

Frequently Asked Questions for the NC Online Educator Evaluation System

1. Who owns the data?

NCDPI, as the contracting agency, officially owns the data. They are granting access to the software to the districts; districts control who has access to the data. At the end of each school year, NCDPI needs to be able to download the Summary Rating Forms for each person evaluated in order to prepare reports for the NCSBE and the federal government. It is possible that this will be handled through “report writer” so that only aggregate data will be downloaded. That is still under consideration.

2. Can we transfer data from one site to another?

Yes. This is made easier by the use of unique identification number for teachers and other staff members. The system allows a principal to transfer records for teachers and a superintendent to transfer records for a principal between and among schools and districts within the state.

3. Who manages the user ids and passwords, and how are they integrated with NCID?

McREL will set up the individual user’s id and password in order to provide access to the software. Users are asked to create a new password after the first login. The NCID is the link for all records in the system. It will be used when employees transfer from site to site and when records need to be updated.

4. Who is the system administrator and how will access be provided?

McREL will administer the system and will provide appropriate administrative privileges to school and district staff members.

5. What is the cost structure for modifying the system if needed?

It is based on the type of modifications needed and the amount of time they would take. The system has been paid for by NCDPI for 14 months.

6. How are changes in personnel information communicated to the system?

- a. The district person who has administrative privileges will be able to make some changes.
- b. Some changes will need to be made by McREL.
- c. Some changes will be made by uploading data from NCDPI.

7. What data will automatically be reported to NCDPI or the NCSBE or other groups?

NCDPI has indicated the need to report information to the federal government on the number of effective and highly effective teachers in each school and district. They may also request customized reports in order to accommodate requests from the SBE. They do not need the permission of the LEAs to access these data because NCDPI is the licensee.

8. Can I use this software on my iPad?

Yes. The software can be accessed via any compatible web browser. This can include Internet Explorer, Firefox and Safari. The iPad has the equivalent of the Safari browser, and should be able to use any application that is included in this software.

9. Is there an API/SIF interface for the instrument?

The NCEES software will be SIF compatible by the beginning of September. There will be some routines available to import data into the system at this time, and can be shared with the LEAs who are interested. The best strategy to assure that this option is available and useful for the LEAs is to provide the name of a single point of contact in each district that will upload data. The software developers will then be able to send that person the requisite information needed to

upload and download data. They will work with the LEA staff members to make sure there are no issues to keep the process from being successful.

10. Is there a ‘Do you want to save?’ prompt as a safety feature while importing data?

We are working on this now and will have it as a part of Version 1 (for use in 2010-2011). The prompt will come up automatically when a user chooses to close a form without first saving it. The save reminder will have the following language:

Do you want to save your work?

Yes – (immediately saves the work)

No – (exits without saving the work)

Cancel – (does not save and takes the user back to the file)

11. We are required to have signatures that verify that we have had a post evaluation conference within the required number of days after the observation. Is it possible to have the electronic signatures at the end of the rubrics during the post-evaluation conference meetings that are time stamped for each observation?

Yes. We are working on making this feature available now.

12. Teachers not on a monitored or directed professional improvement plan generally create their own performance plan. Is it possible for those teachers to fill out their own professional development plan and have the principal view the plan prior to the pre-observation conference?

Yes. We are working on making this feature available now.

13. When assigning a peer to conduct peer observations, does the peer have access to see the evaluation data entered by the principal? Does the peer have access to other teachers information than those they are assigned?

Peers may only see the information that they personally enter into the system. Nothing more is available to them.

14. Some of our facilities do not have wireless capability. Is it possible to have the system resident on our computers so that we can work off line?

This feature will require additional programming above and beyond what we can do as a part of Version 1.0. Since this is a web-based system, the user must have internet access in order to operate the system. We will, however, work on providing this feature in Version 2.0.

15. Is it possible to go back into the system and make changes to individual evaluations (observations) once they have been “Completed/Approved” by the principal?

No. Once both the principal and the teacher have electronically signed off on the Summary Evaluation Rating Form, it is “locked” and no changes are allowed except that the teacher may make a comment at a later time. Should that occur, the system will automatically send an e-mail notification to the principal that such a comment has been added.

16. Can we add reports to list McREL has developed?

Yes. McREL has asked and will continue to ask LEA staff members to send their suggestions for new system reports. If there are reports that a number of LEAs need, we will make every effort to provide them as a part of routine software upgrades. Should an LEA want customized reports, McREL will either refer the LEA to Media-X or broker the report directly with the LEA. In either case, depending on the complexity of the report in question, there may be a charge for the additional programming required to set up the report.

17. Will the LEA have to download data to DPI to populate the system?

DPI is working with McREL to upload certain data to the system in order to make the work of the LEAs simpler. DPI will be able to obtain information directly from the system when they need it.

18. What happens if someone forgets their password?

Users have two options to have their passwords reset:

- a. Contact the LEA person who has administrative rights and ask to have the password reset.
- b. Click on the “I forgot my password” button when they try to login and the software will automatically prompt them how to get a new password.

19. Can the system show the year of Probationary or Career status?

Yes. The status box will read:

Probationary Career

Year 1 ▪ Year 1

Year 2 ▪ Year 2

Year 3 ▪ Year 3

Year 4 ▪ Year 4 ▪ Year 5

20. More-at-Four teachers in non public schools, will they be able to use the software?

Yes. The contact person will have to include their names on the spreadsheet that is returned to McREL. We will set up a software account for them and their evaluators so they can be treated as any other NC teacher.

21. Can a teacher’s self-assessment be changed by a principal?

Teachers have control over their self-assessment files. Principals may not view these documents unless the teacher gives them permission. Under no circumstances should an evaluator change a self-assessment, whether for a teacher, assistant principal, principal, central office staff member or superintendent.

22. Are HRMS additions/deletions/changes handled automatically?

No. Individual districts need to notify McREL when changes to the users list need to be made.

23. Who do we contact for Technical Assistance?

The contact person is Karen Thorne @ McREL. She can be reached at kthorne@mcrel.org or at 303 .632.5543 . Help Desk Support available from 7AM-7PM EST.