



Frequently Asked Questions

The Rhode Island Model Educator Evaluation System



Why is Rhode Island developing an educator evaluation system?

The most important way we can help our students succeed is to make sure they have effective teachers in every classroom and effective leaders in every school. We also know that, for teachers to be effective, they need effective administrators leading their schools. An effective evaluation system will support all administrators and teachers in achieving their personal best while developing those who need to improve in order for their students to learn and achieve. The Rhode Island Model uses multiple measures to assess performance and provides feedback on many dimensions of professional practice, professional responsibilities and student learning.



Who will be evaluated, and when will the process begin?

Field testing of the Rhode Island Model Educator Evaluation System began in March 2011. This process is part of RIDE's continuing effort to ensure a thoughtfully designed system that incorporates the insights and suggestions of teachers and administrators. The system will be gradually introduced statewide during the 2011-2012 school year. School-based administrators and teachers in all districts will participate in each element of the evaluation process, at varying levels, during this first year of implementation in an effort to help everyone feel comfortable with the process. Central office administrators and school support personnel will participate in the evaluation process in 2012-2013. In most cases, teachers will be evaluated by their school principal. On occasion, they may be evaluated by a trained evaluator with relevant content knowledge or instructional expertise. School-based administrators will be evaluated by superintendents or their designees.



How was the Rhode Island Model created?

More than 100 educators from 23 districts and organizations throughout the Ocean State participated in the development of the Rhode Island Model Educator Evaluation System. Six working groups refined the content, and an advisory panel comprised of educators, parents and students from around the state reviewed their work. RIDE will continue to improve the evaluation system based on feedback from educators during the first year of gradual implementation.



How do we know the evaluations will be fair?

An evaluation based on multiple measures, including observations of practice and evidence of student learning, provides the best and most complete assessment of educator effectiveness. Neither observations nor test scores alone should be the sole basis of an evaluation. Many safeguards have been built into the system, including training for evaluators, ongoing refinement of the system and the opportunity to review an evaluation if a teacher or administrator feels it is inaccurate.



How will educators be supported if they are rated ineffective or minimally effective?

Any administrator or teacher who receives a rating of minimally effective or ineffective must have the opportunity to improve. With the support of the evaluator, he or she will create an improvement plan, identify sources of support and training, as well as benchmarks and timelines for improvement. Our goal is to have an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective leader in every school.



What, specifically, will be evaluated?

The evaluation focuses on three areas of performance: professional practice, professional responsibility and student learning. You may review the working draft of the RI Model at www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation.

Professional Practice

Professional Practice encompasses a spectrum of knowledge and skills that result in effective instruction, based on the Rhode Island Professional Teaching Standards, which were developed by a working group of teachers, administrators, and other educators from around the state. For example, teachers will be evaluated on the implementation of lesson plans, use of critical thinking tools, strategies to engage students and the ability to create a safe learning environment. School-based administrators will be evaluated on elements relating to their leadership skills, such as the ability to establish and maintain a school mission or the ability to develop a strong collaborative culture.

Professional Responsibility

Professional responsibility relates to the educator's role and responsibility within the learning community, including participation in decision making, willingness to help and be helped by others in support of student learning, and efforts to advocate for students.

Student Learning

Student learning is best measured by looking at multiple sources. Evaluators will work with both teachers and school-based administrators to set Student Learning Objectives that measure and assess the growth of student learning in every classroom. Student learning objectives are specific, measurable goals based on Rhode Island's content standards or other nationally recognized standards that may be aligned with the School Improvement Plan and the district's strategic plan. These goals are not student-specific; they are classroom-wide or relating to specific groupings of students within a classroom.

The Rhode Island Growth Model will also be used to measure student learning for teachers in NECAP-tested grades (3-7) who teach math or English Language Arts. For teachers, the RI Growth Model rating is based on how a teacher's students progressed in comparison to other students throughout the state who had similar scores in previous years. To increase the accuracy and precision of this growth rating, the score will reflect two years' worth of assessment data. The RI Growth Model will also be used as an evaluation tool for school-based administrators, where applicable, in combination with Student Learning Objectives.



What is the long-term commitment to the new evaluation system?

Rhode Island's winning application to Race to the Top, which netted \$75 million in federal funds included a commitment to the creation of an educator evaluation system focused on professional growth and student learning. RIDE is working with many experts to design and implement a system tailored to the specific concerns of Rhode Island students, teachers and schools. In addition to RIDE's in-house experts, a team of evaluation specialists is being trained to support schools with the ongoing evaluation process.

For more information, visit www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation.