



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Massachusetts Sponsoring Organizations with Initial Teacher Programs  
**From:** The Office of Educator Effectiveness  
**Date:** June 27, 2024  
**Subject:** Updated Standards of Effective Practice, PST Guidelines, and CAP Guidelines

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In accordance with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's [Educational Vision](#), we are pleased to announce updates to guidance and tools for defining, developing, and supporting effective teaching practice in the Commonwealth that centers evidence-based, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices necessary to advance equitable learning opportunities for all students. These updates include:

- [The Model Rubric for Classroom Teacher Evaluation](#):
  - In alignment with the updated [Model School Level Administrator Rubric](#) released in 2023, the Model Classroom Teacher Rubric has been updated to integrate equitable and inclusive practices throughout the Standards of Effective Practice. The rubric was developed in partnership with educators on the Principal and Teacher Advisory Cabinets, refined based on feedback from educators, students, and families through roundtables and surveys, and piloted during the 2023-2024 school year.
  - The model rubrics are exemplars that districts can choose to adopt or adapt, or use a comparably rigorous alternative, in accordance with collective bargaining agreements. [Resources](#) such as Focus Indicators, an evidence guide, and teacher training workshops are available to support implementation.
- [The 2024 Guidelines for the Professional Standards for Teachers \(PSTs\) and the 2024 Guidelines for the Candidate Assessment of Performance \(CAP\)](#):
  - The PSTs define the pedagogical knowledge and skills required of all teachers as they complete preparation programs in Massachusetts. The PSTs and corresponding performance assessment (CAP) have been updated to ensure continued alignment with the Standards of Effective Practice for K-12 educators so that beginning teachers are well-prepared with the knowledge and skills needed to serve all of their students, particularly those from systemically marginalized groups and communities.

Together, these frameworks reflect a critically important shift in focus towards the evidence-based, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices necessary to support *all students* to attain

academic knowledge and skills, understand and value themselves and others, and engage with the world. We look forward to continuing to partner with you in support of this work.

## Context and Background

On April 16, 2024, the Office of Educator Effectiveness released drafts of the revised *Guidelines for the Professional Standards for Teachers* and *Guidelines for the Candidate Assessment of Performance* for public comment. The public comment period closed on June 14, 2024. During this period, we received feedback from over 210 educator preparation personnel, field supervisors, district and school leaders, current educators, and preparation candidates across the Commonwealth through the public comment survey, individual emails, and a series of roundtable discussions.

DESE's Office of Educator Effectiveness reviewed the feedback in full and compiled a summary document that was shared with the external PST/CAP Working Group (with feedback as of June 10<sup>th</sup>), an internal Standards of Effective Practice working group, and representatives from a range of DESE offices.

DESE weighed the public comment feedback from these groups as well as feedback on the Model Classroom Teacher Rubric revisions. DESE leaders also considered the alignment between the revisions and the DESE's Educational Vision. As a result, the following key changes were made to the 2024 PST and CAP Guidelines.

## Updates in Response to Public Comment

- **Updated definitions of practice levels:** In the PST Guidelines, the definitions for Introduce, Practice, and Demonstrate were updated to better clarify both the connections across levels of practice and the distinct expectations for elements at each level.
- **II-A-3: Inclusive Instruction added as a CAP Essential Element:** II-A-3: Inclusive Instruction includes explicit language about supporting students' individual "learning needs, abilities, interests, and levels of readiness, including those of students with disabilities (in accordance with relevant IEPs or 504 plans), English learners and former English learners, academically advanced students, and students who have been historically marginalized..." Overwhelmingly, educator preparation programs shared that this specificity will help align expectations with placement sites and provide an opportunity for more specific feedback to support candidates as they develop these skills.
  - DESE recommends that II-A-3 Inclusive Instruction ratings be informed by candidate artifacts, including candidates lesson plans and reflections on how they are working to support students with a variety of learning needs, abilities, interests, and levels of readiness when planning instruction.
- **Revision to the observation policy and requirements:** The CAP Guidelines have been updated to allow virtual observations for Announced Observations (in which the program supervisor must participate).
  - Any program seeking to routinely use virtual observations must submit a statement of assurance that the virtual observations meet expectations described in the Guidelines.
  - DESE will collect and analyze data over the next three years to better understand the impact of virtual observations on candidates' experiences and outcomes. DESE

may release updated requirements based on these analyses; updated requirements would go into effect no earlier than the 2028-2029 academic year.

Additional feedback from public comment responses will be used to inform implementation processes and supports. More information about the feedback received is available here: [Appendix A: Public Comment Feedback Summary](#).

## Implementation of the 2024 PST and CAP Guidelines

### **Implementation Expectations**

All educator preparation programs are expected to fully implement the 2024 PST Guidelines and 2024 CAP Guidelines beginning in the 2025-2026 academic year. In 2024-2025, each sponsoring organization must employ an implementation plan to prepare its personnel and candidates for full implementation by 2025-2026.

By October 31, 2024, each sponsoring organization is expected to submit a [Statement of Assurance](#), including a high-level implementation plan (a template for this plan is forthcoming), to confirm the sponsoring organization is taking steps to prepare for full implementation in accordance with this timeline.

