



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: Personnel Directors, ADEPT Administrators, PADEPP Administrators

FROM: Lilla Toal Mandsager
Director, Office of Educator Effectiveness and Leadership Development

DATE: March 17, 2020

RE: COVID-19 Emergency Educator Evaluation Flexibility

Dear District Personnel Administrators and Teacher Evaluation Administrators,

The Expanded ADEPT (2018), PADEPP (2017), and ADEPT (2006) for special areas guidelines outline the specific requirements for educator evaluations. Given the mandatory school for COVID-19, the Office of Educator Effectiveness and Leadership Development (OEELD) offers these provisions for the 2019-20 school year. Existing flexibility is in regular type and new provisions are in bold.

Educator Evaluation Reporting Guidelines

Per Regulation 43-205.1, the deadline for reporting classroom-based teacher and special areas evaluation data is June 20. Intermediate dates for observations and final evaluation results are set in districts' annual ADEPT plan. **For the 2019-20 school year, all ADEPT plan due dates are automatically granted extensions until the reporting deadline. The reporting deadline will be reexamined and OEELD will request an extension of the 2020-21 ADEPT plan due date until July 1.** Regulation 43-165.1 sets September as the reporting deadline for principal evaluation data. OEELD will monitor spring semester 2019-20 to gather feedback on whether an extension to this due date is needed.

Classroom-based teachers

For all classroom-based teachers, the Student Learning Objective (SLO) Business Rules outline certain requirements for special circumstances, including

- An educator must be present for 85% of the interval of instruction for the SLO to be deemed valid and complete. In instances of teacher leave an SLO interval can be appropriately shortened.
- The SLO must include a minimum of six students. Students must be present for a minimum of seventy-five percent (75%) of the academic school year to be included in the SLO. This equals a minimum of one hundred, thirty -five days (135) in attendance for a year- long course, sixty-eight (68) days for a semester- long course, and thirty-eight (38) days for a quarter-long course. Students who have absences that exceed the minimum number can be excluded before determining the SLO score upon review and approval from the administrator/evaluator in the summative conference.

In addition to these exceptions, for the 2019-20 school year, districts may allow teachers to extend the window for the final SLO assessment to the end of the school year. Districts may allow evaluators to use the "Skip SLO" function if school closings inhibit the administration of the final SLO assessment and/or the interval of instruction. For teachers undergoing goals-based evaluation, a final overall status of "Met" or "Not Met" may still be reported if the SLO has been skipped according to the SLO business rules.

For classroom-based teachers undergoing formative evaluation, districts are encouraged to conduct the required number of formative observations where possible. **In cases where school closings inhibit the required number of formative observations, districts may still report a final overall status of "Met," "Not Met," or "Incomplete" based on the available observation data. Districts are encouraged to hold teachers harmless for induction requirements and to modify, hold virtually, or cancel remaining induction professional learning sessions as needed.**

For classroom-based teachers undergoing summative evaluation, districts are encouraged to conduct the required number of summative observations where possible. **In cases where school closings inhibit the required number of summative observations, districts may still report a final overall status of "Met" or "Not Met" if all required observations in the preliminary evaluation cycle and at least one required observation from the final evaluation cycle have occurred. That is, teachers undergoing regular summative evaluation will receive feedback on at least three of the required four total observations and teachers undergoing highly consequential summative evaluations will receive feedback on at least four of the required six total observations. If a teacher undergoing highly consequential summative evaluation will have a result of "Not Met" with the modified number of observations and time does not permit doing additional observations, the district is encouraged to report an "Incomplete" result.**

For all classroom-based teacher observations, districts are permitted to use observations of virtual or face-to-face instruction, but are encouraged to consider whether the teacher and the evaluators have been trained in observations of an online environment before using such observations for evaluation purposes.

Special Areas: School Counselors, School Librarians, and Speech Language Professionals

For special areas support staff undergoing formative or summative evaluation, districts are encouraged to conduct the required evaluation process where possible. **In cases where school closings inhibit the required evaluation process, districts may still report a final overall status of "Met," "Not Met," or "Incomplete" based on the available evaluation data.**

Incomplete Evaluations and Next Year Contract Levels

Per 43-205.1, teachers whose ADEPT results are reported to the SCDE as “Incomplete” are eligible to repeat their contract level during the next year of employment. The OEELD encourages districts to be thoughtful about issuing “Incomplete” evaluation results. Districts may consider if teachers with incomplete evaluations are ready to move on to the next contract level, especially if the reasons for the “Incomplete” were due to circumstances beyond the teacher’s control. Similarly, if the teacher is on an initial certificate and has not yet had a successful Annual Summative evaluation, the teacher needs an opportunity to meet that requirement in order to advance to a professional certificate.

Principal Evaluations

The regular principal evaluation timeline ends on September 1, 2020. Districts are encouraged to contact SCDE if they are seeking flexibility on a case-by-case basis.

To conclude, we appreciate the many questions we have fielded in the past few days and all you are doing to put teachers and principals at ease. One of the most important things we can remember is that the principals and teachers we support are worried not just about the health of their schools, but also the health of their communities and families. Any patience, flexibility, and grace we can grant, within reason, will be a boon to our collective strength.

The guidance above addresses many, but certainly not all of the circumstances you may encounter when trying to close out evaluations in a school year that will end in a way none of us could have anticipated. Should you need support or have additional questions, please contact me or your ADEPT and PADEPP contacts directly.