



Updated, April 2021

Pennsylvania's Educator Effectiveness System

Revisions beginning in the 2021-22 school year

On March 27, 2020, Governor Wolf signed Act 13 to enact important protections for public schools related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to these protections, Act 13 also revised Pennsylvania's Educator Effectiveness System in significant ways. On March 27, 2021, the Educator Effectiveness Rating Tool and associated rules and regulations (22 Pa. Code Ch. 19) were published in [Vol. 51, No. 13 of the Pennsylvania Bulletin](#). ***These changes go into effect in the 2021-22 school year.***

PSEA participated in crafting these changes to the Educator Effectiveness System along with legislators and other key stakeholders. During these deliberations, PSEA focused on attaining several goals: 1) reduce the impact of standardized tests and student performance measures and increase the weight of observations of professional practice on educator ratings; 2) recognize the impact of poverty on student performance measures used to calculate educator ratings; 3) shorten the ten-year "look-back window" for educators who receive a "needs improvement" rating; and 4) encourage greater collaboration to improve instructional practices.¹

Key Elements of the Revised Educator Effectiveness System

In general, Act 13 of 2020 and Chapter 19 retain the structure of the existing Educator Effectiveness System for both tenured classroom teachers and tenured nonteaching professionals:

- Tenured classroom teachers will continue to be evaluated with data from observation and practice, building-level data, and teacher-specific data.²
- Tenured nonteaching professionals will be evaluated with observation and practice and building-level data.
- All tenured and temporary professional employees will continue to receive one of four summative ratings: "distinguished," "proficient," "needs improvement," or "failing."
- Educators who receive a "distinguished" or "proficient rating" will continue to be satisfactory, as will educators who receive their first "needs improvement" rating. Educators who receive a "failing" rating or who receive a second "needs improvement" rating within a specified time period will continue to be unsatisfactory.
- Conversion scales for Building Level Scores and Teacher-Specific Data remain unchanged.

In addition to maintaining much of the structure of the Educator Effectiveness System, Act 13 and Chapter 19 clarify or change the system in ways that bring the system closer to several of PSEA's goals:

The revised Educator Effectiveness System reduces the impact of student achievement measures on educator ratings. Beginning in 2021-22, 70 percent of the summative rating for tenured classroom teachers will be based upon observation and practice, and 30 percent will be based upon building-level and teacher-specific data. For

¹ For PSEA's webpage on the new system, see [Educator Evaluation Reform](#).

² In the new system teacher-specific and elective data have been combined into one category that includes teacher-specific state assessment proficiency and growth (where applicable), IEP goal progress, and elective data measured through two or more locally selected measures.

tenured, satisfactory nonteaching professionals, observation and practice will account for 90 percent of a summative rating and building-level data will account for 10 percent.

The revised Educator Effectiveness System takes some account of poverty in calculating a building-level score for use in summative ratings. In the current evaluation system, educators who work in schools serving students from economically disadvantaged families typically receive lower scores on building-level data because of the impact of poverty on these measures. Act 13 and Chapter 19 create a “challenge multiplier” to mathematically adjust a building-level score to take some account of the impact of poverty on student performance measures. This will reduce the negative impact of poverty on the summative ratings of educators working in buildings serving students from economically disadvantaged families.

The revised Educator Effectiveness System reduces the number of years in which a second “needs improvement” rating equals an unsatisfactory rating. In the current system, an educator’s first “needs improvement” rating is considered satisfactory, but a second “needs improvement” rating at any time during a ten-year window while working for the same employer in the same area of certification is considered unsatisfactory. Act 13 and Chapter 19 reduce the ten-year window to four years; if an educator receives a second “needs improvement” rating that is not within four years of the first, then both ratings are satisfactory

The revised Educator Effectiveness System clarifies that administrators cannot place limits on the number or percent of educators who receive a “distinguished” rating. In some cases, PSEA members have reported both formal and informal caps on the number of tenured or temporary professional employees within a building or school entity who may receive a “distinguished” rating. To address this, Act 13 and Chapter 19 state that an employer may not limit the number or percent of “distinguished” ratings through policies, guidelines, or practices.

