REGION 14 SCHOOLS

Educator Evaluation and Support Plan

Revised March, 2025

Development Process

This plan was collaboratively developed by the members of Region 14's Professional Development and Evaluation Committee and approved by the Region 14 Board of Education during the 2023-2024 school year. The plan fully aligns with the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Educator Growth and Evaluation Guidelines. Portions of the following plan have been adapted from the "Connecticut Leader and Educator Evaluation and Supports Plans 2024" document developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) which provides model evaluation and support plans for leaders and educators. The CSDE has granted PDECs permission to adapt the model plan in accordance with a self-assessment of district needs and goals.

Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC)

Kathryn Aseltine	Karen Asselin	Taryn Fernandez
Tami Gilbert	Todd Gorski	Cailey Howser
Nicole Lewis	Allison Loiseau	Kari McCarthy
Kelly Pinho	Andie Rocco	

Board of Education

Carol Ann Brown	Michael Carbonneau	Jim Crocker
Chris Griffin	Alice Jones	Caren Lipinski
Chris Matta	Tikva Rose	

Theory of Action

At the beginning of the plan development process, the Region 14 Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC) agreed to the following theory of action to guide the work: If we develop an Educator Growth and Evaluation Plan that focuses on *continuous improvement* through *collaborative dialogue*, *self-directed goals*, and *differentiated growth plans*, then we will establish a *culture of trust* centered around the *Region 14 Vision of a Learner* and the demonstration of its attributes by all *learners*.

Definitions

Continuous improvement - Continuous improvement refers to the ongoing effort to make incremental changes and improvements to teaching methods, school programs, policies, and processes in order to positively impact student outcomes. The goal is to consistently get better over time through reflection, assessment of current practices, and implementing changes based on evidence and data (Great Schools Partnership, 2013). This requires educators to have a growth mindset focused on becoming more effective teachers and leaders. Key aspects include data analysis, goal setting, professional development, collaboration, and regularly evaluating progress (Education Development Center, 2020; Institute of Education Sciences, 2021). The continuous cycle aims to improve student learning, engagement, development, and school culture (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2013).

Collaborative dialogue - Collaborative dialogue refers to meaningful, constructive conversations and interactions between educators, students, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders. The goal of collaborative dialogue is to share diverse viewpoints, critically reflect, build shared understanding, and work together to make decisions and improvements. Key aspects include open and respectful communication, listening to understand multiple perspectives, identifying challenges/problems collectively, and co-constructing solutions oriented toward shared goals and student growth. Collaborative dialogue enables the school community to leverage its collective intelligence and strengths to foster deeper learning for students and continuous improvement overall. Effective collaborative dialogue builds trust and ownership in decisions made (Smith et al., 2020; Johnson, 2018; Brown & Miller, 2019).

Self-directed goals - Self-directed goals refer to learning objectives and aspirations that educators set for themselves. Rather than having goals imposed on them, self-directed goal setting aims to empower teachers to take charge of their own professional learning. This is facilitated by encouraging teachers to reflect on their interests, learning needs, and what they wish to achieve. Administrators support teachers in planning how to achieve their self-set goals through resources, critical thinking questions, and periodic check-ins on progress. Self-directed goals shift the locus of learning from external to internal motivation (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2013; Great Schools Partnership, 2013; Shakman et al., 2020).

Differentiated growth plans - Differentiated growth plans refer to individualized roadmaps of learning goals and success criteria that educators co-construct together with their administrator. Recognizing that educators have unique professional learning needs, differentiated growth maps help meet teachers where they are at professionally. These living documents outline specific abilities and strategies educators will focus on, catered learning and support, ongoing assessment check-points, and space for educator reflection and ownership. Differentiated growth planning allows educators to target their professional learning and take charge of their continuum of skill building. Rather than a one-size-fits-all instructional approach, it provides customized pathways guiding each learner’s progression, next steps, and professional vision. The differentiation aims to

personalize professional growth while upholding rigorous expectations for teaching and learning to improve student outcomes (Edutopia, n.d.; Moodle, n.d.; Structural Learning, n.d.; ASCD, n.d.).

Culture of trust - Within the realm of educator evaluation, a culture of trust refers to an atmosphere founded on mutual understanding, reliability, and confidence between educators. It is characterized by openness, transparency, care, accountability, and shared beliefs that all students (and educators) can learn at high levels as a result of others having their best interests in mind (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Establishing a culture of trust involves vulnerability, difficult conversations oriented toward growth, and systems that reinforce human dignity over bureaucracy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Trustworthiness is modeled by matching words with actions, keeping promises, and righting wrongs while asking forgiveness when mistakes inevitably happen (Kutsyuruba et al., 2011). In such a positive environment, creativity and risk-taking flourish while fear and uncertainty that hamper achievement decrease (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Sustaining a culture of trust makes continuous school improvement possible (Tschannen-Moran, 2014)..

Region 14 Vision of a Learner - The Region 14 Vision of a Learner aims to ensure all students in our Region 14 community are future ready. To ensure that all of our learners are prepared for the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century, we have developed a common understanding of the skills and qualities that will help them to thrive in life. Our vision represents the core values that guide the work of our educators and students and aligns with the characteristics our community deemed necessary for our students to be positive contributors to society. Region 14's Vision of a Learner provides coherence across our schools from Pre-K through 12th grade and serves as a guide for instruction and decision making.

Learners - Learners refers to the students, faculty, administration, and all others who are engaged in acquiring new knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes through various forms of teaching and experiences. Learners bring a diverse range of backgrounds, capabilities, motivations, and life experiences that influence their needs and approaches to learning.

