



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents

FROM: Sarah Barzee, Ph.D., Interim Chief Talent Officer *SB*
Talent Office

DATE: July 26, 2013

SUBJECT: Update on Connecticut's Educator Evaluation and Support System

Greetings!

As the 2013-14 pilot of Connecticut's educator evaluation and support system has come to a close, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has garnered many lessons learned that continue to inform and improve upon this important work. I want to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts made by all pilot districts to implement the system with fidelity. As a result of their dedication and hard work, we have received invaluable feedback on the SEED state model, as well as the *Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation*, which has, in turn, informed useful and appropriate changes to both documents. The experiences of our pilot districts will also guide and inform training and support as we move towards successful statewide implementation.

This newsletter provides important updates from the CSDE Talent Office to support district planning for implementation of CSDE-approved educator evaluation and support plans during the 2013-14 school year.

Updates featured in this newsletter include:

- State Board Approval for Flexibility for Education Evaluation
- Revisions to the *Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation* (Core Requirements)
- Revisions to the State Model (SEED)
- CSDE-Sponsored Training Opportunities
- BloomBoard Data Management System and Professional Learning Credits
- Neag Implementation Study Phase 2

State Board of Education Approves Additional Implementation Flexibility for Educator Evaluation and Support in 2013-2014

On July 15, 2013, the State Board of Education (SBE), in consultation with the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC), authorized the CSDE to submit a flexibility request to the United States Department of Education (USDE) that would enable districts, through a local process, to determine whether to use Common Core-aligned assessments produced by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), the legacy state tests (CMT/CAPT) or both in the 2013-14 school year. If Connecticut's request for flexibility is approved, the CSDE will establish procedures to guide local decision making, including stakeholder and local board chair input into the choice regarding state test data in educator evaluation. A procedure for districts to apply will be articulated in a

communication following federal approval of the state's flexibility request. Governor Malloy, who attended the PEAC meeting, said, "Providing a level of flexibility to districts will give them the chance to adapt to the many changes that are coming without backing away from the reforms we fought so hard to achieve."

The state will also move forward with a request for flexibility in the use of state test data as part of the evaluation system in 2013-14. Formulation of Connecticut's flexibility request is an ongoing and iterative process involving consultation with the USDE, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, and state education stakeholders. The precise details of Connecticut's flexibility request are in the process of discussion with the aforementioned parties. The CSDE will provide districts with updates throughout the flexibility request process.

Revisions to the *Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation* (Core Requirements)

Over the course of the pilot year, it became evident that minor amendments to the *Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation* were appropriate. On July 15, 2013, the SBE, in consultation with the PEAC, approved the following amendments:

Assistant Principal Observations

The Guidelines have been changed to allow for a differentiated number of observations rather than four school site observations as originally required for assistant principals. Going forward, assistant principals will receive a differentiated number of observations based on the previous year's performance and/or number of years of experience. For specific language, please see the attached document, *Summary of Changes to SEED—Administrator Model*.

Central Office Administrators

The Guidelines state that all educators, below the rank of superintendent, must be evaluated under the new evaluation and support system beginning in 2013-14. However, as part of the original implementation flexibility, approved by PEAC and the SBE in February 2013, local districts may opt whether or not to include central office administrators as part of their implementation plan for 2013-14.

The PEAC agreed to postpone additional changes to the Core Requirements until the Neag School of Education, Center for Policy Analysis, releases its final report in January 2014.

Revisions to the State Model (SEED)

2013 SEED Handbook

In consultation with the PEAC, the SBE also approved the changes to the SEED model. The PEAC reached consensus regarding these changes on July 10, 2013. Attached to this newsletter is a summary of the changes for both the administrator and teacher models. The 2013 *SEED Handbook* will also be posted publicly on the SEED website next week, along with the summary documents attached to this letter.

CSDE-Sponsored Training Opportunities

In accordance with the *Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation* (June 2012), local boards of education are required to provide training for each evaluator who will be implementing the new system and an orientation for each teachers before the evaluation process begins.

