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## Working Toward Implementation of Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth (PE/PG) Systems in Maine School Districts

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# Working toward Implementation of Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth (PE/PG) Systems in Maine School Districts



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## Executive Summary

**Introduction.** In 2012, the (125th) Maine Legislature enacted new legislation through LD 1858 which directed Maine school districts to develop systems of Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth (PE/PG) for teachers and school principals. Subsequent legislation revised the implementation rules and timelines. Together, the statutory law on educator effectiveness (MRSA, Title 20-A, Chapter 508) and the administrative rules for implementation (Education Rule Chapter 180) comprise the state education policy on PE/PG systems. This is the fifth report in a series of Maine Education Policy Research Institute (MEPRI) research studies and reports to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs in the Maine State Legislature.

**Research Methods.** To investigate the progress and challenges in district piloting and implementation of PE/PG systems, MEPRI drew on archived data in the form of PE/PG plans submitted by districts to the Maine Department of Education (MDOE), interviews with the state coordinator, and interviews with 16 district and school administrators in six diverse districts in different regions of Maine. These cases built on four cases studied the previous year. Interviews with the districts, conducted primarily in January 2017, were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for themes.

### Part I. Overview of the Statewide Trends in PE/PG Plans

Throughout the State of Maine, school districts developed PE/PG plans that evaluate teachers and principals using a variety of inputs. Professional practice, student learning, portfolios, and observations of classroom instruction and faculty meetings, among others, contributed to these plans. Traditional evaluators of educators are most common within these plans, meaning principals overwhelmingly evaluate teachers and superintendents typically evaluate principals. Many plans now include options to recommend non-renewal for teachers and principals based on ineffective ratings. Additionally, differentiated professional growth is included in many teacher and principal plans, and almost 3/5 of both teacher and principal plans embed professional growth in summative evaluations.

### Part II. A State-level Perspective on District Readiness to Implement PE/PG Systems

Nearly all districts submitted their comprehensive PE/PG plans to MDOE in spring-summer 2016. The MDOE reviewed and approved plans, and offered assistance to districts where needed. With the one year delay for implementation, most districts accepted the option to pilot another year in 2016-17. While the piloting was still limited this year, districts were required to produce a summative effectiveness rating (SER) for every teacher and principal by the end of this school year.

Despite multiple workshops on developing SLOs offered around the state, districts continued to have questions about SLOs and measuring student growth. The MDOE made visits to some districts and provided phone and email support. More training sessions will be provided in the coming year to address areas where districts have requested support. The state has also launched an online clearinghouse for districts to share their PE/PG plans, using an interactive map.

### **Part III. Progress toward Implementation in Six Districts**

**Current Status of PE/PG Systems in Six Districts.** Three of the six districts were further ahead in piloting and implementation than the other three. The Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) district was the farthest along and had been implementing for a few years. Generally, teacher evaluation systems were more developed than principal evaluation systems. Two of the six districts were implementing both teacher and principal evaluation systems.

**Use of Professional Practice Models.** The six districts used different professional practice models. One district combined two models for their use. All districts adapted the models to some extent, some more than others to meet local needs. District administrators reported being fairly satisfied with their selected models. Within the scope of this study, we were not able to determine how faithfully the districts followed these models. That is a question to investigate at a later time, when districts have fully implemented these systems.

**Areas of Progress and Success.** In this year's interviews, administrators reported the following areas of progress and success in piloting and implementing their PE/PG systems:

- Deeper understanding of the professional practice models
- Use of evidence, reflection, and feedback for professional growth
- More consistent and substantial evaluation practice

**Areas of Greatest Challenge.** Four areas were emphasized as major challenges, and largely echoed similar reports in the interviews last year. Districts were more concerned about the first two: time demands and technical questions, and asked for assistance from the state in dealing with these. For the last two challenges listed: calibration and evaluation for other administrative roles, districts were largely addressing these challenges on their own, and just needed more time to work on those areas.

- Time demands
- Technical questions on student assessment
- Need for improved calibration
- Evaluation of other administrative roles

**Sources of Evidence Used for Evaluation.** A wide variety of evidence was used to inform teacher and principal evaluation. Teacher evaluation systems were generally more formal, and included both formal and informal observation and formal feedback. Teacher evaluation generally did not require the use of peer observation and feedback, but teachers were encouraged to include this in their evidence voluntarily. Principal evaluation systems were less formal, as were observations and feedback to principals. Only one district had a formal system for peer feedback for principals. Districts used district assessments, the state assessment, and teacher-made or classroom-based assessment of student learning. Professional growth plans also figured into the evaluation and feedback of educators. There was limited use of surveys, but these practices were increasing.

**Online Systems to Manage Evidence.** Districts managed the data, evidence of professional practice, feedback, and professional development materials through online platforms and found these to be very helpful in fostering communication. Some systems were

designed to align with a particular professional practice model, but others were more home-grown or generic.

**Supporting Professional Growth.** Administrators valued the collaborative nature of their PE/PG systems and the use of a feedback loop to encourage educators to set individual and school goals, plan action, gather evidence, reflect and seek feedback to identify areas needing further improvement. They saw the opportunity to customize growth plans and professional development; although, meeting educators' varied learning needs was also cited as a challenge.

**Assistance or Guidance Utilized.** Districts received a small allocation from the state to support costs related to developing and piloting PE/PG systems. Districts with the Alternative Organizational Structure (AOS) were able to combine these allocations across their member SAUs. Districts used the resources to hire a trainer, pay for professional development and materials, or purchase tablets to encourage teachers to videotape their practice for peer feedback. Participants indicated low levels of confidence that the MDOE had the resources to provide necessary support and guidance. They generally did not find the SLO workshops to be very helpful.

**Assistance or Guidance Needed.** As reported in previous MEPRI reports, districts reported needing more clarification and guidance primarily around student assessment, SLOs and growth measures. They had questions about developing valid and reliable assessments and which students need to be included. They wondered how to determine if students were making adequate growth. The biggest frustration was the requirement to include the state assessment as a measure for student growth, as it is only given once a year. The second biggest concern was how to develop assessments at the secondary level and for allied arts.

**Views on PE/PG Policy.** There were mixed levels of support for the policy and diverse views and ideas across the six districts and 16 participants. In two districts, district leaders expressed more critical views of the policy and held different concerns about the potential impact of the policy. These districts were further behind in their development of PE/PG systems than the other four districts in our study.

Areas of agreement were that the collective use of a professional practice model as a basis for evaluation and professional growth provided improved clarity over professional standards and expectations, more consistent and substantive evaluation practices, and a focus on reflection and professional growth. Overall, district and school leaders advocated for a focus on supporting professional growth over evaluation and felt this was the best way to leverage improved practice. Districts were also in agreement about the need for stability in the policy, to maintain the good momentum and progress they have achieved. They suggested some areas for streamlining the policy or providing more flexibility. Participants saw the PE/PG policy as part of a larger system, and advocated for the state to take a more comprehensive and coherent approach to education policy, rather than creating and addressing each major initiative separately.

**Conclusions.** Our analysis of the PE/PG plans submitted by districts statewide indicated that many plans have drawn from traditional sources of evidence to contribute to teacher and principal evaluation, including observations, portfolios, and teacher/principal selected artifacts. However, alternative sources of evidence – parent surveys and student surveys for teachers, as well as observations of teacher conferences, school climate surveys, and 360 evaluations for principals – are being used and offer important insights into how educators can improve instruction and the educational environment to best support the communities they serve. Additionally, with the increased demands to evaluate educators, about 10% of school districts that submitted plans indicated they are training or plan to train teachers as evaluators and may also use external evaluators for administrators. Additional analysis of how these evaluations occur could be important to study. Perhaps most profound is the need to focus on professional growth – not simply performance evaluation – to strengthen the human resources of public schools across the State of Maine. About 60% of teacher and principal plans embed professional growth in summative evaluations, which may reduce the role of formative feedback to improve performance *prior* to evaluation, or may result in a focus on strengths rather than areas needing improvement. As Maine’s educational workforce strives to continually improve, allowing for formative feedback to improve performance would be important to consider.

Findings from the study of six district cases revealed that districts are making progress in developing, piloting, and implementing their systems, but are moving at somewhat different rates. Districts clearly need more time to refine some aspects of their systems as they implement next year. To date, these districts have only piloted or implemented their systems on a limited basis, and full implementation may reveal areas that need more attention. Further, districts have not yet piloted all components of their systems as outlined in their formal plans. Districts continued to rely on principals and superintendents to conduct evaluation, although there was an interest in training teacher leaders to assist with this in the future. Finally, districts continue to have important questions about developing student assessments and growth measures. More effort and resources from the MDOE are needed to address the need for support and guidance.

**Recommendations.** The following recommendations are informed by the suggestions and concerns raised in the interviews for this study:

### **State Policy**

- Re-examine the requirement to include the state assessment in evaluation systems.
- Allow some increased flexibility in how student growth is measured.
- Clarify policy language and simplify policy requirements where possible.
- Communicate a positive message about Maine schools and educators.
- Place the primary focus on supporting professional practice and growth instead of on evaluation, ratings, and consequences.
- Work toward stability in the law and reassure districts that the state will continue to support this effort.

### **State Assistance and Guidance**

- Continue and/ or increase state funding support to districts to support their implementation efforts which require professional development time for teachers and administrators.



- Increase state resources (funding, personnel) to support this major state policy initiative, along with related initiatives, such as proficiency-based education.
- Address increased workload for principals, through funding for assistant principals and/or teacher leaders to share the responsibility for teacher evaluation and supporting professional growth.
- Improve and increase guidance and training to school districts to address the on-going technical questions around student assessments and growth measures.
- Provide more regional training opportunities and online resources.
- Provide exemplars and models where needed, in particular for the secondary level and allied arts.
- Utilize existing professional organizations and networks, such as the superintendents' association, to share exemplars, models, and ideas as PE/PG systems continue to develop.
- Partner with other organizations and higher education to support the on-going professional development needs in implementing effective feedback and supporting improved practice.

## **Introduction**

### **Background on the State Policy**

In 2012, the (125th) Maine Legislature enacted new legislation through LD 1858 (“An Act to Ensure Effective Teaching and School Leadership”), which directed Maine school districts to develop systems of Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth (PE/PG) for teachers and school principals. Subsequent legislation revised the implementation rules and timelines. For example LD 692, “An Act Regarding Educator Effectiveness” enacted in 2015, directed districts to include the state assessment of students in principal and teacher evaluation in order to comply with federal education law at that time. LD 38, “An Act to Allow Sufficient Time for Implementation of the Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth System for Educators,” also enacted in 2015, extended the deadline for implementation by one year. Together, the statutory law on educator effectiveness (MRSA, Title 20-A, Chapter 508) and the administrative rules for implementation (Education Rule Chapter 180) comprise the state education policy on PE/PG systems. Other state education policies on student assessment and proficiency-based education shape the way student learning and growth are measured and also have an impact on the evaluation of educators, as student data are an important piece of evidence for educator effectiveness.

After working to develop their PE/PG systems in 2013 and 2014, most school districts were ready to pilot some components in a limited way during the 2015-16 school year. Districts submitted their comprehensive PE/PG plans to the Maine Department of Education (MDOE) in spring-summer 2016. The MDOE reviewed and approved plans, and offered assistance to districts where needed. With the one year delay for implementation, most districts accepted the option to pilot another year in 2016-17. While the piloting was still limited this year, districts were required to produce a summative effectiveness rating (SER) for every teacher and principal by the end of this school year. The MDOE will collect the SER data statewide. Starting in fall 2017, districts will be required to fully implement all components of their PE/PG systems for teachers and principals.

### **MEPRI Research on Maine PE/PG Systems**

At the request of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs of the Maine State Legislature, the Maine Education Policy Research Institute (MEPRI) conducted a series of studies and produced reports to monitor progress on implementation of PE/PG systems in each year since the passage of the educator effectiveness state law. In 2013, MEPRI conducted a review of the national literature and models used in other states for educator effectiveness systems (Doore, Jorgensen, Doore, & Mason, 2013). In 2013 and 2014, MEPRI conducted statewide surveys of district superintendents to better understand district leaders’ beliefs about educator evaluation and to assess progress in the development of evaluation plans (Mason & Porter, 2014). In 2015, MEPRI conducted interviews with superintendents from seven diverse districts across Maine to obtain more detailed information about how districts were planning to measure student learning and growth, and the use of other data sources such as teacher observation (Mason & Tu, 2015). In 2016, MEPRI conducted interviews with district and school administrators from four diverse districts to learn about their successes and challenges in piloting PE/PG systems (Mette & Fairman, 2016).

In this fifth report on PE/PG system development, we present findings from a MEPRI study conducted during the current 2016-17 school year which examined districts' continued experience with piloting and their readiness to implement. This study provides both quantitative and qualitative evidence from three primary data sources: PE/PG plans submitted by districts to the MDOE; an interview with the MDOE Educator Effectiveness Coordinator; and interviews with administrators of six diverse districts which build upon the original four case studies from last year. This report presents both a statewide portrait of district planning as well as a more in-depth look at the progress and challenges districts have experienced and their sense of readiness to fully implement their PE/PG systems in fall 2017.

## **Research Methods**

The broad research questions framing this study were the following:

- What is the current status of PE/PG systems in Maine school districts?
- What progress and challenges have districts experienced with piloting or implementing aspects of their PE/PG systems this year?
- What sources of evidence are districts using for teacher and principal evaluation?
- How have districts designed their systems to support professional growth of educators?
- What additional assistance or guidance do districts need to prepare for full implementation next year?

To investigate these questions, the study draws on two types of evidence: 1) archived data from a state survey of all Maine school districts to obtain information on their PE/PG system plans; and 2) interviews with the MDOE coordinator and six school districts. Research methods are briefly described for each type of data and data source for this report.

In spring 2016, the MDOE conducted an online survey of all school districts to collect detailed information on the components of district PE/PG systems. Districts responded to the survey and data were collected through the online survey program (Survey Monkey). MEPRI obtained permission to access the archived public data for this study and downloaded data in October 2016 into an EXCEL data spreadsheet for analysis. Findings describing statewide trends are presented in Part I of this report.

An interview was conducted by phone in December 2016 with the MDOE Educator Effectiveness Coordinator to gain a state-level view of district progress toward implementation of PE/PG systems in Maine. The state coordinator has been involved in communicating state guidelines for implementation, delivery of training related to implementation, and reviewing and approving district PE/PG system plans along with other MDOE team members. The interview was about an hour in length and was audio-recorded and transcribed. The responses were analyzed for themes and findings are reported in Part II of this report.

Interviews with district and school administrators were conducted by phone in late December 2016 and early January 2017. The case study sample included the four districts that participated in interviews for the report last year, and two additional districts. All had state-approved PE/PG plans, but were diverse in other ways. The interviews included participants in key leadership roles helping to coordinate and conduct educator evaluation. These job roles included the positions of superintendent, assistant superintendent, district curriculum coordinator, district educator effectiveness coach, and school principal from all grade levels.

Interviews were about an hour in length and were audio-recorded and transcribed. Responses were analyzed for themes that emerged in relation to the research questions for this aspect of the study. Part III of this report provides more information about the six districts we studied and findings from the interviews.

## Findings

This section is organized in three parts, each describing findings from a distinct source of data on PE/PG system implementation. In Part I, we describe statewide trends for specific components of the district PE/PG plans submitted to the MDOE. For example, we look at patterns in district choice of professional practice models, sources of evidence districts plan to use for teacher and principal evaluation, and how districts intend to develop and support professional growth plans. In Part II, we present findings from our interview with the state’s Educator Effectiveness Coordinator that describe perceptions of variation in district needs for support and efforts by the state to provide assistance to districts. Part III presents findings from interviews with six districts that are moving in different ways toward implementation in the fall.

### Part I. Overview of Statewide Trends in PE/PG System Plans

Our data collection and analysis of PE/PG plans submitted by school districts statewide included regular K-12 districts and did not include the eight regional CTE centers that were also required to submit PE/PG plans to the state. We collected the survey data on PE/PG plans in October 2016. At that point, there were a total of 146 teacher PE/PG plans and 144 principal PE/PG plans that had been submitted to the MDOE from school districts (excluding the eight CTE centers). Most of the plans had been approved at that point by the MDOE. It should be noted that some districts, such as the Alternative Organizational Structure (AOS) type district, are counted as a school administrative unit (SAU), but are also comprised of multiple SAUs. Most of the AOSs submitted a single, collective PE/PG plan for their AOS.

Overall, there was wide variance in the PE/PG models selected and developed by school districts throughout the State of Maine. Table 1 shows that locally-designed models approved by the MDOE were the least popular statewide for both teacher and principal PE/PG systems. Instead, most districts opted to use models developed by education companies and professional organizations. The Marzano model followed by the Marshall model were the most popular choices for teacher PE/PG systems, while the MPA model followed by the Marzano model were the most frequently selected models for principal PE/PG systems.

Table 1: Selected Teacher and Principal PE/PG Models

	Danielson	Locally-designed	Marshall	Marzano	MPA	National Board
Teacher PE/PG Models (n=146)	21	7	33	59	–	26
Principal PE/PG Models (n=144)	–	7	19	48	56	14

About half of the districts indicated in their plans that they would use models developed by the same company or organization for both their teacher and principal PE/PG systems, as the following list describes:

- 2 districts chose both Locally designed models for their PE/PG systems
- 16 districts chose both Marshall models for their PE/PG systems
- 46 districts chose both Marzano models for their PE/PG systems
- 11 districts chose both National Board models for their PE/PG systems

It should be noted that the MDOE’s online survey in 2016 to collect PE/PG plans predominantly asked districts to describe elements of their evaluation systems, and had substantially fewer questions about how districts would support professional growth for teachers and principals. School districts may have interpreted the survey’s focus on evaluation as an indication that state policymakers put a higher priority on educator evaluation than supporting professional growth. This was a theme that surfaced in our interviews with the six districts, as we describe in part three of this report. Given the structure and content of the survey, the available data described more about district evaluation plans than it did district plans for supporting professional growth of educators. We learned more about the second aspect through the interviews.

One requirement of PE/PG plans was to specify how student learning outcome and growth data would count as a “significant factor” in the determination of an educator’s summative effectiveness rating (SER). The state suggested that student learning or growth measures comprise at least 20% of the SER. As Tables 2 and 3 show, a majority of the PE/PG plans for both teachers and principals indicated that student learning measures would comprise 20-39% of the SER. Some district plans specified a lower percentage. As we describe in part two of this report, the state reviewed all plans and required districts to demonstrate how student learning would be a “significant factor”, and some districts had developed alternative approaches to meeting this requirement. Overall, evidence related to professional practice comprised the largest percentage or basis for calculating the SER.

Table 2: Distribution of Teacher PE/PG Plans by Percentage of SER Based on Professional or Student Factors (n=146)

	Professional Practice	Student learning	Other
0 - 19%	3	29	96
20 - 39%	8	103	22
40 - 59%	22	4	14
60 - 79%	28	0	2
80 - 100%	76	1	3
Not identified	9	9	9
Total # plans	146	146	146

Table 3: Distribution of Principal PE/PG Plans by Percentage of SER Based on Professional or Student Factors (n=144)

	Professional Practice	Student learning	Other
0 - 19%	7	38	97
20 - 39%	7	88	17
40 - 59%	23	7	9
60 - 79%	22	0	4
80 - 100%	74	0	6
Not identified	11	11	11
Total # plans	144	144	144

In addition to student learning, many other sources of evidence for both teacher and principal evaluation were included in the PE/PG plans. Traditionally, teacher evaluation is based on observations conducted by a principal. However, student and parent surveys are increasingly considered as an important form of feedback in evaluation systems (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2014). For the teacher PE/PG plans, 92% included unannounced short observations (often referred to as walkthroughs), 87% included announced long observations, and 84% included teacher constructed portfolios as forms of evidence. All three of these would be considered very common in teacher supervision and evaluation plans across the country (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2014). Parent surveys were less common in the teacher evaluation plans, and were mentioned in only 17% of all PE/PG plans. Student surveys were included in 32% of the PE/PG plans. While these were less common forms of evidence, they can provide important feedback about a teacher’s relationship-building skills. Table 4 shows an overview of selected sources of evidence included in teacher PE/PG models.

Table 4: Sources of Evidence Included in Teacher Evaluation

	Danielson	Locally-designed	Marshall	Marzano	National Board	Total
Portfolios	18	6	29	49	21	123 (84%)
Parent Surveys	5	3	10	6	1	25 (17%)
Student Surveys	6	6	13	11	11	47 (32%)
Announced Long Observations	19	7	22	56	23	127 (87%)
Announced Short Observations	16	5	15	45	18	99 (68%)
Unannounced Long Observations	13	5	16	32	12	78 (53%)
Unannounced Short Observations	17	7	32	56	22	134 (92%)
Total # plans	21	7	33	59	26	146

The sources of evidence that districts selected for principal evaluation reflected the general shift in the principal’s role in recent years from that of a building manager to an instructional leader. Districts indicated the intention to focus on observing and documenting principals in action with teachers and with other stakeholders. Specifically, observations of faculty meetings and other leadership activities were listed as sources of evidence in 75% of the

principal PE/PG plans. Less common sources of evidence included the use of a school climate survey (42%), the use of a 360 evaluation (38%), and a live or video-taped observation of a post-observation conference with a teacher (37%). All of these forms of evidence are important to consider when evaluating how a principal is able to support a learning environment, as well as the ability to lead adults through instructional improvement. Table 5 provides an overview of these findings.

Table 5: Sources of Evidence included in Principal Evaluation

	Locally-designed	Marshall	Marzano	MPA	National Board	Total
Observations of Faculty Meetings and other Leadership Activities	4	16	41	40	7	108 (75%)
Live or Video-taped Post-observation Conferences	3	10	18	14	8	53 (37%)
School Climate Survey	6	7	17	23	7	60 (42%)
360 Evaluation	2	5	10	28	9	54 (38%)
Student Climate Survey	0	0	1	7	6	14 (10%)
Total # plans	7	19	48	56	14	144

While our review of the PE/PG plans revealed a wide variety of evidence used in the evaluation component of teacher and principal PE/PG systems, there was less variation in who would evaluate teachers and principals. As Tables 6 and 7 indicate, school and district administrators were predominantly used to evaluate teachers and principals. The use of trained teachers as evaluators of other teachers was somewhat rare, and was only mentioned in 12% of the teacher evaluation plans. Table 6 provides an overview of the evaluators used in teacher evaluation, while Table 7 provides an overview of evaluators used in principal evaluation.

Table 6: Evaluators Used in Teacher Evaluation

	Danielson	Locally-designed	Marshall	Marzano	National Board	Total
Building Principal	21	7	30	59	23	140 (96%)
Other Administrator (not specified)	15	6	24	47	19	111 (76%)
External Evaluator	0	0	2	1	0	3 (2%)
Trained Teachers	4	1	2	7	3	17 (12%)
Other	1	0	1	1		3 (2%)
Total # plans	21	7	33	59	26	146

Table 7: Evaluators Used in Principal Evaluation

	Locally-designed	Marshall	Marzano	MPA	National Board	Total
Superintendent Only	4	11	35	34	11	95 (66%)
Superintendent and Other Administrators	3	7	11	16	2	39 (27%)
External Evaluators	1	1	4	4	0	10 (7%)
Total # plans	7	19	48	56	14	144

As teacher evaluation is typically thought of as a human resource function (Mette et al., 2017), there are consequences tied to summative teacher evaluations that contribute to either improvement plans or non-renewal. The most common consequence tied to an ineffective summative rating is the recommendation for non-renewal after two consecutive years, which was present in 80% of all teacher plans. Similarly, 48% of all teacher plans had the option to place teachers with ineffective summative ratings on a written improvement plan, which would be considered common practice as a way to help document improvement efforts, and helps protect both the teacher and the school district based on the outcomes of the improvement efforts. Interestingly, 71% of all teacher PE/PG plans included the option to place *all* teachers on differentiated professional growth plans, which suggests a differentiated approach to professional development that would encourage ongoing growth for both high-functioning and low-functioning teachers (Mette et al., 2017). Only 3% of all plans tied teacher salary to summative ratings, and only 3% earn financial compensation for effective ratings. Table 8 reviews the results and consequences that are tied to the various teacher PE/PG plans.

Table 8: Results and Consequences Tied to Summative Teacher Evaluation

	Danielson	Locally-designed	Marshall	Marzano	National Board	Total
All Teachers Placed on Differentiated Professional Growth Plan	17	5	18	44	20	104 (71%)
Only Teachers with Ineffective Summative Ratings Placed on Written Improvement Plan	8	4	16	35	7	70 (48%)
Teacher Salary Scale Tied to Summative Ratings	1	0	1	2	1	5 (3%)
Teachers Earn Financial Compensation for Ratings	1	0	1	0	3	5 (3%)
Teachers with Ineffective Rating Two Consecutive Years Recommended for Non-renewal	17	7	22	51	20	117 (80%)
Total # plans	21	7	33	59	26	146

The consequences tied to principal evaluation followed a very similar pattern to the above described teacher evaluation components. As with teacher evaluation, principal evaluation



helps serve as a human resource function that leads to improvement plans or non-renewal. In all, 60% of the principal PE/PG plans provided language that allows for the recommendation of non-renewal after two consecutive years of ineffective ratings. This is a full 20% lower than for teachers who receive the same two consecutive years of ineffective ratings. There was an additional option to recommend non-renewal for principals after just one year of ineffective ratings, which was present in 35% of all principal PE/PG plans. Additionally, 44% of the principal plans had the option to put principals with ineffective summative ratings on a written improvement plan, while 61% expected ongoing growth from all principals by placing them on a differentiated professional growth plan. Table 9 reviews the results and consequences that are tied to the various principal PE/PG plans.