Standards and Criteria

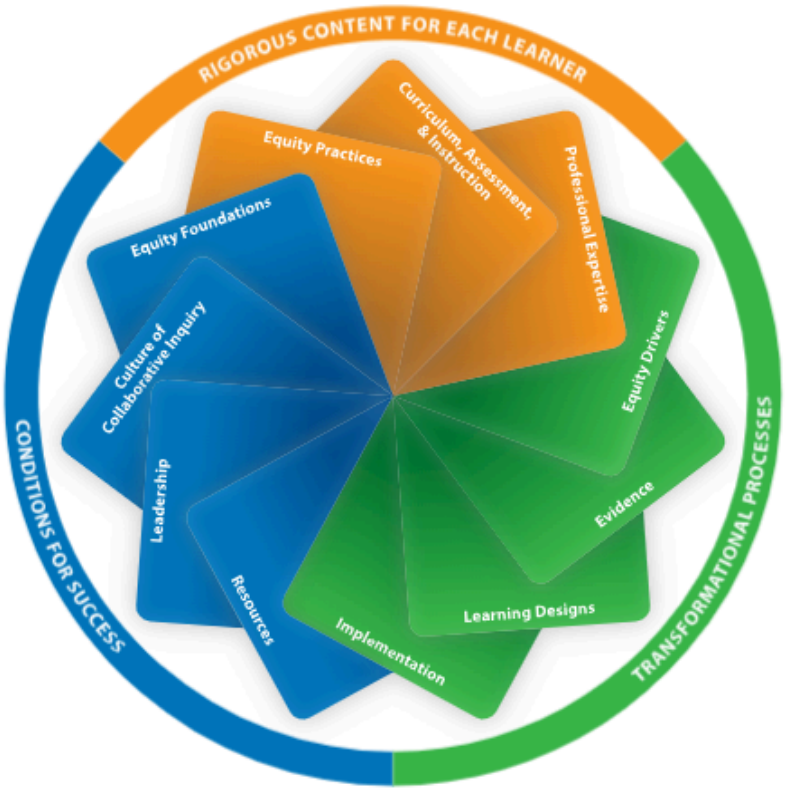
The primary goal of the educator evaluation and support system is to strengthen individual pedagogy and collective practices to increase student learning, growth, and achievement. Region 14 Schools will utilize adaptations of "The Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework" developed by Silver Strong & Associates which align with the Council of Chief State School Officers' Model Core Teaching Standards and Learning Progressions for Teachers as noted on the linked document. Silver Strong & Associates describe the framework as follows: "The Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework is a comprehensive system for observing, evaluating, and refining classroom practice. It synthesizes a wide body of research on instructional design and teacher effectiveness, as well as insight from over 250 teachers and administrators from around the country. The ultimate goal of the Framework is to create a common language for talking about high-quality teaching and how classroom practice can be improved. The Framework allows for assessment according to ten dimensions of teaching, outlining a set of observable teaching indicators within each dimension and relevant student behaviors associated with effective instruction. It also includes rubrics for developing summative evaluations, along with a set of protocols to help school leaders provide meaningful feedback to teachers and conduct powerful pre- and post-observation conferences."

Region 14 has been given permission to make adjustments to this framework to meet the needs of the various educators in the district. As such, there are slight variances between the frameworks utilized for classroom teachers, administrators, and faculty members in other roles. These variances help ensure that the evaluation plan allows for differentiation of roles.

The rubrics associated with each dimension of the Framework have been edited to represent single point competencies. A single point competency rubric focuses the educator on the expectations of performance without the need for ratings to better facilitate discussions of strengths and areas for growth, to utilize evidence to support the identification of these areas, and to determine next steps for support and learning. The focus shifts from a rating to a performance goal.

Professional Learning Standards and Structures

Professional learning is essential to Region 14's Educator Evaluation and Support Plan. Learning Forward Professional Learning Standards 2022, serve as a tool for how professional learning happens to deepen one's knowledge of their practice to impact student learning, growth, and achievement. As a tool, the professional learning standards help educators and leaders intentionally design learning, address content and consider how to accomplish the expected learning transformation desired. Together the professional standards for educators, leaders and professional learning serve as the three visions that work together to lay the foundation for meaningful feedback in a continuous learning process: 1) Vision for effective leadership, 2) Vision for effective professional learning, and 3) Vision for effective teaching, learning, and service delivery.



