



Using Self-Evaluation as an Alternative Measure of Educator Effectiveness

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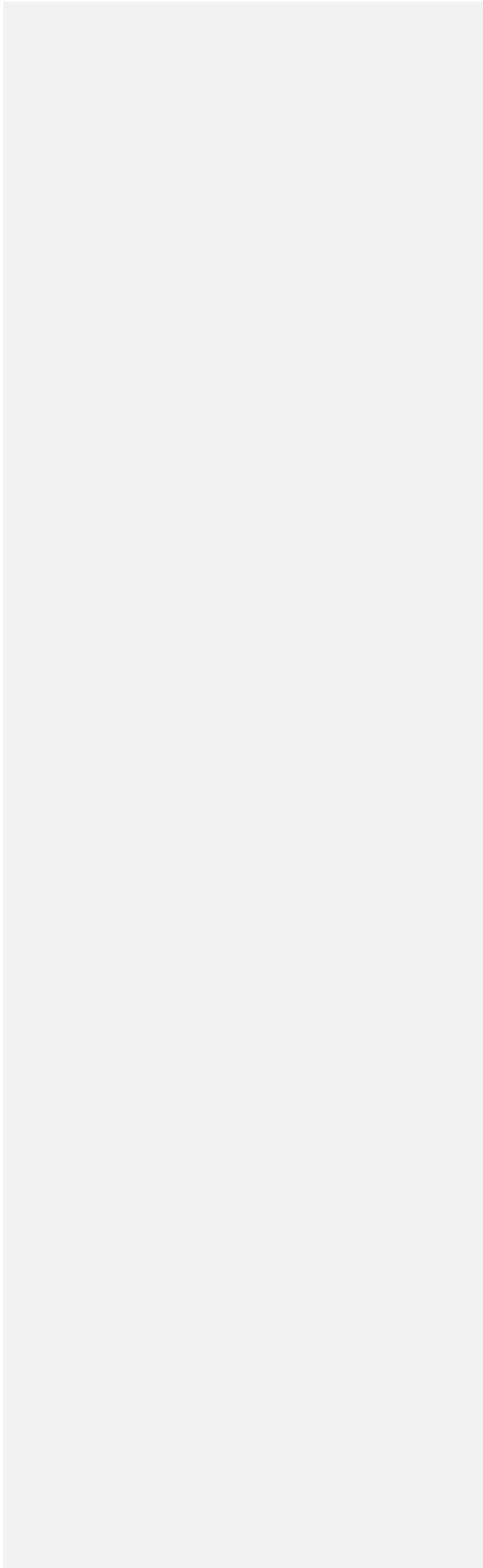
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The 2016–17 budget bill for the state of Ohio includes provisions that modify the alternative framework for teacher evaluations beginning in the 2015–16 school year. Districts may still use the original teacher evaluation framework, but for those electing to use the alternative framework, one or any combination of the following components shall be 15 percent of each teacher’s evaluation: student surveys, teacher self-evaluations, peer review evaluations, student portfolios, or a district-determined component.

This document provides guidance regarding teacher self-evaluations, which are teacher-driven collections of artifacts and professional reflections to demonstrate mastery of instruction. The Ohio standards for teaching ([Standards for Ohio Educators](#)), as well as many of the teaching frameworks currently being used in Ohio, and across the country, highlight the importance of the self-reflective practice as part of what high-quality educators do on a regular basis. Ohio’s educator evaluation and professional growth system presently includes a self-evaluation process. However, this process does not directly result in a separate evaluation score and does not require a systematic reflection on both teaching practices and evidence or artifacts that teachers collect as a part of that reflection. This document aims to clearly define how districts might structure the teacher self-evaluation process to include these types of artifacts and to consider the strength of the artifacts and a teacher’s reflection on those artifacts in determining a separate evaluation score for this alternative component.

Specifically, this document addresses how self-evaluations are used in teacher evaluation systems around the country, the benefits and limitations of their use, and steps for the design of a system that uses teacher self-evaluation as a separate component of the overall education evaluation system.