Training and Orientation Timelines

Recent enacted revisions to Connecticut's Education Reform Act (PA 12-116) Public Act No. 13-245, expands upon the requirement that boards of education must conduct training programs for evaluators and orientation programs for teachers. While statute does not prescribe a specific date by which training and orientation must be completed within a district, the law does specify that any evaluator must be trained before conducting an evaluation and that any teacher must complete an orientation prior to receiving an evaluation. It is the CSDE's interpretation that the evaluation process begins with the goal-setting process as prescribed in the *Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation*. Therefore, a district must complete the required orientation for a teacher and required training for an evaluator before the Goal-Setting Conference between a teacher/administrator and his/her evaluator may be conducted. The PEAC reached consensus on this interpretation on July 10, 2013 and on July 15, 2013, the SBE adopted this interpretation

Training Opportunities

As districts are required to implement educator evaluation and support programs by September 1, 2013, the CSDE, in collaboration with Teaching Learning Solutions (TLS), the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) and the RESC Alliance, has developed training programs for both evaluators of administrators and evaluators of teachers. These regional trainings are provided by trainers from the RESC Alliance and CAS throughout the summer at locations across the state. These trainings are provided at no cost to districts.

In recognition of the fact that not all school administrators work in July and August, the state-sponsored trainings will continue through September 2013.

The full schedule of trainings is available on the SEED website at:

http://www.connecticutseed.org/?page_id=134&ai1ec=action:month|exact_date:1372651200

Please note that while it is mandatory that any evaluator be trained prior to conducting evaluation, it is NOT mandatory to participate in a state-sponsored training. Districts may have already conducted in-district trainings over the course of the year or may have plans to conduct their own in-district training over the summer or in the fall in accordance with their state- approved evaluation and support plan.

Teacher Evaluation CSDE-Sponsored Training

The five-day teacher evaluation training will highlight the *Common Core of Teaching (CCT) Rubric for Effective Teaching* as the observation instrument for collecting artifacts and evidence about teacher practice and performance. The training also covers the process for setting Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), Indicators of Academic Growth and Development (IAGDs) and stakeholder feedback targets. Participants will review the annual process for evaluation and support and will have the chance to determine a final summative rating. Participants will be presented with authentic evidence and artifacts and allowed time to record, analyze, make judgments and issue feedback. Participants who successfully complete the five-day training, which concludes with a proficiency assessment on the final day, will be considered to have met the requirements to demonstrate proficiency as outlined in the *Connecticut Guidelines for Educator Evaluation*.

Administrator Evaluation CSDE-Sponsored Training

The three-day administrator evaluation training will focus on the *Common Core of Leading: Connecticut School Leadership Standards* as the observation instrument for use in collecting artifacts and evidence about administrator practice and performance. The training also covers the process for setting SLOs, stakeholder feedback targets and focus areas for practice and performance. Participants

will review the annual process for evaluation and support and will have the chance to determine a final summative rating. Opportunities to engage in a simulated evaluation process will be provided through a case study approach. An optional proficiency exercise is offered to all participants.

BloomBoard Data Management System and Professional Learning Credits

As a follow up to our last statewide newsletter, the CSDE Talent Office wanted to provide some additional information regarding the BloomBoard data management system. In our previous communications, we described the two options that districts have in terms of opting into the platform. The options are as follows:

1. Opt in for BOTH the data management platform and the professional learning credits; or
2. Opt in for JUST the professional learning credits to be used in the BloomBoard marketplace.

The FINAL deadline for opting in to either option was Monday, July 15, 2013. If you were not able to respond by the July 15th deadline due to extenuating circumstances, or if you have additional questions related to BloomBoard, please reach out to: Shannon Marimón, CSDE Talent Office, at shannon.marimon@ct.gov or 860.713.6816.

BloomBoard Statewide Trainings

BloomBoard is collaborating with the RESCs, CAS and the CSDE to offer in-person, application-based training sessions for evaluators/observers from all Connecticut "opt-in" districts throughout August and September 2013. These trainings are available across a wide range of times and locations and will be available at no cost to districts. The full list of trainings and information on registration can be found at <http://www.bloomboard.com/ctraining>.

Attached is a letter outlining additional details on the funding of the BloomBoard data management system and marketplace. An expanded FAQ sheet is also enclosed, which includes information related to privacy and data usage.

Neag Implementation Study Phase 2

Researchers from the Neag School of Education, Center for Education Policy Analysis, presented the results of Phase 2 of the pilot implementation study to PEAC on July 10, 2013. The report can be viewed on the SEED website at http://www.connecticutseed.org/?page_id=874.

SB/cpe

Attachments: •Summary of Changes to SEED—Administrator Model
•Summary of Changes to SEED—Teacher Model
•Update on BloomBoard
•BloomBoard FAQs (expanded version)