

## **Educator Effectiveness Ratings Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **The System**

#### **1. Who established the teacher and administrator performance evaluation system?**

For the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years, locally-developed evaluation systems have been implemented by local school districts, as required by state law (MCL 380.1249). Beginning in 2013-14, a statewide system of educator evaluations will be implemented based on the educator evaluation pilot results and recommendations of the Michigan Council for Educator Effectiveness (MCEE).

#### **2. Why are teachers and administrators being evaluated and why are the evaluation ratings being reported? Is this the first year?**

While districts have had evaluation systems in the past, the frequency and scope of evaluations differed greatly between districts. While there still are some variations between district evaluation systems, as a result of recent laws and state reporting requirements, districts now are required to have educator evaluation systems with eight required elements, such as including student growth as a significant factor, and must conduct evaluations of administrators and teachers at least annually. The overarching goal is to support administrators and teachers, improve instruction, and increase the number of career-and college-ready students.

Administrator evaluations were conducted and reported for the 2010-11 school year; however, 2011-12 is the first school year in which teachers' ratings were required to be reported. For educator evaluation ratings visit: [www.mischooldata.org](http://www.mischooldata.org) or [www.michigan.gov/educatorevaluations](http://www.michigan.gov/educatorevaluations).

#### **3. What are the evaluation criteria?**

The evaluation criteria are outlined in state law (MCL 380.1249). The criteria include:

(1) Not later than September 1, 2011, and subject to subsection (9), with the involvement of teachers and school administrators, the board of a school district or intermediate school district or board of directors of a public school academy shall adopt and implement for all teachers and school administrators a rigorous, transparent, and fair performance evaluation system that does all of the following:

- (a) Evaluates the teacher's or school administrator's job performance at least annually while providing timely and constructive feedback.
- (b) Establishes clear approaches to measuring student growth and provides teachers and school administrators with relevant data on student growth.
- (c) Evaluates a teacher's or school administrator's job performance, using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor. For these purposes, student growth shall be measured by national, state, or

local assessments and other objective criteria. If the performance evaluation system implemented by a school district, intermediate school district, or public school academy under this section does not already include the rating of teachers as highly effective, effective, minimally effective, and ineffective, then the school district, intermediate school district, or public school academy shall revise the performance evaluation system within 60 days after the effective date of the amendatory act that added this sentence to ensure that it rates teachers as highly effective, effective, minimally effective, or ineffective.

- (d) Uses the evaluations, at a minimum, to inform decisions regarding all of the following:
- (i) The effectiveness of teachers and school administrators, ensuring that they are given ample opportunities for improvement.
  - (ii) Promotion, retention, and development of teachers and school administrators, including providing relevant coaching, instruction support, or professional development.
  - (iii) Whether to grant tenure or full certification, or both, to teachers and school administrators using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures.
  - (iv) Removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and school administrators after they have had ample opportunities to improve, and ensuring that these decisions are made using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures.

Within the parameters set in statute, each district had to make a number of decisions about how it would redefine, rebuild, and revise its educator evaluation system for the 2011-2012 and the 2012-2013 school year.

#### **4. Who evaluates the teachers and the administrators?**

Principals hold the primary responsibility for assigning an overall effectiveness rating for teachers; however, a principal may have assistance from many individuals in conducting any portion of the evaluation. Central office administration is responsible for assigning a principal's effectiveness rating, and one factor of the principal's evaluation will be the degree to which he/she has successfully completed teacher evaluations.

#### **5. How often do teachers and administrators need to be evaluated?**

Teachers and administrators are required to be evaluated at least annually.

#### **6. Did every district have to use the same system of criteria to evaluate its teachers?**

No. Currently, the law requires locally-determined and locally-developed systems of educator evaluations that include specific requirements. This means that although every district was required to implement the criteria specified in the law, the specific manner in which they did that will vary across districts.

## **7. What are the effectiveness ratings?**

There are four different effectiveness ratings: highly effective, effective, minimally effective, ineffective.

## **8. What do these evaluation ratings mean? Do these effectiveness ratings mean the same thing in each school and district or does each school and district have its own definition?**

The definitions attached to each of the four ratings are locally-determined by the district for the system of evaluation that is in place. In other words, there is not currently a standard, statewide definition of each rating. For example: "effective" should be interpreted as "effective as determined by the locally-determined evaluation system." Exactly what that "effective" rating means, or which components combined to create it, will vary across districts even though each system meets the minimum requirements set out in MCL 380.1249. So, what is "effective" in one district may not be equivalent in another district.

## **9. Can you compare effectiveness ratings for administrators and teachers between schools and districts?**

No. Comparing effectiveness ratings from one district to another would be misleading given the evaluation systems are not equivalent. It would be like trying to compare the grades of two students who took a mathematics course in grade 9—while they might both have a course grade of "B," you would need to know which mathematics course they took, what content was covered, whether the course grade consisted of only tests and quizzes or if homework or participation factored in. While the grade of "B" may give a general sense of the students' overall performance, it is not enough to truly understand the complexity of the learning and performance of each student in two different districts where the mathematics courses taken could have differed greatly.