Use of Self-Evaluation in Teacher Evaluation Systems

It is recommended that self-evaluations be included as a portion of the alternative component of teacher evaluations in a two-step process:

- **Step 1: Plan.** At the beginning of the year, a teacher completes the **Teacher Self-Assessment Tool: Standards-Based Guiding Questions**. While this step is already a part of the OTES, using this tool as part of a multi-step process toward a self-evaluation outcome would require additional steps:
 - Use past evaluations and incorporate that information into the self-evaluation tool to identify strengths and areas of improvement, and use this as the basis for creating a professional growth plan.
 - Use the growth plan, which spells out specific practices or strategies, to address the identified weaknesses.
 - Work with evaluators to identify a timeline for the collection of artifacts and the final submission of the documentation.

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<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Teaching/Educator-Evaluation-System/Ohio-s-Teacher-Evaluation-System/Teacher-Performance-Ratings>

OR

<http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Teaching/Educator-Evaluation-System/Ohio-s-Teacher-Evaluation-System/Alternative-Components/OTES-Self-evaluationLocked-081514.docx.aspx>

OR

http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Teaching/Educator-Equity/Ohio-s-Educator-Standards/StandardsforEducators_revaug10.pdf.aspx

The teacher self-assessment is on pp. 79-83.

- Identify specific artifacts to be collected during the school year that will support the teacher’s work to reach his or her professional growth goals. Artifacts should be aligned by the teacher to the specific domains outlined in the Standards for Ohio Educators for teacher practice. Artifacts might include but are not limited to:
 - » Journal articles that are annotated by the teacher that address focus areas
 - » Lesson plans that show the implementation of new strategies
 - » Meeting notes from working with a teacher, peer-coach, or administrator
 - » Revisions made to assessments or classwork that reflect shifts in teacher practice
 - » Student data that reflects growth based on changes to teacher practice and includes teacher reflections about such changes
 - » Reflections/annotations to lesson plans that identify new thinking or changes to teacher practice
- **Step 2: Implement.** During the school year, a teacher will take the following actions:
 - Participate in professional learning activities that are designed to directly support areas of need as identified in the planning stage. These activities might include but not be limited to:
 - » Attending workshops that address research-driven instructional practices
 - » Reading journal articles that relate to the subject area or pedagogical needs of the teacher
 - » Attending professional learning committee (PLCs) meetings that are focused on specific practices aligned to the Ohio standards for teaching
 - » Completing action-research projects that focus on changes in teaching practice and their impact on student outcomes
 - Collect artifacts and documents that support work toward professional goals.
 - Summarize experiences in a reflection that could include scores on a self-evaluation rubric. The score would be based on the strength of the evidence as it directly aligns to the Ohio standards for teacher practice.
 - Review the self-reflection, artifacts, self-evaluation rubric, and teacher-assigned summative score during the final evaluation conference, and agree on a final summative rating with the evaluator.

Self-Evaluation Used in Practice

A review of current state policies did not identify any examples of the use of teacher self-evaluation as a stand-alone measure in teacher evaluation systems. Rather, in many evaluation and professional development systems, teacher self-evaluation or reflection is just one component of broader measures or of the goal-setting process, and does not receive a separate evaluation score. As is true in some Ohio systems, at the beginning of the year, teachers are asked to reflect on their own skills in a range of professional practices, generally tied to a set of teaching standards, in order to inform goal setting for professional development for the upcoming year. In some systems, the self-evaluation process is ongoing, with teachers conducting self-evaluation at predetermined times throughout the year. Some of these systems

ask that the teacher provide evidence on which the reflection is based, or to support the finding of the reflection. These two approaches are discussed in the following:

Reflection with goal setting that starts at the beginning of the year. Many states and districts ask teachers to engage in a goal-setting process at the start of each year. These goals often form the basis of a professional development plan for the upcoming school year. As one model for self-evaluation, some states tie this goal-setting process to a self-evaluation component that occurs in conference with administrators at beginning and end of the school year. For example, Kentucky asks teachers to use their teaching framework (modeled after the Danielson Framework for Teaching) as the basis for the beginning of the year reflection. Teachers are asked to rate themselves on different elements within the framework and to use those ratings to frame their professional goals for the upcoming year. While these reflections and goal-setting practices are not tied to a stand-alone rating in the Kentucky multiple-measure system, they are sources of evidence that principals use when arriving at a final summative rating. A sample reflection sheet can be found at the Kentucky Department of Education website.

