



CEA Guidance on Educator Evaluation Flexibilities for 2020-21

On August 11, 2020, the Connecticut State Department of Education issued a memo authorizing increased flexibility in how teachers are evaluated. Due to the disruptions in teaching and learning resulting from the pandemic, the uncertainty around re-opening of schools, and concerns for the well-being of students and educators, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is permitting changes to the fundamental requirements of the Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation and Connecticut General Statute Section 10-151b effective only for 2020-21.

The new flexibilities, which are summarized in the chart below, are permissive. Districts *may* adopt flexibility through mutual agreement with their Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC) or may keep their existing plan without the flexibilities, although doing so will be difficult if not impossible given the likelihood of continued disruptions to the teaching and learning environment that will make the evaluation process impossible to complete with fidelity. In addition, summative ratings for 2020-2021 school year have been waived for districts adopting the flexibilities.

You can find the CSDE memo here: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Digest/2020-21/Educator-Guidelines-Flexibilities-Memo081120.pdf>

Key Considerations:

- **Ratings:** Summative ratings are waived for the 2020-21 school year for districts adopting the flexibilities.
- **PDEC Role:** The new flexibilities do not change the role of the PDEC or the need for mutual agreement.
- **Goals:** Goals no longer have to be academic in nature and may focus on SEL instead. Goals do not need to be SMART or quantitative in nature, although they may be if mutually agreed upon.
- **Indicators:** A standardized indicator is **not** required—this may help reduce over-testing and alleviate pressure on teachers and students. Both indicators may be non-standardized.
- **Growth Factor:** The focus is now on SEL growth for teachers and students during this stressful time. Teachers may select one indicator related to their own SEL growth, such as developing and implementing strategies to positively impact SEL, as long as the growth ultimately benefits students. Administrators should set goals related to the SEL growth and wellbeing of the teachers they evaluate.

- **Formative not Summative:** The TEVAL flexibilities are formative only (meaning no ratings—the emphasis is on educator growth and development, not misleading outcome measures) and emphasizes the need for quality feedback and professional growth opportunities related to SEL or student and/or family engagement.
- **Paperwork:** The flexibilities may reduce paperwork as PDECs can mutually agree to eliminate or reduce formal observations.
- **Optional:** The flexibilities outlined in the CSDE memo are permissive—district PDECs should discuss them, but may decide through mutual agreement not to adopt them, in which case they will use their most recently CSDE-approved TEVAL plan..
- **PDEC Deadline:** If a district decides through mutual agreement to adopt the flexibilities, they must submit an amendment request to the CSDE by October 1, 2020.
- **Observations:** Observations will still be required, although not scored and need not be formal. Teachers may wonder what the point of doing the work is if they do not get a rating. The point is to ensure educators are getting targeted support and feedback on their practice and to help shift the focus from academics to SEL in a low-stakes environment.
- **Future Changes:** PEAC, which is the statutory group of educators that makes recommendations to the State Board of Education, will be convened to reimagine the entire TEVAL process for the long-term. CEA is part of this group, which also includes groups for superintendents, boards of education, administrators, parents, and higher education.

New Flexibility Options

<u>Previous Requirements</u>	<u>New Flexibility Option</u>
Student Academic Growth and Achievement	Educator and Student Growth Flexibilities
50% of summative score is based on student growth	No longer weighted because summative scores are waived.
1-2 Student Learning Goals (45% of summative score)	1 goal based on SEL or student and family engagement. This goal will not be weighted or scored. The goal need not be SMART.
Minimum 2 Indicators of Academic Growth and Development (IAGD) (each weighted equally at 22.5%)	2 indicators, unweighted and not scored. Indicators may be qualitative rather than quantitative in nature (for example, a portfolio of student work). Both indicators may be non-standardized.
Use of a standardized IAGD (if available and appropriate).	No standardized indicator required.
Student feedback or whole school Indicator (5%)	Remains the same but unweighted and not scored.

Teacher Performance and Practice	Teacher Performance and Practice Flexibilities:
Mix of Formal, Informal, and walk-through observations (40%) (# and type of observation depends on factors like years of experience and previous summative score).	Two for teachers with three or more years of experience previously rated proficient (or equivalent) or higher. Three observations for everyone else. Additional observations are allowable but are encouraged to be short and all should be followed by written feedback.
Parent or peer feedback (10%)	Remains required but not scored.
1 Review of Practice (ROP) (not weighted)	Remains the same and required for all teachers.
Summative score required and reported in aggregate to the state.	Teacher reflection on their practice and connection to their own and their students' SEL growth required at summative conference. Formative feedback provided regularly over the school year culminates in a summative narrative (by evaluator), which replaces the summative score. No ratings will be reported to the state.

Things that Stay the Same:	Major Change:	Rationale
Student growth and Teacher Practice remain the focus	Student growth may focus on strategies that promote SEL or student and family engagement instead of indicators of academic growth. Goals need not be SMART or outcome driven.	Mental health of children and the wellbeing of teachers was a crisis before the pandemic and these issues will likely have been exacerbated by school closures. Students in crisis can't learn and SEL strategies can build a solid foundation for academic and personal success.
One goal and two indicators (previously called IAGDs) are required	No requirement for a standardized indicator. Indicators are not scored and need not be outcome based.	Time spent on test prep can be spent on SEL activities and, in the earlier grades, the importance of play.
Mutual agreement required on goals and indicators	No change	Mutual agreement is critical as it allows the teacher to select the most appropriate learning and SEL indicators for students and the subject area. It also builds trust and fosters collaboration between evaluator and teacher.