

Administrative Memo

Date: March 15, 2016
To: School Administrators
From: Margie Vandeven, Missouri Commissioner of Education
Subject: EQ-16-003 – Educator Evaluation in Missouri

Every child in the state of Missouri deserves access to excellent education. Research firmly establishes the most important school-level factor in providing excellent education to students is highly effective teachers followed next by highly effective leaders. Missouri’s approach to providing highly effective teachers and leaders strikes a balance between support and accountability and is based on continuous improvement. There have been some recent questions regarding Missouri’s educator evaluation process particularly in light of the recent passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

The Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation are based on Missouri statute, not on federal law. While they were described in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Waiver application, it still remains that they were established and continue to exist based on Missouri law. The status of the Flexibility Waiver and the passage of ESSA are not in conflict nor do they impact the purpose of these principles.

Through State Board of Education rule 5 CSR 20-400.375, the Department clarified what constituted a comprehensive, performance-based evaluation as directed by 168.128 RSMo. This clarification was summarized in what the Department has termed the Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation. These seven areas of teacher evaluation include the following:

- Research-based targets of performance
- Differentiated levels of performance
- Developmental support for new teachers and leaders
- Evidence of student growth
- Meaningful feedback from the evaluator
- Evaluators trained in the process
- Evaluation data used for multiple purposes (contract decisions, professional development needs, tenure, compensation, etc.)

The 4th principle, the use of measures of growth in student learning, is essential to determining the extent to which teaching took place and its overall quality. In this context, a performance-

based evaluation of a teacher must include a student-learning measure of some type. Public schools have a great deal of flexibility in deciding how educators demonstrate that student learning has occurred. How student growth data is gathered for principle four is up to individual districts. The Student Learning Objective (SLO) method is recommended and presented through trainings offered by the state due to research on their impact on student learning and improvement of teacher practice. Likewise, the Unit of Instruction (UoI), which is a part of the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE) model offered by MU, is not required either. These are options. Districts and charter schools have the autonomy to determine how to gather student growth data and how to incorporate it into their local evaluation process.

Data on alignment to the Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation is collected through Screen 18A of the Core Data System. This building-level data must be reported by each public school district and charter school by June 30 each year.

If you have additional questions, please contact the Office of Educator Quality.