

# **A Framework for Michigan Educator Evaluations**

*(Under the New School Reform Law*

*2009 PA 205 Section 1249)*

*A Joint Proposal from*

*American Federation of Teachers-Michigan*

*Michigan Education Association*

*Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals*

*Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association*

New state legislation requiring annual performance evaluations of all educators offers challenges and opportunities. Meaningful evaluations that are completed in timely, transparent, and efficient ways are the goals of this suggested framework. This framework represents a set of agreed upon principles. Plenty of room has been left for local districts to incorporate previous best practices, as well as to design improvements to current performance evaluation processes.

Specifically the new law requires:

- 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
- Rigorous, transparent, and fair performance evaluation systems
- Evaluation based on multiple rating categories
- Evaluation with student growth as determined by multiple measures of student learning, including national, state or local assessments or other objective criteria as a significant factor
- Evaluations to inform decisions regarding:
  - Individual professional learning opportunities with ample time for improvement
  - Promotion, retention, and professional development opportunities, including coaching, and instruction support
  - Tenure and/or certification decisions based on rigorous, streamlined, transparent and fair procedures.
  - Removal of ineffective teachers and administrators after ample opportunities to improve have been deemed unsuccessful based on decisions made by use of rigorous, streamlined, transparent and fair procedures.

This framework addresses all the requirements above. The framework is applicable for probationary and tenured teaching staff as well as building and district administrators (NOTE: Probationary teachers will have additional evaluation procedures to meet the requirements of the Tenure Act). It connects several school mandates, such as the required School Improvement Plan, and integrates several district-reporting requirements into one streamlined process. The framework seeks to eliminate duplication, as well as remain cost effective with reasonable expectations to build capacity by those who must do the work.

## **Foundational Principles**

This framework is based on our vision of collective capacity building, in which all levels of the educational system work together toward the common goal of increased student achievement. It is built on the premise that student performance improves when all educators at all levels work diligently towards this common goal. Individual educators improve students' academic progress when they work in collaborative environments while being accountable for student achievement. In this framework, the term "educators" refers to individuals working at any level, including teachers and other professional ancillary staff, principals, superintendents, central office administrators, state Department of Education staff and the Superintendent of Public Instruction to assure that evaluations for all educators at all levels are based on an integrated system that provides incentives for educators to support each other in attaining their goals.

To be successful in implementing this evaluation framework, each entity must establish common internal:

- Goals
- Language
- Understandings
- Professional training/learning

Common professional training is essential to assure that evaluators and staff are thoroughly trained in all aspects of the evaluation process being used in the district. For example: how to create individual and team goals based on data; how to correctly identify reasonable and valid measures of those goals; how to evaluate achievement of the goals; and how to identify quality professional development in order to improve professional practice.

These principles are grounded in 21st Century life where people work in groups, share common goals, and design individual goals. In these situations, improved professional practice is measured against the attainment of both individual and common goals. In addition, it is understood that the evaluation process must not only be embedded in the district and team's improvement goals, but also must be composed of multiple measures. Therefore, districts should modify systems that rely exclusively on classroom observations.

## **The Framework Overview**

The Individual Professional Growth Plan (IPGP) is the foundation of an annual evaluation. It is the common evaluation measurement for all educators. Educators will be evaluated annually based on their performance in meeting the goals in the IPGP. The common goals in the IPGP will be developed in conjunction with professional teams established in the building or district, with the input of supervisors, and include data on individual student growth.

The district and/or building School Improvement Plan, and particularly the findings of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment that is required by law, will serve as the common foundation

from which both the professional team and individual educator goals will be developed. All goals for the professional team and the individual educator must be based in significant part on student growth data, and must include professional development regarding the valid use of student achievement to inform educational decision-making.