Table 9: Results and Consequences Tied to Summative Principal Evaluation

	Locally-designed	Marshall	Marzano	MPA	National Board	Total
All Principals Placed on Differentiated Professional Growth Plan	5	10	34	29	10	88 (61%)
Only Principals with Ineffective Summative Ratings Placed on Written Improvement Plan	1	10	25	25	2	63 (44%)
Principal Salary Scale Tied to Summative Ratings	1	1	2	3	2	9 (6%)
Principals Earn Financial Compensation for Ratings	1	0	2	1	3	7 (5%)
Principals with Ineffective Rating One Year Recommended for Non-renewal	5	9	16	15	5	50 (35%)
Principals with Ineffective Rating Two Consecutive Years Recommended for Non-renewal	2	11	35	30	8	86 (60%)
Total # plans	7	19	48	56	14	144

While the MDOE’s online survey to collect PE/PG plans from districts focused more heavily on questions about evaluation systems, there were some questions about how districts planned to support professional growth. Our analysis found that over 75% of all teacher PE/PG plans included the use of a) formative feedback, b) peer observation, c) self-evaluation training, and d) training to develop professional growth and improvement plans. However, we also found that districts have sometimes combined or blurred the lines between evaluation and professional growth, in that 62% of all teacher PE/PG plans embedded professional growth *within* the summative evaluation. In essence, educators’ self-assessments and efforts to address areas of professional practice counted as part of the evidence for their summative effectiveness ratings (SERs). This practice may pose a conflict between the intent of supporting professional growth (which requires non-evaluative formative feedback) and evaluation (which utilizes summative feedback that may have real consequences). An unintended outcome of this approach may be

that teachers and principals may feel compelled to focus on areas of success in student learning and professional practice, rather than feeling a sense of safety in working on areas where they want to strengthen professional knowledge and skills. When the stakes are high for evaluation, for example renewal decisions or merit pay, the tendency to focus on the safety of positive outcomes is even stronger. This was a concern that surfaced in our interviews and will be described more in part three of this report. Table 10 represents these findings in full.

Table 10: Professional Growth Opportunities in Teacher PE/PG Plans

	Danielson	Locally-designed	Marshall	Marzano	National Board	Total
Professional Growth Embedded in Summative Evaluation	7	3	17	44	20	91 (62%)
Formative Feedback	16	5	23	50	15	109 (75%)
Peer Observation	18	6	24	50	21	119 (82%)
Self-Evaluation Training	17	4	27	53	21	122 (84%)
Training to Develop Professional Growth and Improvement Plans	19	6	28	56	23	132 (90%)
Total # plans	21	7	33	59	26	146

Findings for principal PE/PG models, specifically the opportunities for professional growth, tend to mirror those of teachers. Over 80% of all principal PE/PG plans included the use of a) formative feedback, b) self-evaluation training, and c) training to develop professional growth and improvement plans. Peer observation was present in 56% of plans, perhaps due to the smaller number of principals in small rural districts. Again, we found there was conflation in the intent of professional growth (formative feedback) and evaluation (summative feedback), as 57% of all principal PE/PG plans embedded professional growth *within* the summative evaluation. As with teachers, embedding professional growth within summative evaluation may make it difficult for principals to focus on areas where they want to improve professionally when they are being evaluated for renewal considerations. Table 11 presents these findings.

Table 11: Professional Growth Opportunities in Principal PE/PG Plans

	Locally-designed	Marshall	Marzano	MPA	National Board	Total
Professional Growth Embedded in Summative Evaluation	0	6	36	30	10	82 (57%)
Formative Feedback	5	17	40	42	11	115 (80%)
Peer Observation	2	9	32	28	9	80 (56%)
Self-Evaluation Training	4	14	45	41	12	116 (81%)
Training to Develop Professional Growth and Improvement Plans	5	15	45	45	12	122 (85%)
Total # plans	7	19	48	56	14	144

## Part II. A State-Level Perspective on District Readiness to Implement PE/PG Systems

An interview with the MDOE Educator Effectiveness Coordinator was conducted in December 2016 to obtain a state-level perspective on what progress districts are making in piloting their PE/PG systems and what kinds of assistance districts have needed. We describe first the MDOE effort to collect and review district plans, then MDOE work to assist districts and provide training, and finally the state-level perspective on district readiness to implement PE/PG systems.

**MDOE Approval of District Plans.** The MDOE solicited detailed information from school districts on their plans for PE/PG systems through an online survey conducted in spring-summer 2016. A total of 208 SAUs were required to submit PE/PG plans, which includes eight regional career and technical education (CTE) centers. By June 2016, the MDOE reported they had received plans from 150 school administrative units (SAUs) and had approved 60 of these. In the interview conducted in December 2016, the coordinator for this effort reported they received plans from about 180 SAUs and that they were working more intensively with the remaining SAUs to assist them in finalizing their plans. Nearly all plans that were complete at that point had been approved.

The time and effort to carefully review and respond to the submitted plans required a team. Each plan could be 60 pages in length, and a determination was needed whether the plan complied with state requirements. The coordinator pulled together a team of six former district and school administrators to assist with the review of plans, and they worked intensively for six months reviewing plans, answering questions, and providing guidance to districts to finalize plans. The coordinator admitted it was “a lot to manage,” but that the team put into place an “internal system, so that there were checks and balances and assurances that nothing was overlooked and that we honored the letter of the law appropriately.” Each plan was read by two readers and any significant questions about whether the plan complied with the law were discussed by the whole team. The coordinator described this process: “If something was, almost like a legal question that we were trying to sort out, we would bring the whole team together periodically and meet and put the district plan on the table.” He acknowledged that some plans didn’t show “great quality in some instances, but did meet the intent or the letter of the law.” The review and approval process “was about meeting the letter of the law, the minimum requirement.” But the MDOE team did provide recommendations to districts on ways to improve their plans.

At times meeting the letter of the law was challenging due to the statutory language which needed further clarification and discussion. One example shared by the state coordinator was the requirement for student growth to count as a “significant factor” in the summative effectiveness ratings (SERs) for evaluation. The recommended threshold was 20% for this factor. However, a few plans came under this threshold (as we described in our analysis of statewide PE/PG plans in part one of this report, Tables 2 and 3), and the districts were given an opportunity to make their case. For example, one district indicated they would use a 10% threshold for student growth, but they also had a rule that if an educator received a low score in student growth it would automatically trigger the requirement for a student action plan to be developed. Thus, the district argued successfully that they had made student growth a significant factor in the evaluation process. The requirement to specify what types of evidence would count as “significant factors” and how in the PE/PG plans was probably one of the most sticky points

in the review and approval process, requiring interpretation of the law and negotiation with districts.

Student growth continues to be a murky subject for many districts. The state coordinator commented that “It’s a complicated issue. I could say ‘student growth’, but that means five different things to five different people.” In conversations with the state coordinator, districts also shared their frustration about the requirement to use the state assessment as a measure of student growth, because it is given only once a year.

While questions about how to incorporate student growth comprised the biggest issue with the submitted plans, the state coordinator said that other issues challenged districts as reflected in their submitted plans. These included:

- misunderstanding the requirements of the law
- low fidelity to the selected professional practice model
- development of student learning outcomes (SLOs) to demonstrate student growth
- under-developed peer review process
- poor articulation of what it means to be an effective teacher

The coordinator acknowledged his team’s assistance: “I certainly couldn’t have done it without my review team . . . It was a huge undertaking.” The MDOE required districts to submit their entire plan, rather than submit in pieces as they developed components. This made the review process more manageable for the MDOE. One of the biggest frustrations was that some districts neglected to identify the district name on documents they were uploading into the system for their submittal to the MDOE, which made for more work for the MDOE staff. Overall, the coordinator felt that most districts submitted their plans by the deadline and that the MDOE was able to review nearly all completed plans within the 30-day timeframe required.

In the case of districts with the Alternative Organizational Structure (AOS) which consist of multiple SAUs, these groups submitted one plan for the AOS which also simplified the review process by the MDOE. Another factor that facilitated review was that some SAUs indicated they were adopting another district’s plan that had already been approved.

In reflecting on some “lessons learned” from coordinating this effort, the coordinator described how the process of collecting plans was more supportive than punitive, which departed from some previous state policy approaches and also helped to encourage compliance. He also said that several districts had written to express their appreciation for this helpful approach.

*This has not been a “gotcha” process, a punitive process. The process has been very supportive. Nobody has received any letters of reprimand for not submitting this part or that part. They’re either approved or not approved, based on what they’ve submitted, and then they get recommendations.*

He later added this comment, describing how a compliance approach would not result in productive change in district evaluation and professional growth practices:

*At the end of the day, the checklists are not going to help anybody. They need to be able to be implementing something with fidelity and something that’s going to work for their district, and their teachers, for their kids, for everybody.*

**MDOE Assistance to Districts.** When districts submitted a plan that was not initially approved, the MDOE contacted the district to communicate what needed to be done to obtain approval. For the few districts that did not submit any plans, the MDOE also reached out to help those districts gain compliance with the state law. From March 2016 through the fall, the state coordinator indicated he had made approximately 50 site visits to districts to encourage and assist districts in finalizing a plan that met the requirements of the law. In some cases, the remaining districts to finalize plans are smaller and lack personnel to work on the multiple pieces of a PE/PG system.

In addition to phone, email, and site visits to assist districts with specific questions about their PE/PG plans, the MDOE organized regional workshops on developing SLOs which supported both the educator effectiveness and proficiency-based education efforts. The MDOE contracted with the Northeast Comprehensive Center to conduct workshops in Machias, Presque Isle, Farmington, Augusta, Ellsworth, Brunswick, Rockland, and Portland. Regional career and technical education centers (CTEs) also received training in Augusta on SLOs and requirements for developing PE/PG systems. There was also a training event for mentors of new teachers.

The MDOE also provided mini grants to SAUs to help support some of the cost for developing PE/PG systems. As of March 2017, 77 SAUs had applied for and received these grants.

Like many staff in the MDOE, the state Educator Effectiveness Coordinator has been asked to take on additional assignments in other areas as well, which indicates that the MDOE staff may be stretched to support the PE/PG effort and other areas. This has limited the time available to assist districts, and indicates a need for capacity building in the state agency. In March 2017, the MDOE reorganized staff and a new Acting Educator Effectiveness Coordinator was named. The new coordinator indicated that discussions were underway regarding additional professional development events for teachers next year, with plans to be finalized in the coming months.

In the effort to provide information to districts more efficiently, the MDOE has begun to develop an online clearinghouse for PE/PG system plans that can be searched using a map of Maine and selecting particular school districts (MDOE, 2016). District plans for teachers and principals are available, and the professional practice models are indicated. The state coordinator sees this as a “powerful tool” which will continue to be developed with more information and updates. It also helps to build knowledge about key components of the system, which in his view include the professional practice model, student growth, and mentoring. “Those are the pillars which this whole thing sits on.”

**Assessment of Progress toward Implementation.** At the time of this report, the MDOE had received PE/PG plans from most of the 208 SAUs required to submit plans. Approximately 23 SAUs had plans in various stages of completion and approval. Districts are expected to fully implement their systems starting in the fall 2017.

In the December 2016 interview, the MDOE Educator Effectiveness Coordinator made a point to note the statewide accomplishment of developing educator evaluation systems that were based on professional practice models, rather than the more informal approaches used before.

*I think the biggest accomplishment with this has been, that for the first time in Maine’s history, most of our districts have an evaluation plan that’s grounded in a professional practice model and that incorporates student growth. That’s a*

*huge accomplishment for the state and I think that could attest to the field really doing the heavy-lifting.*

The coordinator also described a sense of strong district support to put into place better quality evaluation systems, and this was reflected in the significant effort districts spent in putting together and submitting their PE/PG plans.

*I love how the field rose to the occasion. I really feel like there's a lot of support behind this. More than I've ever thought that there would have been. . . . There were a few, a very few [districts] that drew a political line in the sand, "this too shall pass" . . . But for the most part, no one said "I'm not doing this." You know, that's a testament to the superintendents and the curriculum coordinators that they do value a quality evaluation system.*

When asked in the interview why some districts were ready with their plans sooner than others, the state coordinator offered two factors that seemed to have an impact on the process and progress. First, there was a strong involvement of teachers from the beginning as members of the district steering committees to oversee development of PE/PG plans. The state coordinator felt the involvement of teachers helped districts marshal the support they needed from teachers to overhaul evaluation systems.

Second, the state coordinator observed that the involvement of teachers also helped to foster better cooperation between district administration and teachers' associations. Districts with a more positive culture of cooperation between these two entities seemed to make better progress in putting together their PE/PG plans. He shared this observation:

*From a standpoint of folks that really had a difficult time doing this, there were cultural relationship issues with their associations . . . there wasn't a healthy relationship between administration and the association or teachers. So there were climate issues in those places. The folks that got this thing done easily were the folks that had really good, healthy relationships, good climates, active, open communication climates. And I think that was kind of an "aha!" for me."*

Surprisingly, the state coordinator did not find that district capacity or size, or isolation of districts, was an important factor determining which districts struggled or not in developing their plans. He observed, "I had big and small [districts] call me with struggles. And I had rural and non-rural [districts] call me . . . some of my best plans were from these little, tiny places." However, capacity may have been a challenging factor for the few districts without an approved plan by December 2016. These districts were generally very small, more remotely located and included some island districts.

