



TEACHER EVALUATION

Take Five Series

Teacher Evaluation Take Five Series

Introduction

Your district has a new evaluation plan this year that aligns with Connecticut's Educator Evaluation Guidelines passed by the Connecticut State Board of Education in June 2023. These guidelines move away from convoluted mathematical calculations and educator ratings and instead focus on educator professional growth and high-quality feedback.

The new guidelines also significantly reduce the overall number of evaluation requirements for educators and provide greater autonomy to districts to design an evaluation plan that meets the unique needs of their educators and students. This means your district's evaluation plan may differ significantly from plans in other districts across the state.

It's important to understand the new requirements in your district's plan, so be sure to read your district's plan document carefully, attend your district's evaluation orientation, and ask questions of your association leaders, administrators, or staff at CEA. By statute, your district's Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC) must annually revise your evaluation and professional development plan, so as the year unfolds, be sure to let the teachers on your PDEC know what's working and what may need to be changed.

While evaluation plans may differ significantly from one district to the next, there are still core requirements that remain consistent across the state. CEA's Teacher Evaluation Take Five series is a set of one-page fact sheets designed to help teachers understand what these core requirements are, make the most of the evaluation changes this year, and provide concise, essential information on the following five topics.

1. What's New in 2024–2025
2. What Stays the Same
3. Your Bill of Rights
4. Observation Tips
5. What Your Union Can Do for You

If you have questions, would like to customize an evaluation orientation or professional development workshop for your local association, or need more evaluation resources please contact myprofession@cea.org or scan the QR code below.



TEACHER EVALUATION TAKE 5: WHAT'S NEW IN 2024-2025

#1

Streamlined & Simplified Process

#2

Focus Is on Growth, Not Ratings

#3

Differentiated Requirements

#4

Emphasis on Collaboration & Innovation

#5

Feedback & Support Are Essential

WHAT'S NEW ABOUT EVALUATION, EXPLAINED

Simplified

Your new evaluation plan is aligned to simplified state requirements that were designed to reduce burdens on educators. Your plan should have fewer steps, eliminate or reduce convoluted mathematical calculations, and involve less paperwork.

Growth, Not Ratings

The state no longer requires educator ratings, and the focus of your new plan should be on meaningful professional learning and growth. Your plan should also consider the growth and well-being of the whole child rather than focus entirely on academic outcomes.

Differentiated Process

The state has moved away from a one-size-fits-all approach to evaluation and now allows for a significant level of differentiation based on educator role and years of experience. Educators in service provider roles may have different expectations than classroom teachers, for example.

Collaboration & Innovation

Educators are permitted to set common goals that foster collegiality and collaboration. Rather than stress compliance, the new evaluation guidelines are intended to foster trust, innovation, and transformational improvement.

Feedback & Support

The success of the new evaluation system depends on the quality of the support and feedback provided to teachers. The new system places a high priority on meaningful support based on educator needs and feedback that is specific, timely, actionable, and accurate.

TEACHER EVALUATION TAKE 5: WHAT STAYS THE SAME

#1

The basic components of the evaluation process remain the same.

#2

A mutually agreed on goal and at least two agreed upon indicators are still required.

#3

An observation rubric aligned to external standards is still a required component.

#4

Evaluators must still be certified administrators and be trained and calibrated regularly.

#5

Teacher rights remain the same.

WHAT STAYS THE SAME, EXPLAINED

Same Basic Components

While your district's evaluation plan is new (and hopefully improved), many of the required elements remain similar to what was required in the past, including goal-setting, mid-year, and end-of-year conferences, observations, feedback, a dispute resolution process, and a support/corrective action process that conforms to state requirements.

Goals & Indicators

All evaluation plans in the state still require at least one learning goal and at least two learning indicators. Mutual agreement between teacher and evaluator on goals and indicators remains a state requirement, as does a dispute resolution process if agreement can't be reached. The types of goals and indicators that are allowable—and the duration of a goal—may be different from in the past. It's important to read your district's new evaluation plan to find out if this is the case.

Standards-Based Rubric

All plans in the state still require some type of observation of teachers, although the number and type may differ from what was required in the past. An observation rubric aligned to external standards is still a requirement. Many districts may have adopted a single-competency rubric without ratings. It's very important to review your district's rubric prior to being observed.

Trained Evaluators

All evaluators in your district must have an 092 certification and be trained in your district's evaluation procedures and in how to provide supportive, meaningful, standards-based feedback. In addition, the state still requires all evaluators to regularly engage in calibration activities to ensure reliability and common expectations.

Teacher Rights

Teacher rights under the new system remain the same as in the past. Teachers are entitled to an annual orientation to the evaluation process, mutual agreement on goals/indicators, timely feedback, dispute resolution, grievance on procedural grounds, and union representation. In addition, the PDEC must include teachers and teachers must be involved in the annual revision of the district's evaluation and professional growth plan.