<http://education.ky.gov/teachers/PGES/TPGES/Pages/TPGES-Self-Reflection-and-Professional-Growth-Planning.aspx>

Another example of the reflective process that is used at the beginning of the evaluation cycle can be found in the Teacher Evaluation and Development (TED) System, which was designed by six labor and management innovation teams across New York State. The TED model starts with a teacher's written self-reflection, which is tied to teaching standards that address assessing student needs, curriculum, and school and community climate. The TED self-evaluation tool does not provide a stand-alone score but is embedded in the work that teachers and evaluators engage in to arrive at summative end-of-year ratings. Information about the TED system can be found at

<http://www.nysut.org/resources/special-resources-sites/ted/what-is-ted>. These types of activities may already be part of the district processes related to teacher practice or may be embedded in other parts of the professional responsibilities required as part of student learning objectives (SLOs), Individual Professional Development Plans, Resident Educator programs, or even individualized education programs. It is important that Ohio districts review their current practices and requirements to be sensitive to the workload teachers and evaluators are already shouldering. Districts should make sure that they consider if the addition of teacher self-evaluations add significant value to the professional growth process. Additional consideration should be given to where parallel practices are already in place that might support the additional steps required to fully implement teacher self-evaluations as an alternate component, and to targeting this set of practices to specific grade levels, subject areas, or specific teaching standards within the Ohio standards.

Reflection that is ongoing during the school year. Another example of reflective practice is when teachers are asked to reserve time throughout the academic year to reflect on their performances, the performances of their students, or on other data sources. As outlined in many teaching frameworks, this formative approach is one in which effective teachers are highly engaged. As noted in the Danielson Framework for Teaching, for example "It is through critical reflection that teachers are able to assess the effectiveness of their work and take steps to improve it" (Danielson, 2007). Similarly,

Marzano Center’s teaching observation protocol includes so-called design questions for each of the teaching practices, as well as additional reflection questions that teachers or evaluators can use to identify at which level a teacher is operating. This can be found at <http://www.marzano-center.com/Teacher-Evaluation-2014-Model.pdf>. However, neither the Danielson framework nor the Marzano protocol assign a rating for the reflective process. Districts that select this model might look to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards model, which has teachers reflect on multiple artifacts, including videos of their teaching, samples of student work, and planning documents.¹

For the self-evaluation rubric, districts might focus on the domains of teaching frameworks that allow for the uses of non-student focused evidence when choosing to use teacher self-evaluation as an alternative measure. Using a rubric that focuses on the quality of evidence in support of changes to teacher practice differentiates this self-evaluation from the current practices in place in most districts. Lesson plans, unit plans, or both might, for example, be used in the self-evaluation as evidence of a teacher’s engagement in planning and preparation. A teacher’s self-evaluation might be focused on how the lesson plan or unit plan reflects his or her ability to address multiple learners within the classroom. This would be in contrast to a portfolio where the evidence might be more focused on student work and student outcomes. Similarly, districts might ask teachers to self-evaluate their increased use of formative assessments in the planning of activities to create a measureable outcome. This would not be based on how students did on those assessments per se, but rather on how a teacher chose to adjust instruction to meet the needs of the students based on the results of the formative assessment process. Specific best practices for self-evaluation are discussed later in this guidance document.

Teacher, Evaluator, and District Roles

Roles will need to be clearly defined. To ensure that the self-evaluation process is rigorous and meaningful, the role of each of the stakeholders needs to be clearly defined. Following are some recommendations for the teacher’s role, the evaluator’s role, and for the role of the system or district.

The role of the teacher. The role of the teacher in self-evaluation is very different from the role of the teacher in other evaluation components. The teacher self-assigns an evaluation rating, so the teacher will be more engaged in this process than in other evaluation processes. Specifically teachers need to do the following:

- Be responsible for reviewing the district’s current selected teaching framework and identifying the domains or elements that they select as the focus of their self-evaluations.
- Complete a self-assessment at the beginning of year. (ODE provides such instruments that districts can consider for use.) Teachers might be asked to provide reflections,

¹ Reflection during the year bears some similarity to the use of student portfolios—another alternative measure available to districts in Ohio—but student portfolios obviously focus on student work alone, while a self-evaluation could include student work and also documentation on a teacher’s practice.

evidence, or other documentation that supports the selection of the domains and their self-evaluation starting scores.