Orientation, Training, and Support Elements

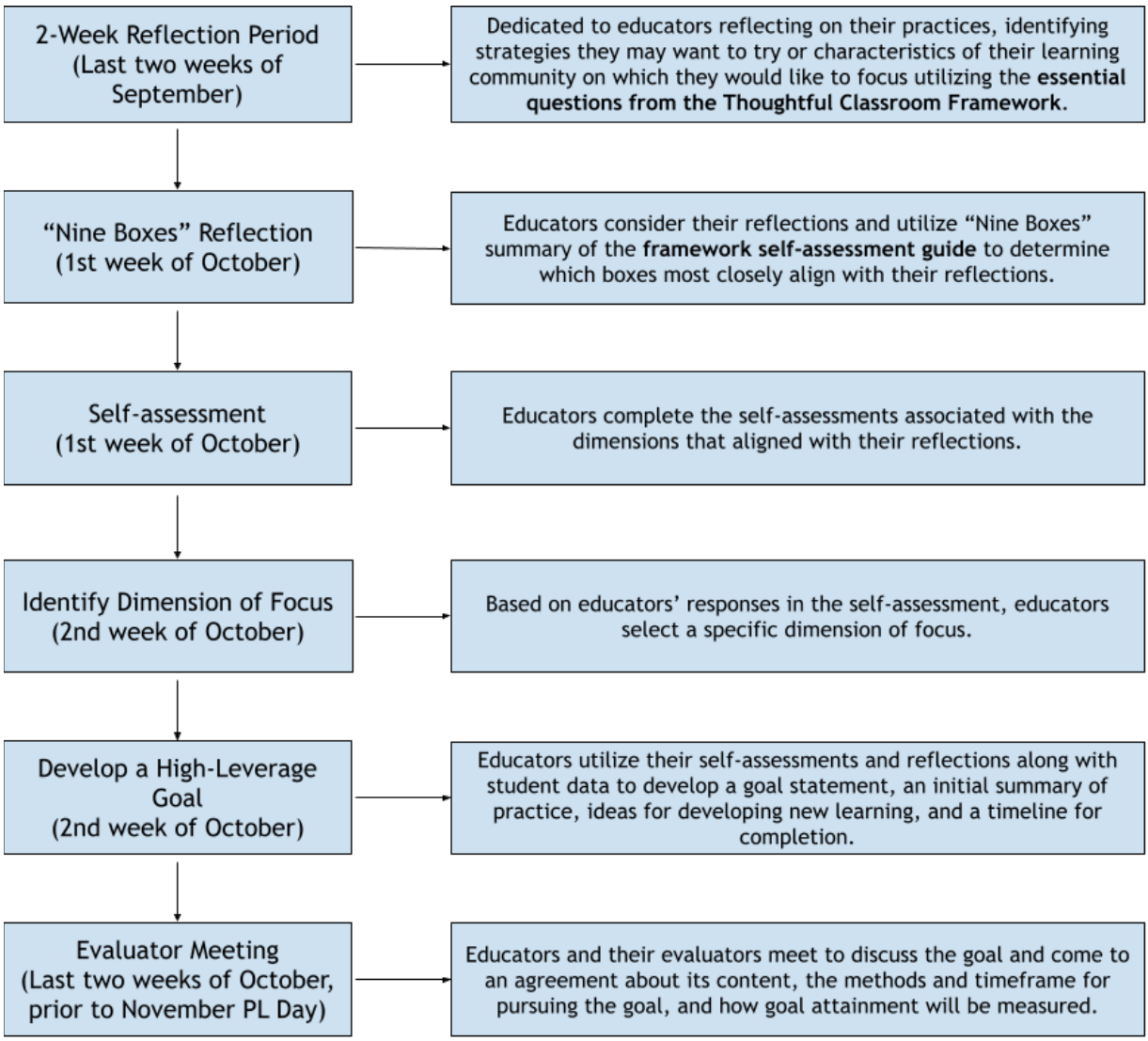
Orientation on the Leader and Educator Evaluation and Support process will be provided to all faculty by members of the PDEC prior to the start of the process. In year 1 of implementation of this plan, orientation will occur prior to October 15th. In subsequent years, orientation will occur annually during the New Faculty Academy and a brief refresher will be provided prior to October 15th for returning faculty. The orientation will facilitate educator understanding of high leverage goals and professional learning plans, the Effectiveness Frameworks, goal-focused and informal observations, tiered supports, and the dispute resolution process.

Annual training for evaluators as required by C.G.S. 10-151b will include engaging in and providing reciprocal feedback tied to standards and evidence of professional practice.

The Goal Setting Process

Region 14 will utilize “The Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework” developed by Silver Strong & Associates. The framework was chosen for its ease of use, the high level of detail and guiding questions it provides, and how readily it can be utilized to facilitate collaborative and reflective dialogue. As Silver & Strong state, “one problem that has plagued the teacher evaluation process in the past has been the tendency to leave teachers out of the process, to require their compliance rather than earn their commitment.” Under this plan, the goal-setting process is incumbent upon the educator’s commitment to honest self-reflection and continual improvement through the development of a personalized goal that will positively impact the educator’s practice and student learning.

The flowchart below delineates the goal setting process.



Developing a High Leverage Goal

At the heart of the goal development process is **action research**. Action research is an inquiry-based process used by educators to study and reflect on their own practices in order to improve student learning outcomes (Mills, 2018; Stringer, 2014). It involves systematically collecting and analyzing data around a specific problem or area needing improvement in an educational setting (Johnson, 2012). When setting the goal, the educator identifies an issue or question to investigate, develops a research plan, gathers and analyzes data, implements changes based on findings, and evaluates the effectiveness of the intervention through observation and reflection (Sagor, 2011).

Unlike traditional educational research, action research is conducted by educators for application in their own classrooms (Creswell, 2012). It promotes educator autonomy and voice in the research process (Mertler, 2017). The goal is always positive change and improvement at the school or district level. Action research provides real-time feedback for educators to adjust practices to better meet the needs of their students (Hendricks, 2013). It allows educators to add to the knowledge base about learning but focuses on practical action and direct implementation in the classroom. Ongoing critical reflection and collaboration with colleagues are key components that distinguish action research from everyday teaching (Ferrance, 2000).

As such, it is essential that a **high-leverage goal** be chosen. A high-leverage goal in education is an overarching, breakthrough target that seeks improvement and sustainable change in a school or district. High-leverage goals are broad in scope, connected to a compelling vision, and focused on closing achievement gaps to benefit all students. They address root causes of problems, not just symptoms, and articulate clear outcomes to aim progress toward (George, 2023; Great Schools Partnership, 2015; TeacherPH, n.d.).

