



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., *State Superintendent*

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November 18, 2013

TO Superintendents
Associate Superintendents for Curriculum and Instruction
Human Resource Directors
Testing and Accountability Directors/Coordinators
Charter School Directors

FROM Rebecca Garland 

REQUEST FOR LOCAL FLEXIBILITY IN THE DETERMINATION OF STANDARD SIX RATINGS FOR EDUCATORS

In October 2013, the State Board of Education (SBE) approved a policy revision to allow local school districts and charter schools to petition the SBE for the use of school-wide growth data to determine Standard Six ratings for specific types of teachers. Districts may submit these requests at any point between now and April 15, 2014; the Department of Public Instruction will present them to the SBE for approval in the order in which they are received.

There are several important requirements for this additional flexibility:

- Districts are not exempt from the administration of the End-of-Grade assessments, End-of-Course assessments, Career and Technical Education High School Assessments, the Beginning-of-Grade English Language Arts assessment for Grade Three or the K-2 process that measures students' reading skill development. Teachers in grades/subjects or courses with these assessments will receive a Standard Six rating based on growth of students as measured with these tools.
- When a district requests the use of school-wide growth data to determine the Standard Six ratings for a specific group of educators, the request, if approved, must apply to all teachers in that group. For example, if a district elects to use school-wide growth data to determine the Standard Six rating for high school Chemistry teachers, the decision must apply to all high school Chemistry teachers in the entire district. There will be no exceptions for schools that would like to use individual teacher-level growth data.
- The attached request form requires the signature of the district superintendent, the local board of education chair, and a teacher representative. The Department of Public Instruction will not present a request to the SBE for approval without these three signatures. While not every district has a local affiliate of the North Carolina Association of Educators or Professional Educators of North Carolina, the Department of Public Instruction strongly recommends that districts with local affiliates seek a teacher signature from a leader of the local association.

ACADEMIC SERVICES AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

Other important notes to consider about this flexibility are:

- The Analysis of Student Work process for measuring growth in performance-based subjects and courses is under development and will be piloted again this spring. Because the process is not being implemented in 2013-14, the Department of Public Instruction is not yet accepting requests to use school-wide growth data rather than individual teacher-level growth data from the Analysis of Student Work process. The Department understands that districts and charter schools will want to know more about the final process before making decisions about a request for flexibility.
- Once a request for the use of school-wide data is approved, districts and charter schools are exempt from the administration of the specific NC Final Exams covered in the request.
- There will be teachers who have individual student growth data from an End-of-Grade assessment, End-of-Course assessment, or Career and Technical Education High School Assessment while also teaching courses and grades/subjects covered in the flexibility request. In those situations, the teachers' Standard Six rating will be based only on the individual teacher-level student growth data. For example, a high school science teacher may teach one section of Biology and five sections of Chemistry. If the district is approved to use school-wide growth data to determine Standard Six ratings for Chemistry teachers, this teacher's Standard Six rating will be based on the individual teacher-level growth data in Biology.

In its waiver from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), North Carolina committed to the use of educator effectiveness data to inform personnel decisions. The SBE has adopted policy that only an educator's overall status of effective, highly effective, or in need of improvement will inform personnel decisions, not individual ratings on Standards 1 – 6. According to SBE policy, a teacher only receives an overall effectiveness status when he/she has three years of student growth data specific to his or her individual students and grade/subject or course.

When districts submit a request to use school-wide data to determine Standard 6 ratings, they are also agreeing that the teachers will receive statuses (and any subsequent consequences) based on the school-wide data. While the SBE has not yet adopted specific personnel consequences for a teacher with a status of in need of improvement, the following example illustrates the above point.

- A Chemistry teacher works in a district that has been approved to use school-wide data to determine the Standard Six ratings of all Chemistry teachers. The school does not make growth in 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16, and the teacher is rated at "accomplished" or "distinguished" on each standard of the NC Educator Evaluation System. As a result, in the fall of 2016, the teacher receives a status of in need of improvement. The school does not make growth in 2016-17, and the teacher is again rated at "accomplished" or "distinguished" on each standard of the NC Educator Evaluation System. As a result, in the fall of 2017, the teacher again receives a status of in need of improvement. The teacher is now subject to any mandatory personnel action required by the State Board of Education.

The Department of Public Instruction urges districts to involve teachers; principals; central office staff members in the areas of human resources, curriculum and instruction, and testing/accountability; and local board members in the decision to request this flexibility.

If you have questions about this flexibility request or the attached request form, please email educatoreffectiveness@dpi.nc.gov or call Jennifer Preston, Race to the Top Project Coordinator at Educator Effectiveness at (919) 807-4187.

RBG:jp

c: Dr. June St. Clair Atkinson, State Superintendent
Dr. Tammy Howard, Director of Accountability Services
Dr. Lynne Johnson, Director of Educator Effectiveness
Ms. Jo Anne Honeycutt, Director of Career and Technical Education
Mr. Tom Tomberlin, Director of District Human Resources
Mr. Adam Levinson, Director of Race to the Top