfully challenge each other's thinking, and address interpersonal conflicts as they arise, including those related to identity, equity, power, and justice
- ▶ Guiding students to self-assess, problem-solve, ask for support, and access resources when needed
- ▶ Empowering students to demonstrate leadership and positively contribute to the classroom and school community

RESOURCES

[Safe and Supportive Schools](#)

[Supporting Student Engagement, Learning, Well-being and Safety](#)

[SEL Guide](#)

[Rethinking Discipline](#)

[Supporting Student Resilience and Well-Being with Trauma-Informed Care: Educator Self-Assessment & Planning Tool](#) | Center for Great Teachers & Leaders

[Fundamentals of SEL](#) | CASEL

Collaborates with families to create and implement strategies for supporting student learning and development both at home and at school.

KEY PRACTICE

Leverages families' cultural and linguistic knowledge and expertise to support student learning.

Engages in dialogue with families about what students are learning in the classroom and expectations for student success.

Identifies and seeks feedback on strategies and resources for supporting student learning and growth in and out of school.

FOCUS FEEDBACK, COLLABORATION, AND SUPPORT ON:

- ▶ Regularly reaching out and listening to families, in formal and informal ways, about their values and priorities for their students' academic learning and experience in school
- ▶ Connecting with families early on and using systems to maintain regular two-way communication throughout the year
- ▶ Asking families for and honoring their communication preferences, including primary contact, time of day, frequency, language and method of communication
- ▶ Providing opportunities for families to contribute to classroom decisions and initiatives (e.g., celebrations, routines), demonstrating understanding of and respect for different home languages, cultures, and values
- ▶ Notifying family members in a timely manner about any concerns about their child's learning or well-being
- ▶ Collaboratively sharing concrete strategies for supporting academic learning and well-being at school and at home
- ▶ Sharing information about learning targets, curriculum, and content that students are engaging with
- ▶ Encouraging families of multilingual learners to use their home language to help build students' background knowledge and support their academic learning at home
- ▶ Interrogating one's own biases around family communication and learning more about students' cultures and backgrounds to support strengths-based, culturally responsive communication
- ▶ Regularly asking family members for feedback

RESOURCES

[Strengthening Partnerships: A Framework for Prenatal through Young Adulthood Family Engagement in Massachusetts](#) | Massachusetts Family Engagement Coalition

[MA Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals Self-Assessment](#)

[Family Portal](#)

[Academic Partnering Toolkit for Teachers](#) | Flamboyant Foundation

[Family Guides to the Curriculum Frameworks](#)

IV-A Reflection

Engages in self reflection in order to improve teaching and learning for all students

KEY PRACTICES

Continuously reflects on the effectiveness of instruction and how one's identities, biases, and practices impact student learning and well being.

Works towards professional practice and student learning goals that aim to improve practice and eliminate learning inequities.

Seeks out and engages in ongoing cycles of professional learning to strengthen equitable practice and improve student learning.

FOCUS FEEDBACK, COLLABORATION, AND SUPPORT ON:

- ▶ Engaging in individual reflection on one's own biases and the impact these may be having on student engagement, achievement, and relationship-building, and taking steps to ensure that all students feel valued and affirmed in the classroom
- ▶ Regularly examining student data to identify disparate outcomes for particular students or groups of students
- ▶ Considering and responding to the ways that issues of equity and access have affected and continue to influence students' learning experiences and environments particularly in relation to academic and social support systems
- ▶ Setting and monitoring challenging, standards-aligned, and measurable goals based on thorough self-assessment, analysis of student learning data, and feedback from students and families
- ▶ Setting and monitoring goals intentionally focused on promoting more inclusive and equitable learning experiences and outcomes for all students
- ▶ Adopting an inquiry-based approach to professional learning and reflection, and adjusting practice on a regular, ongoing basis
- ▶ Applying new knowledge and skills into practice and monitoring the impact on student learning
- ▶ Seeking out and valuing input and feedback from colleagues, students, and families on the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and adjusting practice accordingly

RESOURCES

[SMARTIE Goals](#)

[Culturally Responsive Teaching: a Reflection Guide](#) | *New America*

[LEA Equity Activity Guide](#)

[Culture in the Classroom](#) | *Learning for Justice*

IV.C

Professional Collaboration

STANDARD IV PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

Collaborates effectively with colleagues on a wide range of tasks; becomes involved in schoolwide decision making, and takes an active role in school improvement planning.

KEY PRACTICES

Shares responsibility for schoolwide culture and learning expectations that promote an equitable and culturally and linguistically sustaining school community.

Collaborates and communicates with colleagues in support of shared goals for student learning.

Contributes ideas and expertise to planning and decision making.

FOCUS FEEDBACK, COLLABORATION, AND SUPPORT ON:

- ▶ Differentiating roles and responsibilities in adapting and implementing high-quality instructional materials to ensure that instruction is engaging and inclusive for all students
- ▶ Fostering trusting and supportive collegial relationships
- ▶ Collaborating around and sharing effective and equitable instructional practices and strategies for developing a safe and supportive learning environment
- ▶ Collaboratively planning with special education and English learner education teachers, paraeducators, and specialists to align instruction and coordinate supports
- ▶ Identifying common family engagement strategies and supports to center and strengthen family engagement across grades and subject areas
- ▶ Analyzing data (e.g., attendance, assessment, student feedback, discipline) in teams to identify and disrupt inequities in access, treatment, and achievement in and across classrooms
- ▶ Examining student work, analyzing student performance, and planning together appropriate scaffolds, interventions, and supports
- ▶ Consistently holding students to high expectations and school-wide policies, while interrogating those policies for bias and advocating for equitable expectations for all students
- ▶ Naming harmful practices, moments, and policies when they occur to ensure all staff and students feel safe and supported

RESOURCES

[ILT Framework](#)

[Collaborative Planning Templates for Content/ESL/SPED Teachers](#) | Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence

[English Learner Education Collaboration Tool](#)

[Collaboration: Working Together to Serve Multilingual Learners](#) | WIDA