TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION COVID-19 GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

Office of Leadership Development and School Improvement

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OVERVIEW

Education Reform Act of 2010 and Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) 13A.07.09 identify requirements for the evaluation of teachers and principals. All teachers and principals are required to be evaluated annually using either the state evaluation model or an approved locally developed model. Most school systems use a locally developed model for evaluations. Local school systems are required to use the state evaluation model only if the local school system and exclusive employee representative fail to agree on a locally developed model.

Evaluations consist of professional practice and student growth measures. Professional practice domains for teachers are planning and preparation; classroom environment; instruction; and professional responsibilities. Professional practice domains for principals are the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, which were adopted by the State Board of Education in February 2017. Student growth, for both teachers and principals, measures student progress from a clearly articulated baseline to one or more points in time. Most school systems use local and state assessment data as measures for student growth. Student growth measures are typically collected at defined points of time such as the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Outcomes of evaluations are used to determine certification standing, contract renewals, and other employment decisions.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Maryland schools have been closed since March 16, 2020, and will be closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. Local school systems have modified assessment administration, instructional practices, and grading policies due to COVID-19 school closures. School systems have shifted to distance learning and state assessments were waived for the 2019-2020 school year. These modifications impact student growth measures for teacher and principal evaluations. As a result, it is difficult to fully capture certain measures of student progress.

Stakeholders were convened to address COVID-19 impact on teacher and principal evaluations. Virtual meetings were held with Principal Supervisors on April 21, 2020 and the Teacher Principal Evaluation Workgroup on April 22, 2020. Participation at the Virtual Principal Supervisors' Meeting included 18 of the 24 local school systems. The Teacher Principal Evaluation Workgroup had representation from professional organization, institutes of higher education, evaluator effectiveness personnel from local school systems, and state education associations. Both groups had an opportunity to provide questions prior to the meetings and participate in providing feedback during each meeting regarding waiver recommendations for the 2019-2020 school year. A survey was also sent to all 24 school systems to gather input about 2019-2020 teacher and principal evaluations. The overarching consensus was to consider waiving student growth measures for the 2019-2020 school year for both teachers and principals.

On April 28, 2020, the Maryland State Board of Education approved a waiver of student growth requirements for the 2019-2020 school year.

MODIFYING THE EVALUATION SYSTEM

Most school systems use a locally developed evaluation models that were created in mutual agreement with exclusive employee representatives (COMAR 13A.07.09.04). As a result, school systems must collaborate with their exclusive employee representative to determine if and how the waiver of student growth will be implemented in the school system. Table 1 identifies options that local school systems can consider to address student growth requirements for the 2019-2020.

Table 1: Options for the Student Growth Component for Teacher and Principal Evaluations for the 2019-2020 school year

	Current Requirements	Student Growth Options
Tenured Teachers	• Evaluated annually for student growth. • Professional practice rating can be carryover in year two and three. • Evaluations based on at least two observations • Overall rating, at a minimum, is highly effective, effective, or ineffective.	1. If the teacher has already completed a full evaluation for the 2019-2020 school year, then no modifications are required. 2. Waive student growth requirement. 3. Use available student growth data from the 2019-2020 school year. 4. Use trend data to determine student growth measures.
Non-Tenured Teachers and Teachers Rated Ineffective	• Evaluated annually for student growth and professional practice. • Based on at least two observations • Overall rating, at a minimum, is highly effective, effective, or ineffective.	1. If the teacher has already completed a full evaluation for the 2019-2020 school year, then no modifications are required. 2. Waive student growth requirement. 3. Use available student data from the 2019-2020 school year.
Principals	• Evaluated annually • Based on student growth and professional practice. • Overall rating, at a minimum, is highly effective, effective, or ineffective.	1. Waive student growth requirement. 2. Use available student data from the 2019-2020 school year. 3. Use trend data to determine student growth measures.

School administrators are encouraged to informally observe teachers facilitating distance learning instruction to identify areas of promise and opportunities for growth to inform school wide professional learning needs. Training of observers are recommended prior to conducting formal observations of teachers engaged in distance learning.

DATA SUBMISSION

The teacher evaluation data submission window is June 26 through July 31, and the principal evaluation data submission window is August 14 through September 11. The Office of Leadership Development and School Improvement will work with local school systems to extend the submission window if needed.