TEACHER EVALUATION TAKE 5: YOUR BILL OF RIGHTS

#1

Mutual Agreement

#2

Dispute Resolution

#3

Union Representation

#4

Support & Feedback

#5

Grievance

YOUR RIGHTS EXPLAINED

Mutual Agreement

Your evaluation goal and learning indicators can't be dictated, and you have the right to have input into both. You and your evaluator should discuss, compromise as needed, and reach agreement that the goal and indicators selected are meaningful and relevant to you and your students.

Dispute Resolution

If you and your evaluator can't agree on your goal, indicators, feedback, the evaluation timeline, or any other aspect of the evaluation process, you have the right to a fair dispute resolution process. The details of this process can be found in your district's evaluation plan.

Union Representation

You have the right to union representation in any aspect of your evaluation. If your evaluator misses important deadlines, forgets to provide feedback, provides unfair or unhelpful feedback, or has identified you as a candidate for tiered supports, it's important to involve your union immediately.

Support & Feedback

You should receive either written or verbal feedback after every observation. The timeline for this feedback can be found in your district's evaluation plan. Your evaluator should also offer support and professional development to help you grow as an educator.

Grievance

If your evaluator misses any aspect of your evaluation process—such as a deadline or conference—and it has a harmful impact on your evaluation, you should contact the union, as this could be grievable.

TEACHER EVALUATION TAKE 5:

OBSERVATION TIPS

#1

Be familiar with your evaluator's expectations.

#2

Align your lesson plan or activity to the district's rubric.

#3

Be proactive and invite your evaluator to observe a lesson or activity you're excited about.

#4

Keep on hand several short, engaging check-ins you can use if your evaluator walks through unexpectedly.

#5

Be receptive to feedback even if you don't agree with it.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL OBSERVATION

Know Your Evaluator

Try to get a sense of your evaluator's values and expectations and design a lesson or activity around these. For example, if your evaluator places a high value on structure and order, make sure your lesson includes clear routines and tight transitions to minimize disruptions. Consider posting classroom norms on the wall where they can see them.

Know the Rubric

Your district's observation rubric should show exactly what your evaluator is looking for. If your observation is scheduled in advance, prepare a written plan that aligns each lesson segment to the rubric. Actually cite the domain and indicator number in parentheses right on your lesson plan. This way, if the evaluator doesn't see something, you can submit the lesson plan as evidence of what was missed. If you're not a classroom teacher, be sure to use the rubric for service providers.

Be Proactive

You don't have to wait for your evaluator to schedule an observation. If you planned an innovative lesson or activity you're excited about, particularly if it relates to your goal, consider inviting your evaluator in to observe. This gives you more control, allows you to show your strengths, and creates a bridge between your observed practice and your goal.

Show Engagement

Your evaluator will want to see evidence of student or learner engagement, even if they are only walking through. Consider creating a toolbox of very short, interactive, formative assessment strategies you can use at any point in any lesson that will show your evaluator students are learning and engaged. The toolbox could include: turn and talk, four corners, thumbs up/down, etc.

Be Open to Feedback

Your evaluator should provide specific, meaningful, supportive feedback within 5-10 days of your observation. Sometimes the feedback may seem inaccurate or unfair. In this circumstance, it's still important to be reflective. Tell your evaluator you're not sure you agree with their assessment but will reflect on it for a few days before responding.

TEACHER EVALUATION TAKE 5: WHAT YOUR UNION CAN DO FOR YOU

#1

Safeguard Your Rights

#2

Dispute Resolution

#3

PDEC Representation

#4

Corrective Action Plan Involvement

#5

**Professional Development, Guidance,
& Individualized Support**



WHAT YOUR UNION CAN DO, EXPLAINED

Safeguard Your Rights

Your union helps ensure all the steps of the evaluation process are followed with fidelity and can take action if your evaluator dictates your goal, fails to provide timely or accurate feedback, misses an important deadline, or tries to put you on a corrective action plan prematurely.

Dispute Resolution

If you are unable to reach mutual agreement with your evaluator on goals, indicators, the evaluation timeline, feedback, or other evaluation issue, you have the right to initiate a dispute resolution process that must involve your union. A union representative of your choice will represent you in this dispute and advocate on your behalf.

PDEC Representation

Your district's Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC) must include at least one representative of the teachers' union. The PDEC creates and annually revises both your evaluation and PD plans, so union representation on the PDEC ensures teachers have a voice at the table when important decisions regarding PD and evaluation are being made.

Corrective Action Plans

Teachers may occasionally struggle with performance issues. The union will make sure a corrective action plan is an appropriate step, and if so, that tiered informal supports were provided. The union must also be consulted regarding the content of a formal corrective action plan to ensure it provides adequate support and is not unreasonable in its expectations.

PD, Guidance, & Individualized Support

Your local association can contact CEA to arrange a PD workshop, an evaluation orientation, feedback training, calibration activities, or PDEC training or facilitation, all of which can be customized to meet your district's needs.