High-leverage goals may require multiple years of action research. They drive collaborative work and unite efforts around common priorities. Goals are considered high-leverage if they are strategic, measurable, attainable yet ambitious, results-focused, and equity-centered. They should be linked to recognized needs and leverage research on effective practices that will have a significant return on investment if achieved. High-leverage goals lead to action plans with benchmarks and milestones for measuring interim progress. They provide focus and impetus for raising the bar and realizing dramatic improvement (George, 2023; Great Schools Partnership, 2015; TeacherPH, n.d.).

During the goal setting meeting between the educator and evaluator, a mutual decision must be reached as to the time frame of the goal. Mutually agreed upon one-, two-, or three-year goal and plan for professional development and support must be consistent with professional status and goals.

Educator/Evaluator Meetings

Evaluation and support will be an ongoing, cyclical progress monitoring process with evaluator and educator/team conferences in the fall, winter, and spring. The expectation is that all educators will always be in either the goal development or goal pursuit process. Each educator will be assigned a primary evaluator with an 092 certificate, this will most often be a school administrator. Educators must meet with their evaluator at least three times per school year in relation to their goals.

1) Goal-Setting Discussion: The first meeting is the last portion of the goal development process. For educators pursuing a two- or three-year goal, this meeting will be a planning meeting for the pursuit of the goal for the current school year. (Completed by November 1)

2) Mid-Year Progress Discussion: The second meeting is a progress meeting held towards the middle of the school year. (Completed by March 1)
3) End-of-Year Conference: The third meeting is held at the end of the school year to reflect on the year, discuss progress towards or achievement of the educator's goal, and determine how this progress might inform or launch the next evaluation cycle. (Completed by the last day of school)
4) Summative Evaluation: A summary of the educator's growth towards meeting the goals and a statement of successful or unsuccessful completion of the evaluative cycle is provided to the educator by the evaluator. (Completed by June 30)

The Educator/Evaluator meetings will consist of reflective dialogue around the educator's application of new learning and its impact on students, specifically in relation to improved academic performance. "Reflective dialogue" refers to a thoughtful and critical conversation between the educator and evaluator about the educator's experiences and practices. Specifically, this dialogue focuses on examining and discussing the educator's application of new knowledge or skills gained from professional or personal learning. The goal is to reflect on how these new approaches have been implemented in the classroom and to evaluate their effectiveness in improving students' academic performance, organizational health, and educator growth.

This process involves a deep level of introspection and mutual feedback, where both parties analyze the successes and challenges of applying new strategies or methodologies. The reflective dialogue aims to identify what worked well, what didn't, and why, facilitating a better understanding of teaching practices and their direct impact on student learning outcomes. It encourages continuous professional growth by fostering a culture of learning, self-assessment, and adaptation to enhance educational practices for better student achievement. The needs of the educator to continue pursuing the goal in terms of new learning and/or resources will also be discussed. Data should be provided by the educator that supports the impact statements. This data can be qualitative or quantitative, but should always be specific.

Goal-Setting Discussion

Goal-setting discussions may be scheduled between individual educators and their evaluators or between groups of educators and their evaluators if multiple educators will be working towards the same goal. In preparation for these discussions, the educator(s) must complete sections 1 and 2 of the Region 14 Educator Professional Growth Plan document that will be utilized throughout the term of the goal. Each educator will engage in self-assessment prior to completing the form through the use of their role-specific self-assessment document:

- Classroom Teacher Self-Assessment
- School Counselor/Social Worker/Psychologist/Service Provider Self-Assessment
- Instructional Leader Self-Assessment

Goals must be mutually agreed upon by the educator and the evaluator and include multiple measures of student learning, student growth and achievement, and educator growth.

Mid-Year Progress Discussion

The mid-year progress discussion consists of reciprocal dialogue between the educator and evaluator and includes an educator self-reflection on their progress toward their goal(s) so far. The reflection shall include an

analysis of the impact of their learning on their practice, student learning, growth and achievement and the school community.

- Educators self-reflect and review multiple and varied qualitative and quantitative indicators of evidence of impact on educator's growth, professional practice, and impact on student learning, growth, and achievement with their evaluator.
- The evaluator provides specific, standards-based feedback related to the educator's goal, observation feedback and evidence aligned to the single point rubric.
- The midyear conversation is a crucial progress check-in. The midyear check-in provides an opportunity to discuss evidence, learning, and next steps. It is at this point that revisions to the educator's goal may be considered based on multiple measures of evidence.

End-of-Year Conference

The end-of-year conference provides an opportunity for the educator and evaluator to engage in reciprocal dialogue, similar to the midyear check-in, to discuss progress toward the educator's goal(s); professional learning as it relates to the educator's professional growth and professional practice; and impact on student learning, growth, and achievement as evidenced by multiple and varied qualitative and quantitative indicators of evidence. A written end-of-year self-reflection summary based on agreed upon standards and goals includes the impact of new learning on educator practice and growth, impact on student learning, growth and achievement, school community, strengths and concerns, and possible next steps for the upcoming year. Analysis of evidence from the end-of-year summary is important for the educator's subsequent self-assessment and goal setting revisions or new goal.

