



Local Plan Guidance Overview

2nd edition – July 2013

INTRODUCTION

This document offers guidance to locals and school districts about important elements of the state teacher evaluation model, which is scheduled for testing in pilot districts in 2013-14. This information can be used to assist locals and districts in reviewing the state model and considering options for a local evaluation plan.

For each highlighted component of the state model (see the left-hand column on the following pages), the document provides descriptions of the statutory requirement and how the model addresses it, as well as questions for districts to consider in developing their own plan.

Education Minnesota also recommends the level of examination to give each element, according to these categories:

- **Routine**—These elements will probably work for most local plans, but should still be reviewed with the district context in mind.
- **Moderate**—These elements could work well, but may require a deeper look.
- **Substantial**—These elements may challenge local beliefs, require substantial resources or add procedures that feel complicated or may not meet district needs.

Education Minnesota will continue to study the state model and provide updates as needed.

For more information, please contact your field staff.

STATE PLAN COMPONENT	EXAMINATION LEVEL	GUIDANCE
Teacher Practice		
Teacher practice weighted at 45 percent	Moderate	The statute , aside from the 35 percent weight assigned to growth data from assessments that are valid, reliable and aligned to standards, does not require assigning weights to the elements of the evaluation system. Most of the elements of teacher evaluation system required in statute are addressed in the teacher practice component.
		The state model plan requires that 45 percent of a teacher's overall summative score must come from the teacher practice component.
		Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you believe each part of the evaluation should be broken out into percentages to be calculated in the summative evaluation? If so, what do you believe is the appropriate weight for the teacher practice component? Is 45 percent sufficient for the elements of the statute that address teacher practice? Is it better to move away from percentages and create a holistic evaluation?
Four domains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> planning instruction environment professionalism 	Routine	The statute does not require these four domains. A local plan may use its own system, as long as it aligns with the Minnesota Standards of Effective Practice for Teachers (Minnesota Administrative Rules, Chapter 8710.2000). https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/?id=8710.2000
		The state model plan requires four domains (planning, instruction, environment and professionalism) that provide the framework for the teacher practice component. They are the main categories in the teacher practice rubric.
		Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your district already use a different system that is sound and that you can use in place of the state plan domains? Are there alternative ways to measure the teacher practice requirements of the Minnesota law that work better than rubrics?

STATE PLAN COMPONENT	EXAMINATION LEVEL	GUIDANCE
Teacher Practice		
Points of contact	Routine	The statute does not use the term "points of contact." The statute requires summative evaluation and a peer review process. It does not specify a number or type of observations.
		The state model plan requires a reasonable number of observations or "points of contact" and specifies the types of observations that would be appropriate for both summative evaluation and peer review. "Points of contact" is an umbrella term used in the state plan to cover a variety of evaluation activities, including, but not limited to, a formal observation cycle (pre-conference, observation, post-conference), a series of informal classroom observations, a curriculum review discussion, a review of student data and a video lesson review.
		Question to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there terms or types of evaluation activities that your district is already using or would like to use that could be used in place of the points of contact?
Summative evaluators	Substantial	The statute requires that summative evaluations be conducted by a trained and qualified evaluator.
		The state model plan requires that the summative evaluator hold a valid Minnesota education license to be considered qualified. Also, the summative evaluator must successfully complete MDE's evaluator training.
		Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your district comfortable with an evaluation model where peers may conduct summative evaluations? If yes, what language might be agreed upon to carefully define a peer summative evaluator's role? What role, if any, will a peer summative evaluator have in providing data to administration? What role, if any, will a peer summative evaluator have in employment decision-making?

