

CAPTURING THE LEARNING POINTS



Measuring Student Growth

“When we ask students to hone in on crystal-clear, finely defined targets, then we know as teachers if they are achieving those.”

– CINDY McSMITH, principal, Medical Lake School District

Measuring student growth, or change from one point in time to another, is a very challenging task and a central part of the new evaluation systems being implemented across the state of Washington. Whether a teacher is being evaluated using a comprehensive or a focused process, student growth goals are required. This document clarifies the new requirements and provides questions for consideration as you map out this change and a timeline for implementation.

In addressing this challenging task, participants in Washington’s pilot districts had this advice to offer. Dave Bond, the superintendent of Kennewick School District, found from their pilot experience that the challenges of measuring student growth can be addressed in part by looking carefully at the way the curriculum is delivered and treating curriculum and instruction as the focus. He stated,

“There is a lot we don’t control in education. We don’t control the demographics of our parents. We don’t control the language spoken at home. We don’t control the parents’ education level. We do control some things. We do control the curriculum we choose to share with the students, and we can control how we assess the students (though assessments come from outside), but the biggest thing we control is instruction. So if we’re going to impact the system, we can either sit around and moan about our clientele or we can see how we can best serve that clientele.”

Jennie Beltramini, NBCT, a teacher and a union leader in the Anacortes School District, described how focusing on equity and ensuring that student growth is part of the professional conversation all year long also can support new student growth systems:

“Our teachers are looking at their practice and asking if they are making adequate growth with students. This is a goal-setting process where teachers are setting growth goals for students and then they are tracking and monitoring the student growth aligned to the goal throughout a determined period of time. I think it is important that the rubric does not look different for any teacher; throughout the district there is a sense of equity. It doesn’t matter if you are a core teacher with state tests or a CTE [Career Technical Education] teacher teaching woodshop or metals without a formalized state test. The rubric looks the same. It doesn’t matter what you teach or what kids you have in your classroom; you have student data that you can reflect on and use to monitor students throughout the year. It is this feeling of equity that is a big deal.

“All of our teachers are targeting at-risk and struggling learners. Even an honors class has students not working to potential. It doesn’t matter what you teach or what kids you have in your classroom, you can take student data and decide which students you need to focus on, and you can monitor those students



This document is part of a series of five documents to share tools and best practices for implementing Washington’s new teacher and principal evaluation legislation. These ideas have been drawn from interviews with district leaders, principals, and teachers who have participated in the Teacher/Principal Evaluation Pilot (TPEP) project. The hope is that the lessons learned from their experiences will address some of your concerns and lead you toward greater success. The other four topics in the series are as follows: *Early Decision Making and Engaging Stakeholders in Educator Evaluation*, *Developing Effective Observations That Are Reliable and Result in Professional Conversations*, *Time-Saving Strategies for Principals*, and *Implementing New Evaluations: A Teacher’s Perspective*. These ideas are the result of interviews with the leadership of five pilot school districts (Kennewick, North Mason, Anacortes, Pullman, and Medical Lake) and Educational Service District 101. The content of the *Measuring Student Growth* piece was developed largely by the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession.

throughout the year. We think teachers need to be doing this throughout the year and not waiting until the end of the year to measure growth. It may be too late if we wait until the end of the year because nothing can be done about it at that point. In our system, they're using classroom and district-based data to adjust and modify instruction throughout the year. So it's not just about saying you made student growth at the end of the year but about the process."

Measuring Student Growth—What Is Required?

The single most important requirement to note when incorporating student growth in your new evaluation system is that the student growth process must utilize the OSPI-approved student growth rubrics and be a substantial factor embedded in the new evaluation criteria (specifically criteria 3, 6, and 8), as opposed to a separate process. Further legal requirements are as follows:

- The requirements of RCW28A.405.120 are as follows:
 1. School districts shall require each administrator, each principal, or other supervisory personnel who has responsibility for evaluating classroom teachers or principals to have training in evaluation procedures.
 2. Before school district implementation of the revised evaluation systems required under RCW 28A.405.100, principals and administrators who have evaluation responsibilities must engage in professional development designed to implement the revised systems and maximize rater agreement.
- It is a requirement of WAC 392-191A that by September 1, 2013, each school district is required to post on its website its instructional framework selection from the three options: CEL 5D+, Danielson, or Marzano.
- Student growth data must be a substantial factor in utilizing the OSPI-approved student growth rubrics. To assure fairness, identical student growth rubrics have been added to each of the frameworks by the TPEP Steering Committee.
- In September 2013, all provisional-status teachers and teachers on probation must be evaluated using a comprehensive evaluation under the new system. Other teachers will be added to either comprehensive or focused evaluations according to a plan determined by the board of directors in each school district.
- Student growth requirements under comprehensive evaluations:

Under State Criterion 3, the teacher must set one or more student growth goal(s) for a group of students and also must determine to what extent the goal(s) was achieved.