The revised Educator Effectiveness System simplifies the building-level data. Currently, the building-level score is comprised of seven types of data including Advanced Placement course participation and data from the SAT. The revised measure includes only four types of data: student performance on state assessments; value-added, student growth calculations (PVAAS); graduation rates; and attendance rates.

Professional employees who receive an “unsatisfactory” rating may receive evaluations mid-year. Because building-level and some teacher-specific data are not immediately available for inclusion in a summative rating and are not direct measures of an individual educator’s practice, professional employees who receive an unsatisfactory on their most recent summative rating will be evaluated with observation and practice (70 percent) and LEA-developed measures (30 percent) using an interim rating form. All temporary professional employees will receive at least two semi-annual ratings based entirely on observation & practice. In practical terms beginning in 2021-22, ratings for tenured professional employees who received an unsatisfactory rating and any temporary professional employees can be issued before the end of the school year.

Additional language in Act 13 and Chapter 19 provide clarity on the following issues:

1. Educators may provide evidence of their performance on any component of the rating tool.
2. Evaluators may use both classroom walk-throughs and comprehensive classroom observations to gather evidence. Comprehensive classroom observations must include a pre-conference and a post-conference.³
3. LEA-selected measures may be altered mid-year upon agreement of both the employee and employer and/or carried over between years as appropriate.
4. Professional employees who receive a satisfactory rating cannot be evaluated more than once a year.

³ Upon mutual agreement of an evaluator and professional employee, a postconference may be waived for documented extenuating circumstances. If the extenuating circumstances are raised by the evaluator, a professional employee who does not receive a postconference cannot receive a rating of “needs improvement” or “failing” on the classroom observation component. The postconference cannot be waived for a temporary professional employee.

5. Minimal updates to descriptions and levels of performance for each domain of observation and practice include an expanded focus on culturally responsive and sustaining practices; supports for social, emotional, and academic development; enhanced use of evidence and stakeholder engagement; and inclusive practices that accommodate the needs of a diverse student population.
6. Learning from the COVID-19 Pandemic, PDE included an emergency provision in Chapter 19 allowing the Department to issue temporarily revised conversion tables and adjusted weights for Building Level Scores and/or Teacher-Specific Data in the event that the Governor declares a disaster emergency that impacts the reliability of student performance measures included in educator evaluations. These revisions must be published on the PDE website and are valid only in the year of the declared emergency.

Finally, the Chapter 19 regulations specify that LEA Selected Measures include the same items previously listed under Elective Data, but do not specify how LEA Selected Measures will be measured. Currently, most employers use “Student Learning Objective (SLOs)” to measure similar data. PSEA is seeking clarification from PDE about the tools they will provide to help districts implement the LEA Selected Measures required within law and regulation.

The new rating forms for each category of educator included in the Educator Effectiveness System are available in the Chapter 19 regulations, including Form 13-1: Classroom Teacher Rating Form (p. [1659-1661](#)), Form 13-3: Nonteaching Professional Rating Form (p. [1669-1670](#)), and Form 13-4: Interim Rating Form (p. [1673-1675](#)).

For More Information

For more information on the revised Educator Effectiveness System, see PSEA’s webpage, [Educator Evaluation Reform](#), and Advisories, “Evaluation of Temporary Professional Employees in Pennsylvania’s Revised Educator Effectiveness System,” and “Evaluation of Tenured Educators in Pennsylvania’s Revised Educator Effectiveness System.” PSEA members with general questions about the revised system or rating tool should contact Dr. Gina Gullo in PSEA’s Education Services Division at ggullo@psea.org. For questions about evaluations that are specific to your employer, please contact your UniServ Representative.