

*A Report to the  
Wyoming Select  
Committee on  
Statewide Education  
Accountability*

# The Wyoming Model Leader and Educator Support and Evaluation System



*From The Wyoming Advisory Committee to the  
Select Committee on Statewide Education Accountability*

*With Support from the Center for Assessment*

**FEBRUARY 21, 2014**

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### Acknowledgments

*In addition to the Advisory Committee, the following individuals contributed to the design of the system and the production of the report. They attended most Advisory Committee meetings and offered important comments on the draft report.*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*This document outlines methods necessary for implementing evaluation systems and indicates where the requirements should be “tight” or more standardized across districts and where flexibility is encouraged.*

The Advisory Committee to the Wyoming Select Committee on Educational Accountability was charged with carrying out the recommendations put forth in the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act of 2012 (WEA 65) and House Bill 0072 (2013 Chapter 167). The Advisory Committee’s specific charge was to design a State Model for educator evaluation in Wyoming. The Select Committee wanted a balance between state and local control and, in keeping with Wyoming’s educational philosophy, it placed considerable authority for design and implementation with local educational leaders and teachers. This document outlines methods necessary for implementing evaluation systems and indicates where the requirements should be “tight” or more standardized across districts and where flexibility is encouraged.

Both leader and teacher support and evaluation systems are presented in this document, because both systems must work coherently in order for teaching and learning to improve and for the goals of the system to be realized. The design of both systems was guided by six key principles, but the primary guiding principle is:

*Wyoming’s leader and educator evaluation system supports and promotes increases in student learning in Wyoming schools such that all Wyoming students graduate ready for college or careers. The Advisory Committee believes that both career and college readiness require a range of knowledge and, skills and dispositions beyond simply strong performance in language arts and mathematics. The system must be designed coherently to support a system of continuous school improvement. A coherent system ensures the school, leader, and educator evaluation and support systems send consistent messages and foster collaboration among educators, administrators, and other stakeholders, including civic leaders, business representatives, and parents.*

The leader system is designed so that school leaders will be evaluated against seven standards of leadership. Leaders will be evaluated by their supervisors every year, but they are not expected to be evaluated against all seven standards each year, except for Standard 1: *Unwavering Focus on Student Achievement and Growth*. Further, the Advisory Committee recommends using a decision panel to combine the multiple indicators in the system and to weight Standard 1 at least one-third of the overall rating. Most importantly, the Advisory Committee strongly recommends ensuring that supervisors are well trained to both carry out the evaluation and to support improvement of their school leaders.

Wyoming educators will be evaluated against ten standards (based on the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Model Core Teaching Standards) grouped into four practice domains:


- ✓ Learner and Learning
- ✓ Content Knowledge
- ✓ Instructional Practice
- ✓ Professional Responsibility

Additionally, Wyoming educators will be evaluated for their contributions to student learning, which essentially becomes a fifth domain. The Advisory Committee recommends weighting each of these domains equally, or approximately 20% each.

The Advisory Committee recognized the implementation challenge of evaluating all teachers on all ten standards each year, so the committee recommended differentiating the evaluation system such that teachers rated “effective” will receive a full summative evaluation once every three years, but will still receive formative feedback regularly and their student learning results every year. Novice and teachers not yet rated effective will receive yearly summative evaluations. Like the leader evaluation system, the educator system can only work if school leaders are well trained to carry out the evaluation and support their teachers as they work to improve.



The Advisory Committee emphasizes that both systems will take time and a great deal of support in order for high-fidelity implementation to occur. The pilot period for both systems should produce rich data to help fine tune and improve the systems. The Advisory Committee stands ready to assist the Wyoming Department of Education and other entities to design support structures for helping improve local and state-level implementation. Implementing the leader and educator systems will require significant work, but it is work worth doing to improve student outcomes in Wyoming.

A photograph of a classroom. In the foreground, a student with long dark hair, wearing a light blue shirt, is seen from behind with their right hand raised high. In the background, a teacher with blonde hair, wearing a grey top, is smiling and holding a blue folder. Other students are also visible with their hands raised. The classroom has a green chalkboard and wooden desks.

*The Advisory Committee intends for the Model System to be used by districts as the basis for their local systems. The Model System will not be “plug and play.” Local districts still will have many decisions to make, but this Model System is designed to make that job considerably easier.*

# WYOMING LEADER AND EDUCATOR SUPPORT AND EVALUATION SYSTEM

## Introduction

*All leader and educator evaluation systems must be designed to support a continuous improvement model; one that supports moving Wyoming educators and Wyoming education from “good to great.”*

The Advisory Committee to the Wyoming Select Committee on Educational Accountability was charged with carrying out the recommendations put forth in the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act of 2012 (WEA 65) and House Bill 0072 (2013 Chapter 167). The Advisory Committee’s specific charge was to design a State Model for educator evaluation in Wyoming. The Select Committee wanted a balance between state and local control and, in keeping with Wyoming’s educational philosophy, it placed considerable authority for design and implementation with local educational leaders and teachers. In order to best support the work of districts, the Advisory Committee produced this document: The Wyoming State Model Leader and Educator Support and Evaluation System. The document outlines methods necessary for implementing evaluation systems and indicates where the requirements should be “tight” or more standardized across districts and where flexibility is encouraged. The Advisory Committee intends for the Model System –to be used by districts as the basis for their local systems. The Model System will not be “plug and play.” Local districts still will have many decisions to make, but this Model System is designed to make that job considerably easier.

A critical aspect of the system is the intentional coherence within the system and with other educational accountability systems in Wyoming. A coherent system would use information from school accountability and other relevant school and district systems, such as the district multiple measures assessment system, to supplement the information generated from leader and educator evaluations. For example, a school that has demonstrated high achievement and admirable student growth rates on the statewide achievement tests provides at least some evidence of high quality education in the school. This suggests the State can trust that educators in the building are performing well. Building off of information from school accountability does not relieve school districts from implementing leader and educator evaluation systems, but the state would have to provide far less oversight of such personnel evaluation systems in high performing schools.

## Key Principles

The following principles guided the development of the Wyoming State Model Leader and Educator Support and Evaluation System. The Advisory Committee based the development of the various components of the system on these principles, which are at the heart of the recommendations in this document. The primary purpose of the system is to maximize student learning and improvements in student learning. All of the following principles support that primary purpose.

1. Wyoming’s leader and educator evaluation system supports and promotes increases in student learning in Wyoming schools such that all Wyoming students graduate ready for college or careers. The Advisory Committee believes that both career and college readiness require a range of knowledge and, skills and dispositions beyond simply strong performance in language arts and mathematics. The system must be designed coherently to support a system of continuous school improvement. A coherent system ensures the school, leader, and educator evaluation and support systems send consistent messages and foster collaboration among educators, administrators, and other stakeholders, including civic leaders, business representatives, and parents.
2. The State Model and locally-aligned versions of the system shall be designed to promote opportunities for meaningful professional growth of all educators by providing specific and timely feedback on multiple aspects of professional practice and student learning.

3. The system must be designed and implemented with integrity. A system designed with integrity will be transparent such that all relevant participants clearly understand the expectations.
4. The State Model must be flexible to best fit local contexts and needs. Local evaluation systems, designed collaboratively by leaders and educators also include input gathered from parents and community members.
5. The system will provide credible information to support hiring, placement, and career advancement decisions.
6. The system must be supported by local and state policy makers to ensure that leaders and educators have the proper opportunities and resources to successfully implement the system.

Finally, the Advisory Committee emphasizes throughout this document that all leader and educator evaluation systems must be designed to support a continuous improvement model; one that supports moving Wyoming educators and Wyoming education from “good to great.”

### ***Structure of the Document***

This document presents both the State Model Leader and the State Model Educator evaluation systems in an effort to ensure coherence between the two systems. The first two sections are common to both systems. However, for clarity of presentation, we present the details of the leader evaluation system first, followed by the educator evaluation system. The last section of the document once again brings the two systems together.

The Advisory Committee wants to make clear that the leader evaluation system presented here focuses only on school building-level leadership—principals and assistant principals. The Advisory Committee recognizes the importance of evaluating central office personnel and is committed to creating frameworks for doing so during the next interim, but such issues are beyond the scope of this report. The Advisory Committee will offer its advice and expertise regarding best practices for central office leadership evaluation and non-instructional personnel during the 2014 interim.

## **THE WYOMING LEADER SUPPORT AND EVALUATION SYSTEM**

### ***General Evaluation Framework of the Wyoming Leader Support and Evaluation Model***

The general evaluation framework of the Wyoming State Model Leader evaluation system describes the overall approach for how districts following the State Model would approach the data collection used in evaluating educational leaders. The State Model follows from the key principles outlined at the beginning of this document. There are seven standards of educational leadership practice that begin to outline the evaluation criteria for leaders and paint a picture of effective leadership in Wyoming schools. The State Model includes the use of multiple measures of each standard when possible and when the multiple measures improve the validity of the evaluation decision. All local leader evaluation systems shall include the elements discussed below.

**Seven standards of educational leadership practice form the basis of effective leadership in Wyoming schools:**

- Standard 1:** Unwavering Focus on Student Achievement and Growth
- Standard 2:** Instructional and Assessment Leadership
- Standard 3:** Developing and Supporting a Learning Organization
- Standard 4:** Vision, Mission, and Culture





**Standard 5:** Efficient and Effective Management

**Standard 6:** Ethics and Professionalism

**Standard 7:** Communication and Community Engagement

*The Advisory Committee strongly recommends that the State support the development of an evaluation instrument designed specifically for evaluating the Wyoming leadership standards.*

Districts will use a variety of tools and approaches to measure the standards. The Advisory Committee does not want to limit the options to specific tools, but recommends requiring all local systems to measure the seven standards of effective leadership. District leaders will be expected to evaluate and document the degree to which its selected tool or tools appropriately reflects the content and intent of the standards. However, given that Wyoming's standards for educational leaders are tailored to the needs of improving leadership, the **Advisory Committee strongly recommends that the State support the development of an evaluation instrument designed specifically for evaluating the Wyoming leadership standards.** The Advisory Committee envisions collaborating on such work with WDE during the 2014 interim.

Multiple approaches and measures of data collection will be necessary to ensure the evaluation is tailored to the complex nature of building leadership. The Advisory Committee recognizes, however, the specific focus of each principal's yearly evaluation must prioritize the standards for that particular year and that particular leader. Therefore, the Committee recommends that each leader complete a self-assessment each year as the foundation for a goal setting meeting with the evaluator. The self assessment and collaboratively established goals will be used to focus the evaluation.

The Advisory Committee recommends requiring districts to use research-based approaches and to provide evidence that the system is being implemented to measure leader performance against the seven standards. The Advisory Committee further recommends that leaders have input into the specific standards by which they will be evaluated and on the structure of the evaluation. **Finally, this system will not lead to valid outcomes unless those conducting the evaluations—superintendents or their designees—have the knowledge, skills, and practice to do so. The Advisory Committee strongly recommends that supervisors participate in training to prepare them to do this work well.**

### ***Specific Measurement Framework for the Wyoming Leader Model System***

The specific measurement framework adds details guide the data collection methods in order to successfully conduct leader evaluations. Such a detailed measurement model describes the type and frequency of data collection approaches for each of the major components of the model. The specific measurement approach presented here is not detailed enough to adopt in a "plug and play" fashion, but it is intended to provide recommendations for how data should be collected to support leader evaluation in Wyoming.

The following section includes a brief review of the seven standards and outlines evidence that could shed light on leader performance related to the specific standard. The Committee also provides recommendations (not requirements) for the type of data (and methods of analyzing the data) that may provide the evidence of the performance of leaders on the specific standard. The Advisory Committee strongly recommends that evidence collected to document leader performance related to each standard should lead to clear and direct improvement actions (i.e., "actionable information"). This recommendation addresses the nature of the data collected, the methods by which the data are reported, and feedback provided to building leaders. In other words, the nature of the evidence should lead to specific actions that a leader could use to improve the performance of his/her school, as opposed to some esoteric recommendation that had little bearing on near term practice. **As part of the development of a Wyoming-specific leader evaluation instrument, WDE and the Advisory Committee will outline specific measurement procedures that can be used to operationalize this notion of "actionable information."**



## *Standards for Wyoming Educational Leaders*

### **Standard 1: Unwavering Focus on Student Achievement and Growth**

Effective principals ensure that their school's primary focus is maximizing the learning and growth of all students.

**Given the critical influence of the school leader on student achievement, the Advisory Committee recommends that Standard 1 must be included in the evaluation of every leader, every year.**

**EXPECTED EVIDENCE OF IMPACT.** Increases in student achievement over multiple years and student longitudinal growth, as well as improvement (or maintenance for high performing schools) of other important outcomes and processes, such as equity, attendance and graduation rates.

**SOURCES OF DATA.** The Wyoming Leader Evaluation Model requires incorporating student achievement and growth into evaluations as reflected in Standard 1.

- 1. The Committee recommends that overall achievement and growth on state assessments comprise a major component of Standard 1, and recommends using the results of the school accountability system as the bulk of the Standard 1 score.**
2. Additionally, results from district/school common assessments in all available subject areas and grade levels, disaggregated according to relevant student groups, would be an important source of evidence of student learning. Data from local assessments would be considered in addition to the formal school accountability results.

### **Standards 2 and 3**

The following two standards describe the principal as an instructional leader. Standard 2 focuses on leadership for the instruction of students, while Standard 3 describes the qualities of a principal as a leader of adult learning. Both are critical for creating a school that is truly a learning organization.

### **Standard 2: Instructional and Assessment Leadership focusing on student learning**

Principals lead the implementation of a rigorous and relevant curriculum and assessment system. They work collaboratively with educators to implement a common instructional framework that aligns curriculum with teaching, assessment, and learning, and provides a common language for instructional quality that guides teacher conversation, practice, observation, evaluation, and feedback. They know a full range of pedagogy, and ensure that all adults have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to promote student success.

**EXPECTED EVIDENCE OF IMPACT.** The Advisory Committee noted that the development and adoption of curriculum is generally a district responsibility, but the quality of implementation largely falls to the school. Therefore, a major source of evidence related to Standard 2 is the degree to which a principal leads the high fidelity implementation of the district's curriculum, especially the ways in which the principal uses data to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of curricular implementation. In this case, we should see evidence that teachers in the school are increasing in their skills around implementation of curriculum and instruction. The Advisory Committee would expect a principal performing well on this standard to have a sound knowledge of research-based instructional and assessment methods, including using multiple forms of assessment to improve instruction and programs. These leaders actively share these strategies with their staffs, and that sharing filters down to the school's classrooms. The school staff would also recognize the principal as an instructional leader—one capable of promoting the development of curricular, instructional, and assessment expertise. There would be evidence that expertise among educators in the school is continuing to increase.



*One of the most important aspects of being an effective instructional leader is the implementation of a high quality educator evaluation system that helps educators improve their performance. This requires leaders to judge differences in instructional quality and provide useful feedback to educators in order to improve their instructional and assessment practices.*

**SOURCES OF DATA.** It is critical for an effective leader to demonstrate effectiveness at actively leading their personnel to ensure that students are provided high quality instruction and meaningful learning opportunities. As such, the following are potential sources of evidence for Standard 2. They focus on documenting strategies to support higher fidelity implementation of curriculum and instruction. The district leadership needs to ensure the validity of the inferences related to performance on the standards based on specific sources of data.

1. Unit/lesson plans from a sample of educators that indicate high expectations of students in specific courses and content areas.
2. Syllabi from specific courses and/or curriculum maps documenting students' rich and relevant learning opportunities.
3. Student work from units, including approaches that help faculty develop shared understandings and expectations of high quality student work reflecting deeper learning.
4. Monitoring student assessment and grading practices to ensure that assessments support meaningful learning.
5. Evidence of high quality instruction from walk-through visits or other types of observation.
6. Surveys/interviews of staff members regarding their views, and evidence that the principal is an instructional/assessment leader.

### **Standard 3: Developing and Supporting a Learning Organization**

Effective principals lead the implementation of a high quality educator support and evaluation system. They are courageous, willing to make difficult decisions for the good of the organization and the students. Effective principals have a solid understanding of adult learning. They create and/or support collaborative learning organizations to foster improvements in teacher practices and student learning. They focus on maximizing student outcomes and give such initiatives the time and support to work. They lead the evaluation of new and existing programs as part of a continuous improvement process.

**EXPECTED EVIDENCE OF IMPACT.** One of the most important aspects of being an effective instructional leader is the implementation of a high quality educator evaluation system that helps educators improve their performance. This requires leaders to judge differences in instructional quality and provide useful feedback to educators in order to improve their instructional and assessment practices. Supervisors should see evidence of leaders coaching, mentoring, and supporting ineffective educators, and potentially making the "tough call" and potentially fire underperforming educators. Additionally, effective leaders must possess a demonstrated understanding of adult learning to effectively manage induction systems and professional development in their schools. They should rely on research-based professional development approaches for improving the capabilities of all school personnel, with evidence that these opportunities translate into deeper understanding on the part of the staff, and eventually more effective practices. Finally, effective leaders employ focused, research-based strategies to improve student outcomes and the school as a whole. Furthermore, they have systems in place to evaluate the quality of the programs and their implementation to both report to stakeholders and use the data for continuous improvement. There should also be evidence among staff of emerging leaders and shared leadership.

**SOURCES OF DATA.** There are many sources of data to help supervisors make judgments about leaders on this standard. These include:

1. Documentation of the evaluations and feedback provided to a range of educators, including a rationale for why and how this feedback was

*Effective leaders employ focused, research-based strategies to improve student outcomes and the school as a whole.*

provided and, most importantly, how the educator was able to **act on this feedback** leading to documented improvements in practice. These data would also include evidence of follow-up and monitoring by the leader to ensure successful actions.

2. Comparison of judgments of instructional quality between the leader and known experts (via online tools or other means) and other school leaders.
3. The data from the full set of educator evaluations may be used to evaluate how the principal is evaluating educators in terms of “overrating” or “underrating” staff members.
4. The school professional development plan and other support strategies that clearly reflect an understanding of adult learning. Additionally, there should be evidence that the leader is using the “collective” data from all educator evaluations to structure professional development and support for all staff.
5. Plans and documentation of meetings and other approaches for building expertise among staff.
6. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) may show how the principal has created a learning organization. The Advisory Committee does not expect the school/district to create another SIP for the purpose of the leader evaluation.
7. Documentation that professional development results are regularly evaluated empirically to determine if the programs had any effect on practice and/or student performance.
8. Observations and/or documentation of the ways in which the leader analyzes relevant data to reflect on and improve the quality of programs and instruction. This includes evidence of the use of high quality data, appropriate analyses (e.g., avoid over or under generalizations), and evidence of how these data were used to drive continuous improvement.
9. Observations of the principal leading professional development, conducting classroom observations, and other activities that foster adult learning in the school. This requires the supervisor to conduct some classroom observations with the principal, or otherwise observe the principal doing these observations and pre/post interviews.
10. Staff survey responses should indicate that high quality feedback is provided by the leader in conjunction with the evaluations. These survey responses should also indicate that a high quality of support and professional development is provided at the building and district level to improve educator performance. There should be evidence documenting how the leader uses the survey results to improve performance at the school. [Note that the Advisory Committee does not expect the district to create its own surveys because of the additional workload and required expertise necessary to create valid surveys. Rather, this should be the responsibility of WDE in collaboration with district leaders.]

#### **Standard 4: Vision, Mission, and Culture**

Effective principals inspire and nurture a culture of high expectations, where actions support the common values and beliefs of the organization, including a clear focus on promoting social justice throughout the system. Effective principals demonstrate energy, enthusiasm, and commitment for student learning. These principals build productive relationships that foster collaboration. They embrace diversity and honor the culture of the students, adults, and larger community, while ensuring equity in expectations, opportunities and outcomes. They create and maintain a positive school climate with a trusting, safe environment that promotes effective student learning and adult practice.



*There is no doubt that an effective leader establishes and communicates a positive vision for the school. Many observers indicate they can “feel it” when a school is infused with a positive climate.*

*Effective principals ensure that their schools are safe and supportive places for learning.*

**EXPECTED EVIDENCE OF IMPACT.** There should be evidence that the high expectations for all students established by the leader are shared among all members of the school community. It will be clear to all staff and students that the leader possesses an enthusiastic commitment to maximizing student learning and related outcomes. All students and staff feel valued and respected. More concretely, tangible artifacts like schedules, teacher assignments, and other day-to-day actions reflect concerns about social justice and equality of educational opportunities (e.g., students are not denied critical opportunities due to tracking and or the assignment of the “best” teachers to the highest performing students).

**SOURCES OF DATA.** There is no doubt that an effective leader establishes and communicates a positive vision for the school. Many observers indicate they can “feel it” when a school is infused with a positive climate, but empirically documenting this is a bit more challenging. Nevertheless, the following are approaches for collecting data about a leader’s capacity for ensuring the school has a positive vision, mission, and culture.

1. Observations by the supervisor and others as designated by the superintendent and agreed to by the school leader (e.g., key central office instructional leadership personnel) about the ways in which the leader incorporates the school’s vision and mission when communicating about various programs.
2. Staff survey and interview responses about the degree to which the school holds all students to high expectations and the ways in which the leader fosters a culture where students and staff feel valued and respected and is enthusiastic in his/her commitment to maximizing student outcomes.
3. Surveys of students and parents about their views about the school climate and culture, including the degree to which they feel like the school leader and staff are helping to maximize student learning and personalization.
4. Documentation of how key decisions are made in support of the vision/mission.
5. Records of the infractions of student conduct codes and the consequences.
6. The number and trend in reported bullying and harassment incidents.
7. “Exit survey” of students/family that leave the school documenting their experiences and opinions.
8. Overall achievement (“GPA”) of the school and how it reconciles with other data sources.
9. The postsecondary plans of the students in the school (high school only).
10. The school’s documented plans to address the needs of those most at risk for school failure including monitoring course failures, truancy/absenteeism, and at-risk behavior.
11. Documentation of absentee rates of teachers and habitual absences and trends of these indicators.
12. Schedules, class-assignments, etc reflect equity concerns to the maximum extent possible, including an obvious attempt to balance the quality of instruction across all student groups and performance levels.

#### **Standard 5: Organizational Management and School Safety**

Effective principals ensure that their schools are safe and supportive places for learning. They lead the adaptation and monitoring of operational systems and processes to ensure they are efficiently leading a high-performing organization focused on high-quality teaching and learning. Effective leaders limit the number of initiatives and ensure that whatever programs and strategies are implemented in their school is supported by the best research available. These



leaders effectively guide their organizations in times of change. They build organizational capacity by developing leadership in others.

**EXPECTED EVIDENCE OF IMPACT.** The effective leader has systems in place to ensure the safety of the students and staff from external as well as internal (e.g., bullying) threats to safety.