AND

Under State Criterion 6, the teacher must set one or more student growth goal(s) for a classroom of students and also must determine to what extent the goal(s) was achieved.

AND

Under State Criterion 8, the teacher must set an instructional goal for a group of classrooms of students and describe how they will strive to achieve that goal collaboratively.

■ Student growth requirements under focused evaluations:

The focused evaluation will include the student growth rubrics of the selected criterion. If criterion 3, 6 or 8 is selected, evaluators will use those student growth rubrics. If criterion 1, 2, 4, 5, or 7 is selected, evaluators will use criterion 3 or 6 student growth rubrics.

■ Student growth goals:

A student growth goal describes what students will know/be able to do at the end of an instructional period based on course- or grade-level content standards and district curriculum.

A proficient student growth goal:

- is specific, measureable, and time bound
- is based on multiple sources of available data that reveal prior student learning
- is aligned to content standards
- is appropriate for the context, instructional interval, and content standard(s) (grain size)
- demonstrates a significant impact on student learning of content (transferable skills)
- identifies formative and summative measures aligned to learning targets to monitor progress towards goals
- identifies subgroups and uses data that identifies students not reaching full learning potential (i.e., achievement/opportunity gaps, English language learner, special education, highly capable)

■ Assessments used to measure student learning goals should be:

- standards-based
- of high quality
- designed to best measure the knowledge and skills described in the student growth goal
- inclusive of multiple measures of student growth

The implementation timeline and considerations on the following page is intended to help you put into practice these state requirements.

District Implementation Timeline and Considerations

Planning

Goals

- How will your district define high-quality student learning goals?
- Has your district established a common format for goal setting (i.e., SMART goals)?
- Has your district identified a preferred or required process/timeline for teachers to complete goal setting?
- If your district uses eVAL, has the format/process/timeline been made available to teachers and their evaluators inside eVAL?
- Will your district support a paper/pencil goal-setting format/process?
- Will individual teachers' student growth goals connect to school or district SIP goals, PLC efforts, or other initiatives (required, preferred, no position)?
- What time is being set aside for all administrators to learn about the goal-setting process? Who will teach the evaluators about goal setting?
- How can you ensure that evaluators of teachers have opportunities to dialogue about goal setting to assure consistency across the district?
- What time is being set aside for all evaluatees in the new system to learn about the goal-setting process? Who will teach the teachers?
- Do you want evaluators or teachers (or both) to review OSPI's goal setting module? By when?
- Who can help shape the communications plan to make information and decisions public and assure that messages remain consistent across the district?

Assessments

- How will your district define high-quality sources of student learning data?
- How will the district support teachers to assure that multiple measures are utilized, regardless of content area or student population?
- Which common assessments (if any) does the school or district want to require or encourage teachers to use when applicable and appropriate to their context?
- What district- or school-level data is available to help teachers define student subgroups for criteria 3?
- What assessment literacy resources might be useful to evaluators? To evaluatees?
- How will the district help assure that spring learning data are available to assess achievement of goal(s)?

Initial Implementation

- What time is being set aside/encouraged for evaluators and evaluatees to dialogue about student growth goals?
- Will the district collect/monitor that student growth goals have been established?
- How will the district help teachers study the rubric to understand that a Basic goal might become Proficient or a Proficient goal may be revised to become Distinguished?

Setting Targets

- What time is being set aside for evaluators to dialogue about goals set to move toward rater agreement on the student growth rubric?
- What patterns are emerging?
- How can the evaluator/district support teachers' efforts?

Jul – Sep

Oct – Nov

Nov

Dec – Feb

Monitoring

- How are teachers using formative assessment to monitor student progress toward the goal and to differentiate instruction for all students (Criterion 6) or students in the subgroup (Criterion 3)?
- Do teachers have timely formative data from district-level measures?
- Can teachers describe their progress toward goal(s)?
- How are the evaluator and the district supporting teachers' efforts?
- How can other leaders (department heads, PLCs, mentors, and/or coaches) support teachers' development of knowledge and skills to do this work well?
- How are teachers sharing what they are learning?
- What patterns are emerging?

Mar– May

Reflecting

- How will the district help assure that spring learning data are available to evaluate achievement toward goal(s)?
- What time is being set aside for evaluators to discuss evidence of goal achievement with teachers?
- What time is being set aside for evaluators to dialogue about goals set to move toward rater agreement on the student growth rubric?