Sponsoring organizations are encouraged to design a plan that will best support their personnel and candidates in making the necessary changes. Plans may include, but are not limited to, piloting the updated CAP Guidelines with individual program supervisors or licensure programs, collecting and synthesizing stakeholder feedback on integrating the PSTs into coursework, training and support for field supervisors to internalize the updated expectations, and/or participation in one or more DESE implementation support offerings (see table below).

### **Implementation Support**

An overview of the timeline for implementation supports and resources is below. A more detailed implementation support plan from DESE will be shared in August 2024. Supports will include:

- An updated CAP Implementation Handbook with recommended promising practices and optional resources
- Informational sessions providing an orientation to the updated PST and CAP Guidelines
- Short videos or presentations about the purpose and expectations in CAP that can be shared with a variety of stakeholders
- Communities of Practice designed to provide space for facilitated dialogue and calibration on the CAP Essential Elements, including promising practices in using candidate artifacts as evidence
- Examples of evidence, completed CAP forms, and look-fors for proficient practice

### **Implementation Timeline Overview**

<b>Summer 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• June: Updated Guidelines released</li><li>• August: CAP Implementation Handbook</li><li>• August: Quick Reference Guides for key components of CAP</li></ul>
<b>Fall 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Statements of Assurance</a> and implementation plans due to DESE</li><li>• Informational sessions about updated PSTs and CAP</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application for Community of Practice facilitators</li> <li>• Overview videos for candidates and supervising practitioners</li> </ul>
<b>Spring 2025</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities of Practice, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Opportunities for calibration and discussion with colleagues</li> <li>○ Development of exemplar CAP forms and feedback</li> <li>○ Initial rollout of a library of examples of CAP evidence and forms</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Role-specific drop-in sessions</li> </ul>
<b>Summer 2025</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated CAP Online Platform and supporting resources launch</li> </ul>
<b>Fall 2025</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full implementation of updated PST and CAP Guidelines</li> </ul>

**Specific Implementation Resources**

**Focused Support for Standard III: Family and Community Engagement**

In support of preparing teacher candidates with culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, DESE has added an Essential Element in Standard III. This new element received the most varied feedback from educator preparation personnel, without clear consensus.

Feedback from PK-12 school and district representatives through the public comment survey, working group, and a wide variety of engagements signaled overwhelming support for the inclusion of III-C-1: Collaboration with Families and Students as an Essential Element.

In response to the feedback from educator preparation personnel, DESE will provide targeted support and resources to clarify the expectations for developing candidates’ skills in Standard III, including evaluating III-C-1: Collaboration with Families and Students as an Essential Element through CAP. In particular, concerns were raised about candidates communicating with families separately from the supervising practitioner; this is not required for a candidate to demonstrate proficiency in this element.

In addition to opportunities for collaboration with educator preparation colleagues, DESE will also provide PK-12 school and district leaders with additional information to strengthen their understanding of this expectation.

**CAP Online Platform Updates**

During the 2024-2025 academic year, DESE will update the CAP Online Platform both to improve its functionality and to align it with the 2024 CAP Guidelines. DESE will solicit feedback from educator preparation personnel throughout the update process to inform the design of and resources for the updated platform.

DESE is unable to have multiple versions of the CAP Online Platform running simultaneously. To best support sponsoring organizations with a wide range of implementation plans for the updated guidelines and to minimize disruption for candidates, the transition to the updated CAP Online Platform is tentatively scheduled for summer 2025. Additional information will be shared in early 2025.

## Appendix A: Public Comment Feedback Summary

Across stakeholder groups, demographic groups, organization types, and geographical regions, there was broad support for the updates to the PST and CAP Guidelines, with a range of helpful recommendations that have informed revisions and forthcoming resources.

### Overview of Public Comment Participation

Across the survey, roundtables, individual email exchanges, and other DESE events, we heard from 212 individuals or organizations through public comment. In addition to educator preparation personnel, a range of other stakeholders participated in public comment: supervising practitioners, current candidates, recent completers, PK-12 school and district administrators, PK-12 teachers, and caregivers of PK-12 students.

### Summary of Survey Results

DESE received 81 complete and 48 partial responses to the Public Comment Survey. When asked about the PST and CAP Guidelines overall:

- 86 percent of survey takers (n=69) agreed that the Guidelines articulate purposeful connections and coherence across DESE’s Education Vision, the Standards of Effective Practice, and the Professional Standards for Teachers.
- 90 percent of survey takers (n=71) agreed the Guidelines will support educator preparation programs, field supervisors, and candidates to develop a shared understanding of effective practice.
- 83 percent of survey-takers (n=71) agreed the Guidelines will support educator preparation programs to prepare educators to effectively serve all students, particularly those from systemically marginalized groups and communities.

