

Measuring Educator Effectiveness

What we believe

The MAC believes that the goal of educator evaluation is to use systems that, develop, recognize and retain quality educators who are able to promote effective learning strategies and environments for students and contribute to student growth and success.

The MAC supports the need for fair, balanced, and efficient systems for identifying effective practice among the teachers and administrators working in Michigan's schools. Further, we acknowledge that there are several high-quality evidence-based evaluation models for observing teaching and leadership practices. However, Michigan currently lacks metrics for measuring growth in student achievement that are appropriate for inclusion in educator evaluation systems. This is important given that state law requires the use of growth data to be included in educator evaluation. Also, Michigan does not have instructionally sensitive assessments in which educators have confidence. This is especially true when it comes to measuring growth in student achievement for teachers in grades or disciplines for which there is no state assessment data (for example, in grades K-3, world languages, art, music, etc.), since the MAC believes that educators should not be evaluated based on student test performance over which they have no influence.

Background and support

Public Act 173 of 2015, which drew on recommendations made by the Michigan Council for Educator Effectiveness, requires each public school in the state to have educator evaluation systems in place for teachers and administrators. It requires annual educator evaluation that puts an emphasis on *growth* or *Improvement* in student achievement (also referred to as "student growth.") It requires that by the 2018-19 school year, 40 percent of the annual evaluation will be based on measures of student growth, with the remainder based on the educator's overall performance as measured using a district-selected observation tool. Furthermore, PA 173 states that starting in 2018-19, for educators in tested grades and subjects, at least 50 percent of student growth must be measured using state assessments. The remaining 50 percent can be based on local growth measures. (For teachers in non-core subjects or grades not tested with state assessments, the entire student growth rating is to come from local growth measures.)

Recommendations

The MAC recommends and supports ongoing research and development to improve educator evaluation systems, as well as capacity-building by all stakeholders in the educator evaluation process so that Michigan will be better able to:

1. observe and evaluate effective instructional practice,
2. create more high-quality assessment options authentic to the subject matter and grade level of students,
3. encourage the use curriculum-embedded performance assessments in all subjects and grade levels,
4. encourage educators to collaboratively assess and score student work with colleagues elsewhere in the state (using collaborative scoring software now being developed),
5. accurately measure and attribute growth in student achievement,
6. support teachers and administrators to select evidence of instructional practice and student achievement to demonstrate their effectiveness, and
7. use growth metrics that are supported by research and by the measurement community.

What this means for:

Policy makers:

1. Extend the duration of time over which students are expected to show growth; rather than measuring growth within one academic year, extend to a full calendar year (Spring to following Spring).
2. Recommend metrics for use in measuring growth in student achievement *only* if they are supported by the measurement community. See, for example, American Educational Research Association (2016). Other groups, such as the American Psychological Association and the National Council on Measurement in Education have developed policy statements as well.
3. Prohibit evaluation of teachers based on measures in disciplines over which they have no influence (for example, arts teachers should not be evaluated using M-STEP ELA/reading and mathematics test scores).

School leaders:

1. Actively work to become more assessment literate.
2. Allocate resources to select or develop assessments or other--for all grade levels and subject areas, aligned to the state's academic content standards--so that teachers have options to use quality measures of student achievement.
3. Ensure that all assessments used in evaluation are instructionally sensitive, so that student growth in achievement is based on measures that can show changes in student learning (i.e., measure achievement, not aptitude).
4. Promote teacher use of high-quality achievement measures.
5. Promote the collaborative use and scoring of assessments.
6. Invest in helping teachers develop measures they can use to demonstrate their effectiveness.
7. Invest in helping teachers use the achievement measures to demonstrate their effectiveness.

Teachers

1. Actively work to become more assessment literate.
2. Learn to develop assessments that can be used to demonstrate student achievement and growth.
3. Become confident users of instructionally sensitive performance assessments.
4. Learn to collaboratively score performance assessments in order to expand use of appropriate assessment practices.
5. Insist that defensible measures be used to derive student achievement growth data to be used in your evaluation.

Students, Families, and Community

1. Work to become more assessment literate.
2. Challenge high stakes decisions about students, teachers, and leaders that are made on the basis of only one test.

Support for Our Beliefs:

- Rick Stiggins. (2014). *Defensible teacher evaluation: Student Growth Through Classroom Assessment*. Corwin: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- W.J. Popham. (2013). *Evaluating America's Teachers: Mission Possible?* Corwin: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- S. Paul Wright, Sandra P. Horn, & William L. Sanders. (1997). *Teacher and Classroom Context Effects on Student Achievement: Implications for Teacher Evaluation.* *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education* 11: 57-67.
- AERA Statement on Use of Value-Added Models (VAM) for the Evaluation of Educators and Educator Preparation Programs. *Educational Researcher*. Volume: 44: 8, p. 448-452. Also available, policy briefs on Early Literacy and Assessment Literacy