

LEAP Basic Fairness Guide 2016-17

1 PURPOSE

This document outlines the requirements that the District is committed to following for the administration of the LEAP growth and performance system. It also includes some best practices and recommendations for the implementation of the teacher evaluation system.

2 REVIEW PROCESS FOR FAILURE TO FOLLOW GUIDE

If a teacher feels that the District has not followed any requirement set forth in this Guide, the teacher is encouraged to resolve the issue at the lowest level possible by speaking with his or her evaluator and/or by submitting an inquiry to the LEAP team by emailing LEAP@dpsk12.org. The LEAP team will communicate with the teacher within five school days regarding next steps.

If the concern regarding a requirement of this Guide is not resolved or the teacher does not wish to seek resolution from the LEAP team first, the teacher can submit a grievance under Article 7 of the DPS/DCTA Agreement. The grievance should state how the District has not followed the requirements of this Guide. (Note: Recommendations or suggestions for best practices are not considered requirements of this Guide. For failure to follow suggestions or best practices, the teacher should contact the LEAP team for potential resolution.

The teacher's grievance must comply with the timing deadlines in Article 7. Specifically, any Level 1 grievance must be filed within **fifteen days** after the teacher knew or should have known of the District's alleged failure to follow the requirements in this Guide.

Failure to follow any requirements in this Guide will only be grievable up to Level 2. They cannot be taken to Level 3, as defined by Article 7 of the Agreement.

3 REVIEW OF OBSERVATION OR PROFESSIONALISM SCORES DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

If a teacher disagrees with the indicator-level observation or professionalism scores that were assigned for a particular observation or at mid-year or end-of-year conversations, the teacher can submit an inquiry to the LEAP team by emailing LEAP@dpsk12.org. Depending on the facts of the situation, the LEAP team may be able to provide support to remedy the teacher's concerns. At minimum, the LEAP team will respond within five school days with next steps. The teacher can also contact DCTA for advice.

Disagreements regarding indicator-level observation scores or professionalism scores are not grievable unless an alleged violation of the requirements of this Guide materially impacted the challenged scores. (Note: Failure to follow the recommendations or best practices of this Guide does not constitute a violation of a requirement but can be referred to the LEAP team for potential resolution.) (See Section 2 for guidance on filing a grievance.)

4 REVIEW OF END-OF-YEAR RATINGS

The Redress Process is an option for teachers who fall into a decision-band or a decision box and who disagree with their final LEAP End-of-Year rating that is assigned by their evaluator. In the Redress Process, the teacher receives an independent review to assess whether the End-of-Year rating assigned by the school leader was reasonable in light of the body of evidence.

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In summary, violations of policies or procedures regarding LEAP should be resolved as they arise during the year by working with the school leaders, contacting the LEAP team, and/or submitting a grievance under Article 7 of the DPS/DCTA Agreement. (See Section 2 above.) In contrast, a request to review the body of evidence that supports the final assigned rating from a decision box is appropriately accomplished through the Redress Process.

For teachers who have received two consecutive years of Not Meeting and/or Approaching ratings, they will have access to an appeal process before losing non-probationary status. If you qualify for this [appeal](#), the District will reach out to you with additional information, forms and timelines. (You can also access the DPS/DCTA Agreement on the appeal process [here](#).)

5 THE COMPONENTS OF LEAP

The following measures shall be used to calculate the LEAP End-of-Year rating:

- Observation
- Professionalism
- Student Perception
- Student Growth

6 OBSERVATION

- **Observation Requirements**

- All teachers will receive at least two observations that will be scored in Schoolnet – one Full observation plus at least one other observation. The additional observation(s) could be another Full or a Short.
 1. **Full:** The observer will observe and capture evidence of teacher practice during the lesson (generally 45-60 minutes). The observer will complete a Classroom Observation Form (COF) in Schoolnet that includes evidence and scores for all indicators. Best practice is to include bullets from the Framework and descriptions of student and teacher behaviors whenever possible. (Note: if there was no opportunity during a full lesson to observe the specific practice associated with an indicator, then the observer may choose not to score that indicator.)
 2. **Short (Formerly Partial or Walkthrough):** The observer will observe the lesson and capture evidence of teacher practice for a minimum of 15 minutes. Although not required, it is suggested to deliver feedback via email or in-person, including evidence and scores for specific indicators. It is encouraged to have all evidence and scores for a Short captured within Schoolnet because only scores that are entered in the system will be used in the calculation of the Professional Practice rating. (Note: Observers will only evaluate/score indicators for which they directly observed evidence.)

- **Observers: Who Can Conduct Observations?**

- Peer Observers and School Leaders who have been trained and certified under the District's system are allowed to perform observations. School Leaders include: Principals, Assistant Principals, Administrative Assistants, Senior Team Leads, Team Leads, Deans, Principal Residents and Principal Interns, Instructional support roles such as Instructional Superintendent, or other designee.
- Innovation schools that are not participating in Teacher Leadership Collaboration may have flexibility around who they can certify to observe and therefore other teacher roles may be included.

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- **Observation Schedule**

- Scored observations begin two weeks after the start of school.
- Observations can be announced or unannounced. Announced is defined as the week the observation is to occur, not the exact time and date.
- Observations can take place at any point during a teacher's instructional time. However, observers should not score an observation if there is a significant disruption to the lesson time period (e.g. testing of significant duration, guest speakers, fire drill, or other extenuating circumstances). (Note: If the observer was intending to conduct a Full observation, but was interrupted after 20 minutes by a fire drill or some other similar type of disruption, the observer can still score the observation as a Short.)
- A teacher should not receive more than one scored observation in a single school day. Given that LEAP is meant to be a growth-based system, it is recommended that observers will work to coordinate observation schedules. Best practice is to observe a teacher and score in Schoolnet no more than once per a 2-week coaching cycle.

- **Feedback Sessions**

- **After Full Observation:** An in-person feedback session is required after a Full observation. Although there is no required timeframe for completing the feedback conversation after a full observation, best practice is to conduct the feedback session **within ten school days** of the observation. It is also best practice for the draft of the Full observation to be sent at least 24 hours prior to the conversation. If an observer fails to hold a required feedback conversation within ten school days of a full observation, the teacher should reach out to the observer first in order to request that the feedback be scheduled. The teacher can also reach out to DCTA to ask for advice. If this approach is unsuccessful, a teacher can submit an inquiry into LEAP@dpsk12.org for further review. If the teacher does not receive a feedback session within 25 school days from the date of the observation, the teacher can grieve the lack of a feedback session.
- **After Short Observation:** Formal feedback sessions are not required after Short observations. Although not required, it is suggested to deliver feedback via email or in-person, including evidence and scores for specific indicators.

- **Disagreement on Indicator Scores**

Teachers who disagree with their observer's scores may:

- Add a comment to the Schoolnet observation form. Because the Schoolnet program does not notify the observer when these comments are entered, the teacher should also directly discuss any disagreement with the observer.
- Contact the LEAP help desk, discuss the situation with the observer, and/or ask DCTA for advice.

- **Late Hires and Observations**

- All late hires are in LEAP and should be observed.

- **Teachers on Leave**

- Teachers who are on leave during the course of the year will receive observations if/when they return to the classroom.

7 OBSERVER CERTIFICATION

- **New leaders/ observers** are required to attend District training to learn about norming on observation. Additionally, they are required to watch and score a classroom instruction video. This assessment online (scoring the video) requires the participant to have scores that are 83% adjacent to the

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norm scores. Observers who do not pass the online assessment on their first opportunity will have additional chances to take the assessment or to go through an in-person certification process.

- **Existing leaders/observers:** The District provides re-certification training at network meetings at the start of the school year and opportunities to norm as a school leadership team at least 1 time during the year through Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) calibration sessions.