Evaluation data submission include professional practice, student growth, and overall ratings. If a school system waived student growth measures for the 2019-2020 school year, a code will be used to indicate omission of this data. The overall ratings of highly effective, effective, developing (if applicable to the local school system), or ineffective will be collected.

Details for reporting will be explained in the revised Teacher and Principal Evaluation Data Collection Manual and webinar, which will be released in May.

TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION COVID-19: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This section provides answers to frequently asked questions about teacher and principal evaluations during COVID-19. Additional questions about teacher and principal evaluation may be directed to Ed Mitzel, Executive Director of Leadership Development and School Improvement at edmund.mitzel@maryland.gov.

1. **Are local school systems required to conduct teacher and principal evaluations for the 2019-2020 school year?**

   State law requires the annual evaluation of non-certificated employees and state regulation requires the annual evaluation of all teachers and principals. Most teachers have facilitated instruction for 70% of the school year prior to COVID-19 school closures. Teachers continue to facilitate instruction as part of the continuity of learning plan being implemented by school systems. As a result, school systems are required to evaluate teachers and principals for the 2019-2020 school year. (Limited exceptions due to inability to conduct evaluations will be addressed on a case-by-case basis by the local school system.) Local school systems must follow the evaluation ratings described in regulation that include, at a minimum, highly effective, effective, or ineffective.

2. **Can administrators conduct formal observations of teachers that count toward the summative evaluation score during distance learning?**

   Local school systems will decide if observation of teachers engaged in distance learning will count toward the summative evaluation of teachers. It is recommended that observers complete training on how to conduct observations in the distance learning environment prior to facilitating a formal observation.

3. **Will the required number of observations be waived?**

   Current regulation requires that a teacher evaluation be based on at least two observations. At this time, there is no waiver of this requirement.

4. **Must evaluations include Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) for teacher and principal evaluations this year?**

   On April 28, 2020, the Maryland State Board of Education granted a request to waive student growth measures as part of teacher and principal evaluations for the 2019-2020 school year. Local school systems must collaborate with their exclusive employee representatives to determine if and how the waiver will be implemented. Local school systems that have already completed the window for collecting student growth measures can use this data to complete the evaluations of teachers and principals.

5. **Will the MSDE collect and report teacher and principal evaluation data for the 2019-2020 school year?**

    Teacher and principal evaluation data will be collected and reported for the 2019-2020 school year, including information about any modifications to evaluations. The collection window is June - September 2020. The Office of Leadership Development and School Improvement will work with local school systems to extend the submission window if needed.

6. **If local school systems have implemented previous standard operating procedures regarding missing data, can those procedures still be used?**

    Local school systems that have standard operating procedures regarding missing data that has been submitted and approved by the state can be used for the 2019-2020 school year.

7. **Will there be an extension for written notice for non-renewal of contracts?**

    The Maryland State Department of Education, State Board of Education approved a 45-day extension for non-renewal of contracts for probationary teachers (COMAR 13A.07.02.01).

8. **What is MSDE guidance for termination if local school systems have followed the proper process and collected documented evidence on ineffective teachers?**

    It is up to the local school system in partnership with their exclusive employee representatives to determine if and how they will proceed with non-renewal of teachers rated ineffective.

9. **Will there be a waiver regarding COMAR 13A.07.09.04.B.4.f, that a signature acknowledges the receipt of evaluation?**

    Currently, there is not a waiver of the signature requirement. Local school systems can consider accepting digital signatures or email confirmation.

10. **If an end of year evaluation is 'Not Rated' or otherwise, what guidance is there on how to document employee challenges for the year related to performance? Would a memo be in order?**

    Most school systems are implementing locally developed evaluation models that were created in mutual agreement with exclusive employee representatives. As a result, it is recommended that local school systems adhere to the agreement that was established between the two entities regarding documentation of performance.

11. **For local school systems with locally developed evaluation models that include agreement with bargaining unit partners, what will be the guidance if there are shifts to how employee evaluations are implemented or the performance data which is used?**

    Local school systems and collective bargaining units must work collaboratively to identify if the waiver of student growth requirements will be implemented and how the waiver will be implemented in the school system.

12. **Will MSDE provide guidance on how to rate teachers conducting online instruction?**

    The Maryland State Department of Education is currently developing guidance on conducting evaluations of online instruction. Principals and principal supervisors are strongly encouraged to participate in training before conducting observations in the distance learning environment.