There should be evidence that the leader prioritizes the security initiatives at the school and ensures they are research-based to the extent possible. It should be clear that the leader allocates resources to support the highest priority work of the school, with a schedule designed to maximize student learning. In other words, core instructional time is strengthened and protected. An effective principal must manage the logistical and data demands of an educator evaluation system to ensure it focuses on improving teachers.

**SOURCES OF DATA.** There are various sources of evidence that could inform determinations of leader quality related to Standard 5, many of which are management and budget documents and survey responses from educators and others.

1. Documentation of the educator evaluation schedule and a clear description of the evaluation processes used in the school.
2. The School Improvement Plan may offer evidence for how the school strategically and coherently connects current initiatives (including a research rationale supporting each) with past and future initiatives. This plan is based on analyses of relevant assessment data, including the school performance report, and should be coherent with the district improvement plan.
3. Budget documents are structured in ways that illustrate how programmatic priorities are reflected in the budget.
4. Staff survey and interview responses about school management and distributed leadership.
5. Review of management plans and documents, including self-reflection.
6. Documentation of an up-to-date emergency response system and other safety systems.
7. Evidence of plans and activities to address bullying and related school discipline concerns.

#### **Standard 6: Ethics and Professionalism**

Effective principals are ethical and lead with integrity. They follow all school, district, and state rules and articulate their expectation that all staff and students do the same. They establish a culture in which exemplary ethical behavior is expected and practiced by all members of the school community. Effective principals are important contributors to district initiatives as representatives of their school and for the greater good of the district.

**EXPECTED EVIDENCE OF IMPACT.** There should be evidence that leaders follow applicable rules and laws. Effective principals are respected and seen as being fair and just by staff, students, and the school community. Further, staff and students demonstrate ethical, just, and fair behavior. Effective principals build coherence between the work of the school and the district as a whole, promoting a sense of being a critical part of a larger system.

**SOURCES OF DATA.** It may be difficult to envision hard or quantitative evidence regarding this standard, but observations and perceptions of others are valuable sources of evidence.

1. Supervisor and information from peer leaders (e.g., leaders from other buildings in the district) may indicate how the leader adheres to rules and laws and interacts with others.



*Effective principals are seen and known by the community as respected advocates for the school and its students. These principals use multiple methods of communication and dissemination to ensure that all parents have opportunities to learn about their students' education.*

2. Staff survey and interview responses indicate the degree to which the leader is respected and seen as fair and just.
3. Student surveys demonstrate a positive school climate where diversity is respected and celebrated.
4. Parent and community survey responses indicate the degree to which the leader is respected and seen as fair.
5. There is clear evidence that the leader adheres to established codes of conduct and professional standards.
6. Staff members, students, and other stakeholders say that the leader communicates clearly high expectations for ethical behavior.
7. Supervisor observations and leader (and staff) participation on district committees show the leader understands the district's vision, mission and goals.
8. The leader actively contributes to the profession— particularly at the district level, but also at the state level and through professional associations.

#### **Standard 7: Communication and Community Engagement**

Effective principals successfully advocate internally and externally to advance the organization's vision and mission. These principals recognize that schools and their communities are closely linked and, in turn, share successes and face challenges together. These principals effectively communicate with a range of stakeholders, from students and teachers to parents and members of the larger community to advocate for all students and their school. Community engagement efforts (e.g., surveys, committees, task forces, service learning projects) provide an effective and necessary means to assess successes and address challenges.

**EXPECTED EVIDENCE OF IMPACT.** Effective principals are seen and known by the community as respected advocates for the school and its students. These principals use multiple methods of communication and dissemination to ensure that all parents have opportunities to learn about their students' education. Additionally, effective principals use multiple methods of communication to engage the larger community.

**SOURCES OF DATA.** Fortunately, a leader with an effective communication system will produce a record that can serve as evidence for this standard. Such sources of evidence could include:

1. Documented relationships with key school and community groups such as the PTA and civic/business groups.
2. A review and evaluation of the effectiveness of the various modes of communication. This could include meeting logs and summaries of meeting outcomes.
3. Staff survey and interview responses about the quality and quantity of communication.
4. Parent and community survey responses about their awareness of and support of various school programs, events, and policies.
5. Documentation of efforts to bring in disenfranchised parents and a regular evaluation of the effectiveness of these efforts.

All Wyoming districts will classify all school leaders, as **highly effective, effective, needs improvement, and ineffective** based on measures of the standards for professional practice and measures of student performance.

## Performance Level Descriptors

All Wyoming schools, as determined by their districts, will classify all school leaders, as **highly effective, effective, needs improvement, and ineffective** based on measures of the standards for professional practice and measures of student performance. The evaluation system will produce an overall rating for each leader. To arrive at an overall rating, a description of performance that characterizes the types of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behaviors of an “effective” leader (as well as other levels) must be described. Further, if there is any hope of comparable ratings across the state, common performance level descriptors must be used. Performance standards describe “how good is good enough” and the “performance level descriptor” (PLD) is the narrative component of the achievement standard that describes the key qualities that differentiate educators at each level. These PLDs are critical to help guide data collection and validity evaluation.

The State Model provides PLDs for each of the four levels of the system. These descriptors connect the standards for professional practice with various data produced by the measurement instruments in the system. This overall description is necessary, because an effective leader is not necessarily a simple sum of the scores on the various indicators in the system. **The PLDs in this document present the Advisory Committee’s recommendation for how the seven Wyoming standards for leadership should be combined into an overall classification of leader effectiveness.**

Ultimately, each district must validly classify its leaders into four levels of performance as described by the following policy-level PLDs. Each PLD describes the final evaluation of how well a leader has performed in any given year based on all factors considered. **The Advisory Committee strongly endorses employing the following common performance descriptors for Wyoming in order to promote comparable expectations for leaders across districts.** The Advisory Committee recognizes that school leaders likely will be evaluated on different standards than their peers and among themselves across years. Therefore, the application of these common performance standards must be tailored by supervisors to the specific leader evaluation each year. To aid in this work, the Advisory Committee will create standard-level performance descriptors in subsequent guidance documents. The performance level descriptors are written to support the overarching claim of the system: **Educational Leaders establish learning environments that positively affect student achievement and teacher practices.**

The **Highly Effective Educational Leader** *maintains unwavering focus on student learning and continuously raises expectations* for student achievement and growth by creating and/or maintaining a *community of teacher leaders who actively encourage* academic achievement and growth; nurture student development; and promote a standard of academic excellence. The **Highly Effective Educational Leader’s practices and actions** *embody* the seven Wyoming leadership standards. The **Highly Effective Educational Leader** *capably and consistently applies* each leadership standard in order to establish learning environments that positively affect student performance and teacher practice.

The **Effective Educational Leader** *maintains unwavering focus* on student achievement and growth though creating and/or maintaining a *community of learners* that *values* academic achievement and growth; nurtures student development; and promotes a standard of academic excellence. The **Effective Educational Leader’s practices and actions** demonstrate a *solid understanding* of the seven Wyoming leadership standards. The **Effective Educational Leader** *capably and consistently applies* most leadership standards, *using areas of strength to compensate for less developed competencies*, in order to establish learning environments that positively affect student performance and teacher practice.

The **Educational Leader who Needs Improvement** *attempts to maintain a school-wide focus* on student achievement and growth and recognizes the value of teacher input into academic achievement and growth. The **Educational Leader who Needs**



*In contrast to the teacher evaluation system, the Wyoming Leader Evaluation System does not assume that leaders will be evaluated on every standard, every year. Therefore, determining a common approach for aggregating evidence across indicators is challenging. However, the Advisory Committee strongly recommends requiring evidence from Standard 1—student learning—in the evaluation of every leader during every year.*

**Improvement** employs **practices and actions that** demonstrate a *partial understanding* of the seven Wyoming leadership standards. The **Educational Leader who Needs Improvement** *applies some* leadership standards demonstrating strength in some areas; however, the **Educational Leader who Needs Improvement** *does not use their strengths to fully compensate for areas of weakness* in order to establish learning environments that positively affect student performance and teacher practice.

The **Ineffective Educational Leader** does not clearly prioritize student achievement and growth. The **Ineffective Educational Leader's practices and actions** demonstrate a *limited understanding* of the seven Wyoming leadership standards. The **Ineffective Educational Leader** *inconsistently applies* the leadership standards and *does not use their strengths to compensate for areas of weakness* in order to establish learning environments that positively affect student performance and teacher practice.

#### **Aggregation of Evidence and Determining the Final Rating**

In contrast to the teacher evaluation system, the Wyoming Leader Evaluation System does not assume that leaders will be evaluated on every standard, every year. Therefore, determining a common approach for aggregating evidence across indicators is challenging. However, the Advisory Committee strongly recommends requiring evidence from Standard 1—student learning—in the evaluation of every leader during every year. One way to systematize the aggregation of evidence is to require that Standard 1 count as a fixed proportion in each leader evaluation, such as one-third of the weight of evidence. In this case, the remaining standards selected for the evaluation in each year would constitute the remaining two-thirds of the weight in the evaluation.

The Advisory Committee recommends employing a decision matrix, similar to that used in the educator evaluation system, but adjusted so that the student performance counts approximately one-third of the weight and the leader practices make on the remaining weight. The Advisory Committee recommends using the following matrix for all district systems, at least until enough data are collected to evaluate how well the matrix is validly categorizing leaders. The decision matrix presented below reflects an intended 2:1 (67%-33%) weighting of professional practices to student performance. The “automatic review” in each of the corners is designed to trigger a review of the data and processes that led to such an incongruous result. Ideally, other individuals, besides those who made the original determinations should be brought in to review these results.

**Wyoming Leader Support and Evaluation System Decision Matrix for Combining Multiple Indicators**

"Professional Practice" Rating	4	Automatic Review	Effective	Highly Effective	Highly Effective
	3	Needs Improvement	Effective	Effective	Effective
	2	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Effective
	1	Ineffective	Ineffective	Needs Improvement	Automatic Review
		1	2	3	4
"Student Performance" Rating					



*The Advisory Committee advocates for a coherent and long-term approach to improve the effectiveness of school leaders in Wyoming.*

## **Supports and Consequences**

School leaders are being asked to be leaders of instruction and learning at deeper levels than ever before. This is being driven, at least in part, by policies to improve the comparative outcomes of U.S. education. These policies are enacted through initiatives including the push for college and career readiness, the Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, assessment consortia and, closer to home, the Wyoming Accountability in Education Act. Meeting such expectations ultimately will fall on school leaders, teachers, and students. The Advisory Committee strongly supports the move towards instructional and assessment leadership and away from a primary emphasis on effective management. However, the Advisory Committee also recognizes that for this shift to become widespread, school leaders will require considerable mentoring and support. Therefore, the leader support and evaluation system should be implemented rigorously (i.e., avoid score inflation), but in a way that is designed to target and foster improvement. Further, school leader contracts generally are renewed yearly, so consequences do not carry the same significance they might for educators—another factor supporting the placement of the system's focus on support and improvement.

The Advisory Committee advocates for a coherent and long-term approach to improve the effectiveness of school leaders in Wyoming. Districts must be fully engaged in this effort, but because the need is so great, such efforts must be a partnership among districts, the state (WDE), the University of Wyoming, and contracted providers. A comprehensive approach would focus on the entire continuum of developing high quality leaders, starting with identifying and recruiting potential leaders (e.g., teacher-leaders), supporting a leader preparation program (e.g., UW) designed to support new leaders in meeting the standards (knowledge and skills) described in this document, and providing ongoing support to leaders in the field. Once leaders are identified and prepared, they must be supported by a high quality induction program based in their local districts, or perhaps as part of regional networks as well. Finally, all school leaders and their supervisors need ongoing support and development. For example, there are many digital tools emerging in the marketplace that allow the comparison of judgments of instructional quality between the leader and known experts and other school leaders. These kinds of support and training mechanisms should be supported by districts as they work to implement high quality evaluations in their schools.

The newly formed Wyoming Instructional Leadership Network (WILN) is an example of a state-district partnership designed to fill a critical professional development void in Wyoming. The major focus of this work is to ensure that each district has an Instructional Leadership Director (ILD) to support the development and evaluations of school leaders in the district. **This is certainly the right first step, but the Advisory Committee recommends developing an analogous structure for the development of school leaders.**

## **Recommendations for Implementation**

The Advisory Committee appreciates the reasonable timeline for implementation established by the legislature. All districts are expected to fully implement the leader evaluation system during the 2015-2016 school year and the educator evaluation system in 2016-2017. Training and professional learning opportunities should be occurring as early as the spring and summer of 2014, with continued training and piloting during the 2014-2015 school year. Further, the State Board must begin the rule making process soon after the 2014 legislative session. While the specific rules will not be established immediately, the current statutes and this report provide enough general guidelines for districts to begin implementation.

With this in mind, the Advisory Committee provides recommendations for enacting a process to efficiently implement this system. The Advisory Committee recognizes that the process described below is necessarily simplified for the purposes of this document. For example, even though the description below includes a “beginning”

*The Advisory Committee is emphatic that this evaluation not be a paper chase where leaders (and supervisors) are forced to collect a seemingly endless set of documents to support the evaluation process. There is no question that documentation of critical pieces of evidence is important, but the Committee wants the focus of the evaluation to be on high leverage practices that can be seen throughout the school.*

and “end,” most evaluations should be on-going and iterative. **The Advisory Committee is emphatic that this evaluation not be a paper chase where leaders (and supervisors) are forced to collect a seemingly endless set of documents to support the evaluation process.** There is no question that documentation of critical pieces of evidence is important, but the Committee wants the focus of the evaluation to be on high leverage practices that can be seen throughout the school.

Most importantly, the Advisory Committee emphasizes that the quality of the evaluation rests with those leading the evaluation and supervising the school leaders. The Wyoming Instructional Leadership Network (ILN) is supporting efforts to ensure that all districts have at least one Instructional Leadership Director. For this leadership evaluation model to work as intended, supervisors must be skilled at supporting leadership development and evaluation. The ILN offers one viable way for current leaders to receive such training, but not the only way.

1. The evaluation process starts with the leader’s assessment of his/her strengths and areas in need of development, which leads to establishing goals for the year. This should be based on a review of existing data on school accountability results and other relevant information. The self-assessment should also include the results from the teacher evaluation system. Once the system matures, it is likely that the cycle could/should start in the spring for continuing principals.
2. After the self-assessment is completed, the supervisor and leader meet to discuss the goals to ensure that the evaluation focuses on practices that are most likely to have a positive impact on teachers’ instructional behaviors and student learning. They may revise the goals tied to specific leader standards, but ultimately will agree on the goals and the specific standards to be evaluated. Importantly, the supervisor must ensure that there is a plan in place so that the leader is evaluated systematically on all the standards over a reasonable time frame (e.g., every 3-5 years).
3. The supervisor and leader agree on a data collection plan to best evaluate the yearly goals. Data collection protocols, such as surveys and assessment analyses, must be enacted each year both for continuity and because it would be too difficult to start such efforts into the school year. However, depending on the specific evaluation goals for the year, specific data collections may be required.
4. Typically, in well-functioning evaluation systems there will be ongoing formative evaluation and feedback cycles, but at a minimum the Advisory Committee strongly recommends at least quarterly reviews for each annual leader evaluation.
5. Additional data will be collected throughout the rest of the year based on the initial goals and results of ongoing meetings between the leader and supervisor.
6. The yearly evaluation cycle concludes with a summative evaluation. While this is technically the end of the yearly evaluation cycle, it is also the beginning of the subsequent year’s evaluation cycle. The end of the cycle could be in the fall.



The following graphic represents the general process for implementing a leader evaluation system in Wyoming school districts.

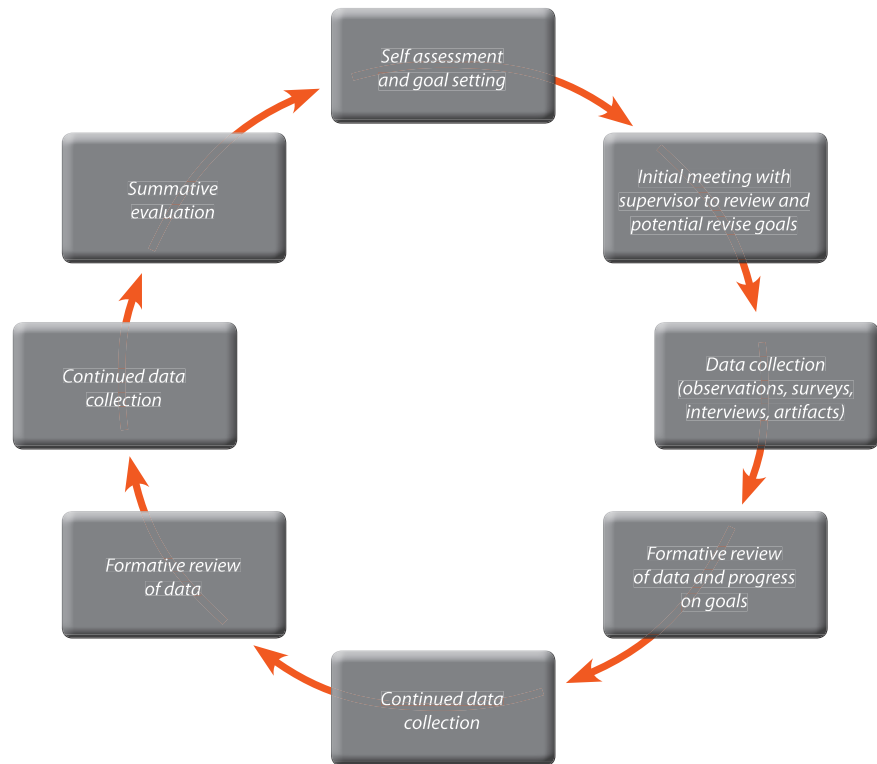


Figure 1. Leader evaluation cycle

### Data collection strategy

The various forms of data suggested for evaluating leader effectiveness according to the seven standards may seem overwhelming when viewed standard-by-standard. There are several data collection tools, such as observations, surveys, and artifact analysis, listed for many of the standards, but that does not mean that each one requires a separate data collection. The Advisory Committee wants all districts to be aware of an important data collection for all local systems: The results of the school accountability system and other state assessment results will not be available to districts until late summer. Local assessment and local SLO results may be available earlier, but generally not until the end of the school year. In most cases, districts will require evaluation results to be completed well before the end of each school year. Therefore, **the Advisory Committee recommends using “lagged” data for the student performance component of the evaluation.** In other words, accountability and assessment results from the prior year would be used in the evaluation. This is the approach commonly used in other states. However, the **Advisory Committee also suggested that districts may consider final evaluations based on lagged data to be a “tentative” rating that can be updated and/or confirmed when new performance results are produced.**

The Advisory Committee recommends using the data sources summarized below as part of each leader’s annual evaluation. These are the same data sources described above for the various standards, but synthesized here for ease of communication.

1. **School accountability system results.** The school accountability system offers a fairly comprehensive view of a school’s performance, including status (achievement), growth, readiness, and equity indicators. It provides a



*Further, the Advisory Committee recommends that either the Wyoming Department of Education or other entity, such as outside consultants or AdvancedEd, be charged with developing or modifying model surveys (staff, students, and parents) for district use so that districts leaders do not have to create their own surveys.*

valid and comparable view of key indicators across the state. This data source also includes evidence of how the school leader is using the results to continuously improve the school.

2. **Observations by supervisor.** The supervisor must observe the leader in the context of the leader's job in order to conduct a fair evaluation. However, the supervisor must be strategic in choosing when and how to observe the leader. For example, joining the leader when she/he is conducting classroom observations and providing feedback to teachers is key way for the supervisor to both collect data about the leader but also gain a direct view of the educator evaluation system in action. Similarly, observing the leader facilitate data/assessment meetings with and working with parent groups provides valuable insights about the leader and about important school processes.
3. **The results of the teacher evaluations.** The data from the educator evaluation system may provide useful evidence for understanding how the principal is evaluating and building the capacity of her/his educators. For example, the supervisor should review the overall distribution of ratings to check for such things as score inflation (or depression) and to examine the type of feedback provided to teachers so they can improve.
4. **Survey or interviews of teachers and classified staff.** As noted throughout this report, the perceptions of the educational staff in the building are critical for informing the leader evaluation. The supervisor, along with input from the leader and staff, needs to determine the most sensible way of collecting this information, but the Advisory Committee strongly recommends that it be collected. **Further, the Advisory Committee recommends that either the Wyoming Department of Education or other entity, such as outside consultants or AdvancedEd, be charged with developing or modifying model surveys (staff, students, and parents) for district use so that districts leaders do not have to create their own surveys.** Further, the Advisory Committee strongly recommends thinking broadly about survey design. Whoever is responsible for creating surveys should not rely solely on models that involve the same survey for each person once per year. For example, matrix sampling in which all students do not complete the same items is an efficient way to collect a lot of information at the school level while allowing each student or only a sample of students to complete fewer items. Additionally, more specific information (and therefore, specific feedback) could be gained by using shorter surveys targeted to specific events (e.g., particular units of instruction or specific professional development programs).
5. **Analysis of evidence from key artifacts.** This is a broad category that will have to be narrowed depending on the specific focus of the yearly evaluation, but would include such evidence as budget and other planning documents, professional development plans, unit plans and associated student work, and local assessment results. Further, digital information such as website "hits" and changes in hits could serve as evidence for Standard 7.

Additionally, the Advisory Committee suggests, in order to gain additional insights, district leaders consider the following data sources in the evaluation of leaders, depending on the focus of the evaluation in the specific year.

1. **Analysis of common assessment results.** The analysis of the quality and results of school and district assessments in all content areas can provide a broader picture of academic achievement than provided from looking at the state assessment results.
2. **Survey of students.** Similar to the issues discussed above about surveying staff members, students can provide important insight on school climate, safety, and expectations.



3. **Observations by peers.** In districts with multiple schools, colleagues serving as leaders in other buildings could provide unique insights into leader effectiveness, especially ways in which a leader may improve his/her practice. However, the Advisory Committee recognizes that most Wyoming districts have only a few schools with leaders from multiple buildings often working closely on district initiatives. It may be challenging, but far from impossible, to switch from a collegial to evaluative role.
4. **Survey of parents and community members.** Again, considering some of the types of evidence that would be necessary for a supervisor to make judgments about several of the standards, a survey of parents and perhaps community members could shed some light about how the parents view such things as communication and community engagement. It must be noted that it is tough to get good response rates from parents and almost impossible to do so from community members who do not have children in schools. Therefore, the cost/benefit of conducting surveys of community members might not be favorable.

The Advisory Committee has offered a coherent set of recommendations for how districts should think about designing local systems to support decisions and improvement actions regarding school leaders relative to the Wyoming Standards for Educational Leaders.

However, the Committee recognizes that this may seem overwhelming at first and offers the following recommendations to districts for getting started during the pilot period.

1. Ensure that supervisors are trained as Instructional Leadership Directors (ILDs) or equivalent.
2. Convene regular meetings with ILDs, school leaders, and other key stakeholders in the system (e.g., teachers, parents) to design the specific local system.
3. Start small. Even though the leader evaluation system needs to be operational in the 2015-2016 school year, districts should take advantage of the 2014-2015 school year to try out various components of their systems, starting with a few aspects of the system expected to yield the greatest gains.
4. Adopt a continuous improvement mindset. Just as districts and schools should focus on continuous improvement in evaluating instruction and programs, they should also view the design and implementation of the leader (and educator) evaluation system from a continuous improvement perspective. The design process should be seen as iterative in that it will likely need to be revised during the pilot period as everyone learns about the strengths and weakness of the system design.

## THE WYOMING EDUCATOR SUPPORT AND EVALUATION STATE MODEL

### *General Evaluation Framework of the Wyoming Educator Evaluation State Model*

The general evaluation framework of the Wyoming State Model describes the overall approach for how local districts following the State Model would approach the data collection involved in evaluating educators. There are four domains of educator practice along with evaluations based on student achievement. As part of the general measurement model, the State Model includes the use of multiple measures of each domain when possible as long as the multiple measures improve the validity of the evaluation decision. All local educator evaluation systems shall include the elements discussed below.

#### **Professional practice measures**

A key aspect of the State Model is that it will contain five major components<sup>1</sup>, four domains of professional practice and one domain of student performance data.

The four domains of professional practice noted below represent the overarching categories of the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Model Core Teaching Standards (InTASC Standards)<sup>2</sup>.

✓ Learner and Learning ✓ Content Knowledge ✓ Instructional Practice ✓ Professional Responsibility

Districts will use a variety of tools to measure professional practice (e.g., Danielson's *State Model for Effective Teaching*; Marzano's *Art and Science of Teaching*). The Advisory Committee does not want to limit districts' options, but recommends that all locally-selected tools measure the four domains of effective teaching described in the InTASC Standards and capture the essence of all 10 standards. District leaders will be expected to document the degree to which its selected tool meets this requirement.

Multiple approaches will be used to collect data on educator practices such that the specific data collection approaches are tailored to the complex nature of teaching practice. The Advisory Committee recommends having each educator complete a self-assessment each year that will be used as the foundation of a goal setting meeting with the principal and/or peer coach (mentor). The self assessment and collaboratively established goals will be used to focus the professional practice data collection for the year in which the educator is being formally evaluated. For the years in which the educator is not undergoing a formal evaluation, the self assessment and goals shall be used to guide professional development and formative evaluation activities.

#### **Measures of student performance**

In order to maximize the benefits while striving to minimize potential unintended negative consequences, the Wyoming State Model uses three strategies for incorporating student achievement and growth into evaluations.

- ✓ Student Learning Objectives
- ✓ Student Growth Percentiles (if applicable)
- ✓ The SLO and/or SGP results may be "shared" among multiple educators depending upon local theories of action around school improvement.

Student Learning Objectives (SLO) form the foundation of Wyoming's approach for documenting changes in student performance associated with a teacher or group of educators, therefore, all educators will have the results of SLOs incorporated into their

<sup>1</sup> We use the term "component" to refer to the four "domains" of teacher practices and student performance results inclusively. We reserved the term "domain" to refer specifically to the four groups of the standards for professional practice.

<sup>2</sup> Council of Chief State School Officers. (2011, April). Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Model Core Teaching Standards: A Resource for State Dialogue. Washington, DC: Author. [http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/Interstate\\_Teacher\\_Assessment\\_Consortium\\_\(InTASC\).html](http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/Interstate_Teacher_Assessment_Consortium_(InTASC).html)

*The State Model is designed to promote coherence and integration among the four domains of professional practice along with student. Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommends weighting each of the five components as equally as possible in the overall evaluation of each educator.*



evaluations. For educators in “tested” subjects and grades—those grades and subjects for which there is a state standardized test as well as a state test in the same subject in the previous year—student performance will be evaluated using Student Growth Percentiles (SGP). The results of SGP analyses, along with SLO results, will be used in the evaluations of educators in tested subjects and grades. Both SGP and SLO approaches are described in more detail in the Specific Measurement Model section of this document, but it is important to acknowledge that implementing a system that incorporates student performance in educator evaluations will require a significant amount of training and support.

Both SGP and SLO approaches can be used to attribute the academic achievement and growth of students to individual educators or aggregations of educators such as grade- or content-level teams or even the whole school. Distributing student performance results to multiple educators is referred to as “shared attribution.” **The Advisory Committee recommends that at least part of the SLO and/or SGP results be shared among multiple educators depending upon local theories of action around school improvement.**

The State Model is designed to promote coherence and integration among the four domains of professional practice along with the student performance component. Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommends weighting each component, especially student learning, as equally as possible in the overall evaluation of each educator. Because there are often differences between nominal (intended) and effective (actual) weights, the Advisory Committee recommends that as each district pilots its system, it analyzes the data to determine the actual weight of the various components. This actual weighting will depend on the variability in the responses to the specific instruments used in each district. In the following sections, the major components of the State Model are discussed in more detail.

**The Advisory Committee recommends requiring that districts provide evidence that any tool used for evaluating teacher practices validly measures all four domains of teacher practices.** The Advisory Committee recommends allowing districts to alter the weighting of the various professional practice domains as long as student learning counts at least 20%, and that all components of the system are fully evaluated for each teacher in each three year period. The Advisory Committee further recommends that teachers in each district have input into the weighting decisions of each district’s system.

### ***Specific Measurement Framework for the Wyoming State Model***

The specific measurement framework adds details to the general measurement framework to guide data collection methods so that educator evaluations are conducted successfully. Such a detailed measurement model describes the type and frequency of data collection for each of the major components of the model. [Note: The specific measurement approach presented here is still not detailed enough for districts to adopt in a “plug and play” fashion, but is intended to provide recommendations for how data should be collected to support educator evaluation in Wyoming.]

The following section includes a brief review of the relevant InTASC standards, organized by major domain, and then provides recommendations for evaluating the performance of educators related to each domain. Additional guidance by WDE, this Advisory Committee, or others will help fill in the remaining holes regarding the specific measurement procedures and policies to be enacted for the various educators in the system.

#### ***Standards for Professional Practice***

The State Model uses InTASC Standards as the framework for evaluating teachers according to the four domains of effective teaching. This recommendation is made, in part, to ensure that the State Model is not tied to any commercial products, but rather to open source materials widely used by multiple states and districts. Local districts

*The State Model uses InTASC Standards as the framework for evaluating teachers according to the four domains of effective teaching. This recommendation is made, in part, to ensure that the State Model is not tied to any commercial products, but rather to open source materials widely used by multiple states and districts.*



may adopt tools or approaches to add more specificity to the InTASC Standards, but the Advisory Committee recommends having districts document that any tools used in their local model are supported by research or at least best practices documenting their efficacy.

The following section presents the verbatim language of each of the ten standards, grouped into the four domains of professional practice, and recommendations for data collection approaches to measure educator performance relative to these standards and domains.

### **Domain 1: Learner and Learning**

Standard #1: **Learner Development.** The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

Standard #2: **Learning Differences.** The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

Standard #3: **Learning Environments.** The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.

**EXPECTED EVIDENCE OF IMPACT.** A teacher exhibiting the practices described by these standards would have a classroom of highly engaged and appropriately challenged students who are developing competence in the relevant subject area. The teacher would understand the strengths and challenges of each student and tailor learning opportunities accordingly such that all students have opportunities to meet relevant performance targets.

**SOURCES OF DATA.** Given the variety of information necessary to support decisions related to this domain, the **Advisory Committee recommends** that local evaluation systems include sources of evidence, similar to the examples described below.

1. Multiple, well structured classroom observations may be used to collect data for evaluating educators in relationship to standards 2 and 3. However, such observations would be unlikely to reveal enough information about teachers' understanding of learner development (standard 1) to enable evaluators to make valid judgments.
2. Planning documents that describe how the educator includes an understanding of learning theory and individual differences would be a source of information for judging educators relative to standard 3. Such planning documents could include detailed course syllabi, but more likely unit plans and perhaps specific lesson plans.
3. Similarly, evidence of reading and understanding relevant literature could provide documentation for educators' consideration of learner development. Of course, possessing this knowledge is only a first and insufficient step. Educators must be able to apply such theoretical and/or empirical reading to actual classroom practice. Some of this understanding could be revealed through reflection and planning documents as well as through pre- and post-observation conferences. However, student work will provide critical evidence of the extent to which these practices have been enacted.

### **Domains 2 (Content Knowledge)**

Standard #4: **Content Knowledge.** The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches



and creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

Standard #5: **Application of Content.** The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.

*A teacher possessing the knowledge and skills represented by Domain 2 would have deep knowledge of disciplinary content and how to connect it to appropriate instructional strategies. This is referred to as pedagogical content knowledge.*

**EXPECT EVIDENCE OF IMPACT.** A teacher possessing the knowledge and skills represented by Domain 2 would have deep knowledge of disciplinary content and how to connect it to appropriate instructional strategies. This is referred to as *pedagogical content knowledge*. Such a teacher would have clear understanding of the learning progressions of the discipline as well as how to diagnose where students are along the progression and how to move them to increasing levels of competence.

**SOURCES OF DATA.** It is unlikely that evaluators could collect information about content and pedagogical content knowledge simply through observations of practice.

1. Content knowledge (standard 4) must be evaluated through collection of artifacts such as successful completion of programs of study, including content-area undergraduate majors and hopefully advanced study, and/or in-depth discussions with experts in the relevant content area.
2. Once the evaluator has documented that the educator possesses solid content knowledge, the educator should include, as part of her/his self-reflection and goal setting, plans to stay current and improve her/his understanding of the discipline. The educator should be expected to document and reflect on her/his new understandings of the discipline as part of the artifact collections.
3. Possessing the requisite content knowledge is one thing but being able to share that knowledge effectively with students is the critical component. The capacity to translate a solid understanding of content knowledge to learning opportunities for students has been termed pedagogical content knowledge. Pedagogical content knowledge or the application of content to instructional practice (standard 5) should also be evaluated by examining planning and reflection documents. However, evaluators may gather critical information related to standard 5, through structured observations of practice that include pre- and post-observation conferences to understand how teachers translate their content knowledge into meaningful learning opportunities.

### **Domain 3 (Instructional Practice)**

Standard #6: **Assessment.** The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, monitor learner progress, and guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.

Standard #7: **Planning for Instruction.** The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

Standard #8: **Instructional Strategies.** The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

**EXPECT EVIDENCE OF IMPACT.** Teachers highly competent in Domain 3 would have classrooms where multiple forms of assessments, especially regular formative assessment, are used to evaluate and shape instruction. Such teachers recognize and rely on the interconnectedness of assessment and instruction and

*A teacher embodying Domain 4 would be intellectually curious and motivated to continue her/his own learning as well as support the learning of her/his colleagues. Such a teacher would seek out leadership roles, as appropriate, and work to support leadership development in colleagues and throughout the profession.*



use assessment information to adjust instructional strategies. Such classrooms are characterized by a rich repertoire of instructional strategies tailored to the needs of diverse learners.