**MDOE Monitoring and Data Reporting.** State plans for on-going data collection and compliance monitoring in the future are still under development. The state coordinator indicated that the state may decide to use a three year renewal and review process, where the state would only review PE/PG systems for about a third of the state each year. This approach would make the work more manageable on the state level. At a minimum, the state will need to collect and report data on the number of teachers statewide who fall into the four performance levels, and

the number from small, rural or isolated districts. Since many districts have indicated they will evaluate about a third of their educators each year, the state will need to wait three years to obtain data or summative effectiveness ratings (SERs) for all educators in a district. This complicates state reporting to the federal education agency.

### Part III. Progress toward Implementation in Six Districts

**Case Study Sample for Interviews.** Districts were selected for the case study sample based on having obtained approval of their PE/PG plans by the MDOE and with a goal to reflect variation in the components of their systems, as well as demographic and regional diversity. We included the four districts from last year’s study (A-D) and added two more districts (E, F) for a total of six district cases. One of the districts added to the study sample this year is a district that received funding through the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF). It was helpful to include a TIF-funded district to appreciate the importance of the extra funding, materials, and professional development for enabling TIF districts to fully implement their PE/PG systems much earlier than most districts in the state. The MDOE created the Maine Schools for Excellence to support TIF districts with intensive professional development, support to implement PE/PG systems, and incentive pay for teachers. Including a TIF district also provided a picture of what PE/PG systems might look like in a more advanced stage of implementation. The TIF district in our study was in the fourth year of implementation, while the other five districts were continuing to pilot or in earlier stages of implementation this year.

Table 12 presents a quick view of the study sample in terms of variation in district enrollment, which ranged from small, rural remote districts to a larger urban district.

Table 12. District Sample

District	Enrollment Range	Demographic Descriptor*
A	3,000-4,000	Small city
B	1,000-1,500	Suburb, small
C	1,000-1,500	Rural, fringe
D	400-600	Rural, remote
E	600-800	Rural, remote
F	1,500-2,000	Suburb, mid-size

\*NCES categories

Districts were also selected from different regions of Maine. One district is located on the northern coast, one on the southern coast, two districts are in western Maine, and two are in central Maine. These districts are different from the sample of seven districts studied by MEPRI in 2015 interviews.

PE/PG plans collected by the MDOE were consulted to identify districts that varied by their approach to educator evaluation. We selected districts using different professional practice models and which used different sources of evidence to inform educator evaluation. This information will be summarized later in the report.

A total of 16 individuals were interviewed from the six districts. District and school administrators were interviewed jointly in an audio-recorded phone interview which was

transcribed. In all cases, district leaders directed us to speak with administrators who were responsible for implementing PE/PG systems and were very knowledgeable about these systems. The TIF district had used part of their funding to create a full-time district Educator Effectiveness Coach, which was a unique position that other districts did not have. Table 13 shows the distribution of participants by district and job role.

Table 13. Number of Interviews by Job Role

District	Superintendent	Assistant Superintendent	Curriculum Coordinator or PE/PG Coach	High School Principals	Middle School Principals	Elementary Principals
A		1		1		1
B	1		1			1
C	1		1	1		
D			1			2
E			1		1	
F	1				1	

**Current Status of PE/PG Systems in Six Districts.** Four of the six districts we studied took the option to continue piloting certain components of their evaluation systems this year, while two districts (B and E, including the TIF district) were implementing both their teacher and principal evaluation systems. These two districts were considerably further ahead with their teacher evaluation system and in their third or fourth years of implementation. The other four districts were in their first through third year piloting their teacher evaluation system. With regard to principal evaluation, three districts (A, B, E) were implementing this year and were in their first or third year of implementation. The other three districts were in their first or second year of piloting this component.

As Table 14 indicates, there was considerable variation in the implementation status. Overall, two districts were well into full implementation for their PE/PG systems, while three districts were piloting both the teacher and principal components, and one district had a mixture of both piloting and implementation. These districts were also further ahead in developing their teacher evaluation systems compared to their principal evaluation systems. It should be noted that while the TIF district was further ahead on implementing both the teacher and principal evaluation systems, there was one district (B) that was close behind in their experience implementing the teacher evaluation system.

Table 14. Implementation Status 2016-17

District	Teacher Evaluation Plan	Principal Evaluation Plan
A	3 <sup>rd</sup> year piloting	1 <sup>st</sup> year implementing
B	3 <sup>rd</sup> year implementing	1 <sup>st</sup> year implementing
C	1 <sup>st</sup> year piloting	2 <sup>nd</sup> year piloting
D	2 <sup>nd</sup> year piloting	1 <sup>st</sup> year piloting
E	4 <sup>th</sup> year implementing	3 <sup>rd</sup> year implementing
F	1 <sup>st</sup> year piloting	1 <sup>st</sup> year piloting

District and school administrators we interviewed cited different reasons for the decision to continue piloting another year. One district indicated they needed another year to pilot the



teacher evaluation system because of the more complex task of developing student growth measures at the classroom level for high school courses. A participant explained,

*Nobody had really made decisions on what was going to be used at the high school level. So we spent a lot of last year working with departments to try and figure out something that was a good tool to measure their effectiveness for student growth. . . . This year we've now really tried to implement that. . . . This year the expectation is that they're going to now implement that measurement tool in student growth for all of their students. And we needed that extra year at the high school to be able to really look at that data and be able to say you know, we can collect this data as well.*

A second district shared similar concerns about the development of objective and reliable measures of student growth for high school courses. But this district questioned the use of these measures for the purpose of teacher evaluation, and did not feel the work of developing these measures is a good use of teachers' time. Instead, they suggested it would be more helpful for the state to develop statewide indicators and assessments for high school courses.

*The common goal would be [for the MDOE] to give us the standard you'd like us to assess; to give us the performance indicators you'd like us to assess; to provide us with the scoring criteria for those performance indicators; to provide us with the rubrics for those from those scoring criteria you've provided, and to create a common assessment that we could then use . . . Then we could look at algebra across the state.*

A third district indicated they needed another year to pilot the teacher evaluation system this year, partly because the piloting so far had to be on a limited scale with a sample of teachers and a reduced level of data collection.

*We felt that we would stay with this, stay with the state timeline and go ahead and pilot this year. So it was the testing results and the extra year that the state had given us to make sure that we were comfortable with the new evaluation law, and gave us some more time to make sure that we were ready to fully implement in the next two years.*

Administrators in the same district were also concerned about what the results of the summative effectiveness ratings (SERs) will be after they enter all the information into their system during the piloting year. A participant reflected,

*I guess [one thing we're] hesitant or unsure of is we're wondering what the SER is going to look like at the very end. We're going through this process, the teachers are doing their SLOs, on an abbreviated scale, they're doing a growth plan on abbreviated scale. We're doing our observations on an abbreviated scale. And then when it's all set and done because we're using iObservation, we're going to punch in numbers and it's going to give us an SER up the other end. And we're concerned, what are those going to look like? Is that truly going to reflect what we expected? . . . If a teacher, even in the pilot, gets an SER that is sub-par,*

*there's going to be a lot of questions about, is it something that the teacher did wrong? Is it something wrong with the system? And how do we correct that?*

This district was just beginning to develop their principal evaluation plan this January, and had not yet determined what types of evidence would be used, completed individual growth plans, or begun to collect data or observations of principals. The district was skeptical that they would be ready to implement either the teacher or principal systems next fall.

A fourth district indicated in the interview that they were piloting again this year in order to continue with work on calibrating student learning outcomes (SLOs) and the way administrators weigh evidence in evaluating teachers. One participant shared this comment:

*The biggest challenge is really calibrating those SLOs to make sure that they're the same throughout the district . . . So that's where we find we have to continue to work on that in leadership, among everything else we have to do. So it's really the time to do that.*

Four of the six districts felt the need to continue piloting to further develop their systems, particularly in places where they were further behind, such as in the principal evaluation and in developing SLOs and student growth measures at the high school level. There were many reasons that districts needed more time to develop and pilot their PE/PG systems. Part of the challenge was in the inherent complexity of the work. In the interviews this year and last year, several participants described a steep learning curve for both teachers and administrators to develop a deeper understanding of their professional practice models, as well as in learning how to develop SLOs and growth measures. That understanding required professional development time. Some comments from districts on this aspect of the work included:

*We empower the teachers to come up with what makes sense to measure their effectiveness, and that was liberating and exciting and exhilarating, and very difficult all in the same moment. . . . That's why the second pilot year was to really give them additional time and support with the evaluators out there. Team leaders, the department heads, and the instructional coach up there [in the high school] have been really scrambling to support in relevant ways, the teachers in their development of their student growth measures.*

*There's been a lot of summer training on assessments and how to use assessments to drive your data and write SLOs with them. So . . . when you talk about the time, it's summer, it is monthly meetings dedicated to training all teachers. We've had workshop days in the fall. We have a workshop day where teachers are allowed to write their SLOs and professional goals and during that time they're supported.*

Another reason for continued piloting was the need to practice the process of observing, giving feedback, and rating educators and to calibrate that effort for greater consistency across administrators and schools, particularly when the effectiveness ratings were going to have real consequences for teacher or administrator pay. The concern about calibration was described in these comments:

*Our calibration and understanding of what the elements mean for the administrator evaluation is growing.*

*The issue that I see that we need to address is now we need to make this [a] consistent practice as far as that is happening throughout district with all of our evaluators with whoever they are observing.*

Finally, the effort to develop and pilot PE/PG systems involved all teachers and administrators, and significant time was needed before districts were ready for implementation. All districts noted the considerable time needed to develop, pilot and implement these systems. One principal explained the time needed to conduct the evaluation process:

*. . . if I didn't have the coach to divide my staff in half . . . all I would be doing is observing. And I don't have an assistant principal. I'm the only administrator. So that would be all consuming, very valuable but extremely time consuming for me. . . You know, because the observation themselves can be 20 to 30 minutes or a full period for us it's 50 minutes this year. But the pre and post conference does have a half an hour of time. It takes up to two hours per observation to put everything into our portfolio system.*

**Use of Professional Practice Models.** The six districts selected for this study used a variety of different professional practice models for their teacher and principal evaluation and professional growth systems. Table 15 below shows how frequently certain professional models were used by these districts as a foundation for their PE/PG systems. A picture of statewide trends in selection of models was presented earlier in part one of this report, in Table 1.

Table 15. Number of Districts Using Professional Practice Models

Teacher Models	Danielson (1), InTASC (1), Marshall (1), Marzano (2), National Board (1)
Principal Models	ISLC (1), Marshall (1), Marzano (2) MPA (3)

While there was no predominant pattern, there was more frequent use of the Marzano model for teachers and the Maine Principals Association (MPA) model for principals. One of the six districts borrowed from two professional practice models for principals, and also adapted and augmented the teacher practice model. The other districts reported feeling fairly satisfied to very satisfied with the professional practice models they had selected.

We were not able to determine to what extent districts were following their selected professional practice models with fidelity within the scope of this study. First, the districts had only focused on a few elements or standards in these models during the piloting phase for educator evaluation and professional growth. The districts anticipated that as they moved toward full implementation, they would only evaluate perhaps a third of their teachers and principals each year and could therefore have more time to examine educators' effectiveness against the full scope of the standards in their professional practice models.

Second, it was clear that districts preferred to adapt the models to a certain degree to fit with their district vision and practices, and also to meet the needs of different grade spans. Some

adapted the models more than others, but the extent of any variation from the models cannot be determined from the interview data. One high school principal explained:

*We are trying to adjust some of the descriptors within the Marshall rubric because some of the descriptors I don't think really reflect maybe secondary education as much as they do maybe primary education. You know . . . I think really we're trying to work on some of the descriptors to make sure they align with our initiatives here at school.*

Third, while districts understood the importance of evaluation, they generally described a greater focus on the professional growth aspect of their PE/PG system—and for some districts more than others. Within the professional growth system, teachers and schools would select just a few of the elements or standards to focus on during the school year, and then examine progress against those elements. Again, this was viewed as a practical and manageable way to incorporate these models into practice, and to customize the models according to each educator's individual professional needs. Focusing on supporting professional growth rather than evaluation was also viewed as a more powerful impetus to effect improved practice.