### **The Impact**

## **10. How will the effectiveness ratings impact teachers and administrators?**

The effectiveness ratings will provide important feedback to improve school systems and instruction, set goals, select professional learning opportunities tailored to the teacher/administrator for continued growth and improvement, and to reward progress.

## **11. How will these ratings impact students, schools and districts?**

Students will be impacted as their teachers receive more regular feedback, and more targeted support and professional development to improve in areas that need improvement, while also being rewarded for areas in which they are currently strong. Schools and districts are impacted as they have the opportunity to provide more systematic, regular support to their teachers and administrators, and to use both the process of conducting evaluations and the information derived from the evaluations to make systemic changes that support student achievement and growth.

## **12. How will these evaluations/ratings change schools?**

These new evaluations will help keep the focus on continued learning for students and continued professional growth for educators. By having a system that helps determine what is working well and what needs improvement, a teacher or administrator can have specific goals and plans in place for their own professional growth and instructional/instructional leadership practices.

## **13. What will happen to ineffective teachers? Will someone work to help them improve?**

Ineffective teachers are required by state law to develop and implement an individual development plan with sufficient time to show growth and improvement. However, after three consecutive ineffective ratings, the ineffective teacher's employment at the district is required to be terminated.

## **14. Does this effectively create a Top-to-Bottom list of teachers? Does this mean a school with a higher percentage of ineffective teachers is a bad school?**

Having a system for determining overall ratings for teachers and administrators does not create a Top-to-Bottom ranking of teachers. In fact, the ratings cannot, and should not, be used in this manner. Rather, each teacher should work with his/her school and district to understand his/her rating and to receive targeted support and training for improvement.

You also cannot compare schools based on the percentage of teachers rated as ineffective. This is true for a number of reasons. First, the effectiveness ratings are not equivalent across districts. Second, effectiveness ratings are based on *student growth*, while school-level rankings are based on a combination of achievement, growth, and achievement gaps. A school as a whole may have a performance profile that is not reflected in each teacher. For example, you can imagine a high-performing school in which some teachers are ineffective; you can also imagine a low-performing school in which some teachers are effective or highly effective.

## **15. Do parents have to be notified if they have a student being taught by a teacher rated as ineffective?**

Parents will be notified if they have a student who will be taught by a teacher who has had two consecutive ineffective ratings. The law is clear that the teacher must be given time and support to show improvement. This provision of the law does not take effect until 2015-2016.

## **16. How can a parent/guardian find a teacher's rating for a teacher who instructs their student?**

A parent can contact the local district.

## **The Results**

### **17. Are most teachers being rated “highly effective” in most schools?**

No. The most common effectiveness rating statewide is “effective;” the rating “highly effective” was reported for only 23 percent of teachers statewide.

Many teachers are rated as effective or highly effective in Michigan because many teachers *are* effective or highly effective! This does not suggest there is no room for improvement, but rather that the local evaluation systems determined the teacher met the basic thresholds in the local systems to be rated “effective.” These teachers still will receive targeted professional development and training to improve their practice, but the fact that improvements can be made does not mean they haven’t attained a rating of “effective” or “highly effective.”

### **18. Are more teachers being rated “highly effective” or “not effective” in low performing schools?**

No. The most commonly-occurring rating in all schools is “effective.” This is true for low performing (Priority) schools as well.

Again, it is not appropriate to use these teacher-level metrics to make judgments about school-level or district-level performance and vice versa. Please see Question 15.

### **19. Was growth an important component in determining the appropriate effectiveness rating?**

Yes. Districts were required to use growth as a “significant factor” in their evaluation systems this year. We know that the majority of districts (e.g., over 600) included growth at a rate of 11 percent or higher; approximately 200 districts included growth between 21 and 30 percent; and approximately another 200 included growth above 30 percent of the evaluation. While there were some districts with relatively low levels of growth in their system, they were not the norm and also represented a number of districts that were still under a prior labor contract, which may have dictated the percentage of growth that could be included.

## **The Future**

### **20. What is the Michigan Council for Educator Effectiveness (MCEE)?**

It is the Council that was initially appointed by the Governor to make decisions about the statewide system of evaluation for educators. The MCEE’s vision is as follows: The Michigan Council for Educator Effectiveness will develop a fair, transparent, and feasible evaluation system for teachers and school administrators. The system will be based on rigorous standards of professional practice and of measurement. The goal of this system is to contribute to enhanced instruction, improve student achievement, and support ongoing professional learning.

Currently, the MCEE is conducting a pilot study in 14 districts across the state to make recommendations to the state legislature about the statewide evaluation system that is expected to take effect in the 2013-14 school year.

**21. Will the Council's recommendations change the ratings?**

The MCEE's recommendations about the statewide system for 2013-14 will not alter or change the ratings that were reported for the 2011-2012 school year. However, in future years, the manner in which those ratings are determined will be altered by the MCEE's recommendations and subsequent legislation.

**22. Once the MCEE's statewide system is put into place, will the ratings still mean different things?**

The MCEE will likely provide definition around each of the ratings and how the ratings are to be determined with the tools and framework that it puts into place. While it's difficult to predict exactly what will occur, there is a strong chance that the ratings will be more comparable across districts once the MCEE's statewide educator evaluation system goes into place.