METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT OF LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP

FTEM School Administrative Procedures for Teacher Evaluation 2026-2027
June 18, 2026
new changes

NOTE: These procedures outline how the Administration intends to conduct the majority of teacher evaluations during the 2026-2027 school year. The Administration reserves the right to alter these procedures at any time. Further, the Administration reserves the right to utilize different procedures for evaluations as circumstances dictate.

1. Teacher Evaluation

General Provisions: A Full Cycle observation includes a pre-conference, observation and a post conference meeting. ***Days*** as used in these administrative procedures shall be ***school days***. The procedures in this section do not apply to growth and trend tracker feedback which does not constitute a full cycle observation. An evaluator is an administrator (primary/secondary). Non Evaluative feedback may be provided by others using the FTEM tool other than the designated primary and secondary evaluators such as Instructional Coaches and Team Leads ie. walkthroughs.

2. General Procedures FTEM

a. Within the first three weeks of each semester, each principal, or other appropriate administrator shall present the School District's teacher evaluation procedures to bargaining unit and newly hired teachers. FTEM Schools presentation shall include an explanation of the evaluation tool and forms as recommended by the District FTEM Guidance Team. Every effort will be made to provide each teacher (within this timeframe) the name of the administrator(s) who will be their primary, and if appropriate, secondary evaluator. A school leadership team will work collaboratively to protect the Full Cycle observation which includes a pre-conference, observation and post conference.

b. The evaluation instrument for certified general classroom teachers shall be the Focused Teacher Evaluation Model (FTEM). The FTEM teacher model also includes: Multilingual (ML) teachers, Interventionists, Resource teachers, Functional Academic teachers and Life Skill teachers, Related Arts-Elementary. Intensive Intervention teachers could be placed on either FTEM or the non instructional model on a case by case basis for that year. The non instructional rubric employee roles would include our itinerant staff. The non instructional rubric would include: Deaf/Hard of Hearing Teachers, Blind/Low Vision Teachers, Speech Language Pathologists, Instructional Specialists, (employees housed at LECC), School Psychologists, Counselors, Therapists, Project Search Teacher, Diagnostic Day Treatment Teachers and Non-public school teachers. A teacher shall be evaluated with respect to his or her area of state certification.

The criteria set forth in the Lawrence FTEM approved rubric may also be used to place a teacher on an Improvement Plan, the evaluating administrator will provide the teacher with observed and /or measurable deficiencies for improvement. The teacher shall be given the opportunity to utilize professional help. Professional help may include the support of certified personnel within the township, attendance at professional development, professional study, as well as other professional activities. Placement on the Plan will follow the procedures outlined in these guidelines. Teachers on Improvement Plans will have priority status with district instructional coaches (if applicable).

The criteria set forth in the Lawrence FTEM approved rubric may also be used to place a teacher on an IMPROVEMENT PLAN (Plan). The Plan will set forth the areas in which the teacher needs to improve, and the Plan will be used to guide the evaluation of the teacher's performance.

c. The **summative evaluation** (End of Year Summary Evaluation) will be acknowledged with a signed electronic signature. When doing a post conference you can click reviewed with the teacher.

d. All **informal observations** may be unannounced. **Formal observations (Full Cycle)** will be scheduled with the teacher and observer.

e. The administrator will not solicit the opinion of bargaining unit members for the purpose of evaluating the performance of other bargaining unit members. If a parent, guardian, MSDLT colleague, patron or student registers a complaint against a teacher that will be used in the evaluation process, the Administration shall inform the teacher of the nature of the complaint within three (3) school days of receiving the complaint. A reasonable attempt shall be made to give the teacher an opportunity to respond to any parent, guardian, patron, MSDLT colleague or student complaint. If the complainant has requested that the teacher not be notified, the complaint shall not be used in an evaluation.

f. Teachers who are members of the LEA Association if they choose, may be afforded Association representation during any post observation/evaluation conferences. However, the post observation/evaluation conference will not be delayed more than seven school days due to schedules of those invited by the teacher, unless the Administration agrees to a longer delay.

3. Observation Procedures

a. Each teacher will be observed with a minimum of 1 **Formal observation** cycle per semester. **A formal observation** cycle consists of a pre-conference, observation and post conference.

An **informal observation** will be a minimum of ten (10) minutes in length and a formal observation cycle will be a minimum of (30) minutes in length. A formal observation cycle may consist of more than one (1) visit within a forty-eight (48) hour period. Informal observations are unannounced. Formal cycle observations should normally be scheduled and announced.

One Formal cycle observation must be conducted every semester. The teacher or evaluator will conduct a pre observation conference prior to the observation. Any mandatory pieces of information that an evaluator would like to see during the observation (lesson plans, assessment scores, etc.) must be requested of the teacher *24 hours* prior to the formal observation.

Following a post observation conference (administrator and employee) can agree to a timeline of capturing elements not observed in a formal observation by conducting an (additional) informal observation.

The principal, assistant principal, or the appropriate administrator has the responsibility to observe the teacher. Observations may be made by either the primary evaluator and or a district administrator under extenuating circumstances (ie. up to the discretion of HR and LEA). Department Chair's, and eLearning Instructional Specialists (secondary) are also serving as evaluators. The primary evaluator performing at least one (1) of the Formal Observation cycles. No Formal observations/evaluations shall be conducted by peers in the bargaining unit.

b. An electronic summary of every Formal Observation cycle shall be made. This Formal observation may include areas of professional commendation and concerns that are observed during the teacher's contractual responsibilities.

c. For any informal observation(s) made the observer shall provide written feedback within three (3) school days. If deficiencies are noted during an informal observation, a post observation conference may be scheduled at the request of the administrator or teacher to discuss the deficiencies. Informal observations could count towards the final observation which allows continued growth on specific elements. Walkthroughs are used for coaching

For any formal observation(s) conducted, the observer shall schedule and conduct a post observation conference(s) with the teacher within seven (7) school days of the date the formal observation was conducted. The teacher shall receive a draft of the written summary with an invitation to collaborate on the Formal observation prior to the post observation conference. If there are any changes made to the written summary prior to the conference, the revised summary must be forwarded to the teacher in advance of the post observation conference. If there are any changes in the written summary as a result of information shared at the post observation conference, the teacher shall receive the revised electronic written summary within ten (10) school days of the post observation conference.

d. If the observer notes any deficiency (ies) in the teacher's performance during the Formal observation, the deficiencies shall be noted on the written summary. The observer may place the teacher on a forty-five (45) day IMPROVEMENT PLAN. The observer will work with the teacher to establish specific written recommendation(s) for improvement in the case of any deficiency (ies) especially when there is a pattern of deficiencies. The teacher shall be given the opportunity to utilize professional help in an attempt to improve the deficiency (ies). Professional help may include the support of certified personnel within the township, attendance at professional development, professional study, as well as other professional activities.

4. Procedures for Improvement Plans

There are resources available (Coaches and FTEM tools) to assist teachers. Improvement Plans are in effect for a minimum of forty-five (45) days. The plan goes into effect the day the evaluator reviews the plan with the teacher. Evaluators will identify and review specific areas of patterns of deficiencies based on ongoing observations such as: walk-throughs, Informals and the Formal Observation. The Plan will outline the specific evidence necessary to improve the level of performance by the teacher. Performance should be measurable and or defined. Suggestions, resources, strategies, and support necessary for improvement may be determined by the evaluator and the teacher. There should be ongoing communication between the evaluator and the teacher throughout the duration of the plan. The teacher should have an opportunity to have input into the identification of resources outlined in the plan. Teachers on improvement plans will have priority with the district instructional coaches and Team Leads (if applicable).

At the end of the forty-five (days), the evaluator shall conduct one (1) thirty (30) minute minimum Formal Cycle Observation of the teacher to evaluate the teacher’s level of performance in the previously determined area(s) of deficiency noted on the Improvement Plan. The post observation conference will be held within ten (10) school days of the Formal observation. The Formal observation notes should be provided to the teacher five (5) school days in advance of the conference. At the post observation conference, the evaluator will recommend the teacher be (1) removed from the plan, (2) continue the plan, or (3) notified of the intent to move to cancel the teacher’s contract. Normally, the recommendation to cancel the contract of a teacher based on the evaluation process shall not be made if the teacher has not been given at least forty-five (45) days on an Improvement Plan

Whenever a teacher is placed on an Improvement Plan, the building principal will inform the Chief Human Resources Officer, who will, in turn inform the Association President.

If either the teacher or evaluating administrator is absent during any of the above timeframes, the time period will be extended by the number of the school days of the absences.

5. Evaluation Procedures

a. A teacher shall be evaluated for all professional instructional responsibilities in the building. A teacher assigned to two (2) or more schools shall be evaluated by the primary evaluator, which will be the principal, the assistant principal, or appropriate administrator of the two (2) or more schools where the teacher is assigned the greatest amount of time. However, an administrator at the other school may be the secondary evaluator.

b. At least one (1) finalized teacher evaluation shall be completed each school year for all teachers.

c. Any deficiency (ies) noted on the teacher evaluation shall have been previously addressed in writing. **This includes all Domains** pertaining to Formal/Informal observations, feedback notes, and **professionalism.**

d. The appropriate teacher evaluation forms shall be prepared and both parties shall have the opportunity to sign and date the appropriate form within five (5) school days of the evaluation conference. A teacher's electronic signature indicates that he or she has examined this document but such signature does not necessarily mean that the teacher agrees with its contents. The final Formal observation must take place at least ten (10) days prior to the last teacher day. Every effort will be made to hold summative evaluation conferences no later than the last teacher day.

e. If a teacher so desires, he or she may write a response to any evaluation that such teacher receives within 14 days of the observation. This response shall be uploaded and attached to the teacher's documentation as an artifact, with a hard copy placed in the teacher's hard copy personnel file, if requested by the teacher. This placement shall be witnessed by the teacher and by a person selected by the teacher if the teacher so desires.

f. A teacher receiving a summative rating of INEFFECTIVE may request and be granted a conference with the superintendent prior to the start of the new school year. All requests must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent or the Chief Human Resources Officer.

g. The recommendation to cancel the contract of a teacher for the grounds of "Repeated Ineffective Performance" in accordance with this these Administrative Guidelines shall not be made if the teacher has not been given forty-five (45) days on an improvement plan to correct the deficiency(ies) noted on the Formal observation/or evaluation that prompted the improvement plan.

h. Extended Absences: If an unplanned extended leave is necessary causing the teacher to be in attendance fewer than 120 days, the teacher's approved student achievement results are therefore not appropriate and will not be included in the summary evaluation. The percentage of the teacher's summative rating that would have been based on student achievement data (up to 25%) will be added to the percentage based on that teacher's effectiveness rubric.

If a teacher has been placed on an Improvement Plan and takes an approved leave prior to the completion of the forty-five (45) days, upon the return of the teacher, the Plan continues from the point at which the teacher began the leave.

i. Retiring Teachers: Evaluators have the option to complete Formal observations and summative evaluations for teachers in good standing submitting their letters of retirement by March 1st to be effective by the last teacher day or sooner to the Chief of Human Resources. For these teachers, routine walkthroughs and or observations may be conducted by evaluators.

j. ~~Teachers hired at the beginning of second semester will have one formal observation and possible informal observations.~~ Any teachers hired before December 1st will receive the full evaluation cycles. After December 1st new hires will be evaluated on an abbreviated model of FTEM. If hired after December 1st the evaluation should be finalized. A teacher hired after March 1st should be given feedback through walk throughs or an informal observation which would be an incomplete evaluation.
~~**If hired at the beginning of the second semester the evaluation should be finalized.**~~

k. It is highly recommended that feedback from in-formals, coaching through walkthroughs be given at least once prior to November 1st and Spring Break to allow time for coaching and growth for the teacher.

6. Teacher's Files
Upon request, teachers shall be permitted to see all materials in their files with the exception of confidential pre-employment reference information. For the purpose of these guidelines, "files" shall mean the hard copy permanent personnel file, which is kept at the Administrative Offices, and the principal's personnel file, which is kept in the building. After examining his or her file(s), the teacher may request and shall be granted a discussion with an administrator(s). At such a meeting the teacher may have a person of his or her choosing and/or no more than one (1) Association representative present. If the teacher wishes, he or she may prepare a signed and dated response to, or explanation of, any material already in the file or any material about to be placed in the file. The response or explanation shall be attached to the material before placing it in or returning it to the file. The teacher and a person of his or her choosing shall witness the placement if the teacher so requests. All materials included in these files shall be labeled with an identification of a source by name. The teacher shall have the right to duplicate all materials included in these files with the exception of confidential pre-employment reference information.

7. Class Observations
If persons other than administrators and coordinators of the School Corporation (parents, community members) desire to observe a class in session, the principal, before granting approval, shall consult with the teacher(s) involved regarding the request to determine the most convenient and appropriate time for the observation.

All Guidelines for Online Teacher Expectations and Observation will continue to be developed (and are subject to change) by the FTEM Guidance Team and reviewed by the District Evaluation team.