### **Suggested Content of the Professional Team and Individual Growth Plan Goals**

- School Improvement Plan goals
- Student Growth Improvement goals
- Professional development plan to meet goals that is job-embedded and provides time for professional collaboration
- Indicators/Evidence of Success for meeting goals
- Monitoring Process and Timelines for assessing goals attainment
- Evaluation tools to be used for assessing goals attainment

### **Development of Goals**

In order to develop team and individual goals that support the purpose of improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps by improving instructional practice at all levels of the system, the framework provides the following guidelines for goal development:

- All goals at all levels need to be based on School Improvement Plans (SIP) and comprehensive needs assessments (CNA), as well as district improvement plans and those of their constituent entities where applicable.
- Measures of goal attainment should include data on student achievement/growth, which should be based on local, state and/or national achievement/growth measures depending on availability and appropriateness.
- All goals must have *clear measures* attached based on *identified outcomes*.
- Team goals are developed and approved by the team in collaboration with the immediate supervisor.
- Goals for leaders need to include the provision of resources and support to their employees to achieve those goals. Goals should define clearly which resources and supports will be provided and should be agreed upon by both parties.

### **The Framework is divided into a three-part PGP development process**

**Part One: The Professional Team** (e.g. Professional Learning Communities such as subject area departments, learning groups, interdisciplinary teams, etc.).

Professional teams (PTs) will develop their goals based on the school improvement plan goals and student performance data for the group.

All educators are part of various PTs. The PTs will determine their team's goals that must be tied to the district's goals (school improvement plan) and include criteria for determining success developed from student growth data. Team goals shall also include a delineation of

responsibilities and practices needed to meet the goals and suggested timelines for meeting the goals. PTs will provide data and information to their supervisor on the goals and progress towards meeting their goals.

Following is a list of evaluation tools that PGPs might use, but this list is not exhaustive:

Surveys (360, Parent, Student, etc)	Assessment/Other Student Data
Observation Rubrics	Curriculum/Coursework
Portfolio based on Rubrics	Case Studies
Presentation/Demonstration/Exhibition Rubrics	Action Research Projects

Professional teams should be given common planning and collaboration time for examining student work for successful implementation of the evaluation framework.

### **Part Two: The Individual Professional Growth Plan (IPGP)**

An IPGP that includes, in significant part, the use of student growth goals based on current student performance data will be developed to reinforce or change the educator’s instructional practices. \* Each Individual’s goals must be consistent with the school improvement plan and his/her professional team goals, and should also be based on student data and standards of professional practice. The IPGP will be developed in collaboration with the educator’s supervisor and will include the applicable components of the professional team’s goals. The IPGP shall include goals, a delineation of resources, responsibilities and practices needed to meet the goals, and suggested timelines for attaining the goals.

\*The Michigan Department of Education has taken the position that the assessments of students who have not been present in the classroom or the school during the majority of the school year (as determined locally) shall not be included in determining student growth data.

### **Part Three: Paths to Improvement**

This Framework is designed to address both the requirements of Section 1249 (teacher evaluations) as well as Section 1250 (the use of student achievement in teacher pay).

#### **Paths to Improvement**

- Exceeds Goals
- Meets Goals
- Progressing Toward Goals
- Not Progressing Towards Goals

It is our belief that every educator seeks continuous improvement of his/her professional practice. Many educators are successful in buildings that are struggling and do stellar work, yet the building or district continues to flounder. Rather than continue with the environment of isolated pockets of excellence, the professional team process, which can be implemented throughout the system, offers our educators holistic performance growth opportunities for their professional practice.

Although student achievement is heavily influenced by educators, it is also affected by many other factors. Given this reality, any use of student achievement/growth data in high-stakes evaluation decisions should be done with great care. Such use of achievement/growth data should be strictly formative for a minimum of three years in which an educator is being evaluated in a particular evaluation system. If low student achievement/growth data for an educator are included in an evaluation, those data should not be used for high-stakes decisions unless: 1) the educator has been evaluated using a locally bargained process consistent with this framework for multiple years; 2) the educator has been offered targeted professional development based on the needs identified in the evaluations, and 3) the data continue to show low achievement growth even after formative evaluation and professional development.

### **Collective Bargaining**

In this framework all aspects of the proposal including the evaluation processes, timelines, instruments and tools, level of proficiency, significant student growth measures, and the professional team composition and processes are subject to collective bargaining at the local level.

### **Summary**

This three-part Professional Growth Plan Framework has much potential. Many educators are already making great strides in student achievement using the collaborative team approach. This proposed framework is meaningful, manageable for all, connects many school initiatives, and is flexible enough to fit the needs of any district, any educator, non-tenured or tenured teacher, building administrator, central office, ISD, or state department of education educator.