MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION

Quick Reference Guide: Performance Rubrics

EDUCATOR
EFFECTIVENESS

Introduction

Performance rubrics play a key role in the Commonwealth's educator evaluation framework. By translating the Standards for Effective Teaching and Administrative Leadership Practice into concrete, actionable descriptions of practice, rubrics serve as guides to help both educators and evaluators (1) develop a consistent, shared understanding of what proficient performance looks like in practice, (2) develop a common terminology and structure to organize evidence and provide feedback, and (3) make informed professional judgments about formative and summative performance ratings on each Standard and overall.

Four ESE Model Rubrics

ESE has developed four model rubrics to encompass the roles and responsibilities across all educators:

- ✓ Superintendent Rubric
- ✓ School-Level Administrator Rubric
- ✓ Classroom Teacher Rubric
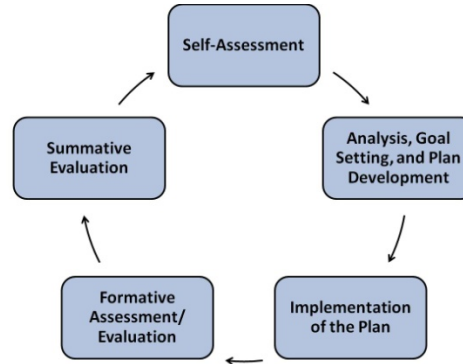- ✓ Specialized Instructional Support Personnel Rubric

Regulations

- A rubric is defined as "a scoring tool that describes characteristics of practice or artifacts at different levels of performance" (603 CMR 35.02).

- Districts "may use either the rubric provided by the Department in its model system or a comparably rigorous and comprehensive rubric developed by the district and reviewed by the Department" (603 CMR 35.08(2)).

- School committees may "*supplement* the Standards and Indicators with additional measurable performance Standards and Indicators… where applicable" (603 CMR 35.03 and 35.04).

Each rubric is built around the Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice or Administrative Leadership Practice. Districts may adopt or adapt the model rubrics or use a "comparably rigorous and comprehensive rubric" that incorporates the following components: the four Standards, related Indicators, and specific descriptions of practice across the following four performance levels: *Exemplary, Proficient, Needs Improvement,* and *Unsatisfactory*.

Role-Specific Indicators & Other Resources

Some districts desire more specificity for a particular role, and may develop role-specific Indicators to supplement a Model rubric, such as the Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) rubric. The addition of one or more role-specific Indicators can accomplish the following:

- allow for evaluation to incorporate elements specific and possibly unique to a certain role;
- preserve the opportunity to emphasize commonalities across roles while simultaneously acknowledging specific responsibilities; and
- promote a structure through which it may be more feasible for evaluation to be shared by multiple evaluators, with one assuming responsibility for practice associated with a role-specific Indicator and a second evaluator retaining responsibility for assessing practice associated with the base rubric.

Districts may also choose to adapt existing Indicators or elements to allow for more significant differences in assignments and responsibilities (603 CMR 35.03).

Districts and statewide organizations may also decide to supplement the Model rubrics with role-specific resources. For example, providing "look fors" or descriptions of evidence aligned to specific Indicators or elements in the rubric can assist educators in understanding and utilizing the rubric. ESE has collaborated with several statewide organizations to develop role-specific resources for School Counselors, School Business Administrators, School Nurses, School Psychologists, School Librarians, and Speech Language Pathologists.

To offer suggestions, pose questions, or receive updates on ESE's implementation efforts, please email EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu.

Using the Performance Rubric

A performance rubric plays a critical role in each step of the 5-Step Evaluation Cycle:

Step 1: Self-Assessment. Educators use the rubric to examine their own practice within each Standard and Indicator, identifying areas of strength as well as areas requiring further development.

Step 2: Analysis, Goal Setting, and Plan Development. Educators and evaluators agree on elements and/or Indicators that will be the focus of their attention during the evaluation cycle. The rubric also serves as the starting point for conversation about setting the "specific, measurable, and actionable" professional practice goals by painting a clear picture of what it would look like to move practice from *Proficient* to *Exemplary* in one Indicator/element or from *Needs Improvement* to *Proficient* in another.

Step 3: Implementation. During Step 3, the rubric is an invaluable tool for identifying and organizing evidence and providing targeted feedback. Rubrics help evaluators and educators ensure that they are gathering appropriate evidence to enable a fair assessment of educator practice on each Standard and Indicator. The rubric also guides evaluators in the provision of targeted feedback based on concrete descriptions of practice in response to individual observations or artifacts of practice, and ultimately supports judgments about patterns and trends in educator practice based on evidence gathered across multiple points in time.

Steps 4 and 5: Formative Assessment/Evaluation and Summative Evaluation. The formative and summative evaluation conferences are opportunities for the evaluator and educator to discuss the educator's performance on the continuum of practice presented in the rubric. The rubric is therefore the organizing framework for these conferences, providing evaluators with concrete descriptions of practice from which they can provide meaningful, targeted feedback to the educator about both strengths and areas in need of improvement.

FAQ's

1. Why don't the model rubrics include the Student Learning Indicator?

The model rubrics are designed to support meaningful feedback about teacher practice. The Student Learning Indicator is designed to focus on student outcomes. Did students learn as much as teachers set out to teach? Due to this discrepancy between the intended purposes of the rubric and the Student Learning Indicator, evaluators and educators should work together to identify the most appropriate assessments of student learning to provide feedback to educators about their impact.

2. Can the rubric be used as an observation tool?

No. The rubrics are written to support educators and evaluators in making judgments about patterns of evidence, gathered across multiple points in time. Observation is a valuable way to gather evidence on performance against many, but not all, of the Standards and Indicators. The classroom teacher rubric, for example, includes many elements and Indicators than can only be assessed through means other than observation. The ESE model rubrics have not been designed to be observation tools and should not be used for that purpose.

> ***Learn More About Performance Rubrics:***
> - ESE Model Rubrics
> - Rubric Refinement Project
> - Part III: Guide to Rubrics and Model Rubrics
> - Guide to Role-Specific Indicators
> - Role-Specific Resources for School Counselors, School Business Administrators, School Nurses, School Psychologists, School Librarians, and Speech Language Pathologists.
> - Module 2: Unpacking the Rubric
> - Workshop 1: Rubric Review

To offer suggestions, pose questions, or receive updates on ESE's implementation efforts, please email EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu.