

Utah Model Principal Evaluation System Handbook

Introduction and Core Design Principles

Principal evaluation in Utah is based on the Utah Educational Leadership Standards (UELS) adopted May 3, 2018. These standards are based on the previous version of the UELS as well as the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership (PSEL) from the National Policy Board for Educational Administration. This model is built on five core design principles:

1. The model measures principal effectiveness on the three components required by Utah Code 53G-11-507 and board rules R277-531 and R277-533, which are:
 - a. Leadership practice
 - b. Student academic growth
 - c. Stakeholder input
 - d. Note: The code and board rules also require that administrators be evaluated on their effectiveness of evaluating employee performance. In this model this requirement is accomplished in the leadership practice component.
2. This system is designed to meet two disparate but related purposes. First, it helps principals develop and improve their practice by ensuring that principals are continually improving their skills and becoming more and more effective. Second, it measures principal quality by ensuring that principals are of the highest quality and are accountable for their professional performance.
3. The model clearly differentiates between four levels of performance: Highly effective which describes performance that serves as a model for others to emulate, Effective to describe performance that leads to strong student learning, Marginally Effective to describe performance that needs improvement, Not Effective to describe performance that cannot be allowed to continue.
4. The model does not have a rubric for every standard defined in the strands. Rather, the indicators are correlated to the standards they measure. The Standards Correlation column in the rubric shows these correlations.
5. The model demands a great deal from evaluators. Ensuring principal quality and providing them with the feedback they need to continually improve their requires supervisors/evaluators who are well versed in what the principal does, what effective performance looks like, and what is happening in the school. It requires frequent professional conversations that are focused on improvement.

Model Principal Evaluation System Components

The model assesses principals on three components: leadership practice, student academic growth, and stakeholder input. The percentage each component plays in the final summative evaluation score is left up to LEA discretion.

Leadership Practice

Leadership practice consists of the actions that principals take to drive increased student outcomes. We describe these actions in the seven strands of the Utah Educational Leadership Standards (UELS):

- 1. Visionary Leadership:** Effective educational leaders facilitate the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a shared vision that promotes each student's academic success and well-being.
- 2. Teaching and Learning:** Effective educational leaders support teaching and learning by facilitating coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being
- 3. Management for Learning:** Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote the success and well-being of faculty, staff, and students.
- 4. Community Engagement:** Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in order to create an inclusive, caring, safe, and supportive school environment to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
- 5. Ethical Leadership:** Effective educational leaders act ethically and professionally to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
- 6. School Improvement:** Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement and foster a professional community of teachers and staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
- 7. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness:** Effective educational leaders honor the heritage and background of each student, use culturally responsive practices, and strive for cultural competency and equity of educational opportunity to promote each student's academic success and well-being

These strands draw on research identifying the principal actions that drive increases in student performance. They are aligned to the Professional Standards for Educational Leadership (PSEL) standards, though they emphasize a smaller number of domains of principal actions than PSEL. Each strand is of equal importance in principal evaluation because each encompasses a core, fundamental area of principal practice. Further, the seven strands are deeply interconnected as a principal's practice in one area can influence their practice in all other areas. For example, Teaching and Learning focuses on implementing a high-quality, rigorous curriculum and School Improvement focuses on evaluating and supporting teachers who implement that Curriculum. These are different aspects of the principal's primary and important role as an instructional leader. Because of this, we do not assign greater weight to any of the strands. The standards under each strand are correlated to the rubric and are noted in the Standards Correlation column in the rubric.

Utah Model Principal Evaluation Rubric

In order to assess principal practice against the seven strands of the UELS and to help frame supports for principals, we developed the **Utah Model Principal Evaluation Rubric**, found at the end of this document. The rubric describes leadership actions across four performance levels for each of the seven strands and associated standards of practice as follows:

Highly Effective principals build the capacity of others and can and do increase the number of highly effective teachers. They continuously demonstrate an expert level of performance on all the principal standards. Specifically, they

- Ensure all students receive rigorous, personalized instruction to drive them to high levels of learning and academic growth,
- Build and sustain a positive culture of high expectations that supports the development of all students' academic skills and social emotional learning development,
- Build the capacity of others to assume leadership roles in the school, and
- Consistently implement systems, structures, and policies that support student learning and adult development.