8 PROFESSIONALISM

- The Professionalism Domain assesses the work teachers do outside of instructional time, individually and collaboratively, and includes a component of teacher self-assessment. Professionalism calculations are based on the first 6 indicators of the Professional Framework, unless the evaluated teacher serves in a designated Teacher Leader Capacity, in which case the school leader will evaluate the teacher's performance on the seventh indicator (P7).
- **When is Professionalism Completed and by Whom:** During both the Mid-Year and End-of-Year Conversations, teachers rate themselves on Professionalism as does the school leader.
 - Teachers can choose whether or not they self-rate the Professionalism indicators for Mid-Year and End-of-Year. It is completely voluntary but strongly recommended.
 - A school leader is required to fill in the Professionalism indicators with ratings at both Mid-Year and End-of-Year. School leaders are encouraged to provide evidence with each rating, either in written form or during conversations. Best practice is to holistically assess the teacher's practice on each indicator rather than focus solely on isolated events. Only the End-of-Year ratings are used in the calculation for the overall performance rating.
 - Teachers are welcome but not required to attend each Professionalism conference with their own evidence for each indicator on the Professionalism Domain. For example, the teacher can show examples using data from Infinite Campus, data team meetings, Professional Development sessions they attended, records of meetings with parents etc.
- **Dual Schools:** Teachers who are at 2 schools will have their Professionalism completed by their home school's leader. Home school is defined as the school the teacher attends on Monday mornings or, if not equally at both, the school with the greater FTE.
- **Disagreement on Professionalism Indicator Scores**
Teachers who disagree with their leadership's professionalism scores may:
 - Contact the LEAP help desk for help, discuss the situation with school leader and/or contact DCTA for advice. See Sections 2 and 3 above if the teacher believes that filing a grievance is appropriate.

9 STUDENT PERCEPTION SURVEYS

- The SPS is the LEAP measure that incorporates student voice. As part of LEAP, the Student Perception Survey is a short survey done annually for most teachers to examine how students perceive their teachers and their experience in the classroom.
- Teachers in ECE- 2nd grade will not have student perception surveys.
- Teachers must have at least 10 unique student surveys completed in order for student perception results to contribute to the overall rating calculation.

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- After SPS results are released, DPS will provide resources to teachers and school leaders to help explain the calculations, make connections to instruction, and understand the results. Teachers are encouraged to discuss the results with their school leaders and/or teacher leaders.
- For questions about SPS, contact the LEAP team for help, discuss the situation with school leader and/or contact DCTA for advice.

10 STUDENT GROWTH

LEAP Student Growth: As required by law, all Colorado districts must incorporate student growth as 50% of teacher ratings. For DPS, Student Growth is made up of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), school measures, and state measures (when applicable).

SLOs: SLOs comprise 40% or 30% of a teacher’s overall LEAP rating, depending on the teacher’s role.

- A teacher is required to complete **two** SLOs for each school year, and each SLO will be scored as a percent of points possible.
- The two SLOs will be **weighted equally** for a teacher’s overall LEAP rating.
- Teachers must include a minimum of 10 students on each SLO unless teachers have less than 10 students rostered to them over the course of the school year.
- Teachers who teach multiple sections of the same class/course should add all sections to an SLO, if applicable.
- Teachers and school leaders should review the teacher’s body of evidence for each student prior to approving the SLO.
- An overall Student Growth Rating is not calculated until the Leader selects the “approve” button in the SLO Application Tool. If a teacher and leader disagree on the SLO data and/or the teacher refuses to make revisions or changes, the leader may be required to approve the SLO in order to generate an overall rating. A leader should then document the specific context around why the SLO was moved to an approved status. A leader’s concerns regarding the SLO may be considered in the final assigned rating if the teacher falls into a decision box.

School Measures: The School Performance Framework (SPF) represents a teacher’s collective measure of student growth and comprises 10% of an overall LEAP rating.

- Only the SPF Growth Indicator, not the Status Indicator, is used in teacher evaluations.
- The previous academic year’s SPF Growth is used in all teacher evaluations.

State Measures: For English-Language Arts and Math teachers, student growth on state measures will comprise 10% of overall LEAP ratings.

- Students must have scores from two consecutive years to calculate growth and be included in a teacher’s evaluation.
- State Measures will not be used in the calculation of new teachers’ evaluations.

The District releases a separate supplement regarding Student Growth calculations.

11 LEAP MID-YEAR AND END-OF-YEAR CONVERSATIONS

- LEAP Mid-Year conversations should occur between mid-December and mid-February. During this time, teachers and leaders have the opportunity to do a preliminary assessment of the teacher’s progress to-date for the school year.
 - Teachers are encouraged but not required to complete a mid-year self-reflection on performance and professionalism self-assessment (scores only or scores and comments).

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- Leaders are advised to enter scores and comments for each teacher at Mid-Year, and share them with the teacher prior to a Mid-Year conversation. Best practice is for the leaders to include evidence and cite specific examples of practice.
- While data is reviewed for each of the measures, no Overall or Professional Practice ratings are provided to teachers at mid-year. Best practice is for leaders to use the mid-year to help teachers understand next steps for growth and improvement, with the goal being to assure that the End-of-Year rating is not a surprise.
- LEAP End-of-Year conversations will start in April and go through the end of the year. During this time, teachers and leaders do a final assessment of the teacher's progress and performance for the school year.
 - Leaders are required to complete the end-of-year process by assigning Professionalism scores and updating evidence and comments as needed.
 - Leaders are required to enter the Reflections on Practice, identifying Areas of Strength, Areas of Growth and Next Steps.
 - Leaders will share a draft of the ratings and comments with teachers via the LEAP Application Tool. This draft should be shared at least two weeks prior to the end of the school year. Note: Given the timing/completion of SLOs, teachers and leaders may request an extension which may not exceed the last day of school.
 - Teachers are encouraged but not required to complete Professionalism self-assessment and or reflections on practice.
- Professional Practice and Student Growth ratings will be assigned and applied to the matrix. If a teacher's performance rating lands in a decision box, the leader must select a rating and provide written reasoning for selecting that rating.
- For all teachers not on leave, an End-of-Year conversation must occur prior to the end of the school year. If a teacher is on leave and has sufficient data to receive a rating, the leader should reach out to the teacher to offer to meet either by phone, in person, or through email exchanges to complete the end-of-year conversation. If the teacher on leave chooses not to participate in any of these options, the Leader will finalize the EOY in their absence.
- School Leaders must acknowledge/sign all teachers' final ratings.
- Teachers have the following options for acknowledging the end-of-year rating:
 - Acknowledge and sign
 - Refuse to acknowledge
 - Do nothing

12 CALCULATING OVERALL PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE RATING

Calculation: Since there are 50 points possible in Professional Practice, a teacher's performance rating is based on the percentage of points a teacher earns on the Professional Practice measures out of 50.

The Professional Practice data is converted into points using the following:

- Points for Observation and Professionalism are calculated using the mean scores.
- For the Student Perception Survey, teachers will earn points based on their performance on each SPS category.

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The number of points a teacher receives is then plotted on the Professional Practice continuum to determine the overall Professional Practice performance category rating. The graphic below displays the performance continuum. If the point totals fall within these bands, school leader discretion is applied in determining the rating.

Prior to End-Of-Year conversations, DPS will provide resources and guidance to school leaders to assist in making discretionary decisions for teachers that fall in decision bands for Professional Practice. DPS will consult with DCTA prior to issuing such guidance.



13 CALCULATING THE FINAL END-OF-YEAR RATING

- A teacher will receive an overall performance rating of Distinguished, Effective, Approaching or Not Meeting.
- 50% of the rating is from Professional Practice and 50% is from Student Growth. The Professional Practice Rating is combined with the Student Growth Rating using a matrix.
 - If a teacher’s ratings are the same for both Professional Practice and Student Growth, a rating is automatically assigned.
 - If a teacher’s ratings are different, a leader will need to select the rating and provide the reasoning for the rating selection.
- Prior to End-Of-Year conversations, DPS will provide resources and guidance to school leaders to assist in making discretionary decisions for teachers that fall in decision boxes. DPS will consult with DCTA before issuing such guidance.

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|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Student Perceptions | Professionalism | Distinguished | Decision | Decision | Decision | D |
| | | Effective | Decision | Decision | E | Decision |
| | | Approaching | Decision | A | Decision | Decision |
| | | Not Meeting | NM | Decision | Decision | Decision |
| Observations | Professional Practice: | | Not Meeting | Approaching | Effective | Distinguished |
| | | Student Growth: | | | | |
| | | Student Learning Objectives | | | | District Growth |

Note: Best practice for school leaders is to include a specific statement in the End-of-Year report about the strengths or weaknesses of the student growth data and how that factored into their assignment of the final rating from the decision box.

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14 THE LEAP END-OF-YEAR REPORT

As required by statute, the LEAP End-of-Year Report shall:

- state the Teacher’s strengths and weaknesses;
- include a plan for improvement;
- specifically identify when a classroom observation was conducted;
- identify the data used to support the overall rating;
- be discussed with the Teacher (if the Teacher is able and willing to do so);
- be signed by the evaluator; and
- give the person being evaluated the opportunity to electronically sign the evaluation by choosing to (1) sign, (2) select the option of “refusing to sign,” or (3) not sign.

15 REDRESS PROCESS:

Purpose

- Provide an opportunity for review where a teacher believes that his/her rating was determined unfairly.
- Encourage problem-solving at the lowest level between teacher and school leadership.

Procedures & Protocols

- Teacher can request review of an overall LEAP rating where:
 - He/she believes there has been a computational error in the way the rating was determined; or
 - He/she believes that the evaluator’s assignment of the Professional Practice rating from a decision band was not reasonable in light of the body of evidence and that assignment had a material impact on the overall final rating; or
 - He/she believes that the evaluator’s assignment of a final rating within a decision box was not reasonable in light of the body of evidence
- If the teacher believes that any of the requirements of this Guide were not followed and the teacher is within the time period for filing a grievance, s/he can file a grievance regarding the issue. (See sections 2 and 3 above.) A teacher who is eligible for redress can also elect to have any alleged violations of this Guide considered in the redress process if the time period for filing a grievance has not passed.
- If a teacher wishes to request a review, s/he must request review by sending an email to the LEAP inbox within ten (10) days of the final evaluation conference.
- This email will be acknowledged within two (2) business days and sent to the DPS ombudsperson alerting him/her of the need to schedule a conversation with the teacher and school leadership. The ombudsperson will also be sent the final rating report and teacher/school leader contact information.
- This meeting will be scheduled to take place within twenty-one (21) days from the acknowledgement of a teacher’s request for review.
- Structure of the meeting with the ombudsperson:
 - Meeting will involve a facilitated conversation between the teacher and appropriate school leaders. School leaders will include the principal and the school leader immediately supervising the teacher (if different than the principal).
 - The basis for the conversation will be the LEAP final evaluation document and whether the final rating was reasonable in light of the body of evidence.
 - Meeting will last for no longer than 60 minutes.
 - Meeting attendees will be limited to the following: teacher, school principal, teacher’s immediate supervisor (if different than the principal), and the ombudsperson. No additional attendees will be permitted.

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- The principal or immediate supervisor may modify the overall evaluation document based on the conversations, but the ombudsperson may not alter the rating.
- Following the meeting, the ombudsperson will document the outcome of the conversation and share this with DPS Human Resources, the school leader, and the teacher. The ombudsperson will share this within five (5) business days.
- If the teacher is not satisfied with the resolution of the facilitated process, she/he can submit a request for review to the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) or designee by sending an email to the LEAP inbox within three (3) days from receiving the document from the ombudsperson.
- This email will be acknowledged within two (2) business days and sent to the CHRO designee, along with the final rating report and summary by the ombudsperson.
- The CHRO or designee will make a final determination based on the written request for review and a review of the final evaluation document.
- This determination must be made within twenty-one (21) days of receiving the request for review.
- The CHRO or designee may consult with the Instructional Superintendent, ombudsperson, evaluator, teacher, or other relevant individual in making a final rating, but is not required to hold a hearing of the parties.
- The CHRO or designee may alter the rating assigned to the teacher only where it is not reasonable in light of the body of evidence; she/he may not substitute their judgment for that of the evaluator.
- The decision of the CHRO or designee will be final.

16 REVISIONS:

This Guide is a District document that was developed in consultation with the Denver Classroom Teachers Association (DCTA). The Guide is subject to revision in the District's discretion after consultation with DCTA. It does not create any contractual or employment rights.