



Revised, February 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. ***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 10-year "look-back window" for educators who received 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 retains the structure of the Educator Effectiveness System for both tenured classroom teachers and tenured nonteaching professionals:

- Tenured classroom teachers will continue to be evaluated with data from observations of practice, building-level data, and teacher-specific data².
- Tenured nonteaching professionals will still be evaluated with observations 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 are educators who receive their first needs improvement rating. Educators who receive a failing or who receive a second needs improvement within a specified time period will continue to be unsatisfactory.

In addition to maintaining much of the structure of the Educator Effectiveness System, Act 13 clarifies or changes 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 observations of professional practice, and 30 percent will be based upon building-level and teacher-specific data. For tenured, satisfactory nonteaching professionals, observations of 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

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 (SLOs).

from economically disadvantaged families typically receive lower scores on building-level data because of the impact of poverty on these measures. Act 13 creates a ‘challenge multiplier’ to mathematically adjust a building-level score to take some account of the impact of poverty on measures of student achievement. 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’ is an unsatisfactory rating. In the current system, an educator’s first ‘needs improvement’ rating is satisfactory, but a second needs improvement rating at any time during a 10-year window while working for the same employer in the same area of certification is unsatisfactory. Act 13 reduces the 10-year window to 4 years; an educator who receives two needs improvement ratings more than four years apart remains 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 report both formal and informal caps on the number of tenured or temporary professional employees who may receive a distinguished rating. To address this, Act 13 states 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 will include only four types of data: student performance on state assessments; value-added 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 an observation of professional practice (70 percent) and locally developed measures (SLOs, 30 percent). All temporary professional employees will receive summative and mid-year ratings based entirely on observations of professional practice. In practical terms beginning in 2021-22 ratings for temporary professional employees and for tenured professional employees who have received an unsatisfactory rating can be issued before the end of the school year.

Additional language in Act 13 provides clarity on the following issues:

1. An educator may provide evidence of their performance on any component of the rating tool.
2. An evaluator may use both classroom walk-throughs and comprehensive classroom observations to gather evidence. Comprehensive classroom observations must include a pre- and post-conference.³
3. Locally selected measures (SLOs) may be altered mid-year upon agreement of both the employee and employer.
4. Professional employees who receive a satisfactory rating cannot be evaluated more than once a year.

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 should contact Dr. Gina Gullo in PSEA’s Education Services Division at ggullo@psea.org. For questions about evaluation that are specific to your employer, please contact your UniServ Representative.

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