

BEST PRACTICES Teacher Self-Assessments

Understanding the Colorado State Model Evaluation Process and Teacher Self-Assessments

One of the most important desired outcomes of educator evaluations is for educators to receive meaningful feedback about their performance and relevant professional development to improve their practice.

In the Colorado State Model Evaluation System, educators are able to be advocates for themselves. This begins with the self-assessment which identifies the evaluatee's perception of his/her own strengths and weaknesses with respect to the Quality Standards. The model system encourages educators to be thoughtful, reflective and honest about the professional practices that they believe are present in their everyday practice.

As part of the teacher evaluation process, the teacher is required to complete a self-assessment, which means he/she is already engaging in the process of reflection. This is a core best practice of evaluation. However, in the outlined model system process, the teacher sharing the self-assessment document with their evaluator (or others) is optional. The user's guide states, "[For the teacher] Review self-assessment throughout the year to make sure strengths are maintained and weaknesses addressed. If desired, share self-assessment with evaluator and/or other members of the evaluation team such as peer evaluators. The person being evaluated determines whether the self-assessment is shared and with whom." CDE recently clarified this language in the user's guide as many evaluators and teachers were asking questions about the self-assessment process.

The decision to allow optional sharing of the self-assessment is a design choice in the Colorado State Model Evaluation System. There are multiple other design choices that may be valued by districts. It is important to understand that some elements of the model system process may be modified to meet district needs. This is referenced on page four of the user's guide, "Procedures for conducting evaluations may be determined at the local level, provided they ensure that data are regularly collected, associated feedback and improvement opportunities are regularly provided and educators receive a formal evaluation and performance standard designation by the end of each academic year."

It is important to note, that if the model system process is modified, the districts should consider the repercussions of each design choice.

Regardless of the sharing of the document, it is a best practice that the teacher engages in a verbal, honest and reflective conversation with the evaluator about their craft and what they reflected on when doing their self-assessment. The principles of adult learning show that when people use self-assessment in professional development, they are more likely to sustain their learning, in more disciplined ways, than when evaluators alone enact professional development requirements. By engaging in a joint and reflective conversation about a teacher's craft and practice, goal setting and performance planning are more targeted. In this way, teachers and evaluators are working together collaboratively to identify areas of growth and support that are targeted to the real needs and goals of the teacher.

There are many benefits to sharing the actual self-assessment data:

- It can build trust and open discussions about practice with between the teacher and his/her evaluator
- It can guide the conversation into specific, actionable support from the evaluator or other experts in the building and the district
- It can guide the creation of meaningful professional development opportunities

Where can I learn more?

- To learn more about the Colorado State Model Evaluation System for Teachers visit:
www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/smes-teacher