Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) is committed to ensuring excellent teaching and learning for every student, in every classroom, in every school. A lot goes into making this happen, but it is teachers who create classrooms that are full of energy and enthusiasm for learning. Effective teachers are professionals who plan, teach, reflect, and then adjust their teaching to develop students’ skills and abilities—and inspire students to reach high and achieve their potential.

State Context

City Schools is not alone on this path toward new teacher evaluations. In Maryland, under the Education Reform Act of 2010, by the academic year, 2013-2014 all 24 of the state's Local Education Agencies (LEAs; or school districts) are required to implement redesigned teacher and principal evaluation systems. This is in direct alignment with education reform efforts nationwide. Maryland's participation in the federal Race to the Top program provides the state with resources to undertake this work.

The Maryland State Department of Education has developed a teacher evaluation framework to which all LEAs must adhere. According to this framework, 50 percent of the evaluation must be derived

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1 Information used from Baltimore City Schools’ Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation guidebook.
from qualitative measures and 50 percent from measures of student growth; no single measure can account for more than 35 percent of the evaluation. The state also developed a teacher evaluation model that all districts must use if they do not develop their own. City Schools elected to develop its own evaluation system that the district feels more accurately captures the work of its teachers.

**City School’s Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation System**

The district’s present evaluation for teachers, or Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation system, is the product of more than two years of work, marked by ongoing collaboration with diverse stakeholders. Although led by staff in the district’s Achievement and Accountability Office, the work has drawn on the expertise of other offices, including Academics, Human Capital and School Support Networks. Throughout, City Schools also partnered closely with the Baltimore Teachers Union (BTU); district leaders and staff met regularly with BTU leadership to review and discuss the evaluation components. District and union leaders—along with a broad cross-section of teachers, school leaders, and district office staff—were represented in the numerous groups whose work was either directly related to developing the teacher evaluation or intersected with the evaluation. The primary voice of teachers and school leaders was captured through the Educator Support and Evaluation Committee, an advisory group of 20 teachers and school leaders appointed by both the BTU and the district. This work and collaboration culminated in the summer of 2013 with a negotiated agreement between City Schools and the BTU that described what the evaluation would include and how it would be enacted in the 2013–14 school year.

**Overview of the Present System**

Because effective teaching is multidimensional, City Schools’ Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation system provides a detailed picture of a teacher’s practice through multiple measures. The 2013-2014 Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation system measures teacher effectiveness in two areas: professional
practice and student and school growth. Each of these areas accounts for 50 percent of a teacher’s overall effectiveness rating, and nearly every classroom teacher will experience two distinct measures within each of these areas. The exact measures depend on the grade and the subject matter that a teacher teaches.

**Professional practice (50%).**

- Classroom observations using the district’s Instructional Framework (35%)
- Professional expectations measure (15%)
  - The professional expectations measure includes two parts. The first focuses on expectations for attendance, punctuality, adherence to City School’s policies and testing integrity. The second professional expectation focuses on a teacher’s skills in communication, job knowledge, professionalism and teamwork.

**Student and school growth (50%).**

- Student growth measure
  - Individual student measure (for teachers in grades/subjects where state standardized tests are administered) *or*
  - All-student measure (for teachers in nontested grades/subjects)
- School performance measure

**Collaboration**

It is very important to note, that the present evaluation system is the reflection of several years of diligent effort formed by collaboration across multiple and diverse stakeholders. Beginning in summer 2012, City Schools and BTU leadership began meeting to share information about a new evaluation system while addressing teachers' concerns. In the summer of 2013, City Schools and the BTU met to review data from a field test that took place during the 2011-2012 school year and to further negotiate the
terms of the new evaluation system. Negotiations resulted slight revisions to the evaluation system. For example, the use of a professional responsibilities checklist that documents a teacher’s attendance, punctuality, the ability to communicate, and collaborate was expanded to develop a richer measure of professional expectations. Also, a student survey that had been field-tested was omitted as component of the evaluation system. Together, City Schools and the BTU believe that the 2013-2014 evaluation system will lead to better support and professional development for teachers as well as improved outcomes for our students.

**Gradual Implementation.**

During the course of developing the Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation system, City Schools has considered, piloted, and field-tested evaluation components that are not part of the new evaluation in 2013–14. In some cases, it was clear from the field test and teachers’ feedback that these components needed further revision; in others, it was determined by City Schools and the BTU that the components should be removed from the evaluation altogether. Because of this, the district will continue to revise and field-test some components during the 2013–14 school year and continue to negotiate with the union with the goal of creating the strongest possible set of evaluative measures. Because of the scope of the work, development of the evaluation was planned to take place over several years, reaching milestones along the way.

**Milestone 1: Pilot.** In 2011–2012, a pilot of four evaluation measures was implemented in eight schools with approximately 300 teachers. The four components included the Instructional Framework, a student survey, value-added student and school growth measures, and the professional responsibility checklist. There were no consequences (or reward) for a teacher or school who participated in the 2011-2012 field test. Results and feedback from the pilot informed further development of the evaluation system.
**Milestone 2: Field test.** In spring 2013, the new evaluation was field-tested in all City Schools. Like the pilot, no consequences or rewards were attached to the results of the 2013 field test. The field test included the four components of the pilot and the inclusion of student learning goals. Student learning goals are long term goals set for students by teachers. Although omitted as part of the 2013-2014 negotiated City School’s Teacher Effectiveness System, student learning goals may be included as an all-student measure of student growth for teachers in non-tested subjects in the next version of the evaluation system beginning in 2014–15.

**Milestone 3: Implementation.** Beginning in 2013–14, all teachers, as defined by the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR; state regulations governing teacher evaluations) will experience the present evaluation system as previously described. There are now rewards and consequences attached to the evaluation system. Using a formula that includes all effectiveness measures, teachers will be rated highly effective, effective, developing, or not effective. Under the current contract between City Schools and BTU, BTU teachers are awarded Achievement Units (AUs) for a variety of activities, such as writing curriculum or participating in various professional development offerings. Teachers also earn AUs based on the results of their annual performance evaluation. Teachers rated highly effective earn 12 AUs. Teachers rated effective earn 9. Teachers rated as developing earn three. Teachers rated as ineffective will not earn any AUs. AUs are important because they enable teachers to maintain their professional certification and lead to pay raises.

While City Schools was expected to implement the full Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation system for the 2013-2014 school year, including the teacher focused and student focused measures, City Schools is only focusing on the professional practice measures. In June 2013, the U.S. Department of Education announced that it would allow Race to the Top recipients, including Maryland, to apply for a waiver that would permit a delay in including student growth measures in teacher evaluations. For City Schools, this
waiver means that only the professional practice measures (classroom observations based on the Instructional Framework and professional expectations) of the present evaluation system would be used to make employment decisions in 2013–14 such as compensation.

**Moving Forward**

The district is working to develop professional development opportunities that align to the evaluation so that teachers experience it both as an affirmation of effective instruction and as a tool to improve their practice. There will be numerous opportunities throughout 2013–14 for teachers and school leaders to provide feedback on the new evaluation and inform the development of the professional learning component so that what the district ultimately creates is a comprehensive process for strengthening, supporting, and measuring teacher effectiveness.
References and Resources


