

Teacher Evaluation and Supports



Framing the Issue

In response to coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), many states, districts, and schools have transitioned to a combination of virtual and in-person learning or, in many cases, virtual learning only. Few education preparation programs have prepared teachers to teach in a virtual environment, and teachers therefore will need support and feedback on how to navigate the transition from in-person to virtual learning. State education agencies are seeking new ways to support teachers with more relevant forms of feedback that teachers can use in their new teaching environments. Two key considerations for the virtual environment include: (1) reviewing teacher evaluation standards and frameworks and aligning them with best practices in virtual learning and (2) adapting teacher observation and evidence collection practices for virtual learning environments.



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Key Takeaways

Review and align standards and frameworks to the virtual learning environment.

Review existing teacher professional practice frameworks to ensure that the best practices for delivering virtual learning are reflected and reinforced in the rubrics.

- Examine professional practice frameworks to determine which standards and/or indicators emphasize virtual learning best practices by conducting a crosswalk with national online learning standards.
- Adapt frameworks for virtual learning by identifying specific standards or practices to be elevated for virtual learning and prioritizing specific indicators, such as social-emotional learning, student engagement, and relationships with students, to support during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Develop guidance that illustrates each indicator or practice in a virtual setting.
- Refer to existing virtual schools' evaluation system frameworks or resources for examples on how to modify and support teachers with virtual learning.

Consider new approaches to teacher observation.

Teacher observations should reflect the way virtual instruction differs from in-person instruction. How education leaders collect observation evidence will depend on whether virtual instruction is synchronous, delivered in real time with students using communication tools such as Google Classroom or Zoom, or asynchronous, in which there is a delay between the presentation of content, such as prerecorded videos, and the student response. When updating guidance on collecting evidence and conducting observations in virtual learning environments, consider the following:

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- Use recorded videos of teacher practice. With both synchronous and asynchronous instruction, administrators and evaluators can observe recorded lessons. The video can be used to provide feedback specific to their instruction and offers an opportunity for deeper reflection and explicit coaching.
- Protect student privacy. If using recorded videos as evidence for synchronous instruction, state education agencies will need to give districts and schools guidance on protecting student privacy, particularly if the learning management system or platform records students' webcams. Such guidance could include obtaining parental or guardian permission to use recordings in evaluations and instructing teachers to take students who do not have parental permission off camera.
- Measure student engagement. To facilitate the measurement of student engagement, state education agencies should encourage districts to track engagement through the learning management system or platform analytics. Many online platforms can provide data such as time on the platform, time watching videos, the number and duration of log-in sessions, and discussion forum visits and contribution.



Exemplars and Resources

Providing Supports for Teacher Evaluation and Feedback

The **Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education** (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/implementation/>) has identified six focus indicators for teachers and administrators from the state's educator evaluation framework that represent the highest priority practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. Supporting materials for both roles include key practices, adapted to highlight practices of specific relevance to the unique context of the 2020–21 school year; examples of feedback, collaboration, and support for both in-person and remote learning environments; and supportive resources for all learning environments.

Teacher Observation, Feedback, and Support in the Time of COVID-19: Guidance for Virtual Learning (https://gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/Teacher_Observation_COVID-19.pdf) This paper provides state education agencies with strategies to adapt educator evaluation and support system policies and practices to support virtual learning. The paper also explores the standards and rubrics for virtual learning, the logistics for how school leaders can conduct virtual observations, the challenges with observing and providing feedback virtually, and resources for professional learning focused on virtual learning environments.

Professional Development for Virtual Schooling and Online Learning (North American Council for Online Learning) (https://aurora-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/NACOL_Professional-development-for-virtual-schooling.pdf) This paper discusses five common myths with supporting teachers of online learning and outlines actions that schools can take to provide professional development to virtual teachers.

Supporting Teacher Learning and Development During Remote Instruction (The Danielson Group) (<https://danielsongroup.org/blog/blog/2020/05/07/supporting-teacher-learning-development-during-remote-instruction>) This guide outlines a timeline, a protocol, and suggested activities to support teachers who are learning to navigate digital learning. The guide may serve as a resource to work through during professional learning community meetings.

<https://www.air.org/resource/air-s-covid-19-response-and-resources>



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