STATE PLAN COMPONENT	EXAMINATION LEVEL	GUIDANCE
Student Engagement and Connection		
Student engagement weighted at 20 percent	Moderate	The statute does not require assigning weights to the elements of the evaluation system, with the exception of the requirement that 35 percent of a teacher's evaluation must be based on growth data from assessments that are valid, reliable and aligned to standards.
		The state model plan requires that 20 percent of a teacher's evaluation come from the student engagement component.
		Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you believe each part of the evaluation should be broken out into percentages to be calculated in the summative evaluation? If so, what do you believe is the appropriate weight for the student engagement component? Is it better to move away from percentages and create a holistic evaluation?
Student survey weighted at 15 percent	Substantial	The statute requires the use of longitudinal data on student engagement and connection, but it does not specify how the data are to be gathered or what weight this component should carry in a teacher's overall evaluation. A student survey is not required.
		The state model plan uses student survey data as the primary factor (15 percent of the total evaluation) in determining the teacher's contribution to student engagement. The remaining 5 percent comes from other sources, including points of contact, the teacher's self-assessment and peer review, and the optional teacher portfolio. Note: The state plan indicates that MDE will develop and administer the student survey, providing data to districts. MDE has stated that without a state survey, districts should not be compelled to use a student survey for teacher evaluation.
		Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you agreed on a definition of student engagement? How should the teacher's contribution to student engagement be assessed and what is the best approach for your district? Should a student survey be the predominant factor in determining a teacher's contribution to the engagement of students in his/her classroom? How can you ensure that a teacher is held accountable only for factors under his or her control? If a student survey will be used, is it better to use MDE's process or is your district equipped to design, pilot and administer a fair, reliable survey?

STATE PLAN COMPONENT	EXAMINATION LEVEL	GUIDANCE
Student Engagement and Connection (continued)		
Longitudinal data	Moderate	The statute requires the use of "longitudinal" data on student engagement and connection.
		The state model plan does not define how many years of data are needed to be considered "longitudinal."
		Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">How do you structure your district plan so one challenging year or difficult class doesn't have too strong an influence on a student engagement "score"?Should the student engagement data be from all three years of the cycle or longer if possible?
Student Learning and Achievement		
Growth data	Moderate	The statute requires that growth data from assessments that are valid, reliable and aligned to standards be used for 35 percent of a teacher’s evaluation. A plan may include a value-added model or student learning goals, but neither is required.
		The state model plan categorizes teachers in three groups. Group 1 teachers spend 100 percent of their day in a subject area where value-added data are available. Thirty-five percent of their evaluation is based on a value added model. Group 2 teachers spend a portion of their day in a subject area where value-added data are available. Thirty-five percent of their evaluation is based on a mixture of value-added data and student learning goals (SLGs). Group 3 teachers spend 100 percent of their day in a “non-tested” area where value-added data are not available. Thirty-five percent of their evaluation is based on SLGs. In addition, the state plan articulates a method for determining what portion of the teacher’s evaluation is dedicated to “class goals,” “targeted need goals” and “shared goals.” Note: The state plan indicates that MDE will provide value-added data to districts. MDE has stated that without these data, districts should not be compelled to use value-added data in meeting the 35 percent student achievement data requirement.
		Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Although the state plan takes an approach that is relatively flexible and recognizes that the method of measuring student learning should be suited to the subject area(s) in a teacher's job assignment, is the method outlined by the state suited to your local needs?Should "shared" and "targeted" goals be part of your plan? If so, what weight should each carry within the 35 percent requirement?Are teachers comfortable with the categories into which teachers are grouped in the state plan? If not, what categories might the district use instead?

STATE PLAN COMPONENT	EXAMINATION LEVEL	GUIDANCE
Student Learning and Achievement (continued)		
Student learning goals (SLGs)	Moderate	The statute requires growth data from assessments that are valid, reliable and aligned to standards. A plan may include a value-added model or student learning goals, but neither is required.
		The state model plan uses student learning goals (SLGs) and a value-added model (VAM) to meet the statutory requirement for growth measures. The state plan articulates a method for determining if a teacher uses a VAM, SLG or combination of both (see the teacher groups described under "Growth data," page 5). Also, the state plan indicates what proportions of the teacher's evaluation are dedicated to "class goals," "targeted need goals" and "shared goals." The state plan is somewhat prescriptive in outlining the selection and approval of assessments to be used in the SLG process, but it does not address in detail how SLGs are to be used for teachers in non-classroom assignments (such as school counselors and teachers on special assignment).
		Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can your district develop a fair, reliable method for measuring student growth in the "non-tested" areas? • Does your district already have a process in place for measuring and documenting student growth? • If so, are teachers comfortable with incorporating this process into the evaluation system? • How will your district develop student growth measures for non-classroom teachers? • Do targeted goals and shared goals fit your district's and exclusive representative's beliefs about evaluation?

STATE PLAN COMPONENT	EXAMINATION LEVEL	GUIDANCE
Summative Evaluation Performance Ranking		
Performance level ratings	Substantial	The statute does not require the use of performance levels or teacher ratings.
		The state model plan requires that performance level ratings be calculated using the results of all the components of a teacher's evaluation. The performance levels are: Exemplary, Effective, Development Needed and Unsatisfactory.
		Questions to consider: (Note: Minnesota's approved ESEA waiver addresses U.S. Department of Education waiver requirements that performance levels be included in both principal and teacher evaluation systems. This inconsistency between the law and the waiver may require further guidance from MDE and/or Education Minnesota.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you comfortable with performance levels being included in your plan? If the exclusive representative and the district are not comfortable including performance levels, how will your plan let teachers know if they are meeting district standards?
Teacher improvement process	Substantial	The statute requires that teachers who do not meet professional standards be given a process to improve that includes established goals and timelines.
		The state model plan: This part of the state plan is not yet developed.
		Questions to consider: After the teacher improvement process is established in the state model, local districts must consider questions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What triggers placement on a teacher improvement plan? How will the district demonstrate and document that the teacher is not meeting professional standards? What supports will be provided to help teachers on an improvement plan become more successful? Does the teacher improvement process provide at least a one-year time frame for improvement? How does a teacher exit the teacher improvement process?
Summative evaluation implementation	Routine	The statute requires a three-year professional review cycle that includes, among other things, at least one summative evaluation beginning in the 2014-15 school year.
		The state model plan is piloted in 2013-14. The three-year cycle begins in 2014-15. The summative evaluations start for one-third of the teachers in 2015-16, with summative evaluations for one-third of the teachers in 2016-17 and one-third in 2017-18.
		Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When should your plan start summative evaluations? How many years of longitudinal data for student engagement and connection do you need for the first summative evaluations? How many years of value-added data and/or growth data do you need for the first summative evaluation?

STATE PLAN COMPONENT	EXAMINATION LEVEL	GUIDANCE
Summative Evaluation Performance Ranking (continued)		
Personnel data and peer review/coaching	Substantial	The statute states that evaluation data on individual teachers are personnel data (Minnesota Statutes Section 13.43). Thus, any peer review or peer coaching data that are generated must be made available to the school district on request
		The state model plan requires peer reviewers and teachers to sign a Self-Assessment and Peer Review Annual Summary form that includes comments about implementation and results. (The form is shared with the summative evaluator to inform about professional growth during non-summative years.) Peer reviewers also sign a Point of Contact Documentation form that details evidence and feedback. (The teacher retains the form, but since it is personnel data, the district could ask for it.)
		Questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will your plan document peer activities? • While the district can access all personnel data, does everyone agree on when and why the data should be accessed? • How can you balance the need to document and share peer work, while providing an atmosphere that encourages open and trusting peer review and coaching experiences?
Professional judgment	Substantial	The statute is formulaic in that it requires specific items to be part of the plan and it requires 35 percent of the final evaluation to be based on growth data.
		The state model plan at times seems very formulaic and rigid. However, it also acknowledges that evaluators must constantly apply their professional judgment, no model or rubric can capture all the nuances of teacher practice, and synthesizing multiple sources of evidence is more complex than a checklist or numeric average. The state model aims for a comprehensive, holistic approach that allows evaluators to consider all evidence collected and use their professional judgment in determining a teacher's rating.
		Questions to consider: "Synthesizing" is different from merely calculating a score. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can your plan allow for common sense to intervene when a classroom setting, work assignment or situation is not accurately evaluated under the plan? • Should your plan have an appeals process to allow for unusual circumstances? • Does professional judgment in areas of teacher practice, student engagement and connection, and student learning and achievement fit your district and exclusive representative's beliefs?
Probationary teachers	Moderate	The statute does not change the requirement that a new teacher must be evaluated within the first 90 days.
		The state model plan recognizes that new teachers must be evaluated within the first 90 days.
		Question to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will your plan differentiate between probationary teachers and continuing contract/tenured teachers?