- Identify, collect, and organize artifacts that demonstrate the ability to address the framework domains or elements. Depending on the model of self-evaluation selected by the district, specific reflections on each piece of evidence (or artifact) might be required (or suggested) and be included in a portfolio presentation of the self-evaluation. Variations in approaches are not only possible but also likely.
- Self-assign a summative rating using ODE-provided rubrics or scoring tools. The final rating for this component of the evaluation would need to be agreed upon by the teacher and the evaluator. Rubrics should focus on the quality of each reflection and of the evidence.

The role of the evaluator. The evaluator's role in teacher self-evaluations is important to ensuring that the process is rigorous and that the reflections are meaningful in terms of teacher learning and professional growth. Specifically, the evaluators need to do the following:

- Work with each teacher to identify a predetermined set of teaching standards or domains that will be the basis for self-evaluation. Evaluators should focus on those standards or domains that are of greatest need by each teacher but that also align to the goals of the school and/or district. Casting too wide a net can lead to an unfocused reflective process, while casting too narrow a net can lead to limited impact.
- Review the preevaluation. Evaluators can help teachers review past performance ratings and feedback from observations in order to focus the self-evaluation process. Evaluators might also provide each teacher with the results of his or her assessments, student feedback, and evaluations or other information.
- Review the timeline and check-in points for the process to ensure that ongoing reflections, documents, artifact collection, and additional information are collected, organized, and ready for submission. Districts will need to review their current practices and expectations to see if adding this duplicates practices already in place.
- Schedule time to review the reflection based on the districts scoring rubric. This is a teacher self-evaluation, so it should be the task of the evaluator to ask probing questions and to review the evidence and artifacts that each teacher provides, and then agree upon a final score.

The role of the district. District leaders will need to: define what is expected; how self-evaluations will be scored by the teacher; how scores will become 15 percent of each overall evaluation; what role the evaluator has in the process, including what happens if the evaluator and the teacher disagree on the final rating; and design the tools that both the teacher and evaluator will use during the process. These are key steps to ensure that the self-evaluation process is both meaningful and impactful. Specifically, districts also need to do the following:

- Create a form or protocol for the teacher self-assessment process to promote consistency and fairness across schools.

- Clearly define the model of self-evaluation, including how a final score will be determined and what level of collaboration is needed between the teacher and the evaluator.
- Create a scoring rubric that defines the scoring criteria along designated teaching standards and respective performance levels.
- Develop a timeline that includes the initial self-evaluation, interim check-in dates, and the window for final submission by teachers and review of materials by evaluators. Again, districts will need to review their current practices and expectations to see if adding this duplicates practices already in place.
- Districts can create exemplar self-evaluations for training and guidance and specific training for both teachers and evaluators.

Considerations

Financial costs. Using self-evaluations generally require a smaller financial commitment from districts than some of the other alternative measures for evaluation. Although districts will need to develop guidance and guidelines for both teachers and evaluators, conduct trainings, and produce scoring rubrics and templates for use by teachers, there are few additional costs for this measure.

Validity. Teacher self-evaluations are questioned by critics for their fairness at providing a valid measure of teacher effectiveness. Skeptics rightfully acknowledge that self-evaluation is inherently biased. Districts will want to address these concerns by providing training and tools that increase consistency and fairness while acknowledging the importance of self-reflection for the process of teacher self-evaluation. Limiting the weight of the self-evaluation and combining it with other measures of teacher effectiveness will reflect the emphasis on a multiple-measure evaluation. If done well, the use of self-evaluations can further reinforce the importance of the framework for teaching.

