Essential Principles
of Effective Evaluation

MISSOURI'S EDUCATOR EVALUATION SYSTEM
Essential Principles of Effective Evaluation

The growth and learning of children and the educators who teach and work with them can be observed and measured. In Missouri, educators, in partnership with students, parents and community, are accountable for improving student performance. Therefore, its schools measure educator effectiveness to improve student performance. An effective evaluation system includes the following research-based essential principles:

- Measures educator performance against research-based, proven practices associated with the improvement of student performance.
- Uses multiple ratings to differentiate levels of performance.
- Highlights a probationary period of adequate duration to ensure sufficient induction and socialization support for new teachers and leaders.
- Uses measures of growth in student learning as a significant part of the evaluation of professional practice at all levels and ensures that a proficient or distinguished rating cannot be received in educator performance if student growth is low.
- Provides ongoing, timely, deliberate and meaningful feedback on performance relative to research-based targets.
- Requires standardized, periodic training for evaluators to ensure reliability and accuracy.
- Utilizes the results and data to inform decisions regarding personnel, employment determinations and policy regarding employment.
**Essential Principle 1: Research-Based Practices**

To ensure that student performance continually improves through the work of excellent teachers and leaders, an evaluation system must use measurement of clearly articulated, research-based and proven practices. It should include evidence linked to the impact of student performance. Clear language reduces subjectivity and provides direction for improvement. Practices must be aligned to Senate Bill 291 passed by the Missouri Legislature in June 2010, which directs school districts to adopt teaching standards that include:

- Students actively participate and are successful in the learning process.
- Various forms of assessment are used to monitor and manage student learning.
- The teacher is prepared and knowledgeable of the content and effectively maintains students’ on-task behavior.
- The teacher uses professional communication and interaction with the school community.
- The teacher keeps current on instructional knowledge and seeks and explores changes in teaching behaviors that will improve student performance.
- The teacher acts as a responsible professional in the overall mission of the school.

**Essential Principle 2: Differentiated Levels of Performance**

Increasing effective practice requires opportunities for growth. Achieving growth, given the complexity of educator practice, will require clear statements of differentiated levels of performance across a professional continuum capable of determining growth and improvement. Each level should be precise enough to allow for discrete, independent, measurable elements that reliably describe current practice as well as a clear direction for growth. Levels must be characterized by level of performance as opposed to years of service and should move beyond sorting and classifying to ensuring opportunities for the improvement of effective practice.

**Essential Principle 3: Probationary Period for New Educators**

Missouri law indicates that the first five years of teaching is a probationary period for new teachers. This time period provides for the accurate and appropriate accumulation of performance data on a new educator’s practice. Mentoring for teachers is required for the first two years. Principals, special education directors and career education directors also receive two years of mentoring, and superintendents receive one year of mentoring. During the probationary period, intensive induction and socialization support, aligned to the state’s teacher mentor standards, must be provided. This confidential and non-evaluative support is focused at a critical time when the greatest amount of support is required.

**Essential Principle 4: Use of Measures of Student Growth in Learning**

Missouri educators have as their ultimate goal the improvement of student performance. As such, they are held accountable for this improvement. Multiple measures of growth in student learning, a positive change in student achievement between two or more points in time, should be included as a significant part of the evaluation process. Measures of growth in student learning may include, but are not limited to: common, benchmark and formative district-generated assessments; peer-reviewed performance assessments; mutually developed student learning objectives by evaluator and teacher; student work samples such as presentations, papers, projects, and portfolios; individualized student growth objectives defined by the teacher; and valid, reliable, timely, and meaningful information from standardized testing.

**Essential Principle 5: Ongoing, Deliberate, Meaningful and Timely Feedback**

A collaborative culture enabling professional conversations about educator practice supports and promotes growth. Deliberate, meaningful and timely feedback as a part of those professional conversations encourages formative development. Feedback is valuable for teachers and leaders at any stage of their career. It is provided using multiple
sources of evidence from a variety of different measures and should include the analysis and use of student data. Feedback may include but is not limited to:

- Observations focused on professional practice and the extent of student learning.
- Analysis of the improvement of student performance.
- Survey results from students, families and community members.
- New learning and its application to improve the overall performance of students.
- Self-reflection on practice.
- Analysis of artifacts including lesson plans, professional development plans, supplemental resources, participation in coursework and improvement plans.
- Evidence of educators as responsible professionals supporting the overall mission, vision and goals of the school and district.

**Essential Principle 6: Standardized and Periodic Training for Evaluators**

Reliable and valid measures of performance are an essential factor in ensuring that annual growth for teachers and leaders results in growth for students. Evaluators who collect these measures of evidence and provide feedback must be highly trained to ensure that ratings are fair, accurate and reliable. Evaluators demonstrating skills aligned to minimum quality assurance standards may include master teachers and peers as well as other external, trained third party people from within or outside the district that assist in the overall responsibility of moving staff to increased levels of effective practice.

Evaluator training may include topics such as:

- Conducting effective classroom observations and walk-throughs focused on the quality of instruction.
- Assessing student data and the analysis of artifacts.
- Interpreting survey information.
- Providing clear, constructive timely feedback.

**Essential Principle 7: Evaluation Results to inform Personnel Employment Determinations, Decisions and Policy**

Ratings of educator effectiveness should guide district decisions regarding determinations, recognition, development, interventions and policies that impact the extent of student learning in the system. As a result of the evaluation system, districts are empowered to recognize and utilize highly effective educators to improve student learning. Highly effective educators may serve their system in ways such as:

- Serving as mentors, peer observers, and coaches for less effective educators.
- Contributing through key leadership roles.
- Assisting with the challenges of high need students in high need locations.
- Assuming other critical additional duties that contribute to a school system’s overall success.

Ineffective educators are those demonstrating sustained periods lacking desired growth as documented by unsatisfactory evaluations. These educators receive targeted interventions and support to encourage ongoing formative development. Established timelines should be articulated through local policy and provide further clarification in terms of duration of interventions and the nature of additional support. If sustained demonstration of unacceptable performance occurs, a local dismissal protocol should be enacted.