**Areas of Progress and Success.** In the interviews last June, districts described a sense of progress in developing their PE/PG system and focused on several key areas of progress which are described in an earlier report (Mette & Fairman, 2016). These included:

- Alignment with district evaluation systems and visions
- Increased clarity and transparency in professional practice standards
- Success in limited piloting and increasing support from teachers
- Use of online platforms to collect evidence and drive conversations about practice

In the interviews this winter, district and school administrators focused on the following areas of progress:

***Deeper understanding of the professional practice models.*** Districts reported that both teachers and administrators were continuing to deepen their understanding of the models, and the piloting work had provided opportunity to apply those concepts through evaluation and reflection on practice. Yet, they recognized that more work was needed to become more fluent with these models, and they devoted training and workshop time to this effort. One administrator explained: “The teachers were continually unpacking and diving deeper into what the elements in the Marzano framework actually are calling for, what those strategies look like.”

***Use of evidence, reflection, and feedback for professional growth.*** District and school administrators were pleased with the impact of having a common focus on a professional practice model, and the effort to examine evidence of professional practice and provide feedback to inform teachers' and principals' individual growth plans. As educators discussed the evidence with their evaluators, they were able to identify areas for professional growth. Support for learning and improvement could be customized, with resources shared through the online platforms and the professional practice models, as well as within district professional development. One administrator commented, “Teachers providing evidence based on each element has been very valuable to us because actually seeing that in practice and making recommendations specific to those different pieces.” For principals, informal mentoring was the preferred method to support principals' development.

**More consistent and substantive evaluation practices.** Districts reported that the new PE/PG systems were providing a more substantive structure for evaluation and that administrators were becoming more consistent in their approach to evaluation. However, they saw a need to continue this effort and had been focusing on calibration. They reported that teachers appreciated having more consistency and a focus on clear standards and rubrics. The following comment reflects these views:

*As a district, we're cohesive and consistent, which in the past was dependent on who the administrator was in the building at the given time and what evaluation they chose to follow. We have a consistence. It doesn't matter who's stepping in. They're all looking at the same thing under the same lens and the feedback is actually, it's real. It's not just about, you know, did you change your bulletin boards often enough?*

**Areas of Greatest Challenge.** Several areas were described as significant challenges in the interviews this year, and echoed district perceptions from last year's interviews. These included: the time demand for administrators, uncertainty about technical aspects of developing student growth measures, and continued need to calibrate both student growth measures and evaluation practices.

**Time demands.** The demand on district and school administrator time to implement all aspects of evaluation work and support of educators' professional growth was significant. Administrators described the time needed to conference with principals or teachers, conduct evaluation, and review documentation. While supervision and evaluation are a necessary part of administrators' job roles, the new PE/PG systems are more elaborate and formalized than before and there's a greater emphasis on collecting and reviewing evidence of practice. In smaller schools and districts, where administrators wear "many hats," the additional work was more difficult to absorb. Overall, we did not hear about any effort to involve teachers or teacher leaders to assist with the work of teacher evaluation in these six districts. We did see that other districts indicated they planned to use teachers in evaluation roles in their PE/PG plans, as described in part one of this report, Table 6. An administrator described the contractual barriers for using teachers as evaluators:

*I think at this point, unless something changes in the contract language, the contract says it would be by the principal or a designee and I think for us to designate another staff member to do official you know, certainly peer evaluations . . . I want to be trained in doing that, but as far as something that will actually be counted into their evaluation . . . Maybe there will be a model that will come forward that will allow us to do that, but I don't see that at this point.*

Further, the state's requirement to evaluate all educators and produce a summative effectiveness rating for each one this year created a significant logistical challenge. Districts had to scale back in their evaluation effort in order to comply with this requirement. They look forward to using a staggered cycle in the future to make this work more manageable and meaningful. One participant described the challenge of completing the evaluations this year:

*You know, you put this in a time crunch, and to do that many. So you minimize . . . you know, we're talking about in order to get everybody through, we're talking*

*about maybe four to six week to eight week time period for teachers to develop an SLO and to complete it. So, even though it is good for everybody to dip their toes in the water, nobody is getting a full swim at this point because we're not able to do that with that many people.*

**Technical questions on student assessments.** Districts continue to have many questions about technical aspects of developing SLOs and student growth measures. They wonder if the assessments they are creating and using are valid and reliable, and worry about the lack of comparability across classrooms, the district, and the state. Creating growth measures at the high school level and for allied arts courses continue to challenge districts, and they are further behind in that effort at the high school level. Districts also wonder how to use the state assessment to measure student growth as it is only given once a year, and felt this assessment may not be appropriate for the purpose of teacher evaluation. The following comments from three districts reflect the continued questions about technical aspects of developing or selecting measures of student learning, and the need for more support in this area:

*I think student growth measures are going to continue to be a challenge. Whenever you're moving to something more organic, it's like, how are you making some validity and reliability in that whole conversation, some sturdiness to the assessment tool. Is it comparable? Is it what we're asking in the math department vs. in the science department? Is there kind of a, I don't know, a standard that says, okay that seems equitable in terms of the sturdiness in assessment? So, I think that's an ongoing challenge.*

*One of the reasons I think there was a year delay it's because they're [the state] not quite sure how to use the results from the state assessment. But unless the law changes, the state assessment will be used. And then we also will use whether they're locally developed assessments. I know that we'd love to be able to use things like through NWEA and other sort of things. I'm not quite sure whether those are allowed to be used at this point.*

*I think there are some people for whom you know, looking at pre and post [assessment] and putting things in a spreadsheet or a table and comparing them is just a challenge, because it's not an area of strength for them. And our teachers might be a great example of you know, that's not why we hired them, [for] their spreadsheet skills. And for other folks it's that fear part. It's that you know, fear of repercussions or whatever even though we try to minimize that.*

**Need for improved calibration.** While principals and district administrators have been working on calibration of their evaluation procedures, they recognize a need to continue that effort next year. This is a bigger issue in larger districts with multiple principals, and perhaps more consequential in districts that plan to link salary with effectiveness ratings. Administrators from three districts shared the following reflections:

*Just really wanting to be fair. Fair and accurate process. I think . . . really making sure that we're calibrated across principals . . . but I think we're determining that as we do those together. And then, I stay calibrated to do that*

*with the principals when we're looking, talking with the assistant principals. So, we just want to be really mindful, because I'll remind you that our principal evaluation system is connected to the Administrative Contract.*

*And the issue that I see that we need to address is the fact is now we need to make this now consistent practice as far as that is happening throughout district with all of our evaluators with whoever they are observing. So this is a consistent practice. As far as, you know, we're having that one hour, two hour, pre-conference. What are the things that you're discussing? What are you showing as far as evidence? You know, that's for us here that we need to be doing.*

*One of things we did this year . . . we kind of calibrated our write ups. So depending on if you're a probationary teacher you get five to ten. I don't know if you can see that in the handbook, and most of those probationary teachers get about 9 or 10 and then level 2 teachers are our contract teachers. . . . So there's like three documents in their folder: their observations, their rubric and the professional growth plan which has the SLO, the professional goal, the reflection, the peer review. It's on one document.*

**Evaluation of other administrative roles.** This challenge was mentioned less often, and primarily affected larger schools and districts where there were more administrative roles. Districts felt a need to adapt their professional practice models to meet the different roles of assistant principals and district administrative personnel. This is an on-going process, as it creates evaluation systems and supports for professional growth to meet the needs of different professionals. An administrator in one district described how they realized their evaluation system would need to be adapted for different professional roles:

*So, the first year that the pilot year and we went through it and we went, "Huh, well, my role is different as an assistant principal," and so, some of those pieces, we've had to be, kind of very intentional in including in part of the assistant principal's position because they're different roles.*

**Sources of Evidence Used for Evaluation.** This section describes the variety of sources of evidence that the six districts were using to some degree in piloting their evaluation systems. Sources of evidence for evaluating teacher effectiveness are described first, followed by sources of evidence for principals. A statewide perspective on sources of evidence was discussed in part one of this report, from our analysis of PE/PG plans, Tables 4 and 5.

**Evidence for teachers.** When asked about sources of evidence for teacher evaluation, districts described using the following types of evidence:

- short or informal observations or walkthroughs
- formal observations by the school principal (twice a year)
- a pre- and post-observation conference between the principal and teacher (sometimes done online rather than in person, particularly during the piloting period)
- state educational assessment results for ELA and math
- district student assessment results, such as NWEAs
- teacher made assessment results, formative and summative assessments (pre- and post-measures of student growth, a few weeks apart for a unit of study)

- the teacher professional growth plan and goals for the year, reflection and self-assessment of progress on selected elements of the professional practice model

In addition, teachers uploaded a variety of different kinds of documents or in some cases video to show evidence of effectiveness for selected elements of their professional model. For example teachers might upload lesson plans, unit plans, classroom assessments, newsletters or communications to parents, evidence of professional development effort, and evidence of work within PLCs or other committees.

The TIF district and one other district described how they surveyed parents and/ or students to inform teacher evaluation. Only the TIF district reported they had used a 360 survey for the purpose of teacher evaluation. Surveys included:

- parent surveys
- student/ climate surveys
- 360 surveys

One principal described the growing use of student surveys in the high school this way:

*The high school surveys were relatively new to that culture, and so we modeled them for the last couple of years at the administrative level. The expectation was for department heads to start last year with them, and this year the expectation will be that students have surveys that will go back to teachers as well.*

A superintendent described the use of parent surveys about school climate, but these were not used for evaluation of individual teachers:

*We'll survey our parents more around some of the initiatives that we're doing. I don't typically ask them for specific feedback on a teacher. I think that's very difficult to embed that as evidence in making determinations about teachers.*

Peer observation and feedback was another potential source of evidence for some districts. Four of the six districts talked about the practice of teachers observing their peers and providing feedback linked to the professional model standards and rubrics. Only the TIF district formally included peer feedback in teacher evaluation. For the other districts, teachers might have the option to voluntarily include peer feedback in their evidence for evaluation and/ or professional growth plans, but it was not required. One district also described how they had encouraged teachers to use tablets to video-tape their lessons so they could share them with peers for feedback that was not part of evaluation, but to support professional growth. Administrators could not view the videos unless teachers decided to share them. Despite their enthusiasm for peer observation as a powerful lever to improve classroom practice, this district was cautious about peer observation for teachers, in part because of the restrictions of their teacher contract. They described their vision for using video to support teacher learning about the professional practice model:

*We [administrators] can't see the video unless they choose to deliver or share it. So, that builds that sense of safety and so on. And one of the outcomes in the long run we'd like to have from that is to have more exemplars, videos that we can use*



*to say, "OK. This is what we're talking about with proficient with distinction for the assessment standard or the learning environment standard" and so on.*

And this district hoped to eventually include peer review as a component of teacher evaluation, and to expand the number of trained evaluators beyond just the school principal:

*I think where I'm going with this, with peer review, is that I'd love that to be one of their observations that they submit to me, and I review it and then we'll cut and paste it into their document. Because I think what I'd like to kind of create here is that there are more people that can do evaluation. You know, maybe one of their evaluation could be a peer review.*

Overall, the systems of evaluation for teachers, as described by administrators in the interviews, were fairly formal and well-developed to date, with multiple and varied types of evidence. In some districts, administrators repeatedly described the process as “organic,” in that teachers had a good deal of control over what evidence they provided in their online portfolio for evaluation, and teachers were drawing on their own classroom assessments and other district assessments to demonstrate student growth. Administrators also sought to make the task of collecting evidence less onerous and time-consuming for teachers, and were conscious of not wanting to create burdensome requirements. In some cases, principals would request a teacher to provide more evidence where needed, but it was not in a punitive way. There was also variation across the six districts in administrators’ clarity on how teachers were assessing students and whether certain kinds of assessment could be used for PE/PG systems. Some principals described their approach to teacher evaluation in the following ways:

*The actual evidence part of that is that classroom observation piece that might be full length observations or might be mini observations. Often times there's a portfolio that people are putting together to bring in evidence for those things that can't be seen directly in an observation or things that they want to highlight. . . . Often times people have evidence of professional development of some sort, certificates and things like that in that portfolio that they bring in, logs of parent phone calls. A lot of reflection based on their experiences with their goals. They will do a reflection piece but then, you know, the reflection usually has evidence embedded into it. That seems to be very popular. We're just kind of scratching the surface of peer review.*

*I don't have a lot of conversations with teachers necessarily around professional responsibilities and even school to home communication. I ask teachers to gather evidence for me. So when it comes time to have our mid-year check-in that's a little bit more formal than our debriefs after our mini-observations or our end-of-the-year reflection on both our goal and our SLO. They provide the evidence really, for school to home communication. A log of entries that they have made where they've either emailed or personally called parents you know, some of that stuff has to do with what kind of interventions are they providing kids or what sort of reassessment process do they have in place for kids. We really focus on planning and preparation and delivery of instruction and assessment.*

*If I have a teacher who has a student who didn't do well on [the district assessment] and it just doesn't match what they see, then they can come to me with all their evidence and . . . that's just one snapshot . . . And for that reason, I think there's more teacher buy-in, honestly.*

**Evidence for principals.** Principal evaluation systems generally included the following sources of evidence:

- informal observations and walkthroughs by district administrator
- informal meetings and formal conferencing (once or twice a year)
- principal professional growth plan and goals, reflection and self-assessment on progress
- school improvement plan and reflection on progress
- documentation of principals' communication with parents and teachers
- evidence of student growth through SLOs

Superintendents generally explained that they visited schools so frequently that they did not see the need for formal observations. In attending various school meetings and events, they have frequent opportunities to observe how principals interact with teachers, students, parents, and other community members. Superintendents also meet individually with their principals quite frequently. Principals can upload a variety of documentation that reflects their professional practice, and one district also described the use of video.

The TIF district and four other districts described how they conduct surveys of stakeholders to collect evidence of principal effectiveness related to elements of the professional practice model. Four districts surveyed teachers, three districts mentioned parent surveys, and two districts mentioned student/ climate surveys to inform principal evaluation. Only the TIF district used a 360 survey for the purpose of principal evaluation. The surveys included:

- teacher surveys
- student/ climate surveys
- parent surveys
- 360 surveys

A superintendent shared, "I say to them [principals] you know, 'I would encourage you to survey your staff and get that feedback and then share with me what you discern from them.' " A principal from the same district described his use of surveys to inform his evaluation and professional growth plan:

*I have had a couple [surveys] I've done, like a Google form to the parents, you know, especially at the beginning of the year, what's worked well, what didn't. We did that with our teachers this year, kind of as an administrative feedback for ourselves to help drive some of the organization.*

Across the six districts in our study, we found that the teacher evaluation systems were more formally designed and more developed than the principal evaluation systems. Sources of data were more informal for principals, and in some districts they had not yet determined the full range of evidence they might use by the time of the interviews in January 2017. Perhaps one reason for this is superintendents' view that they continually observe and interact with their principals on a regular basis, and thus do not feel there is a need for a very formal system. On the

other hand, superintendents spend far less time observing teachers, and trust that principals are providing supervision and support to teachers in their schools. Superintendents from two districts described their approach to evaluating principals in these comments:

*. . . there're direct observations, but they're not formal. So there're observations that we garnered through our regular visits to the school and in the interactions that we are observing, that the principals are involved with. But mostly, for a lot of it quite honestly comes from the principals including us in their communication, overseeing their growth plans, their school improvement plans. That's all there already. Quite frankly, those two documents hold evidence for a lot of the elements right there.*

*I get the opportunity with each of the principals throughout, just the course of our work, to observe them and in multiple situations, you know. . . . I'm constantly in that observation mode of how principals deal with not only just the day to day, an unhappy parent, an unhappy student or whatever but how they deal with some of those major issues that come along in their way . . . And so, and then the other evidence is pretty much provided by the principal in the form of reflection.*

In two districts that were further behind in developing their principal evaluation systems, principals described in the January 2017 interviews the lack of a formal system (first quote) or lack of a well-defined plan about what types of evidence would be included in principal evaluation (second quote) for the evaluation to take place this spring:

*I don't know what a rubric would look like for us, for administration, that really could encompass everything we do and provide the feedback. I don't know. I think the constant dialogue is what I need.*

*We still have to have a discussion of what that looks like, in terms of, is it, you know, is it an observation of us [principals] in a staff meeting? In a professional development? Is it an evaluation, you know just a pop in the building? And you know, it is a different type of observation for a principal than it is for a classroom teacher . . . You know, so it is different. So I think it's going to really come out of the professional growth plan in terms of the areas that we decided to work on.*

**Online Systems to Manage Evidence,** Some professional practice models, like Marzano and Danielson, had the advantage of a customized online platform to manage the evidence and PD resources that are linked to each element or standard in the model. In other cases, districts had to find or develop their own system for uploading, viewing, and managing the evidence used for teacher and principal evaluation. Having an electronic or digital data storage system was viewed as critical for managing the large body of documentation, and reduced the time teachers and principals had to spend to gather together their professional portfolios of evidence to share with evaluators. Having an online system also made it easier to share and view materials and for evaluators to communicate feedback on the evidence.

Whether the system was specifically designed to support the selected practice model or a more generic system, district and school administrators were happy with the increased opportunity for collaboration and communication through the shared systems.

*We were looking, to be honest with you, for a platform which was the most user-friendly and easiest to use. And with Marzano and iObservation, that kind of led us in that direction. . . . It allows in between times, where I'm sitting face to face with the teachers, to have either a pre-conference or a post-conference, that we can still be communicating back and forth. It also allows an open door for some peer interaction for teachers with teachers on different elements.*

*You know, they all have a digital portfolio where we keep their observations or mini-observations. We have a copy of the rubric there. They keep their SLO and professional goals to get feedback. Some teachers will be asked to upload things, you know . . . like right now, we're doing a lot of performance based assessment design, really trying to move away from heavily recall-oriented summative assessment. Really trying to get to the depth of thinking that we want kids to do.*

**Supporting Professional Growth.** Our interviews with four of the six districts last May (Mette & Fairman, 2016) explored administrators' views about the importance of supporting educators' professional growth and how they were approaching that effort. In the current study, we focused more on districts' piloting experience with the evaluation system. However, we did probe district practices to support teacher and principal professional growth, and learned more about the continuing development of the professional growth part of the PE/PG system.

In both the May 2016 and January 2017 interviews, districts described the development and review of teachers' and principals' professional growth plans as being a collaborative process, where the evaluator (principal or superintendent generally) has input into educators' individual growth plans and peers sometimes also provide feedback on growth plans. In a May 2016 interview, two principals from one district described the collaborative process this way:

*All teachers in the pilot did a self-assessment and identified elements to focus on in their growth plan. And then we have templates that are available for them to write out action steps for each of those growth plans. This was done in collaboration with the principals. They're developing those plans together. We've talked about not over-doing it, not too many elements but a few. We also talked about a few [elements] in common across teachers in the school that the school would work on.*

*I think that's the most exciting part of the program. The fact that there's so much collaboration through the process, that we collaborate on the goals that we want to set, individual as well as school-wide. And that we collaborate on how the teachers are going to meet those goals. And then teachers had an opportunity to have targeted professional development based on their individual needs.*

Districts also described the process of evaluation and supporting professional growth as a continuous feedback loop. Educators select certain elements or standards and rubrics from their professional practice model to focus on in the school year, develop action steps, implement

action and collect evidence, and then later write a self-assessment of their progress. Educators review and discuss progress with their supervisors/ evaluators, but also obtain feedback from peers or other stakeholders. This review of progress helps educators to identify professional development needs for the following year. Educators can then receive more targeted support for their continued growth as professionals. The online platforms, mentioned earlier, were viewed as a great help in managing the documentation and allowing for electronic communication among educators and their evaluators and peers. One principal described how she appreciates that the process of collecting evidence and getting feedback from the superintendent or assistant superintendent had been fluid and continuous throughout the school year, not just at the end of the year:

*But the nice part is that it's ongoing, so you don't feel like you get to the end of the year and you are just starting from scratch. You're getting feedback as you go, as you need it . . . So, it's actually, I think it's a more natural process. So, this is kind of more organic and if there is an issue that comes up, you know . . . we take care of it as we need.*

A superintendent in another district described the importance of taking time to implement action, gather data, and examine results process this process for teachers:

*There has to be opportunity built in and I haven't seen it built into many evaluation processes where you evaluate, you do your mini observation you have your de-brief and from that de-brief, a teacher identifies a strategy they want to employ, and then they gather data after they've employed that particular strategy. And you de-brief again based on the results of employing that strategy.*

Another administrator from the same district shared how teachers appreciated the constructive feedback:

*I think the teachers are really receptive. I think they like getting feedback and it's constructive in such a way, the conversation is about, and it's not about, "Okay, here's what you need to do next." It's you know, "Here's what I saw. What are you thinking?" You know, and making it a conversation.*

A second district shared a similar observation about the use of evidence to drive discussion with teachers:

*Now, do they come in loaded with evidence to demonstrate, what's in that box? Of course they do. And if it doesn't match up to what we're seeing, then we can have that conversation and we at times disagree where they are, and that's OK. A lot of times we agree. But there's huge value in that conversation and in that piece. There's huge value at the end of the year when we take that rubric and . . . we try to figure out, OK, where are we seeing the trend and where do we see the need for professional development?*

Districts included peer feedback in growth plans in a variety of ways. For most districts, the peer feedback process for teachers was used to inform growth plans and self-assessments,

rather than counting toward evaluation. However, some districts indicated they give teachers the option to include peer feedback in their evidence for evaluation. Teachers gave feedback to their peers through observation as well as review and discussion of individual growth plans. Teacher observation and peer feedback was more developed and widespread in the TIF district. An administrator from that district described the process and teachers' enthusiasm for peer observation:

*Teachers do a full blown, one full period observation of a peer in the building and they do pre- and post-conferencing. They have a targeted area that they want to focus on. There is a protocol and a template that they take notes on and provide feedback, for they can use that as some of their professional evidence for one of the core props for their summative evaluation. And that's one of the pieces that we intend to continue next year even after the grant, and my staff even, their desire is to do it more than just once a year; to do it two or three times a year. . . . The staff, [what] they value the most is that peer to peer interaction which allows them not only to provide feedback but just to get out and see other people at their craft.*

Administrators in two other districts also described the value of peer observation for teachers' professional growth:

*Those kind of big picture ideas, whereas instructional rounds are more, "Okay, let's... Everybody today, instead of meeting as a team and all sixth grade teachers, I want you to get to four different classrooms in the building today and using kind of a two plus two model. What are two nuggets that you can give this teacher that you saw? What are two questions you still had when you walked away?" That way, and it's informal, it's not evaluatory and it's just about trying to generate conversation.*

*I can only speak of the high school, if that's all right. We do supportive observations. So, at the start of the year, we have department heads and so we meet with department heads and say, "Okay. You're going to observe every teacher in your department and you're going to provide them supportive feedback and involve the instructional coach if need be and it's not evaluatory. And then we put it out to the faculty, if anyone would like to . . . then again, it has to be their planning or study hall, if anyone would like to observe, and we've had several newer teachers especially take us up on that and when we say to them, if a teacher is having classroom management issues, "Go observe this teacher".*

In one district that pairs principals for monthly meeting time to provide peer feedback, and also provides time during their administrative team meetings to share feedback on growth plans, a principal described the frequent peer sharing for principals:

*Once a month, we'll get together, whether it'd be you know, as a high school principal working with maybe an elementary principal or even you know . . . and the administrator is part of that as well. And so, trying to get some decent feedback and check in.*

Another administrator from the same district noted that this practice of peer feedback for principals has had the impact of more substantive discussions of professional goals and practice:

*The depth of conversation in the conferencing—it's deep, it's long, it's longer than some of them like it to be. [laughs] Some of our principals would like it to be a little less process oriented.*

Districts that conducted surveys of stakeholders (e.g., teachers, students, parents) also used survey data as feedback to inform educators' self-assessments and development of growth plans, as described earlier in the section on sources of evidence. A principal described how he seeks feedback from teachers at the end of the school year, in order to inform his self-assessment and support his professional growth:

*I also ask about at the end of the year about you know, the specific goals that I played out you know, "How do you think that those have been accomplished this year?" But then, I ask like the personal question you know, "So, how is it working here for you?" You know, "Is there anything I can do to help and support you?" or "Is there anything I can do better as a leader?"*

In the interviews, district and school administrators described their belief that supporting the professional growth component is more important than a focus on documenting effectiveness and evaluation for accountability purposes. They feel a focus on growth is more likely to encourage improvement where it is needed. Some of the comments regarding a district focus on professional growth were:

*You know, the process for us, the direction for us, is always heavily weighted towards professional growth rather than the evaluation piece. The evaluation piece is sort of a byproduct of the professional growth component. So, the system is truly heavily weighted PEPG . . . it just sort of says it all. That's where we are. From the principal's side, the observation piece is kind of ongoing because of the nature of the job of the principal.*

*I think our whole mantra, the whole system, whether it's from my position and all the way down . . . it's about growth. So that's how we kind of relax the teachers into this whole new system-- it's about growth. You're going to be always continuously growing, just like our kids. That's kind of the bottom line.*

While district and school administrators agreed on the importance of maintaining a focus on professional growth, and providing support for professional development, there appeared to be more professional development resources to support and guide teachers' improvement of professional practice than were available to support administrators' professional growth. For the most part, principals were getting more informal mentoring from the superintendent and in some cases from peers. Teachers had access to workshop training and online resources through their professional practice models.

One issue that came up in a few of the interviews was a concern about the consequences of evaluation for salary and merit pay that may deter educators from focusing on improvement. In one district that had previously instituted merit pay for teachers, a principal shared his view that a merit pay approach conflicts with the desire to have educators honestly examine their

strengths and weaknesses, and encourages teachers to inflate their ratings on the professional practice model because of the high-stakes consequences.