For each Standard of Effective Practice, the percentage of survey takers that agreed with key indicators are as follows:

	<b>Standard I: Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment</b>	<b>Standard II: Teaching All Students</b>	<b>Standard III: Family and Community Engagement</b>	<b>Standard IV: Professional Culture</b>
Elements at the demonstrate level represent key knowledge and skills that educators must possess in order to be ready to well-serve all students on day one in the classroom	87.1% (n=70)	92.6% (n=68)	69.6% (n=69)	92.8% (n=69)
It is realistic to expect that candidates will have opportunities to practice and demonstrate competency in the elements at the demonstrate level in varying practicum or practicum equivalent contexts.	79.7% (n=69)	83.8% (n=68)	50.7% (n=69)	92.9% (n=70)

The Essential Elements represent the most critical knowledge and skills within the standard that should be evaluated in the Candidate Assessment of Performance.	88.2% (n=68)	75.7% (n=70)	59.2% (n=71)	91.5% (n=71)
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The vast majority of respondents who did not select “agree” indicated they somewhat agreed with the statement. Many provided valuable feedback reflected in the changes described above and others in the PST and CAP Guidelines.

### Summary of Qualitative Feedback

In addition to the concerns described in the memo above, several key themes were elevated across the sources of feedback:

#### Areas of Strength:

- **Alignment with DESE’s Educational Vision and the Standards of Effective Practice**
  - “This is important not only for explicitly training teacher candidates but to further support DESE's Vision and commitment to ensuring that all educators consistently use evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices.”
  - “I would like to commend embedding social-emotional learning and cultural proficiency as cross-cutting these elements... The clear expectations for candidates and examples of the different levels for introduction, practice, and demonstrate were also very well-designed.”
- **Additional flexibility in evidence sources for each element:** There was generally positive feedback regarding this shift; some participants requested examples and additional clarity, which will be provided through the 2024-2025 implementation support.
  - “We appreciate and support the flexibility the proposed CAP will provide in evidence collection. We see that as a real strength in these guidelines.”
  - “I do like the CAP rubric with the evidence table. I would like to see some sample case studies that can be used as a reference when trying to best determine how to select and use evidence to minimize the administrative work.”

#### Considerations and Concerns:

- **Demonstrating curriculum literacy across content areas and grade levels:** DESE will continue to provide resources and guidance on demonstrating curriculum literacy competencies across content areas. As described in the [2023 Guidelines for Program Approval](#), curriculum literacy competencies are essential for all educators, whether they are provided with high-quality, published curricular materials, are asked to design their own curriculum, or something in between. DESE has hosted content-specific curriculum literacy workshops and will continue to identify resources to clarify the role of curriculum literacy across subject areas.
  - “Curriculum literacy may be difficult to demonstrate as described in certain fields and in some practicum placement sites.”

- “It takes time to develop curriculum literacy. Sometimes our candidates do not have the agency to determine the strengths and weakness of materials and adapting them as necessary to plan evidence-based, inclusive, and culturally sustaining instruction, although they can gain practice in doing so.”
- **Need for clarity about and flexibility in implementation rollout:** Based on feedback from multiple stakeholders, sponsoring organizations may determine the best plan for building toward full implementation during the 2025-2026 school year. DESE will not prescribe the rollout process; all sponsoring organizations will be required to submit a statement of assurance and implementation plan affirming they are on track to meet the implementation timeline.
  - “It would be great to have more specifics about what partial implementation might look like.”
  - “Consider shifting from a ‘partial rollout’ in 2024-25 to a year of preparation for full rollout in 2025-26. Student teaching portfolios and documentation systems will face real challenges with a short turnaround in summer 24 and managing old and new CAP protocols and the systems we use to manage them for a wide range of licensure programs.”
- **Value of a variety of resources and supports for implementation:** Each of the proposed implementation supports received broad support from participants. DESE is developing a multi-faceted plan for implementation resources and supports, which will be shared in more detail in the coming months.

Appendix B: Statement of Assurance Template

**Directions:** *This form should be completed on the sponsoring organization’s letterhead by the person responsible for its educator preparation programs.*

Place your initials in the appropriate yes/no box. If the answer is no, please provide a comment explaining why and intentions to fully meet the expectations set forth.

A high-level implementation plan for 2024-2025 outlining how your SO will prepare for implementation of the PST and CAP Guidelines **must** be included when this Statement of Assurance is submitted. A template for this implementation plan will be shared in August 2024.

Please sign and submit this form to [educatorpreparation@mass.gov](mailto:educatorpreparation@mass.gov) by October 31, 2024.

Statement of Assurance	Yes	No	Comments (optional)
Candidates enrolled in <b>all Initial Teacher preparation programs and expected to complete their practicum in or after the 2025-2026 academic year</b> have been advised that they will be assessed using the <i>2024 Guidelines for the Candidate Assessment of Performance</i> .			
<b>Each Initial Teacher preparation program will fully implement programming in alignment with</b> the <i>2024 Guidelines for the Professional Standards for Teachers</i> by the start of the 2025-2026 academic year.			
<b>Each Initial Teacher preparation program will fully implement the Candidate Assessment of Performance in alignment with</b> the <i>2024 Guidelines for the Candidate Assessment of Performance</i> by the start of the 2025-2026 academic year.			

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SO Representative Signature Name & Title Date