Summary of Recommendations on Using Self-Evaluations as Measures in Teacher Evaluations

The following is a summary of guidance, best practices, and recommendations that districts can choose to implement as a part of the alternative evaluation framework in the OTEs system:

- Tie teacher self-evaluations to the district’s framework for teaching. Ensure that the same standards and expectations are clearly communicated among administrators, instructional leaders, evaluators, and teachers.
- Tailor the design of the self-evaluation system and the tools, including the rubrics and guidance documents, to meet the district’s needs and conditions in the following ways:

- If there are components of the teaching standards that reflect building and/or district priorities, those components should be highlighted in the self-evaluation process. For example, if planning and preparation are a priority in the district, teacher self-evaluations can be focused around this domain. Examples that highlight specific goals, evidence, and outcomes focused on planning and preparation would be developed and used in training with administrators, evaluators, and teachers.
- For teachers who are not new to the district, consider using past observations or other past performance data as the basis for at least some of the domains that teachers reflect on for their self-evaluations. Domains highlighted in past evaluations as areas in need of reinforcement can be selected for further concentration through the self-evaluation process. Districts may choose to highlight instructional practices aligned with district goals through guidance documents.
- Include partners such as teachers, principals, and union leaders in planning for the system. Examples include the following:
 - Provide forums for teachers and principals to share their views on self-evaluation at multiple points in the development and implementation phases. Allow educators multiple opportunities to raise questions prior to finalizing the system’s design. Find opportunities where self-evaluation is already in place. Determine what worked and what resources were required to make the process sustainable?
 - Provide clear examples of how certain types of self-evaluation would look in practice. Actively address any concerns that may come up from practitioners while emphasizing fairness with teachers and evaluators.
- Consider the following practices when designing individual models:
 - Provide clear rubrics to use for scoring for both the beginning of year (if applicable) and end-of-year summative scoring.
 - Provide examples and exemplar self-evaluations that can be used as models.
 - Include guidance around aligning artifacts to the Ohio standards for teacher practice as well as additional training on the standards.
 - Involve principals and other evaluators early in the design process. Training should ground self-evaluations in the district’s standards for teaching and evaluation expectations.
 - Create opportunities for ongoing training and collaboration among administrators and teachers.
 - Consider the union’s role in designing and communicating about the system. Successful collaborations can enhance stakeholder support and build trust in the system. Use building representatives as key point persons in the district to communicate the value and parameters of the self-evaluation process.

Possible sources of data to be used for teacher self-evaluations include the following:

- Prior year observation documents
- Prior year teacher professional development plans
- Feedback from peer evaluations or observations
- Student survey results either from a formal student survey or an informal teacher-created student survey
- Climate survey data
- Results of action research projects
- Results or findings of collaborative teams (e.g. PLCs, data teams, department teams, grade-level teams)

Possible sources of evidence that supports a teacher's final self-evaluation score include the following:

- Samples of lesson plans and unit plans
- Samples of student work
- Samples of communications between the teacher and families
- Videos of the teacher in the classroom
- Agendas and other documents from teacher-run professional development sessions
- Reflection journals
- Annotated articles from professional journals

Resources

A number of states have built teacher self-evaluations into their multiple-measures evaluation systems. The National Board for Professional Teacher Standards also includes self-evaluation in its requirements for board certification. The following highlights examples of implementation of self-evaluations:

The Washington State Teacher/Principal Evaluation Project has resources focused on many different aspects of teacher and principal evaluations, including a teacher self-assessment form, which can be found at <http://tpep-wa.org/wp-content/uploads/ksd-measures-evidence.pdf>

New York State has multiple resources for districts seeking to incorporate teacher self-reflection into teacher evaluations. Resources include the following:

- a. A teacher evaluation rubric can be found at <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/teachers-leaders/practic rubrics/Docs/marshall-teacher-rubric-jan-2014.pdf>
- b. A teacher self-assessment guidance document can be found at <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/teachers-leaders/practic rubrics/Docs/SilverStrongSelfAssessmentRubric.pdf>

The Kentucky State Department of Education has resources available that include information on the self-reflection process, which is part of their Professional Growth and Effectiveness System. These resources can be found at <http://education.ky.gov/teachers/PGES/TPGES/Pages/TPGES-Self-Reflection-and-Professional-Growth-Planning.aspx>

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has resources on its use of teacher self-reflection, which can be found at <http://www.nbpts.org/>

References

[Danielson, C. \(2007\). *Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.](#)

[Marzano, R.J. & Toth, M. \(2013\) *Teacher evaluation that makes a difference: A new model for teacher growth and student achievement*.](#)

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