#### **SOURCES OF DATA.**

1. Information about the way in which an educator plans for instruction (standard 7) and uses assessment (standard 6) may be revealed through pre- and post-observation conferences, particularly planning for instruction.
2. Information/observations about how an educator participates and uses assessment data in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) or related group structured to maximize student learning would be useful for gathering information about all three of these standards.
3. Examining artifacts such as unit plans, syllabi, and assessment tools would reveal important information about educator quality.
4. Interviews (discussions) with educators about how they use student work to reflect on what was revealed in the assessment process and what instructional decisions should be made based on these results.
5. Direct classroom observations are critical for capturing information about educators' use of appropriate instructional strategies (standard 8).

#### **Domain 4: Professional Responsibility**

Standard #9: **Professional Learning and Ethical Practice.** The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.

Standard #10: **Leadership and Collaboration.** The teacher seeks appropriate leadership opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

**EXPECT EVIDENCE OF IMPACT.** A teacher embodying Domain 4 would be intellectually curious and motivated to continue her/his own learning as well as support the learning of her/his colleagues. Such a teacher would seek out leadership roles, as appropriate, and work to support leadership development in colleagues and throughout the profession.

**SOURCES OF DATA.** Professional responsibility may be observed informally through seeing how the educator interacts with colleagues, parents, or others, but it is unlikely that information about professional responsibility can be collected through formal classroom observations. Staff meetings and PLCs could be rich structures for gathering information related to this domain. The Advisory Committee recommends that the yearly self reflection and goal setting activities specifically address professional responsibility and establish the focus of professional responsibility for the given year. The Advisory Committee deliberated about whether teachers new to the profession should be exempted from being evaluated on Domain 4, but overwhelmingly recommended that all educators should be expected to demonstrate their responsibility as a professional educator. One potential difference between novice and experienced educators is that novice educators may focus on more "inward-facing" aspects of this domain, as discussed in standard 9. On the other hand, experienced educators may continue to focus on these internal aspects of responsibility, but they would also be expected to become more "outward-facing" leaders in the school, the district, and the profession at large.

## Data Collection Strategies

The specific focus of the professional responsibility will guide the required data collection and reflection. There are several data collection tools, such as observations, surveys, and artifact analysis described for many of the standards, but that does not mean that each one requires a separate data collection. The Advisory Committee recommends using the following data sources as part of each educator's evaluation:

*The Advisory Committee recommends having all educators establish yearly professional goals in consultation with their supervisor or designee and document the process and products associated with these goals through a selective collection of artifacts.*

### **Documentation of Practice: Self Assessment, Goal Setting, and Artifact Collection**

The collection of artifacts is a critical component of WY's State Model and contributes data to multiple domains of teacher practice. The collection of artifacts is guided by educators' self-assessment, but also by districts' elaboration of the Specific Measurement Model. The Advisory Committee recommends having all educators establish yearly professional goals in consultation with their supervisor or designee and document the process and products associated with these goals through a selective collection of artifacts. The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) will produce resources designed to support the use of artifacts for evaluation purposes. The Advisory Committee recommends that each educator's evaluation incorporate the following components:

- ✓ Self assessment of strengths and weaknesses,
- ✓ Collaboratively (among educator, administrator, and perhaps peer team<sup>3</sup>) established specific goals,
- ✓ A plan describing specific professional learning opportunities and needs for achieving the goals,
- ✓ Analyses of key artifacts such as student work from specific assignments, planning documents, and assessments related to the established goals, and
- ✓ Self-reflection at the end of the year to evaluate the extent to which the specific goals have been achieved.

The specific collection and use of artifacts should depend on each district's evaluation plan and the suggestions for data collection described throughout this document.

### **Observations of Professional Practice**

As indicated earlier, evaluators will need to "see it" in order to document that educators are able to enact key aspects of professional practice. This evidence will be derived from classroom observation protocols designed to measure performance according to the ten InTASC standards and will likely involve the use of commercially-available or other existing tools. Most of these existing tools to provide evidence about the degree to which the educator is enacting expected InTASC practices. However, these tools may also be designed to collect data for practices not part of the InTASC framework. The district must ensure that it collects data on at least the InTASC standards. It may also collect data on non-InTASC-related practices, but not at the expense of InTASC standards. Therefore, districts must establish a clear and transparent approach for how it will enact the tools it has selected to use.

Unfortunately, many school leaders have not been adequately trained and/or do not have enough experience at accurately evaluating instructional practice, although they generally have extensive experience observing and providing feedback on classroom management behaviors. Therefore, each district must ensure that those responsible for conducting observations and evaluations have training at a level that enables the evaluator to distinguish fine gradations in instructional practice. These evaluators must also have training and support to enable them to provide actionable feedback to educators based on the results of the observations.

<sup>3</sup> Peer teams could ensure that an educator's goals are aligned with important aspect of the discipline and with the content-based goals of school, PLC, and/or grade-level teams.

*All teachers, whether in “tested” or “non-tested” subjects and grades shall be required to document student academic performance each year using SLOs in accordance with Wyoming’s SLO guidance.*



### **Student Performance**

The primary purpose of Wyoming’s educator evaluation and the reason for engaging in this work is to support and promote increases in student learning in Wyoming schools. Therefore, the results of student achievement must be incorporated in the evaluations of all educators. While this sounds intuitively straightforward, it is one of the most complex aspects of new forms of educator evaluation. The Wyoming State Model uses a three part approach for incorporating student achievement and growth into evaluations in order to maximize the validity of educator evaluations, while striving to minimize potential unintended negative consequences.

Student Learning Objectives (SLO) form the foundation of Wyoming’s approach for documenting changes in student performance associated with a teacher or group of educators. As such, all educators will have the results of SLOs incorporated into their evaluations. For educators in “tested” subjects and grades—those grades and subjects for which there is a state, standardized test as well as a state test in the same subject in the previous year—student performance will be evaluated using Student Growth Percentiles (SGP). The results of SGP analyses, along with SLO results, will be used in the evaluations of educators in tested subjects and grades. Both SGP and SLO approaches can be used to attribute the academic achievement and growth of students to individual educators or to appropriate aggregations of educators such as grade- or content-level teams or even the whole school, known as “shared attribution.” The tradeoffs associated with shared attribution are also discussed below.

#### **Student Learning Objectives (SLO)**

*SLOs are content- and grade/course-specific measurable learning objectives that can be used to document student learning over a defined period of time. To boil SLO down, they provides a means for educators to establish learning goals for individual or groups of students, monitor students’ progress toward these goals, and then evaluate the degree to students achieve these goals. The active involvement of the teacher throughout the process is a key advantage of the SLO approach over traditional test-centered approaches to accountability. It is designed to reflect and incentivize good teaching practices such as setting clear learning targets, differentiating instruction for students, monitoring students’ progress toward these targets, and evaluating the extent to which students have met the targets<sup>4</sup>.*

All teachers, whether in “tested” or “non-tested” subjects and grades shall be required to document student academic performance each year using SLOs in accordance with Wyoming’s SLO guidance (to be developed). Both SGP and SLO analyses shall produce results in at least three classifications of performance, to the extent possible, such as: high, typical/average, and low. The results of the SLO determinations shall be incorporated into the evaluation of all educators according to the rules described below in the section on combining multiple measures.

#### **Calculating Student Performance Results in “Tested” Subjects and Grades**

The growing interest in reforming approaches for evaluating and compensating teachers has been characterized by, among other things, a desire to incorporate student performance results. Advances in growth and value-added models in education have contributed to the interest in using changes in student test scores over time as part of educator accountability systems. Many districts, states, and non-governmental organizations have embraced these test-based accountability initiatives, but the initial focus has been on the content areas and grades for which there are state standardized tests, generally administered at the end of each school year, i.e., “tested

<sup>4</sup> Marion, S., DePascale, C., Domaleski, C., Gong, B., & Diaz-Bilello, E. (2012, May). Considerations for analyzing educators’ contributions to student learning in non-tested subjects and grades with a focus on student learning objectives. Center for Assessment. Retrieved from [www.nciea.org](http://www.nciea.org) September 3, 2013.



*SLOs allow for more control and tailoring to specific courses than state test results so the Advisory Committee recommends that at least a portion of the SLOs used to document student performance be attributed to the individual educator of record.*

subjects and grades.” Student performance for these tested subjects and grades is generally evaluated using complex statistical models such as value-added or student growth percentile models. It is important to realize that while these statistical approaches have led to the popularity of incorporating student achievement results into teacher evaluations, they generally apply to approximately 25% of the teaching population. In Wyoming, the results of such analyses could be applied to only those educators teaching math and language arts in grades four through eight.

There are several possible approaches that Wyoming could use for evaluating student performance in tested grades, but in order to adhere to the coherence principle, the Advisory Committee recommends using the same Student Growth Percentile model currently being used for the school accountability system. This is not necessarily as simple as it sounds.

WDE shall produce Student Growth Percentiles (SGP) results documenting the individual student and aggregate growth for students. These results will be reported for the whole school level and for identifiable student groups in the school. A student-level file will be provided to each district to use for aggregating SGP results according to the attribution rules in each districts’ evaluation plan, whether for individual teachers, specific groups of teachers, or both. These SGP results, based on Proficiency Assessment for Wyoming Students (PAWS) or other state-mandated assessments, shall be incorporated into teachers’ evaluations using either a shared or individual attribution State Model.

The SGP results and other state assessment results will not be available to districts until late summer. Local assessment and local SLO results may be available earlier, but generally not until the end of the school year. In most cases, districts will require evaluation results to be completed well before the end of each school year (e.g., early April). Therefore, **the Advisory Committee recommends using “lagged” data for the student performance component of the evaluation.** In other words, SGP and SLO results from the prior year would be used in the evaluation. This is the approach commonly used in other states. However, **the Advisory Committee also suggested that districts may consider the final evaluation based on the lagged data to be a “tentative” rating that can be updated and/or confirmed when the new performance results are produced.**

#### ***Shared Attribution***

The Advisory Committee recognizes the challenges of properly attributing the results of student performance to individual teachers. It is easy to think of many examples where it does not make sense to attribute the performance of students to individual teachers, such as when grade-level teams of teachers place students into differentiated instructional groups and instruction is provided by educators other than the child’s “regular” teachers. Therefore, the Wyoming State Model relies on a mix of shared and individual attribution. The SGP results, based on state tests in grades 3-8 should, depending on the specific theory of improvement for the particular school, be shared among educators at the same grade and/or teaching in the same subject areas. SLO results, assuming groups of educators are working on the same SLO, may also be shared among educators at the same grade and/or content area. However, SLOs allow for more control and tailoring to specific courses than state test results so the Advisory Committee recommends that at least a portion of the SLOs used to document student performance be attributed to the individual educator of record.

Like anything else in accountability system design, there are both advantages and disadvantages to using shared attribution. One of the major concerns with attributing the results of student performance to individual teachers is that many fear it could erode collaborative cultures at many schools,

*The Advisory Committee recommends sharing student performance results among multiple educators according to local theories of improvement and not based simply on reliability concerns. For example, if the focus of improvement activities is the grade level team, then attribution should be shared among educators at that grade and not at the whole school level. Therefore, the first step in implementing any sort of shared attribution approach involves a careful articulation of the school's locus of improvement actions.*

especially if the results are used in some sort of “zero sum game” accountability design. Shared attribution approaches, if implemented sensibly, can help promote both collaboration and internal accountability orientations, both of which are associated with high performing schools and organizations. Another concern for policy makers and accountability system designers are potential unintended negative consequences of having the mathematics and reading teachers in grades 4-8 evaluated in potentially very different ways than the other 70-80% of educators in the district. This could lead to higher rates of attrition from these subjects and grades or perhaps feelings of professional isolation. The requirement for all educators to participate in the SLO process is one hedge against this potential problem. However, sharing the results of all of the student performance indicators among multiple educators, as appropriate, is another way to recognize the contributions of other educators to student performance, especially in reading and math. For example, the SGP results may be shared among grade-level or content area teams or specific Professional Learning Community (PLC) groups. Similarly, SLO results may be shared, as appropriate, for teachers working on the same SLO. Finally, reliability of these indicators is one of the major concerns with tying student performance results to individual teachers when dealing with small groups of students. Aggregating the student performance results for multiple educators is one way to ameliorate, but far from eliminate, these reliability challenges.

