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PA Educator Evaluation: The REVISED Frameworks for Observation and Practice

Act 13 of 2020 and the Chapter 19 regulations revised the Pennsylvania Educator Effectiveness system beginning in the 2021-22 school year. With these revisions, PDE edited Charlotte Danielson's *Frameworks for Teaching* by incorporating content related to trauma-informed practices, cultural relevance, remote teaching strategies, career readiness, equity and inclusion, and social and emotional wellness. These modified Frameworks should inform the Observation and Practice portion of the system.

The revised Frameworks for Observation and Practice include one Framework for classroom teachers and seven position-aligned Frameworks for non-teaching professionals. This *Advisory* addresses the revisions to the [Frameworks](#); previous *Advisories* detail the Act 13 Educator Evaluation system and rating tools.

Major Changes

The revised Frameworks adapt Charlotte Danielson's 2011 "Framework for Teachers" and 2020 "Framework for Remote Teaching." Several areas of change are noted below:

- Descriptions of practice in the revised Classroom Teacher and Information Technology Specialist Frameworks include descriptions of practice in both in-person and digital contexts.¹
- The revised Frameworks include culturally responsive and sustaining practices such as:
 - Engaging in inclusive and appropriate communication with students and families;
 - Including culture and language in the consideration of background knowledge; and
 - Holding high expectations for all students.
- For classroom teachers, distinguished practice often includes setting conditions for student-led learning.
- PDE issued seven additional Frameworks for non-teaching professionals: 1) school social worker/home and school visitor; 2) school psychologist; 3) speech and language pathologist; 4) school health specialist (including school nurse and dental hygienist); 5) school counselor; 6) instructional technology specialist; and 7) other non-teaching professional (which includes behavior specialists and may include individuals working in a position that requires an instructional certificate who do not provide content-based instruction to students). A description of the components included in these seven Frameworks can be found in [this Educator Effectiveness Resource](#) available on PEARL.²
- There are several other changes in the Frameworks, which educators should review as related to their discipline. All revised templates are available for download from the [PDE SAS website](#).

Issues to Consider

The Frameworks are a guide, not a checklist. PDE created the Frameworks to guide both educator self-evaluation and administrator evaluation; however, the structure of the Frameworks may lead some educators to misinterpret them as mandatory rubrics rather than guides.

¹ Unless restricted by a collective bargaining agreement, administrators can observe educators working in any context including online.

² PEARL, Professional Education and Resources for Learning, is an online professional learning system available to all PSEA members featuring dozens of free, asynchronous online courses. Learn more at pearl.psea.org.

The components of professional practice in the Frameworks may not be comprehensive. The Frameworks describe several possible components of effective practice. However, the components are suggestive only and may or may not reflect elements of a particular educator’s professional practice. Additional practices not described in the Frameworks might better reflect an educator’s level of proficiency in one or more domains. Educators should review their applicable Framework to empower them to engage in self-advocacy during pre- and post-observation conferences with administrators and use their pre-conference as a time to discuss the relationship of the Framework to their professional practice.

A “Not Observed” component of professional practice does not substantiate a lower proficiency rating. No single lesson incorporates all components of any Framework. Educators should be prepared in the pre- and post-conference to provide a professional rationale for which components are and are not observable within a lesson. Evaluators must have sufficient evidence to justify a rating in each of the four domains of Observation and Practice but do not need to gather evidence on every component of the Framework.

Discussion Prompts and Evidence of Practice offer tools, not checklists. The new Frameworks include Discussion Prompts and Evidence of Practice for each component. These are designed to foster conversation between the educator and evaluator and do not represent the range of topics or evidence that may inform a rating. As such, these are not checklists of elements required within a domain component.

Evaluations must focus on educator practice, not student behaviors. Some components of professional practice in the Frameworks could be construed to hold educators responsible for the student, rather than educator, behaviors. PSEA holds that evaluations of educators must be based upon *educator practice, not student behaviors*. In situations where student behavior is noted in the Frameworks, PSEA believes that administrators should focus their evaluation on educator practice *in response to* student behavior.

The Framework describes the Commonwealth’s vision of effective practice but does not define the data collection tools that an administrator may use to complete an evaluation. Administrators must issue a justifiable rating that is supported by observations of practice on the four domains established under Act 13. The Frameworks define PDE’s approved practice model and are tools to help both educators and evaluators reflect upon components of effective practice.³ However, the use of the Framework documents remains optional. Evaluators need only gather sufficient evidence to record a single rating in each of four domains of Observation and Practice to comply with the statute and related regulations.

Summary

The revised Frameworks for Observation and Practice provide a shared understanding of elements of effective professional practice. Holding the most up-to-date and accurate knowledge about these Frameworks is an important step for self-advocacy and preparedness in PA’s new system of educator evaluation.

For More Information

For specific information about how the new Educator Effectiveness System is being implemented by your employer, PSEA members should contact their UniServ Representative. Members also can explore the professional learning opportunities on this and other topics available from [PSEA’s Center for Professional Learning](#). For general information about the revised Frameworks for Observation and Practice or any other element of the revised Educator Effectiveness system, PSEA members should contact Dr. Gina Gullo in PSEA’s Education Services Division at GGullo@PSEA.org.

³ For nonteaching professionals, PDE’s Framework for Observation and Practice is the only practice model pre-approved for use. For classroom teachers, PDE has pre-approved the Danielson Framework for Teaching 2011[®] and 2013[®] in addition to the PDE Framework. Ratings must be based upon a pre-approved model beginning in 2022-23³ unless the employer has received PDE approval to use a different practice model.