*You can't have an incentive-based program because teachers, because they look at the evaluation system not as a growth model but as an "I gotcha", as this divisive tool between administrators and teachers. And teachers are never going to be reflective when you have merit pay attached to it. They're all going to self-assess themselves at threes and fours within the domains, and never really want to be reflective and say "You know what, I'm really in need of improvement for these couple of indicators and understand that it's okay to have some areas of 'needs of improvement', some areas where you want to grow."*

An administrator in another district commented:

*Reflecting on what is happening in other districts, you know, they see people gaming the system or just setting, you know, very cupcake goals that anybody can make. And in some cases there are big financial incentives to meet that goal.*

Even where merit pay was not an issue, there was a concern about the use of effectiveness ratings and checklists for professional practice. Administrators in some of the districts shared their views that educators might be tempted to inflate their self-assessment ratings or simply not take the process seriously. Administrators in one district shared these observations:

*It just seems to me like the teachers also are spending an enormous amount of time preparing these materials, this documentation to say "Well, this is how I'm proving too, I do this. This is how I prove that I do that. This is how I'm going to show that I do this . . ." but I don't know that we're actually seeing the results of all of these activities.*

*From the assessment point of view, asking teachers to create their own SLO and asking them to come up with those measures, it seems like a test that doesn't make sense, because I will choose an assessment where I know I can show growth.*

As described in part one of this report, our review of the PE/PG plans submitted by districts statewide revealed that about 2/3 of the district plans have embedded the growth systems within the evaluation systems, where educators' efforts to reflect on and improve practice are part of the body of evidence that produces a summative effectiveness rating. While this integration may have some positive consequences, it can also lead to some negative and unintended consequences, as reflected in the quotes above from the interviews. There are concerns that educators may cherry pick the areas of success rather than addressing areas needing improvement when the stakes or consequences for them are high. Of the six districts in our case study, two of the six included professional growth in teacher evaluation (SERs), and three of the six included professional growth in principal evaluation (SERs).

District and school leaders generally felt their districts were doing a good job of supporting teachers' professional development and growth, utilizing within district professional



development and resources, as well as resources through their professional practice model and online platform. One district reported in a May 2016 interview,

*I think we're in really good shape with the professional growth part of it. We have good people providing good professional development at all levels. They have clarity on the standards now, research-based practice. It aligns and supports the work we're doing.*

While districts felt they could meet some of the professional development needs within their districts, they were challenged to support teachers' diverse needs. One principal commented, "The biggest challenge for us is just different teachers being at different places and providing the right PD [professional development] so that everybody is moving forward." Another district was thinking about how to utilize instructional coaches differently to support teacher professional development needs:

*We're thinking about how we use our literacy coaches at the elementary [level] differently, trying to move some of our special ed team leaders in that direction as well. We're trying to really look at the people we have who can support teachers in their growth and understanding of these well-researched practices and how to make that a regular part of instruction in our classrooms.*

Despite these comments, district and school leaders noted there was a need for continued support from the state to fund professional development time for educators, and more broadly for professional development or training, perhaps on a regional level. We describe these views in the next section.

**Assistance or Guidance Utilized.** District and school leaders were asked about what assistance they had utilized from the MDOE. Most of the districts we studied mentioned the small financial allocation (typically around \$4,500) they received from the state to support development of PE/PG systems. One district used the funding to buy tablets to encourage teachers to video-tape their teaching practice and share for peer observation. Other districts used the funding to support teacher professional development or, in the case of two districts, to hire a trainer. One district with an AOS structure received considerably more financial support than the other districts, as each school administrative unit in the AOS received its own allocation and the funding was then pooled to hire a trainer for the entire district. Having a trainer was viewed as very helpful:

*It was vital to have someone to train us and coach us. Had we not had that, we would not be ready to start that. It was crucial to have that. Someone with real knowledgeable on that [professional practice model].*

The TIF district received a substantial grant for five years which supported trainers, materials, intensive professional development, stipends for teacher leaders to work as trainers of other teachers, incentive pay for teachers, and a full time district coach. This district was grateful for the resources they had received and credited their early adoption and development of a PE/PG system to the outside funding and guidance.

*The grant through Maine Schools for Excellence, they provide all the consultation and resources that were required. It was a very thorough package. . . . We would do some virtual [training], but for the most part they would come in person and so we would have full-blown, hands-on, interactive support and training every step of the way both for staff and for administrators and it goes year round. A lot of the work happens in summer, especially with the teacher leaders and administrators working with them. . . . Without the training, the assistance and the support and the resources, this system would be extremely overwhelming, trying to start up from scratch on your own.*

Only two districts mentioned they had sent teachers to attend the workshops on developing SLOs and educator evaluation provided by the MDOE throughout the state. District and school administrators found these sessions somewhat informative, but not sufficient to help them figure out what assessments could be used and how to develop their own measures of student growth. One district administrator commented, “I haven’t found that in the last two years when I’ve attended workshops or I’ve read some of the documentation coming out, it hasn’t been particularly helpful or relevant.” None of the six districts in our study mentioned receiving on-site visits from the MDOE.

With the exception of the TIF district, the other five districts were uncertain about the state’s ability to provide the support and guidance necessary to districts statewide on technical aspects of developing their PE/PG systems. The consensus was that the MDOE staff is too thin currently to be a reliable source of support. Some comments included the following:

*I feel like the state has been really quiet on all this and particularly in the last two years. . . . we really kind of just move forward without relying on the state.*

*Local control and local decision means there’s no money. So, they dump it back on us and I don’t mean to be flippant. The reality is [the state] is not able to provide us with any SLOs for example at the high school level.*

**Assistance or Guidance Needed.** When asked what additional assistance they would like from the state to support their readiness to implement PE/PG systems next year, district and school leaders emphasized more technical guidance and training, more flexibility in measuring growth, and continued funding for professional development either locally or through regional training. These responses did not differ in any significant way from what we heard in the interviews last May from four of the six districts (Mette & Fairman, 2016). Thus, districts continue to need more specific technical guidance and help in the following areas:

- developing valid and reliable local assessments to measure student growth
- determining how to count or include students in assessment results and for which teachers (e.g., special education students)
- figuring out what kinds of assessments could be used in the allied arts subjects
- examples of how to measure student growth in high school courses
- determining what is adequate growth
- clarification on how to use the state assessment—though generally districts indicated they hoped the state assessment be eliminated from the system of educator evaluation, as it is a snapshot measure given only once a year

The most frequent request was for more clarification and guidance in developing SLOs and growth measures, particularly at the secondary level and for allied arts classes such as art and music. Two administrators from one district described wanting more models on assessment from the state:

*So, we're looking for a model from the state and they have yet to be able to produce or show us one at the high school level. And questions have been asked specifically to them on that and their answer is, "We don't know and we don't have those."*

*Unless the state wants to come up with common assessments that we're all using and then we can use that data. Or a benchmark exam . . . that levels the playing field and that would actually be valuable for the state.*

An administrator in another district described a lack of clarity on which students need to be counted for a teacher's SLO measure:

*I think for [the elementary school], the biggest challenge has been . . . there is fogginess and ambiguity around who to include in the SLO, because of the fact that if you have students because we do know there're guidelines, they have to be there 80% of the time and all these other things. We also have some students who receive some instruction in the regular classroom. They may get supported in the special ed room. Who counts them in their SLO? Do you have the ability to make the choice to take kids out and put kids in? . . . We've received many different answers. So we're not even sure. So for the pilot, we're saying count everybody. Keep everybody in for the pilot. But we're still not sure what that means moving forward.*

Districts felt the need to continue training on their professional practice models. This is an on-going need, as staffing turns over. One district described this need in the following comment:

*We would love to start kind of building more teacher leadership capacity within the building and sending some of those, and we haven't been able to, because of that financial burden. And so, that's one area in terms of the PEPG. It would really benefit our building or, you know, the actual system, if we could train [teacher leaders] by an outside resource. . . . [on] the evaluation process, the professional standards. There needs to be a great deal of professional development around that. So, that takes time, that equates to money unfortunately.*

One district suggested more professional development for administrators and teachers on how to give effective feedback would be helpful, as this is at the crux of their work to help educators improve.

*And I don't know whether I'm not looking for the state to do that, but maybe the state could work with the university or somebody as far as to say, so let's work with, you know, say professional development on feedback . . . what's effective feedback? Because that only trickles down to teachers giving feedback to their students. That's a big focus right now. So let's work on that kind of piece. So, I*

*think that will be a better way to put our effort into that, as opposed to some of this other checklist stuff we're doing.*

District and school leaders also recommended continued and increased state funding for professional development, which they said could be delivered at the regional level. Participants also noted that more information could be shared by the state on exemplars and through professional networks. Professional development is still needed on SLO development, measuring student growth, and consistency in evaluation practices. Comments from two districts suggesting a regional approach to sharing ideas and training included these:

*So where we really learn from each other is like going to these meetings and kind of calibrating as superintendents. But we need to have more . . . if we have more resources, or they could send consultants down to do that, that would help. But from the DOE, there's nothing, you know. They're under-staffed, they really don't have the ability to do it. . . . I think if they could develop a system where we could get money as regional . . . If they could send the money to the superintendents where we can then hire our consultants to do stuff, that would be a better model.*

*Start with our evaluators, do this in a regional aspect, since the state seems to be grabbing onto that kind of model. Okay, so provide a regional area and bring you know, bring your evaluators together and let's have conversations in regions. Let's do that.*

**Views on the PE/PG Policy.** District and school administrators from the six districts in our sample study shared a range of different views on the PE/PG policy. There were areas where administrators largely agreed, and areas of divergence. They described aspects that were beneficial and others that were not viewed as helpful. They sometimes wondered what a better approach might look like, and other times offered more specific suggestions to improve the policy. We describe administrators' views on the policy in this section.

**Perceptions of improved practice.** Districts were largely in agreement that their implementation of new evaluation systems, based upon and aligned with a professional practice model, had positive impacts for their districts in terms of both evaluation practice and professional practice for teachers and principals. As described earlier in the section on progress and success, the use of the professional practice models helped districts to communicate common understandings of professional practice and expectations. Building evaluation procedures around the models and the effort to calibrate evaluation practices produced more consistent and substantive evaluation of teachers and principals. Both the evaluation and professional growth work required educators to develop individual growth plans and action steps, collect evidence, reflect on areas needing improvement, utilize feedback from peers and supervisors, and develop new goals and action plans. Districts acknowledged that the systems they were building were an improvement on what existed before the PE/PG law. A comment from one district describes some of the positive impacts to date:

*. . . we were given an opportunity to kind of construct this to meet our needs. It has been powerfully implemented and teachers are better in my school, I think, as a result. More face to face time with the administrator more, you know, structured observations, more opportunities to talk about their work in their classroom.*

*Accountability is good. You know, it's not a bad thing. They know it. . . . I mean, the expectations I think about teacher performance have been you know, been raised but done so in a really powerful, safe, you know, purposeful manner.*

**Maintaining a focus on professional growth.** While district and school administrators acknowledged the need to evaluate educators and for accountability to the state, they held somewhat different views about how evaluation should be conducted or how much time and effort should be devoted to evaluation as opposed to focusing on supporting teachers' and principals' growth. As described earlier in the section on supporting professional growth, the six districts in our study believed an emphasis on supporting educators' professional growth would improve practice and ultimately evaluation results, as well as student learning outcomes. They wanted to encourage educators in reflective practice and taking ownership of their professional growth, and they acknowledged that each educator is unique and may have different strengths and weaknesses. Thus, overall, districts favored an emphasis on providing support for educators' professional growth and development, and suggested more regional approaches for this purpose. They also favored more clear and simplified requirements for evaluation and accountability, rather than increasingly complicated and vague rules. Administrators from two districts reflected on the balance of policy goals in these comments:

*I go back to what exactly was the purpose behind setting up this whole PEPG piece? Is it, you know, as we were talking about, an accountability piece? Or is it truly to improve teacher practice? I think there are better ways to develop teacher career pathways. I'm not sure exactly what it is, but I don't think this is it yet.*

*I think the challenge with all of this is finding the proper level of, I use the word concern, that instead of just going about doing what we know to be correct in leading our schools that we change direction to meet the requirements of this new evaluation law. . . . [Teachers wonder] "All right, how much time and effort do I put in on this evaluation or do I just continue to teach like I always have and allow the evaluation to be a reflection of my teaching?" So that struggle between those two things is always an issue.*

**Mixed levels of policy support.** Some districts were more satisfied with the structure that the PE/PG systems provided, while other districts felt there was too much emphasis on checking boxes on rubrics and a system that rewarded selective use of strong student assessment results. Most districts wanted more flexibility in the policy for local decisions about how to measure student growth. A participant in one district explained, "I just think that there needs to be a way that districts have the autonomy to create some systems internally that really reflect student growth." Another participant concluded, "I absolutely support the idea of some sort of accountability for teachers for learning. I'm not sure of SLOs is the way to go." A third administrator commented:

*In the student growth piece, I am hopeful that there's some change there. But don't ask me what right now, I can't think of what . . . I'm hopeful that some of the restrictions that were put in as part of the waiver will be looked at, so we have a little more latitude in that area.*

However, one district indicated that they would prefer the state to simply provide the assessments, particularly for the high school level.

*The common goal would be to give us the standard you'd like us to assess; to give us the performance indicators you'd like us to assess; to provide us with the scoring criteria for those performance indicators; to provide us with the rubrics for those, from those scoring criteria you've provided, and to create a common assessment that we could then use, since you've asked the question, that would make more sense. Then we could look at algebra across the state.*

Some districts were concerned that the policy's emphasis on evaluation may communicate a negative or punitive message to educators, worried that this may deter people from entering the profession. Two administrators in one district explained this concern in the following statements:

*Many of the decisions at the state level, the culture there, starts with a faulty premise, if you start with the premise that it is broken, that teachers don't do a good job. So, we need to put in place a system whereby we can hold them accountable.*

*I think it's important not to drive teachers out of the profession. You know, I think that . . . we're going to be in a crisis situation in the next five years with so many teachers retiring. And if we make it such a negatively perceived profession to enter into because people think that you know, "Schools are broken, things aren't going well," then it's not going to draw people to the profession, and I think, this is hard work. You know, not just documenting kids and teacher growth, but the work of teachers every day, and what they have to deal with is very difficult, stressful, and demanding in a lot of ways. And so, I think as many powerful, positive messages that can be sent out that we do have . . . some really incredible people that are entering into classrooms every day, doing a damn good job. And so, you know, sending that message that we're not broken, we just have to be better funded.*

Not surprisingly, districts that communicated the strongest support for the policy were also further ahead in developing their PE/PG systems. District leadership appeared to be a critical factor in setting work in motion to develop and implement these systems, and in communicating the value of a more consistent approach to evaluation and a focus on professional standards of practice. Two of the six districts we studied were more critical of certain aspects of the policy, and were also less sure about their readiness to implement their teacher and principal evaluation systems in the fall.

***Need for stability and streamlining.*** Districts shared a common concern about the number of changes made to the PE/PG policy, and expressed a strong hope that the state would not continue to make significant changes in the policy. There was some desire for streamlining the policy, most notably to eliminate the requirement to use the state assessment as a measure for student growth to inform educator evaluation. Districts explained that the assessment is given only once a year, and currently does not meet the criteria for a growth measure. All districts, no matter their level of enthusiasm for the policy overall, indicated they hoped the state's effort to

build better PE/PG systems would not be abandoned, in light of so many policy reversals on state education in recent years. Districts described the significant effort they have invested in developing their systems, and the belief that it is having a positive impact to improve both knowledge and practice. Overall, they advised that the state stay the course on this policy.

*I'm hopeful that things don't change drastically. We're in trouble, if it does change drastically, with teacher culture. It's taken some time to get teacher buy in on some of this. Culture would be hard to repair if there are major changes.*

*Are they now going to stay the course? Are we going to have done this and done the pilot and start the implementation next year and then you know, it's always one of those things where we as the superintendent and we as the principals, we have to be the cheerleaders for the state. And when we get the feedback which is understandable from teachers saying "Well, we're going to do this for three or four years and it is going to disappear." So, we have to say, "Oh no! This one's going to stick around." And then when it doesn't. Our credibility is damaged.*

*I'd like the legislature to leave it mostly alone, because the law has changed six times in four years or whatever; minor changes in some cases, big changes in others, and so on. And I don't think you know, one of the changes that I perceived most negatively was throwing in SLOs a couple of years after the fact, because that's a fairly big change. . . . So, if anything I think if the legislature can open up some more options without forcing changes, because a lot of districts have a lot of time and energy invested into this.*

***A comprehensive and coherent approach to state education policy.*** District and school administrators talked about the connections between the PE/PG policy and other state policy initiatives, such as proficiency-based education and customized learning. They urged state policymakers to work toward a more comprehensive and coherent approach to improving education that would help policies work together toward a common purpose, rather than a piecemeal or fragmented approach. One district leader explained this idea:

*We feel very strongly that the evaluation system can't be out pointing in its own direction, that everything has to point into our strategic plan, our vision, which is, you know, students, and student growth and student achievement. So it is what it's all based on, so proficiency-based education, and PEPG, and customized learning, and technology integration, all have to be aligned and pointing towards the same thing.*

## **Conclusion**

This report presented findings from MEPRI's on-going examination of the development and implementation of PE/PG systems in Maine school districts. Data presented in this report were drawn from three sources: an analysis of the PE/PG plans submitted by districts statewide, an interview with the MDOE Educator Effectiveness Coordinator, and interviews with district and school administrators in six districts that varied in demographic characteristics, components of their PE/PG plans, progress in development and implementation, and views about the policy.

Overall, the statewide data on PE/PG plans, along with the interview with the state coordinator, suggest that districts are taking the policy seriously and most districts have submitted a plan and been approved to move forward. Districts have designed plans using multiple measures of professional effectiveness. Their choice of professional practice models may differ, as do their local approach to evaluation and support for professional growth.

Findings from our review of PE/PG plans submitted by districts statewide indicated that many plans drew from traditional sources of evidence to contribute to teacher and principal evaluation, including observations, portfolios, and teacher/principal selected artifacts. Traditionally, teacher evaluation has predominately been based on announced long observations and unannounced short observations (often referred to as walkthroughs) conducted by the principal. For principal evaluation, this has typically been based on observations of meetings and informal conversations that happen on a daily or weekly basis between the superintendent and the principal. However, alternative sources of evidence – parent surveys and student surveys for teachers, and observations of teacher conferences, school climate surveys, and 360 evaluations for principals – are included in PE/PG plans and offer important insights into how educators can improve instruction and the educational environment to best support the communities they serve. If teachers are to improve their instruction, feedback from parent surveys (included in 17% of PE/PG plans) and student surveys (included in 32% of PE/PG plans) can be considered. Additionally, if principals are to be able to improve as instructional leaders, feedback on their ability to conduct a post-observation conference (included in 37% of PE/PG plans), school climate surveys (included in 42% of PE/PG plans), and 360 evaluations (included in 38% of PE/PG plans) can offer important insight as well.

With the increased demands to evaluate educators, about 10% of school districts indicated they are training or plan to train teachers as evaluators and also plan to use external evaluators for administrators. While teachers do not traditionally serve as sources of evaluation for other teachers, and are often prevented from doing so by collective bargaining agreements, additional analysis of how these evaluations occur could be important to study. Moreover, understanding why districts use external evaluators to evaluate principals would be informative as well. Another area for further investigation is the perceived use of the PE/PG systems by local school districts as compared to by others outside their respective school district. Many schools view the PE/PG systems as a tool to focus on professional growth and ongoing development and not simply a measure of performance at the end of the year. About 60% of teacher and principal plans embed professional growth in summative evaluations, which may reduce the role of formative feedback to improve performance *prior* to evaluation, or may result in a focus on strengths rather than areas needing improvement. This can cause conflation between the two intents of the PE/PG system, one of which is to evaluate teachers, but the other of which is to encourage ongoing professional growth where educators are allowed to experiment with new instructional methods and forms of leadership. As Maine's educational workforce strives to continually improve, allowing for formative feedback to be present and represented in the PE/PG plans would be important to consider.

Findings from the study of six district cases revealed that districts are making progress in developing, piloting, and implementing their systems, but are moving at somewhat different rates. Districts clearly need more time to refine some aspects of their systems as they implement next year. To date, these districts have only piloted or implemented their systems on a limited basis, and full implementation may reveal areas that need more attention. Further, districts have not yet piloted all components of their systems as outlined in their formal plans. For example, the



use of surveys or peer observation may continue to develop over time. Student growth measures at the secondary level and in allied arts lagged behind other areas, and was an area requiring more state guidance. Districts were generally happy with the professional practice models they had selected and found the online platforms helpful for managing evidence and fostering communication and feedback between educators and evaluators. Districts continued to rely on principals and superintendents to conduct evaluation, although there was an interest in training teacher leaders to assist with this in the future.

Overall, these districts were further ahead in developing and piloting their teacher evaluation systems than the principal evaluation systems. Teacher evaluation systems were also more structured and the process was more formal than for principals. Districts had used a variety of measures and sources of evidence to inform evaluations and professional growth plans. Peer observation was rarely mentioned for principals, but was more widely used in some of the districts for teachers.

Interviews with the six districts and with the state coordinator indicated that districts continued to have questions about developing or selecting student assessments and growth measures, and districts requested more support from the state on that. Similar questions have dogged districts for several years now, since the initial roll out of this initiative. More effort and resources from the MDOE are needed to address the need for supports. Districts indicated a willingness to access some support regionally. At the local level, professional development and calibration efforts will continue as districts implement their systems next year. Adapting the professional practice models to fit the needs of other administrative roles, such as assistant principal, is also a work in progress.

Views about the policy varied somewhat across the six districts and participants. There was an acceptance that educator evaluation and accountability are necessary, but different views on the degree to which the state or districts should focus on evaluation as opposed to supporting reflective practice and growth for educators. Some felt the emphasis on rubrics and student assessment undermined the goal of encouraging educators to attend to areas they want to improve. Some worried about tying salary to evaluation ratings. Others felt the evaluation system supported the professional growth system and vice versa, but were more concerned about how administrators would manage the increased time demand for observations and feedback. Generally, these districts agreed that the collective focus on a professional practice model and re-design of their evaluation system had the positive impacts of clarifying professional standards and expectations and making evaluation more transparent and consistent in their districts.

## **Recommendations**

District suggestions about the state policy and for state assistance and guidance have been described throughout this report, and in several previous MEPRI reports. In this section we highlight some of the major areas of need or concern to inform future policy decisions.

### **State Policy**

- Re-examine the requirement to include the state assessment in evaluation systems.
- Allow some increased flexibility in how student growth is measured.
- Clarify policy language and simplify policy requirements where possible.
- Communicate a positive message about Maine schools and educators.

- Place the primary focus on supporting professional practice and growth instead of on evaluation, ratings, and consequences.
- Work toward stability in the law and reassure districts that the state will continue to support this effort.

### **State Assistance and Guidance**

- Continue and / or increase state funding support to districts to support their implementation efforts which require professional development time for teachers and administrators.
- Increase state resources (funding, personnel) to support this major state policy initiative, along with related initiatives, such as proficiency-based education.
- Address increased workload for principals, through funding for assistant principals and/or teacher leaders to share the responsibility for teacher evaluation and supporting professional growth.
- Improve and increase guidance and training to school districts to address the on-going technical questions around student assessments and growth measures.
- Provide more regional training opportunities and online resources.
- Provide exemplars and models where needed, in particular for the secondary level and allied arts.
- Utilize existing professional organizations and networks, such as the superintendents' association, to share exemplars, models, and ideas as PE/PG systems continue to develop.
- Partner with other organizations and higher education to support the on-going professional development needs in implementing effective feedback and supporting improved practice.

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## **Appendices**

### Interview Protocols:

- A. State Educator Effectiveness Coordinator Interview
- B. District and School Administrator Interview

## Appendix A

### MDOE Educator Effectiveness Coordinator Interview

December 2016

1. What have been some of the biggest areas of progress experienced by the MDOE in reviewing districts' PE/PG plans?
2. What have been the challenges experienced by MDOE in reviewing all the districts' PE/PG plans statewide?
3. What were the challenges in providing feedback and guidance to individual districts?
4. How many districts has your team visited this past spring and summer to provide assistance or guidance?
  - a. What was the nature of that assistance? What topics came up most often?
  - b. Have you observed any patterns in the type of assistance needed by smaller districts versus larger districts?
5. Describe the readiness of districts to implement their plans, and how this might vary across the state.
  - a. Have you observed any patterns in the readiness of smaller and larger districts to implement their plans?
6. Describe how the MDOE will collect and use data from educator evaluation systems.
  - a. Specifically, how might the MDOE use these plans to better support the development of educators across the state?

## Appendix B

### District and School Administrator Interview

Dec. 2016 – Jan. 2017

1. What sources of evidence are you using for teacher evaluation? What sources of evidence are you using for principal evaluation?
  - a. Are you using the state assessment? Locally developed assessments?
  - b. Are you using portfolios, and if so, who reviews those?
  - c. Are you using parent surveys, student surveys, school climate surveys, or a 360 evaluation? What are the benefits/drawbacks to using any of these more non-traditional sources of evidence?
  
2. Describe the implementation process in your district. Are you still piloting any aspect of your PE/PG work?
  - a. If you are piloting, will you be ready to fully implement both systems next year? What changes did you make this year, if any?
  
3. Does your district primarily rely on principals to do the teacher observations?
  - a. Is there typically a pre-conference, observation, and post-conference?
  - b. Do you have any plans to incorporate feedback through peers? How?
  - c. Have you trained any more staff or teachers to be evaluators?
  
4. What are some of the challenges you have experienced related to selecting SLOs and growth measures?
  
5. Have you received any visits or assistance directly from the state regarding your PE/PG system?
  - a. If so, what was the nature of that assistance? To what extent did that assistance provide sufficient guidance?
  - b. If not, what type of assistance would you like to see implemented?
  
6. If your district is working with an external advisor to support the process of developing and implementing your evaluation systems? If so, please describe the nature of that work.
  
7. Describe the guidance or answers you need from the state at this point regarding PE/PG implementation.