This discussion could lead one to ask: If shared attribution has so many advantages, why would a system include any other approach? Of course there are potential disadvantages to shared attribution. An important disadvantage—one that may be reduced with careful design—is that educators may be held accountable for results for which they may have little to no control. This was a major criticism of Tennessee’s approach for including student performance results in the evaluations of teachers from non-tested subjects and grades. This threat is likely greatest when student performance on the state math and/or reading tests is attributed to all educators in the school as opposed to a finer-grained aggregation. Another potential disadvantage to shared attribution is that it may mask true variability in educator quality. If one believes that educator quality is truly variable in terms of being able to influence student performance, then pooling results among multiple educators could mask such differences. Of course, being able to separate the “signal” (true variability) from the “noise” (unreliability in the system) is not easy with small samples. This is more problematic at the elementary level with self-contained classroom of 20 students or so compared to a middle school where a teacher might be responsible for the math or reading instruction of over 100 students. The Advisory Committee is well aware that this assumption of greater numbers at the secondary level still may not hold true in many of Wyoming’s small schools and districts.

Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommends sharing student performance results among multiple educators according to local theories of improvement and not based simply on reliability concerns. For example, if the focus of improvement activities is the grade level team, then attribution should be shared among educators at that grade and not at the whole school level. Therefore, the first step in implementing any sort of shared attribution approach involves a careful articulation of the school’s locus of improvement actions. This theory of improvement (action) should also make clear which subjects are shared and with whom. For example, does the 5th grade team share both math and ELA results or just one subject? Finally, while the Advisory Committee favors shared attribution approaches in many cases and for at least some of the weight in accountability determinations, it also recommends that at least some of the changes in student performance be attributed to individual teachers. This might best be accomplished with SLOs

rather than SGPs because of the closer ties to the specific course, but the Advisory Committee suggests leaving decisions regarding attribution to local school districts.

*Student surveys were the most positive influence on the reliability of the composite rating of teachers' performance in the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project, in which surveys, value-added model results, and observations were combined for a teacher rating.*

### **Student surveys**

The Advisory Committee discussed the merits and challenges associated with incorporating results from student surveys into teacher evaluation decisions. On the one hand, using information from students solves a major “sampling problem” associated with both teacher observations and student test scores. Even an ambitious observation schedule of four or five one hour observations in a year (and most would consider 2-3 ambitious) is still four or five hours out of a possible 720 instructional hours each year (180 days x 4 instructional hours each day). Student Growth Percentiles (or value-added models) based on PAWS or other state-mandated assessments, while technically strong, are only a sample of students' knowledge and skills and, in Wyoming's case, suffer from limited reliability based on the small numbers of students in a given class or school. Student surveys, by contrast, collect information from those who are with the teacher essentially 100% of the teacher's instructional time. Further, by including enough questions (e.g. 25-40), it is possible to generate fairly reliable results. In fact, the student surveys were the most positive influence on the reliability of the composite rating of teachers' performance in the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project, in which surveys, value-added model results, and observations were combined for a teacher rating.

On the other hand, increasing reliability does not mean increases in validity will automatically follow. Several researchers have raised concerns that having students participate in the consequential evaluation may change the “social contract” in the classroom. This concern should not be taken lightly, and if surveys are used, care must be taken in the design to deal with potential challenges to the validity of the teacher evaluations.

The Advisory Committee has several recommendations for incorporating surveys into district evaluation systems:

1. Survey questions must be predominantly “low inference” type questions that ask about specific practices (e.g., “how many times each week does your teacher ask you to explain your reasoning”) compared with questions about feelings (e.g., “does your teacher care about you?”).
2. Surveys should be piloted extensively so students can get used to completing surveys and school personnel can gain an understanding of how the surveys relate to other information about teachers.
3. The Advisory Committee recommends considering the survey results as either one of many measures in the overall evaluation or simply as an additional factor to raise or lower a teacher's overall rating.
4. In order to most conservatively provide the type of additional information called for in #3, districts and schools should consider using the surveys normatively. In other words, the survey results would only be a factor to adjust the evaluation results if the teacher's survey results were noticeably higher or lower than the average for other teachers at that same grade span.
5. Student surveys should be designed to provide information regarding the standards for which students would likely have meaningful insights. This would include most of Domain 1 as well as standards 5, 6, and 8.
6. Finally, given the capacity and cost required to produce valid and reliable surveys, the **Advisory Committee recommends that WDE be charged with producing or selecting model surveys that districts can use if they choose.** There should be model surveys designed at least for each grade span and multiple content areas, if applicable.



## Performance Level Descriptors

All Wyoming schools will classify all licensed personnel as **highly effective, effective, needs improvement, and ineffective** based on data from measures of the standards for professional practice and measures of student performance. The evaluation system will produce an overall rating for each teacher. To arrive at an overall rating, a description of performance that characterizes the types of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behaviors of an “effective” teacher (as well as other levels) must be described. Further, if there is any hope in comparable ratings across the state, common performance level descriptors must be used. Performance standards describe “how good is good enough” and the “performance level descriptor” (PLD) is the narrative component of the performance standard that describes the key qualities that differentiate educators at each of the various levels. These PLDs are critical to help guide the data collection and validity evaluation of the system. Further, the PLDs were used to guide the values in the decision matrix, but the relationship among the PLDs and decision matrix will have to be evaluated once districts have the opportunity to implement the system and collect data.

The INTASC Standards provide performance descriptors for each of the ten standards, but they do not provide an overall description for various levels of teacher effectiveness. One might ask: Why not require educators to meet the requirements on each of the ten standards in order to be classified as effective? This type of conjunctive system where candidates must meet every threshold in order to be classified as “effective” is both unrealistic and unreliable. We discuss various approaches and recommendations for combining multiple measures in the following section of the document.

The State Model provides PLDs for each of the four overall levels of the system. These descriptors connect the standards for professional practice with the various data produced by the measurement instruments used in the system. This overall description is necessary, because an effective teacher is not necessarily a simple sum of the scores on the various components/indicators in the system. The PLDs in this document present the Advisory Committee’s recommendation for how the ten INTASC standards should be combined into an overall classification of educator effectiveness.

Ultimately, each district system must be able to validly classify its educators into four levels of performance as described by the following policy-level PLDs. Each PLD essentially describes the final evaluation of how well a teacher has performed in any given year based on all factors considered. **The Advisory Committee strongly endorses employing the following common performance descriptors for Wyoming in order to promote comparable expectations for educators across districts.**

### *Highly Effective*

*Teachers performing at the highly effective level **consistently** advance growth and achievement of students at levels to ensure that students **meet or exceed** important growth and achievement targets. They set and maintain high expectations for learning and achievement for all students and create learning experiences and inclusive learning environments **consistently reflective** of individual differences.*

*Highly effective teachers demonstrate **extensive knowledge** of their **content** area, **consistently** making connections among concepts to engage learners. Highly effective teachers consistently use their expertise and skills to employ research-based strategies to **frequently engage** their students in **authentic, accessible, and meaningful learning** opportunities aligned to the content, standards and related skills. They are **knowledgeable in multiple** forms of assessment and incorporate these multiple assessment strategies to evaluate student learning and adjust instruction accordingly as part of their regular practice. **Highly** effective educators integrate technology into their instructional and assessment approaches in ways that advance student learning opportunities.*





*The Advisory Committee recommends using an approach for combining the various sources of information that avoids mechanistic approaches such as simple averaging, but recommends one that takes into account the nature of the different sources of information. A “panel” or “decision matrix” approach” for combining the multiple measures allows the goals of the system to be reflected explicitly and not get buried in some numerical composite.*

Finally, highly effective educators **consistently demonstrate leadership** in their contributions to their school's academic progress and culture of growth. They engage productively in learning communities and **continuously strive to maximize** their own self-directed professional growth and that of their colleagues. These educators consistently uphold high standards of professional practice.

#### **Effective**

Educators performing at the effective level **generally advance** student growth and achievement at levels for students **to meet** important growth and achievement targets. They set and maintain high expectations for learning and achievement for all students and create learning experiences that are **mostly reflective** of individual differences and inclusive learning environments.

Effective teachers demonstrate **strong knowledge** of their **content** area and **often** use their knowledge and skills to employ research-based strategies to **regularly engage** their students in **authentic, accessible, and meaningful learning** opportunities aligned to the content standards and related skills. They use assessment evidence to evaluate student learning and adjust instruction accordingly. Effective educators appropriately integrate technology into their instructional and assessment approaches to maximize student learning.

Finally, effective educators engage in learning communities, fostering their own self-directed professional growth, and frequently provide leadership to support improvements in their colleagues' performance, making regular contributions to their school's academic progress and culture of growth. These educators consistently uphold professional standards of practice.

#### **Needs Improvement**

Educators performing at the needs improvement level **inconsistently advance** student growth and achievement such that only some students **meet** important growth and achievement targets. It is **not evident** that they set high expectations for learning and achievement for all students. They **are inconsistent at creating** learning experiences that reflect an understanding of individual differences and inclusive learning environments.

Teachers in the needs improvement category demonstrate **a basic knowledge** of their **content** area and **occasionally** employ research-based strategies to **engage** their students in **authentic, accessible, and meaningful learning** opportunities aligned to the content standards and related skills. Teachers in the needs improvement category use assessment evidence to evaluate student learning, but it is not evident if or how they adjust instruction based on assessment results. These educators use technology in their instructional and assessment approaches.

Finally, educators performing at the needs improvement level participate in learning communities, but inconsistently attend to their own self-directed professional growth. These educators uphold professional standards of practice.

#### **Ineffective**

Educators performing at the ineffective level may advance some student growth and achievement, but **frequently fail** to have students **meet** important growth and achievement targets. There is little evidence that they have established ambitious and reasonable expectations for student learning for most students and generally do not engage students in appropriate learning opportunities.

Educators performing at the ineffective level may have a **limited** knowledge of their **content** and **rarely** employ research-based strategies to **engage** their students in **authentic** learning opportunities. Teachers in the ineffective category have a very limited assessment repertoire and there is little evidence that they use assessment results to adjust instruction. These educators have not fully or consistently integrated technology as part of their instructional and assessment approaches.

Finally, educators performing at the ineffective level may participate in learning communities, but there is little evidence that they make substantive contributions to their own professional growth and/or support the growth of their colleagues. These educators generally uphold professional standards of practice.

## COMBINING MULTIPLE MEASURES

The Advisory Committee recommends using an approach for combining the various sources of information that avoids mechanistic approaches such as simple averaging, but recommends that one that takes into account the nature of the different sources of information. A “panel” or “decision matrix” approach for combining the multiple measures allows the goals of the system to be reflected explicitly and not get buried in some numerical composite.