Effective principals consistently implement effective leadership practices and demonstrate an adept level of performance on almost all the principal standards. Specifically, they

- Ensure most students receive rigorous instruction to support high levels of student learning and academic growth,
- Build and sustain a positive culture of high expectations that supports the development of most students' academic skills and social emotional learning development,
- Develop some staff capacity to take on additional responsibilities and leadership roles, and
- Consistently implement systems and structures that support student learning.

Marginally Effective principals demonstrate the knowledge and awareness of effective leadership practices, but do not consistently or effectively execute those practices. They may demonstrate appropriate effort but show limited evidence of impact. Specifically, they

- Create structures that aim to support instruction and to improve achievement with limited implementation,
- Attempt to develop a culture that supports the development of students' academic skills and social emotional learning development,
- Demonstrate Marginally Effective knowledge and awareness of how to develop capacity in others but limit this to a select group of staff, and
- Develop systems for student learning that are inconsistently implemented.

Note: Novice principals may find that they are rated Marginally Effective in some or most strands as they are developing their practice. Such ratings for novice principals are to be expected and do not reflect deficiencies. Rather, they reflect opportunities for growth.

Not Effective principals, over time, have not demonstrated acceptable levels of performance on the principal standards. Their practice and outcomes are unacceptable and require immediate attention and monitoring. Specifically, they

- Make decisions that negatively impact instruction and student achievement,
- Sustain a culture that negatively impacts the development of students' academic skills and social emotional learning development,
- Restrict the involvement of key staff in making key decisions about the school, and
- Are unable or unwilling to implement structures, systems, or processes that support student learning and academic growth.

Note: The rubric does not have a column for the Not Effective rating. If principals do not reach the requirements for Minimally Effective they are considered to be Not Effective.

Examples of Evidence

The rubric also provides **Examples of Evidence** as a guide for evaluators. The examples illustrate the processes and structures evaluators might expect to see in a school with a principal who demonstrates Effective practice. We recommend that as evaluators learn to use the rubric, they review these Examples of Evidence and generate additional examples from their own experience rather than use the provided examples as a checklist.

Gathering Evidence of Leadership Practice

A comprehensive effort to gather evidence of leadership practice includes four steps:

- 1. Direct observation of principal practice** occurs when the evaluator is physically present in the school or venue where the principal is present and leading. These observations include but are not limited to leadership team meetings, principals observing teacher practice, principal involvement in PLC meetings, or principal to teacher feedback conversations such as professional conversations and observation pre- and post-conferences.
- 2. Indirect observation of principal practice** occurs when the evaluator is observing or reviewing systems or processes that have been developed and implemented by the principal but operate without the principal present. These indirect observations include but are not limited to attending teacher team meetings or collaboration sessions (where the principal is not present) or observing teacher practice across multiple classrooms.
- 3. Artifacts** documenting principal practice include but are not limited to the strategic school plan, documentation of the school's instructional framework, and communications to families and community members.
- 4. School data** are concrete results of a principal's work, including but not limited to leading indicators, direct evidence of student performance, and all stakeholder feedback.

Two Purposes of Principal Evaluation

Evidence collected in these four areas should inform both the professional growth needs of a principal and summative ratings as part of an evaluation system. The rubric, like the entire evaluation system, has two purposes:

1. It informs professional growth:

The strands and rubric can be used as developmental tools to help principals identify priority areas for their own professional growth that are aligned to the needs of their school. The rubric contains a detailed continuum of performance for every indicator of principal practice to serve as a guide and resource for school leaders and evaluators to talk about practice, identify specific areas for growth and development, and have language to use in describing what improved practice would be. Evaluation, then, can and should be part of a system of continuous growth.

2. It is the basis for assigning leadership practice ratings:

The strands and rubric should also be used to review all evidence of principal practice and assign ratings of the leader's practice in relation to each strand. Evaluators and principals will review principal practice and specifically the evidence from the 4 categories just described. Evaluators will then complete evaluation detail at the strand level, using the rubric indicators aligned to the standards as supporting information as needed.

