

## TEACHER EVALUATION FLEXIBILITIES 2022-23: GUIDANCE FOR PDECS AND EDUCATORS

In April of this year, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) sent a memo to all superintendents extending the existing educator evaluation flexibilities through the 2022-23 school year. The rationale for this extension is to maintain the focus on the social emotional wellbeing of students and educators while the state evaluation guidelines are substantially revised. A copy of the commissioner's memo can be accessed here: ([https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Digest/2021-22/Educator\\_Guidelines\\_Flexibilities\\_Memo\\_4\\_7\\_22.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Digest/2021-22/Educator_Guidelines_Flexibilities_Memo_4_7_22.pdf)).

If adopted with the wellbeing of educators and students in mind, the flexibilities could have a beneficial impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning. CEA recommends that your local PDEC seriously consider adopting these flexibilities, which do not replace your existing evaluation plan, but rather allow for a more flexible interpretation of specific aspects, such as the option for fewer observations and goals. If your PDEC mutually agrees to adopt the flexibilities for 2022-23, your superintendent must inform the Connecticut Department of Education by October 1, 2022 using the form found here:

<https://sde.ct.gov/sde/Forms/Forms.aspx?formid=6PrB0bsZUri24AK>

### Summary of Flexibilities for 2022-23 (identical to 2021-22):

- The purpose of these flexibilities is to lessen stress, ease the paperwork burden on teachers and administrators, and foster the trust and innovation needed to promote educator and student growth and wellbeing. The flexibilities are also intended to provide space for teachers to focus on SEL instead of only academic outcomes.
- The importance of mutual agreement is clarified and the language requiring it is strengthened.
- Only 1 goal is allowable and it must be mutually agreed upon between teacher and evaluator.
- The goal may have either an SEL **or** an academic focus. This focus must be mutually agreed upon between teacher and evaluator (the focus of the goal may not be dictated).
- A minimum of two indicators (also called *measures of accomplishment*) are required and both must be mutually agreed upon. More are possible if requested by the teacher and mutually agreed upon.
- **No** standardized indicator may be required (although the teacher may select one with mutual agreement). All indicators may be non-standardized. Indicators (or measures of accomplishment) do not need to be mathematically quantifiable.
- Indicators should be holistically scored based on a preponderance of evidence (artifacts like student work, lesson plans created by teacher to address the goal, common rubrics, interventions tried related to the goal).
- There are fewer observations required for virtually all teachers. No formal observations are required (but are allowable—this should be discussed and mutually agreed upon by the PDEC—it is possible to allow formals when there are documented concerns related to teacher performance, as an example), nor are pre and post conferences required. Informal observations should be short and followed by timely feedback that is actionable and formative in nature (not evaluative).

- Two informal observations will be required of experienced teachers most recently rated proficient or higher on their summative evaluation.
- Teachers who are in years 1 and 2 and experienced teachers on improvement plans have three informal observations. Post conferences are recommended for these individuals but are not required.
- A review of practice (ROP) is still required of all teachers.
- Feedback (formative) is required after all observations and ROPs.
- Teachers who are not primarily in classroom positions (media specialist, counselor, social worker, instructional coaches) may substitute a ROP in place of an observation.
- The timeline remains the same (orientation to the plan, goal setting conference, mid-year conference, and summative conference).
- An annual performance rating is required of all educators.

### **Goal Setting under the Flexibilities:**

- The flexibilities allow for only one student learning goal, which **may** have either an SEL or an academic focus—the focus must be discussed at the goal-setting conference and mutually agreed upon between the teacher and the evaluator.
- Two indicators (also called *measures of accomplishment* in the flexibilities) are required, although more are allowable if requested by the teacher and mutually agreed upon by teacher and evaluator at the goal-setting conference.
- Regardless of whether your PDEC adopts the educator evaluation flexibilities in 2022-23, all goals and indicators must be mutually agreed upon by teacher and evaluator. If mutual agreement is impossible after diligent effort, the teacher has the right to go through your district dispute resolution process described in your district’s evaluation plan.
- Goals may be simple or more complex depending on the teacher’s level of comfort, SEL background, professional development provided, and needs of the students.
- SEL goals do not need to be mathematically quantifiable. The flexibilities allow for many other measures of progress besides standardized assessments or surveys. **No standardized indicator** is required under the flexibilities.
- Teachers may create goals that focus on students’ SEL growth, engagement in learning or school community, or emotional wellbeing. Administrators may focus on the SEL learning of teachers and the health and wellbeing of educators and students.
- Goals may align with CASEL’s SEL Competencies: Self-awareness, Self-management, Social awareness, Relationship management, and Responsible decision-making (<https://casel.org/casel-sel-framework-11-2020/>).
- Goals may also pertain to students’ emotional wellbeing and connection to the school community.
- SEL goals do not need to be content area specific although they *may* be with mutual agreement.
- Your goal may include implementation steps that focus on developing and/or enhancing your pedagogical skills related to student SEL growth.
- Many resources on SEL and goal setting may be found on the Connecticut Department of Education website: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Social-Emotional-Learning/Social-Emotional-Learning>.

### **Sample areas of focus for SEL Goals:**

- Students will build empathy for each other and be able to understand and respect conflicting points of view.
- Students will be able to identify feelings and employ mindfulness skills to help manage and regulate behavior.
- Students will improve their reflective listening skills.
- Students will expand their emotional vocabulary and be able to identify how they are feeling as well as how others are feeling.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of healthy ways of dealing with conflict.
- Students will demonstrate consideration for others by contributing to the well-being of their school and community.
- Students will demonstrate an awareness of cultural issues and a respect for human dignity and differences.
- Students will demonstrate an awareness of social cues and respond appropriately while understanding cultural variations.
- Students will apply decision-making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social responsibilities
- Students will use feedback constructively and understand the emotional impact of their feedback on others
- Students will understand their personal responsibility and role in developing a positive classroom culture.
- Students will learn to self-monitor their feelings and develop strategies to cope with strong emotions.

### **Sample SEL Indicators/Measures of Accomplishment**

- Representative sample of student work related to SEL.
- Student reflections on their SEL growth over time.
- SEL rubrics that show growth over time.
- Sample lesson plans and SEL activities aligned with goal.
- Log of student check-ins and conversations with families and community members.
- Feedback and reflections from students and families.
- Student public defense of learning (such as a Capstone Culminating experience or science fair presentation).