Summative Evaluation

A summary of the educator's growth achieved through the process will be provided by the evaluator on an annual basis based on agreed upon standards and goals. The summary will be tied to The Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Rubric and will make a distinction regarding the educator's successful completion of the evaluative cycle. Multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement, and educator growth as agreed upon during the goal setting process will be utilized to make this distinction. These may include evidence of student performance, observations of practice, student feedback, artifacts of professional practice, and reflections of the educator on students growth. They should include a mix of quantitative and qualitative data and indicate a positive shift in student outcomes. These summative evaluations are discussed at the end-of-year conference.

Professional Practice and Student Growth: The Goal Pursuit Process

The implementation of the continuous learning process is shared between the educator and evaluator. For the duration of the learning process, educators pursue learning and attainment of their goals by engaging in collaborative conversations with their colleagues, being open and responsive to coaching from both their evaluators and their fellow reflective practitioners, collecting evidence of practice related to their high leverage

professional learning goal, and collecting student performance data upon which to base the effectiveness of their practice and their professional learning needs.

At least eight professional learning sessions throughout the year will be dedicated to the pursuit of educators' goals. These sessions will include opportunities to work with colleagues, access to banks of instructional strategies aligned with the TCTEF dimensions, and sharing of strategies that have been implemented with reflective discussions around their effectiveness as evidenced by qualitative and quantitative data on student outcomes. Efficient utilization of the time provided during these sessions will enhance and provide further evidence of the educator's professional practice as delineated in Dimension 10: Professional Practice which assesses the educator's commitment to professional growth, the school community, and professionalism.

Evaluator/Observer/Stakeholder Feedback and Engagement

Evaluator Observations of Educators

Observations occur throughout the continuous learning process. There will be two types of observations in the Region 14 evaluation and support model: goal-focused observations and informal observations. Each type of observation will serve a different purpose.

Goal-Focused Observations

Goal-focused observations of educators will be for the purpose of gathering evidence of the educator's progress towards meeting their goal. The observations will be scheduled to include reflective dialogue afterwards. This dialogue facilitates the opportunity for the educator to provide context for the lesson or portion thereof that was observed, for the evaluator to hear the educator's reflections on the lesson, how it reflected their goal, and how they perceived it impacted student performance, and for a coaching conversation to occur to further promote the educator's growth. Different from formal observations of the past, pre-observation conferences are optional and formal lesson plans are not required. However, educators should be prepared to speak to all aspects of the lesson during the post-observation reflective dialogue.

Goal-focused observations will occur once each school year. While the length of time of the observations will vary, evaluators will observe as long as necessary to provide meaningful feedback related to the educator's goal. Administrators will utilize the TCTEF Observation Feedback Tool with a focus on the dimension(s) associated with the educator's goal to provide specific, timely, accurate, actionable and reciprocal feedback and to guide reflective dialogue.

Pre-Observation Preparation

Prior to a goal-focused observation, educators should consider if there are aspects of the lesson on which the evaluator should focus which specifically relate to the educators' goals. Communicating these aspects with the evaluator prior to the observation will help to center the evaluator's attention and increase the likelihood of collecting evidence of goal-specific strategies and student behaviors.

Post-Observation Reflective Dialogue

A post-observation reflective dialogue will follow all formal observations. The purpose of the dialogue is to facilitate deep reflection on the lesson and identify areas of strength and opportunities for growth with the goal of improving teaching and learning. This dialogue may also include reflection on the observation process itself, how it helped and how it can be improved. Post-observation reflective dialogues will be based on Silver Strong & Associates' "Five Rs": review, reactions, reasons, rethink, and reflect. Some questions that may be part of the dialogue include the following:

- Review: What did you and your students do during the lesson? What changes did you make during the lesson that deviated from your lesson design?
- Reactions: What are your personal reactions to the lessons? On a scale of 1-5 how do you think this lesson went? How do you feel your students reacted to the lesson? What caused them to feel this way?
- Reasons: What caused you, if at all, to modify your plans during the lesson? Why do you feel the way you do about the lesson? What did the students learn? Why do you think this is so?
- Rethink: What would you do differently next time? What have you learned from this lesson and observation? How will this observation influence your teaching in the future?
- Reflect: How did this observation and feedback process work for you? How, as a coach and observer, can I better help you?

Informal Observations

Informal observations of educators may be scheduled or impromptu. The purpose of informal observations is for the evaluators to observe teaching and learning in the classroom as a whole and provide actionable feedback on the Thoughtful Classroom Framework. Evaluators will consider the essential questions, instructional indicators, and student behaviors from the TCTEF Observation feedback tool when developing their feedback. Written and/or verbal feedback will be provided after each informal observation. A post-observation conference may be requested by either party.

The minimum number of informal observations required by this plan is determined by the number of years of service in public education and in Region 14. Evaluators must compile sufficient evidence of teacher's practice in accordance with the TCTEF Observation feedback tool to make a well-informed evaluation of the teacher's practice. As such, additional informal observations beyond the minimum noted may be required.

- Educators who are new to the profession, fewer than 40 months of full-time service in public education, OR educators with fewer than 20 months of full-time service in Region 14 will have AT LEAST THREE informal observations.
- Educators who have earned tenure in Region 14 will have AT LEAST TWO informal observations.
- Part-time/Partial Year Educators will be observed proportionally to their FTE and above educator level
    - Educators serving less than .5 FTE have a minimum of twoobservations per year
    - Educators serving .5 FTE or greater will have a minimum of three observations per year

Growth Criteria

An educator is determined to have successfully completed the learning process by demonstrating:

- Reflection supported with evidence of the impact of the educators' new learning on their practice/goal;

- the impact the educators' new learning and practice had on student learning, growth, and/or achievement, supported by evidence;
- the development of next steps to further learning and goal attainment;
- evidence of application of actionable feedback provided by evaluators after informal observations; and
- evidence of commitment to professional practice as described in Dimension 10.