8. Online Teacher Expectations & Observations (As needed)
Evaluators will be conducting online observations (informals or formals) for online virtual instruction.
“E-Learning Expectations for all MSDLT Staff”

- Posting assignments on Seesaw or Canvas
- Daily and or weekly communication to family pending roles
- Provide weekly guidance and feedback to students/families
- Monitor student usage-attendance
- Participation in staff meetings, PLCs, and PD meetings
- E-Learning Expectations are aligned and integrated into FTEM Domains

Guardrails provided to Evaluators

● If the principal does not see appropriate lesson planning or feedback to students in the learning management system, he/she will contact the teacher for a meeting to discuss. The principal also alerts their Director and the Chief of Human Resource.
● Chief of HR will communicate with the Lawrence Education Association President and the number of teachers impacted.
● A teacher who fails to meet E-Learning expectations may be subject to progressive discipline measures, including a recommendation of cancellation of the regular teaching contract. We have had less than .003% of teachers in this category in the past.

FTEM Elements "All 23 elements would be available and a minimum of 7 from the Standards Based Instruction Domain would be required to finalize an evaluation for the year.

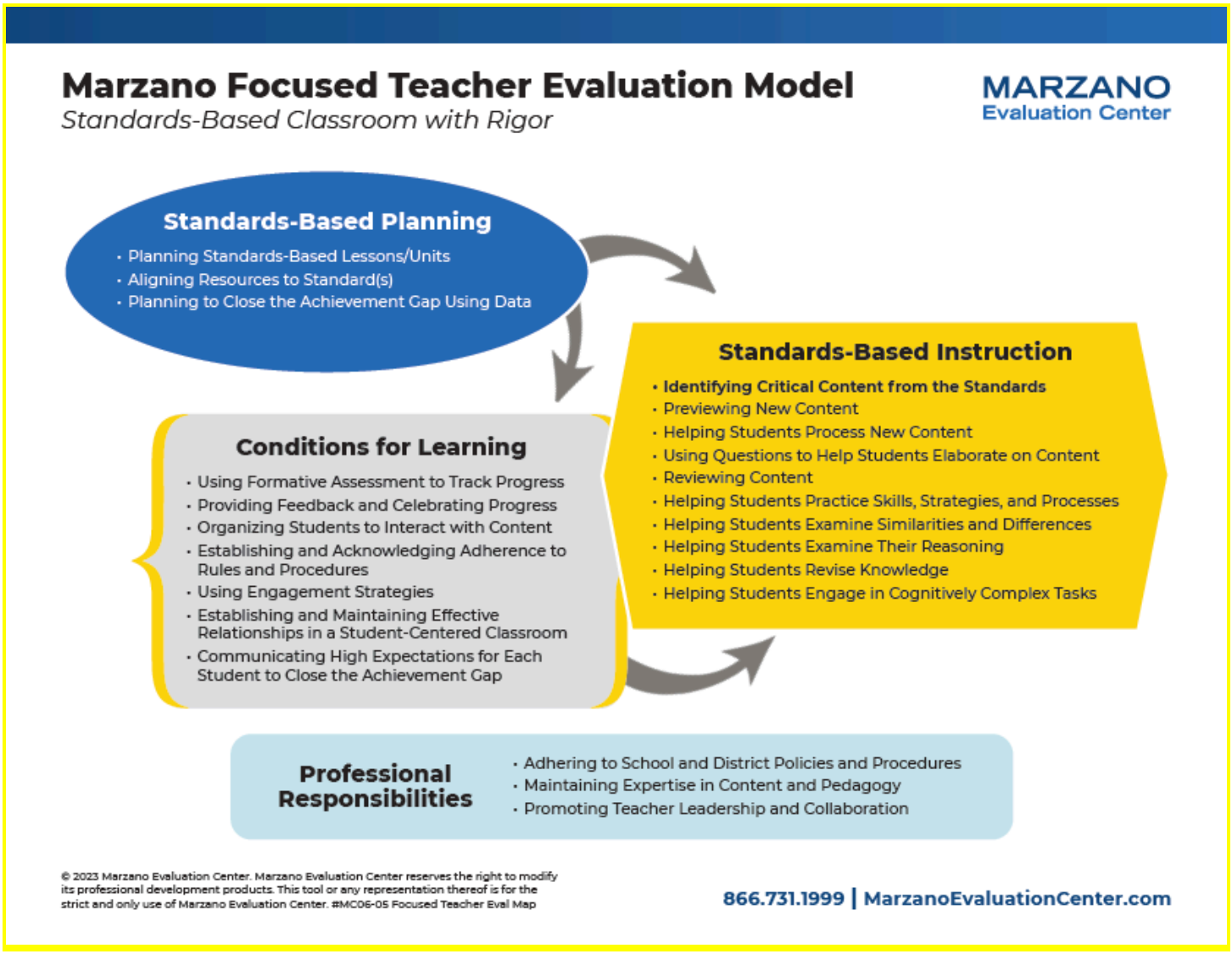
Elements for 2026-2027 School Year.