Calculating Summative Ratings on Principal Leadership Practice

To assign a rating of principal leadership practice, the evaluator takes the following steps:

1. Review all evidence collected over time. State code and board rule require summative evaluations be based on multiple observations. The number of observations/evidence collections is left to district discretion. However, there should be evidence collected over the course of the entire year or over several years used in determining summative ratings.
2. For each of the seven strands, determine the rating (Highly Effective, Effective, Marginally Effective, or Not Effective) that matches the **preponderance** of evidence.
3. Determine the strand rating from the performance indicator ratings. Unlike teacher evaluation, this is not meant to be a cumulative rubric. In other words, a principal need not be highly effective in all lines of performance in order to be rated highly effective on a strand. The tables below are used to determine strand scores.

For strands with four performance indicators:

Not Effective (0)	Marginally Effective (1)	Effective (2)	Highly Effective (3)
Not Effective on at least 2 indicators	At least Marginally Effective on at least 3 indicators	At least Effective on at least 3 indicators AND No rating below Marginally Effective on any indicator	Highly Effective on at least 3 indicators AND No rating below Effective on any indicator

For strands with three performance indicators:

Not Effective (0)	Marginally Effective (1)	Effective (2)	Highly Effective (3)
Not Effective on at least 2 indicators	At least Marginally Effective on at least 2 indicators	At least Effective on at least 2 indicators AND No rating below Marginally Effective on any indicator	Highly Effective on at least 2 indicators AND No rating below Effective on any indicator

After strand ratings are scored use the following table to determine an overall summative Principal Leadership Practice rating.

Not Effective (0)	Marginally Effective (1)	Effective (2)	Highly Effective (3)
Not Effective on at least 4 strands	At least Marginally Effective on at least 5 strands	At least Effective on at least 5 Strands AND No rating below Marginally Effective on any Strand	Highly Effective on at least 5 Strands AND No rating below Effective on any Strand

Characteristics of Effective Feedback

In continuous improvement cycles, supervisors should always keep in mind the value of feedback based on certain evidence-based characteristics. Although different models can be used when giving feedback, effective feedback must display these characteristics:

- ***Specific:*** It should contain specific information rather than generalizations
- ***Accurate:*** It should be factual and clear
- ***Objective:*** Feedback should be unbiased and unprejudiced
- ***Timely:*** It should be given as soon as possible after completion of a task (however, at times it might not be possible and may be delayed to a more appropriate time and place)
- ***Usable:*** Relate the feedback to goals and strategies so the individual can improve performance
- ***Desired by the receiver:*** Feedback can still be effective even in those who don't actively seek it, however those who are seeking feedback will often be more motivated to improve performance
- ***Checked for understanding:*** Clarify understanding with the individual to ensure they are getting the most out of their feedback

(Matua et al 2014; Rose & Best 2005)

The Three Cubed Rating System

Making principal evaluation meaningful and ensuring it leads to continuous growth requires having in - depth professional conversations between principals and their supervisors. Since there are 24 indicators in the rubrics, professional conversations of all indicators at once can become burdensome. It can lead to just getting evaluations done rather than using them to contribute to professional growth. Adopting a model such as the Three Cubed Rating system can move the process toward one of continuous growth. Here are the characteristics of such a system:

1. In most LEAs in the state principals are summatively evaluated once every three years, thus the first three.
2. In each of the three years principals are evaluated on two strands plus the School Improvement strand, making three strands (the second three). Since the School Improvement strand is critical to school functioning and improvement processes it is evaluated all three years (the third three).
3. By the end of the third year the principal will have been evaluated and coached through all seven strands with special emphasis on the School Improvement strand which is a focus every year.

A system such as the Three Cubed Rating System allows districts to focus continuous improvement efforts on fewer strands making personalized professional learning for principals much easier. It is not even necessary for all principals to be working on the same strands.

LEAs are not required to adopt this or any other evaluation pattern. They are free to choose the system that works best for them.

Student Academic Growth

Student academic growth ratings should be determined by principal achievement of goals set in concert with and approved by their supervisor. Principals and supervisors should agree on the level of performance required in order to be rated highly effective, effective, minimally effective, or not effective. Research suggests that principals impact student learning and academic growth indirectly rather than directly through actions that support teachers in their instruction and pedagogical growth (Leithwood, 2004).