Each local educator evaluation system must be able to produce overall classifications for each educator in the district. The Advisory Committee recommends that the decision matrix described below be used by all districts to combine the results of teacher practice and student learning results. This will allow for at least some level of comparability across Wyoming districts. This 4 x 3 matrix will be useful with an immature system such as the type we would expect during early implementation phases. As the system matures and more data are available for each educator, particularly in terms of student performance, more expansive matrices may be appropriate, such as the 4 x 4 matrix recommended for the leader evaluation system. One might ask why a 4 x 4 matrix is recommended for the leader system and not the teacher system. Quite simply, the leader system has considerably more student performance data, with significantly more students, available for the evaluation decision.

**Wyoming Educator Support and Evaluation System Decision Matrix for Combining Multiple Indicators**

“Professional Practice” Rating	4	Automatic Review	Highly Effective	Highly Effective
	3	Needs Improvement	Effective	Effective
	2	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement
	1	Ineffective	Ineffective	Automatic Review
		1	2	3
		“Student Performance” Rating		

## SUPPORTS AND CONSEQUENCES

### *Assumptions*

First, the Advisory Committee wants to make clear that the results generated by both the leader and educator systems are part of district secure personnel files and are not public information. The committee recognizes the aggregate results will be reported to the state in a format to be determined by WDE in consultation with Wyoming school districts.

Wyoming’s State Model is being designed to support improvements in teaching and learning. As part of this design, the Advisory Committee emphasizes the importance of reporting detailed and actionable information so that educators and their leaders have the information they need to improve their practice. This means that educators need to receive information on each of the indicators in the system, while recognizing that the information at the indicator level is considerably less reliable than the total evaluation. This will require having thorough documentation produced for each local system, in terms of the components and indicators outlined in this document, so that all educators understand the nature of the information on which they will be evaluated.

The WY State Model and all local systems must produce an overall effectiveness rating that guides support, career development, and employment decisions. The overall rating can only be an overall flag to guide support since the detailed information is necessary to allow for focused support and development.



## Supports

A critical support requires having each educator understand the rules by which they will be evaluated. In other words, teachers **Therefore, WDE, in consultation with Wyoming school districts shall develop and implement a process for training all licensed personnel on the educator evaluation system including the consequences associated with the ratings.**

*Districts shall provide ongoing training for all personnel who will be conducting classroom observations as part of a defined training and qualification process.*

One of the major guiding principles of Wyoming's educator evaluation system is that it should lead to improvements in educators' performance. Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommends that each Wyoming school district include formalized processes of induction systems for new educators along with mentoring and support systems designed to improve the performance of all educators in the district, but especially those with improvement needs identified through the evaluation system. The support and mentoring systems *should* be designed collaboratively with teachers and administrators based on research and documented best practices.

Districts shall provide **ongoing** training for all personnel who will be conducting classroom observations as part of a defined training and qualification process. This training will help leaders better understand differences in instructional quality so that they can better support their teachers' improvement efforts. Additionally, all evaluators (administrators) must receive ongoing evidence-based training on how best to provide feedback to those evaluated in order to support understanding of the information derived from the evaluation system and improve practice.

## Consequences

Ultimately, the system will lead to certain consequences for educators falling well below or well above expectations. While the system is designed for improvement and a significant support system is required to help struggling educators, there will likely come a point where educators may need to be counseled out of the profession. **The State Model includes the following expectations for such eventualities, but recognizes that all consequences are ultimately a district decision:**

1. Educators rated *ineffective* or *needs improvement* in one year must be placed on *directed professional growth* (improvement) plan that includes receiving targeted support. These support systems must be research-based to the maximum extent possible. Further, the evaluations of the educators involved in a directed professional growth plan shall include additional data sources in the evaluation during the improvement plan year.
2. The State Model requires that an experienced, educator with **two consecutive** years of *ineffective* ratings lose her/his current (continuing contract) status and may be dismissed without additional cause. The Advisory Committee recognizes that such potential consequences will need to be incorporated into locally-negotiated personnel contracts.
3. After receiving a second consecutive "*needs improvement*" rating, the educator will be considered to have received his/her first year of an *ineffective* rating.
4. An educator rated *highly effective* for two consecutive ratings should receive recognition, as determined by the local district, and should be encouraged to assume a "teacher leader role" as part of the mentoring and support system.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In this section, the Advisory Committee provides recommendations for efficiently implementing this system.

1. The evaluation process starts with the educator's assessment of his/her strengths and shortcomings, which then leads to establishing goals for each year. This should be based on a review of existing data from past formative and summative evaluations, student performance results, and other relevant information. This cycle could/should start in the spring for continuing educators.
2. After the self-assessment is completed, the supervisor and/or mentor and educator meet to discuss the goals. They may revise the goals tied to specific standards, but will ultimately come to agreement on the goals.
3. The supervisor and leader agree on a data collection plan to best evaluate the yearly goals. However, each district will have certain data collection protocols, such as specific types of observations, surveys and assessment analyses, enacted for all educators.
4. Typically, in well-functioning evaluation systems there will be multiple progress monitoring meetings between the supervisor and educator, but the Advisory Committee strongly recommends that there is at least a yearly formative or summative evaluation for all educators in the district.
5. Additional data will be collected throughout the rest of the year based on the initial goals and the results of the mid-year conference.
6. The evaluation cycle concludes with a summative evaluation at the end of the third year. While this is technically the end of the evaluation cycle, it is also the beginning of the subsequent evaluation cycle. The specific beginning and end of each district's cycle will be locally determined based on negotiated contracts.

The following graphic represents the general process for implementing an educator evaluation system in Wyoming school districts.

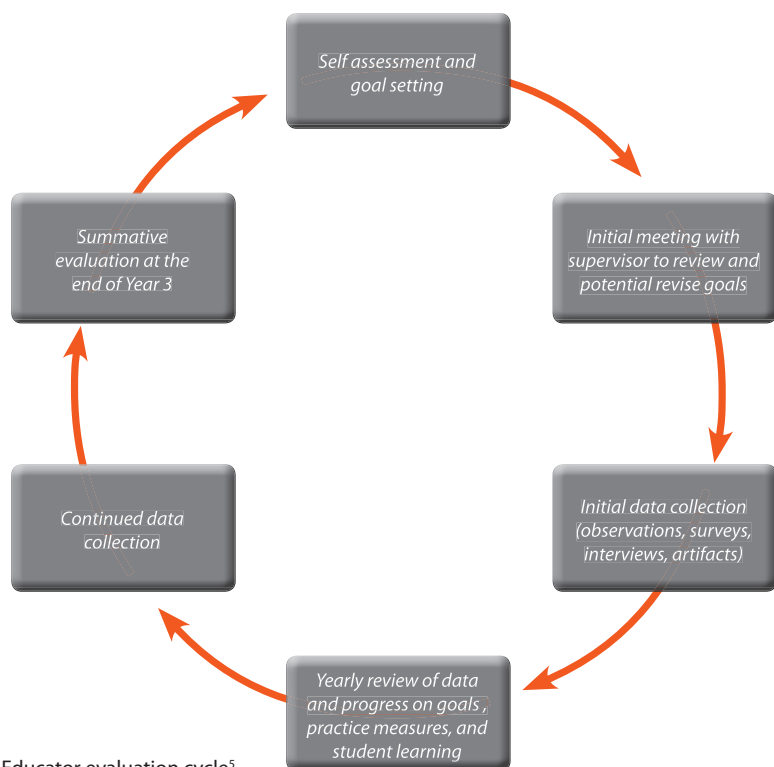


Figure 1. Educator evaluation cycle<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Note: This is based on a three-year evaluation cycle for experienced and effective educators. Novice and educators not yet rated effective will be summatively evaluated each year.



*The Advisory Committee recommends differentiating evaluations according to the experience and status of the schools' educators.*

The Advisory Committee has been very thoughtful about designing a State Model for educator evaluation in Wyoming. We have attempted to outline a clear approach to addressing the complexities for designing and implementing educator evaluation systems. However, the Advisory Committee wants to stress that there are enormous challenges to implementing such systems in any locale. One positive aspect of having Wyoming follow other states and districts in this work is that we have the opportunity to learn from the experiences of others. One of the most striking things being learned is that significant time and thoughtfulness are needed to implement these systems well.

This would be true under conditions where the state standards and assessment systems were stable. As we know, Wyoming has recently adopted the Common Core State Standards which call for deeper levels of understanding on the part of students than ever before. Shifting instructional practices and curriculum will require considerable effort on the part of local school districts. Adding requirements for a new school accountability system will further stress systems. The Advisory Committee appreciates that the educator evaluation system in Wyoming can be implemented with an extended pilot period to both gradually implement the system and allow for formative feedback to make adjustments before it becomes operational..

### ***Differentiation***

The Advisory Committee has been sensitive to balancing the needs of creating a valid system without creating an unmanageable burden. While many states require a full evaluation of every teacher every year, the Advisory Committee quickly recognized that this would place an impossible and inefficient burden on WY schools. Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommends differentiating evaluations according to the experience and status of the schools' educators. Ultimately, each district shall enact a policy and set of procedures to differentiate evaluation systems for its different classes of educators (e.g., novice, veteran, and/or high performing, low performing) and to the specific evaluation questions to be investigated. **Each educator shall be evaluated at least once, using the full system, within the first three years of implementation, while novice educators should be evaluated every year.** To the extent possible, yearly evaluations shall include multiple years of student performance results.

Novice educators, defined as those within the first three years of the teaching profession, must be evaluated every year until they are rated "effective" for **two** consecutive years. Districts may decide to focus specific aspects of the evaluation for novice educators by reducing the demands of certain aspects of the systems and/or focusing the evaluation on specific standards.

**Teachers with professional status (continuing contract) receiving an ineffective or needs improvement rating shall be evaluated every year until they receive "effective" ratings or better for two consecutive ratings or until other actions are taken. Once these teachers receive two consecutive effective ratings, they shall receive summative evaluations every three years.**

**Continuing contract teachers who have received an effective or highly effective rating are required to be formally evaluated at least once every three years. This does not relieve the supervisor of the responsibility of providing formative feedback to teachers multiple times each year and collecting and reporting on student performance results each year,** but the formal determination does not have to be made more than once every three years. Additionally, for teachers who have been rated effective for multiple consecutive evaluations, the Advisory Committee recommends allowing supervisors and teachers to tailor the evaluations to focus on the standards that will allow such teachers to move from good to great. The Advisory Committee recognizes that such flexibility is highly dependent on the quality of school leaders to be able to enact such systems. Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommends using such flexibility where there is complete confidence in the school leader to enact such a system.

In addition to multiple measures, the Advisory Committee recognizes the challenge of having any single individual with enough expertise and time to conduct all required evaluations. Therefore, the State Model includes the optional use of peer teams, in addition to building-level administrators, to participate and advise in the evaluation process.

## REVIEW PROCESS

While the Advisory Committee has a clear preference for the local control of the leader and educator evaluation systems, the systems still need state oversight and support to ensure that all educators and leaders have the opportunity to participate in a fair and valid system. **This will require a monitoring and review process overseen at the state level by WDE and likely the State Board of Education and perhaps the Professional Standards Teaching Board (PTSB). The process enacted should be one that provides districts an opportunity to learn how to improve their systems rather than review processes that are focused on compliance.**

To meet these goals, the Advisory Committee recommends charging WDE with developing a peer review process for evaluating, first, district leader evaluation systems, followed by the educator evaluation systems. In keeping with the mind set of avoiding a “paper chase,” the Advisory Committee recommends designing the review process such that districts are incentivized to provide evidence that their systems are designed to directly influence improvements to teaching and learning. As the leader and educator evaluation systems mature, districts should be expected to provide evidence that their systems are indeed influencing the performance of both the teachers and students in the district.

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FEBRUARY 21, 2014