- All Elements in Standards Based Planning Domain One
- All Elements in Conditions for Learning Domain Three
- All Professional Responsibility Elements Domain Four
- Standards- Based Instruction - A minimum of 7 elements from Domain Two
- A copy of our Standards -Based Classroom Rigor Map is embedded below.
- Here is an example of how all elements could be scored within the year. An observation per semester with a pre-conference teacher and evaluator might schedule the beginning of a unit which might capture the beginning elements and another formal observation might observe the latter part of the elements found at an end of a unit of study.

FTEM Modified Elements "All hires after December 1st" will be evaluated on the abbreviated 14 element model. 14 elements would be required to finalize an evaluation for the year.

Modified Elements for 2026-2027 School Year.

- All Elements in Standards Based Planning Domain One
- All Elements in Conditions for Learning Domain Three
- All Professional Responsibility Elements Domain Four
- Standards- Based Instruction - Only the first element from Domain Two
  - Identifying Critical Content from the Standards
- A copy of our Standards -Based Classroom Rigor Map is embedded below.



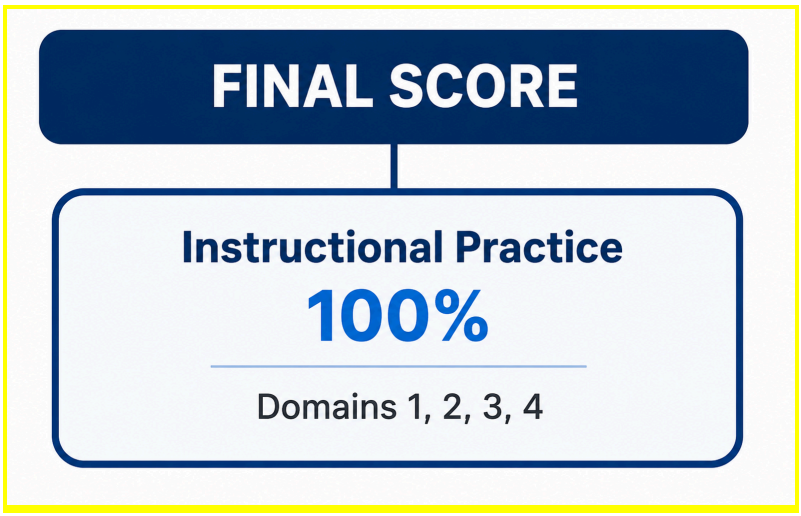
FTEM Guidance Team Agreements

- Walkthroughs could be informal and used toward positive growth and trends
- Multiple points of other observers would use the FTEM tool for growth and feedback. Scores not included in finalization
- Professional development will be provided evaluators on giving feedback in a virtual environment
- ~~Annually the FTEM Guidance Team will review, edit, discuss FTEM- Eval Admin Guidelines. GROWTH PLAN: Growth plans are for all schools. Growth plans start in August and conclude by May 1st. A teacher hired at the beginning of the second semester can start a growth plan. A growth plan should be kept open as long as a teacher is striving toward more learning on that element. A teacher may choose any element they would like to focus upon. Teachers may choose an element from Domains 1, 2 and 3.~~
- ~~FTEM Planning Conference questions have been changed as a result of a staff survey~~

Schools will use Domains to show teacher scores

- Recommended weight for each domain
  - Domain 1: Standards Based Planning: 25%
  - Domain 2: Standards Based Instruction: 25%
  - Domain 3: Conditions for Learning: 25%
  - Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities: 25%

- **Proficiency Scale** Numeric Rating Ranges

From	To	Proficiency Level
3.5	4	Highly Effective
2.5	3.49	Effective
1.5	2.49	Developing
0	1.49	Unsatisfactory

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