Examples of measures that could be used to determine this score are:

- Completion of Student Academic Growth goals set by principals in concert with their supervisor.
- Ultimate responsibility for overall student academic growth schoolwide. State code prohibits using the results of standardized tests in educator evaluation. Therefore, LEAs may not require those results to be part of a principal’s summative evaluation. Principals may, however, choose to use results of standardized tests in determining their rating on student academic growth.
- School Improvement Plan status measured by completion of principal actions impacting teachers directly, which then impacts students indirectly, considered longitudinally across a mutually agreed period.
- Use of high leverage practices that have been shown to have a positive correlation to increases in student learning and academic growth. Some of those practices are:
 - Choosing and documenting leading indicators that show the impact of principal actions on teacher progress leading to student academic growth such as measures of culture, allocation of resources including finances, physical resources, and human capital, etc.
 - Creating a collaborative culture and supporting it with time, resources, and advocacy
 - Time spent in classrooms observing instruction and giving feedback to teachers.
 - Focusing on continuous improvement cycles with all teachers
 - Leadership of, attendance at, and participation in teacher PLCs
- Other evidence-based practices that indirectly and positively affect student academic growth. Principals must cite the research and create a plan to implement the practices. Supervisors must sign off on the plans.

Setting Goals for Student Academic Growth

Principals and their supervisors should meet at the beginning of the school year to choose student academic growth goals. Such goals should be significant, tied directly to an action that has been shown to increase student academic growth, and few (no more than three). Principals and their supervisors should agree on rubrics that will indicate levels of performance to determine a rating. Below is an example of a rubric that could be created by a principal and supervisor to measure achievement of a goal they mutually agreed to:

Student Academic Growth Measurement			
Goal: Spend more time in classrooms observing teaching and learning and giving feedback to teachers. I will spend at least 3 more hours per week observing teaching in classrooms than my current practice (2 hours). I will give feedback to teachers after every visit.			
Not Effective	Minimally Effective	Effective	Highly Effective
Did not increase amount of time spent in classrooms or decreased that amount of time.	Maintained my current level of time spent in classrooms.	Achieved the goal of spending 5 hours per week in classrooms and giving feedback on each visit	In addition to effective, had professional conversations with teachers after each observation that lead to teacher goals for growth.

Principals and their supervisors should meet for at least one mid-year review in which they discuss the principal's progress toward achievement of their goals. If some goals are achieved or largely completed at this review the goals should be revised or marked complete. New goals may then be set.

Calculating Summative Ratings for Student Academic Growth

Principals will meet with their supervisors in order to discuss achievement of the goals set. They will discuss the principal's achievement of their goals and discuss evidence collected by the principal to substantiate their level of achievement. Using the rubrics agreed upon at goal setting, a rating will then be determined. If the principal and supervisor have set more than one goal the summative rating will be the average of the ratings on all goals.

Stakeholder Input

Utah State Board of Education rule R277-533 requires that stakeholder input for administrators be gathered from parents, teachers, and students (when appropriate). Other stakeholders, such as school support staff, may also provide feedback. LEAs may choose from many different means of collecting stakeholder input on the leadership practice of their principals. These means may include:

- Surveys available commercially or found online.
 - Student surveys
 - Teacher surveys
 - Parent surveys
 - School climate surveys
- Logs of interaction with community members
- Phone logs
- Artifacts of communication with stakeholders (e.g., e-mails, texts, official correspondence)

When scoring stakeholder input results evaluators should emphasize how principals used the data to adjust or improve their practice. Ratings could be determined by using this suggested rubric:

Not Effective (0)	Marginally Effective (1)	Effective (2)	Highly Effective (3)
Did not review stakeholder input OR did not use stakeholder input data to adjust or improve leadership practice.	Reviewed and reflected on stakeholder input and attempted to use input data to adjust and/or improve leadership practice.	Reviewed and reflected on stakeholder input. Shared the data with school leadership teams. Actively sought and implemented means of adjusting leadership practice. Made goals for improving leadership practice.	Reviewed and reflected on stakeholder input. Shared the data with school leadership teams. Made plans to actively involve the school leadership team in implementing adjustments to school procedures. Actively sought and implemented means of adjusting leadership practice. Made goals for improving leadership practice and immediately began the process of improvement.

Ratings may also be determined by using the Leadership Practice rubrics for Strand 4 – Community Engagement.

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Academic Growth Measures informed by **How Leadership Influences Student Learning**, Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement at the University of Minnesota and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 2004, The Wallace Foundation