Observations vs. Walkthroughs

It is important to note that observations are distinct from walkthroughs. Observations will follow the protocols described above and are part of the evaluation and support plan while walkthroughs are non-evaluative. Walkthroughs by school and district administrators are predominantly to determine alignment of instruction between classes and schools, witness the impact of curricular decisions on teachers and students, and identify strengths and areas for growth in order to target professional learning opportunities.

Tiered Support

All educators require access to high-quality, targeted professional learning support to improve practice over time. Educators and their evaluators thoughtfully consider and apply three tiers of support, as appropriate, within an evaluation process. All three tiers of support must be implemented prior to the development of a corrective plan.

A pattern of persistent lack of growth and reflection or resistance to growth-oriented feedback should lead to advancing levels of support with a defined process for placing an educator on a Corrective Support Plan with indicators of success for transitioning out of it. Evaluators must utilize and document all three tiers of support prior to the development of a Corrective Support Plan and provide documentation to the educator. The Corrective Support Plan shall be developed in consultation with the evaluator, educator, and their exclusive bargaining representative if applicable.

Tier 1

It is the expectation that all educators consistently access opportunities for professional growth within their district. Tier 1 supports are broadly accessible professional learning opportunities for all, inclusive of, but not limited to, collegial professional conversations, classroom visits, available district resources (e.g., books, articles, videos etc.), formal professional learning opportunities developed and designed by district PDEC, and other general support for all educators (e.g., instructional coaching). These resources should be identified through a goal setting process by mutual agreement.

Tier 2

In addition to Tier 1, Tier 2 supports are more intensive in duration, frequency, and focus (e.g., engaging in a professional learning opportunity, observation of specific classroom practices, etc.) that can be either suggested by the educator and/or recommended by an evaluator.

Tier 3

In addition to Tier 1 and Tier 2, Tier 3 supports are responsive to unresolved, previously discussed concerns and are developed in collaboration with the educator and may be assigned by the evaluator. Tier 3 supports have clearly articulated areas of focus, duration of time, and criteria for success, and may include a decision to move to a Corrective Support Plan. Tier 3 supports shall be developed in consultation with the evaluator, educator, and their exclusive bargaining representative for certified educators chosen pursuant to C.G.S. §10-153b. The start date and duration of time an educator is receiving this level of support should be clearly documented.

Corrective Support Plan

A pattern of persistent lack of growth and reflection or resistance to growth-oriented feedback should lead to advancing levels of support with a defined process for placing an educator on a Corrective Support Plan with indicators of success for transitioning out of it. Evaluators must utilize and document all three tiers of support prior to the development of a Corrective Support Plan. The Corrective Support Plan shall be developed in consultation with the educator and their exclusive bargaining representative for certified teachers chosen pursuant to C.G.S. §10-153b.

The Corrective Support Plan is separate from the normal educator growth model and must contain:

- clear objectives specific to the well documented area of concern;
- resources, support, and interventions to address the area of concern;
- well defined timeframes for implementing the resources, support, and interventions; and
- supportive actions from the evaluator.

At the conclusion of the Corrective Support Plan period, a number of outcomes are possible as determined in consultation with the evaluator, educator, and bargaining unit representative.

Dispute Resolution

In cases where the evaluator and educator being evaluated cannot agree on goals or objectives, the evaluation period, feedback, or the professional development plan, the dispute resolution process will entail the following:

Any claims that the district has failed to follow the established procedures of the teacher evaluation and support program shall be subject to the grievance procedures set forth in the then-current collective bargaining agreements between the Region 14 Board of Education and the relevant bargaining unit.

Dispute Resolution

The purpose of the dispute resolution process is to secure at the lowest possible administrative level equitable solutions to disagreements, which from time to time may arise related to the evaluation process. The right of appeal is available to all in the evaluation and support system. As our evaluation and support system is designed to ensure continuous, constructive, and cooperative processes among professional educators, educators/leaders and their evaluators are encouraged to resolve disagreements informally.

Ultimately, should an educator disagree with the evaluator's assessment and feedback, the parties are encouraged to discuss these differences and seek common understanding of the issues. As a result of these discussions, the evaluator may choose to adjust the report but is not obligated to do so. The educator being evaluated has the right to provide a statement identifying areas of concern with the goals/ objectives, evaluation period, feedback, and/or professional development plan, which may include the individual professional learning plan or a Corrective Support Plan.

Any such matters will be handled as expeditiously as possible, and in no instance will a decision exceed 30 workdays from the date the educator initiated the dispute resolution process. Confidentiality throughout the resolution process shall be conducted in accordance with the law.

Process

The educator being evaluated shall be entitled to collective bargaining representation at all levels of the process.

1. **Within three school days** of articulating the dispute in writing to his/her/their evaluator, the educator being evaluated and the evaluator will meet with the objective of resolving the matter informally.
2. If there has been no resolution, the individual may choose to continue the dispute resolution process in writing to the superintendent or designee **within three workdays** of the meeting with his/her/their evaluator (step 1). The educator being evaluated may choose between two options.
    a. Option 1: The issue in dispute may be referred for resolution to a subcommittee of the Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC), which will serve as a neutral party. The superintendent and the respective collective bargaining unit for the district may each select one representative from the PDEC to constitute this subcommittee, as well as a neutral party as mutually agreed upon between the superintendent and the collective bargaining unit. It is the role of the subcommittee to determine the resolution of the dispute and to identify any actions to be taken moving forward.
    b. Option 2: The educator being evaluated requests that the superintendent solely arbitrate the issue in dispute. In this case, the superintendent will review all applicable documentation and meet with both parties (evaluator and educator being evaluated) as soon as possible, but no longer than **five school days** from the date of the written communication to the superintendent. The superintendent will act as arbitrator and make a final decision, which shall be binding.

Time Limits

1. Since it is important that appeals be processed as rapidly as possible, the number of days indicated within this plan shall be considered maximum. The time limits specified may be extended by written agreement of both parties.
2. Days shall mean workdays. Both parties may agree, however, to meet during breaks at mutually agreed upon times.
3. The educator being evaluated must initiate the appeals procedure **within five workdays** of the scheduled meeting in which the feedback was presented. If no written initiation of a dispute is received by the evaluator **within five workdays**, the educator shall be considered to have waived the right of appeal.

4. The educator being evaluated must initiate each level of the appeal process within the number of days indicated. The absence of a written appeal at any subsequent level shall be considered as waiving the right to appeal further.

The Role of the Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC)

The PDEC serves as the collaborative decision maker using the consensus protocol to create, revise, and monitor the evaluation and support model, as well as the professional learning plan.

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statute 10-220a and Public Act 23-159 Section 11 (b) (3), each local and regional board of education must establish a professional development and evaluation committee (PDEC) to include at least one teacher and one administrator, selected by the exclusive bargaining representative for certified employees, at least one paraeducator selected by their exclusive bargaining representative, and other personnel as the local board deems appropriate. It is vital that individuals selected as delegates for administrators, teachers, and other school personnel are representative of the various classifications within the groups.

The duties of PDECs shall include, but are not limited to:

- participation in the development or adoption of a teacher evaluation and support program for the district, pursuant to section 10-151b;
- the development, evaluation, and annual updating of a comprehensive local professional development plan for certified employees of the district; and
- the development and annual updating of a comprehensive local professional development plan for paraeducators of the district.

The educator and leader evaluation and support program shall be developed through mutual agreement between the local or regional board of education and the PDEC. If the local or regional board of education and the PDEC are unable to come to mutual agreement, they shall consider the model educator and leader evaluation and support program adopted by the State Board of Education and may, through mutual agreement, adopt such model educator and leader evaluation and support programs.

If the local or regional board of education and the PDEC are unable to mutually agree on the adoption of the State Board of Education's model program, then the local or regional board of education shall adopt and implement an educator and leader evaluation and support program developed by such board, provided that the program is consistent with the CT Guidelines 2023 adopted by the State Board of Education.

Local and State Reporting

The superintendent shall report:
1. the status of teacher evaluations to the local or regional board of education on or before June 1 of each year; and
2. the status of the implementation of the teacher evaluation and support program, including the frequency of evaluations, the number of teachers who have not been evaluated, and other requirements as determined by the Department of Education, to the Commissioner of Education on or before September 15 of each year.

For purposes of this section, the term “teacher” shall include each professional employee of a board of education, below the rank of superintendent, who holds a certificate or permit issued by the State Board of Education.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Sample Reflection Questions

Self-Reflection Sample Questions

• Thinking about the success and challenges you may have encountered last year, or at the start of this year, what questions do you have about teaching and learning? What new learning might you want to explore to inform your understanding of these questions and professional practice?
• In reviewing the rubric, what areas emerge as opportunities for your professional learning and practice?
• Based on your current students'/adult learners' strengths and needs, what new learning might you explore to address the needs?
• Based on knowledge of your students/adult learners, and/or knowledge of school/program goals, are there any new strategies or methods you'd like to explore and implement this year?
• How do you see yourself contributing to the school or district's mission, vision, and/or Portrait of a Graduate and what strategies can you learn more about to support that focus?
• What are you considering for your learning goal?
• What will it look like when you achieve your goal?

Professional Learning and Action Questions

Indicators of Success

• What question will you focus on to address your goals?
• What are the criteria for an accomplished practice?
• How do you plan to collect and analyze evidence to assess progress toward your goals?
• What research/professional readings might you explore to support your professional learning and achieve your goal?
• What specific professional learning might you need to achieve your goal?
• What support might you need from your colleagues, supervisor, others? How frequently?
• How might you apply your learning to practice? How often?

Determine Evidence

• What evidence might you collect and analyze to understand progress toward your goal? Quantitative or qualitative or both?
• What ways would you like me as your evaluator to collect data/evidence for feedback?
• From how many different situations should we examine data/evidence?
• What are the advantages and disadvantages of the identified evidence?
• How will the data help us to analyze your practice?
• What is your timeline for collecting this evidence and measuring impact?
• What are the anticipated challenges or obstacles, and how do you plan to address them?
• How might you communicate/share your professional learning to your colleagues or families?
• What opportunities for professional learning do you believe would be beneficial for your growth as an educator?
• In what ways can we encourage collaboration and communication among colleagues to promote a culture of sharing best practices?

Analysis of Evidence

• What do you observe in your evidence?

• What patterns, themes, or outliers do you notice?
• What does the evidence say about how you are doing in relation to your goal and indicators of success?
• Based on the evidence and your practice overall, what are your strengths?
• In what aspect do you want to continue to grow or refine your knowledge, skill, practice?

Learning Reflection and Next Steps

• What is clear to you now?
• What are you learning?
• What do you understand now that you didn't understand as clearly before?
• How will this learning influence future actions?
• What is a single sentence conclusion that represents your learning?
• Under what circumstance might this conclusion not be true?
• What are ways you continue to refine your practice?
• What more do you want to learn and practice?
• How might you accomplish that? What is your next plan?
• What resources and support do you want or need?
• Once learning has been implemented: What effect did the learning have on practice, students?

Reflect on the Feedback Process

• In what ways did my engagement with you support your learning?
• What did I do as a learning partner that helped you as a learner and how did it help?

Appendix B: Professional Growth Plan Form

(This form is a template in the Region 14 Google Drive)

Name:	**School:**
Role:	**Date:**
Section 1: Using the Framework to Identify Areas of Strength and Areas for Potential Growth	
Based on your self-reflection/assessment and discussion with your colleagues, which dimensions do you feel are your strongest? (Identify no more than three.)	*Based on your self-reflection and discussion with your colleagues, which dimensions would you like to work on? (Identify no more than three.)*
How do the growth areas you've selected fit into your vision of a thoughtful and effective classroom?	
Are there any specific indicators in the dimension(s) you're targeting that help you better describe how you would like to grow?	
Section 2: Establishing a Goal for Professional Growth	
Goal Statement: *(Based on your analysis (areas of strength/target areas), establish a clear, high leverage professional growth goal.)*	
Indicators Associated with The Goal:	
How is this goal aligned with your school/district goals?	
What is the anticipated impact on teaching (what evidence or artifacts will you collect)? What is the anticipated impact on student learning (what evidence or artifacts will you collect)?	
Time Frame for The Goal:	
Practice: *What will you need to do in the classroom/in your role to achieve this goal?*	
Knowledge: *What do you need to learn to achieve this goal? In what learning activities will you participate?*	
Resources: *How can your grade-level team/department-level team, instructional leaders, or PLC help you achieve this goal? What other resources can be of help to you?*	
How will you know if you're successful?	
Discussion Notes:	

Section 3: Mid-Year Reflection Discussion
Please bring the following to your mid-year reflection meeting: ● Evidence of your progress towards meeting your goal through its impact on teaching ● Evidence of your progress towards meeting your goal through its impact on student achievement
Discussion Prompts: ● *What modifications to your classroom practice have you made?* ● *What effects on student learning do you see?* ● *What results (test data, student work) can you point to for each milestone?*
Discussion Notes:
Section 4: End-of-Year Reflection Discussion
Please bring the following to your end-of-year reflection meeting: ● Evidence of your progress towards meeting your goal through its impact on teaching ● Evidence of your progress towards meeting your goal through its impact on student achievement
Discussion Prompts: ● *What modifications to your classroom practice have you made?* ● *What effects on student learning do you see?* ● *What results (test data, student work) can you point to for each milestone?*
Discussion Notes:
Section 5: Summative Evaluation Summary
(In this section, the evaluator will provide a summary of the leader's growth towards meeting the goals and a statement of successful or unsuccessful completion of the evaluative cycle)

Appendix C: Observation Frequency

Type of Observation	**New to Profession/Region 14** **(fewer than 40 months of full-time service in public education, OR educators with fewer than 20 months of full-time service in Region 14)**	**Tenured in Region 14**
Goal-Focused Observation	One each school year	One each school year
Informal Observation	**At least three** each school year (at least two for educators less than .5 FTE)	**At least two** each school year
Walkthroughs will occur throughout the year.		

Appendix D: Sample Corrective Support Plan

(Sample)

Educator A has consistently struggled with classroom management. Tiered supports have been provided by the evaluator throughout the year. Educator A has demonstrated a lack of growth/improvement, which has led the evaluator to assign a Corrective Support Plan.

Objective:
To improve classroom management practices in order to improve a positive learning environment (CCT – 1A) to support learning.

(Suggested) Resources:
• Observe a mutually agreed peer for structures, systems, and dispositions that support positive classroom management skills.
• Read and discuss “The First Six Weeks of School” - Center for Responsive Classroom with evaluator.
• Training in Restorative Practices.

Timeframes:
• Educator A will remain on this Corrective Support Plan for six weeks.
• Improvements in classroom management within this six-week duration will serve as criteria for successful completion of this plan.

Supportive Actions:
• All resources made available
• Timely feedback in person and in writing (weekly/bi-weekly meetings)
• Management of access to learning opportunities in and out of the building, as appropriate.
• Modeling of effective classroom management strategies
• Weekly, bi-weekly meetings with progress reporting from Teacher A and written feedback from evaluator (dependent upon need for plan)

Corrective Support Plan Template
(Educator being evaluated) has consistently struggled with _____ _____. Tiered supports have been provided by the evaluator throughout the year. (Educator being evaluated) has demonstrated a lack of growth/improvement, which has led the (Evaluator) to assign a Corrective Support Plan.

Objective:
To improve _____ _____ (Indicate specific standard in your objective language)

(Possible) Resources:
A blend of opportunities and resources should be extended to the Educator being evaluated being supported on the Corrective Support Plan

• Mentor
• Coach
• Reading as appropriate

Timeframes:
• (Length of the Corrective Support Plan - typically six to eight weeks in length)
• Improvements in (standard) within this (Length of Corrective Support Plan) will serve as criteria for successful completion of this plan

Supportive Actions:
(Suggested supportive actions)
• Weekly, bi-weekly meetings with progress reporting from Educator A and written feedback from evaluator (dependent upon need for plan)
• All resources made available
• Timely feedback in person and in writing (weekly/bi-weekly meetings)
• Management of access to learning opportunities in and out of the building, as appropriate.

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