



# *Wachusett Regional School District*

*Holden, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling*

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## *K-8 Teacher Portfolio Guidelines*

## **K-8 Teacher Portfolio Guidelines**

These guidelines establish criteria for portfolios based on the tenets of the Skillful Teacher course for all new staff members. By paralleling the important concepts from the course, these criteria create consistent goals for teaching and allow us to develop these goals in detail through new teacher training and Skillful Teacher training. Furthermore, these criteria serve as a teaching tool for new educators inherent in the portfolio itself. Mentors and administrators, all of whom are familiar with the course, are able to support new teachers during the portfolio process in a consistent manner. Additionally, establishing research-based criteria engages teachers in an approach that will truly lend to improving practice. Finally, this proposal embeds all of the components included in the original guidelines under *Article 18* of the *WREA Collective Bargaining Agreement*.

### ***Portfolio Format***

A number of options for presentation of the portfolio are available, including loose-leaf notebooks, accordion files, pocket folders, and electronic media. The contents of the portfolio should include artifacts and reflections that serve as evidence of professional growth. Suggestions for these are provided throughout this document. Portfolio contents should be presented in a professional manner, with narrative material typed. Artifacts should be labeled and annotated, whether presented in their original form, or through photographs and other representations.

### ***Contents***

The portfolio contains basic information including name, school, grade, and subject, if applicable. In constructing the portfolio contents, each individual has a degree of flexibility within the guidelines established by the WRSD. The guidelines include attention to the instructional responsibilities of planning and implementation, assessment, and communication.

### ***Year-by-Year Criteria***

#### **Year One**

Portfolios will highlight the following components during the first year of employment:

- Management
  - ✓ Space
  - ✓ Time
  - ✓ Planning
  - ✓ Routines
- Instruction
  - ✓ Communication
  - ✓ Clarity
  - ✓ Models of Teaching
- Curriculum
  - ✓ Objectives
  - ✓ Assessment

## **Year Two**

Portfolios will highlight the following components during the second year of employment:

- Motivation
  - ✓ Expectations
- Instruction
  - ✓ Communication
  - ✓ Clarity
  - ✓ Models of Teaching
- Curriculum
  - ✓ Objectives
  - ✓ Learning Experiences
  - ✓ Assessment

## **Year Three**

Portfolios will highlight the following components during the third year of employment:

- Curriculum
  - ✓ Assessment
  - ✓ Curriculum Design

## Year One: Management

*Space: How do you make the most of your space and furniture?*

In this portfolio section, characterize the ways in which you **use space and furniture to enhance teaching and learning**. The following approaches, described in *The Skillful Teacher*, may help to frame your thinking:

- Books are visible and accessible to students
- Books and other materials are organized and stored in a way that allows students to independently and easily access them
- Wall space is utilized to reinforce and further instruction (e.g., anchor charts to connect past lessons to current independent or small group work, student work that models an effective product or process)
- Private spaces with limited distractions are available for independent reading and other tasks
- Arrangement of equipment and furniture facilitates flexibility including whole class, small-group, and individual methods of instruction

*Evidence of this Aspect*

In order to document ways in which you use space and furniture to enhance teaching and learning, you *may* include the following artifacts:

- Lesson plans detailing ways in which students transition to various spaces based on instructional goals (e.g., focus lesson in a whole class space, shared reading in a library corner, independent reading in specially designated chairs, conferring at the kidney table)
- Written reflection on how you relied on spaces in the room to help organize or rotate students through a series of centers or tasks
- Photographs of students in various spaces in the room with descriptions of ways in which each space allowed the students to accomplish a specific task
- Diagram of your room with a written reflection that describes your rationale for the set-up and ways in which it meets your goals for effectiveness in facilitating instructional practices
- Reflection and diagrams of ways in which you changed the use of space and furniture in your room to better enhance teaching and learning
- Photographs of wall space and other display areas with a reflection on the ways in which those spaces contributed to teaching and learning

*Time, Planning, and Routines: How do you time events, regulate schedules, and develop routines so that students get the most productive learning time?*

In this portfolio section, characterize the ways in which you **use time, regulate schedules, and develop routines to maximize learning opportunities**. The following approaches, described in *The Skillful Teacher*, may help to frame your thinking:

- Time allocations match school priorities (e.g., 60 minute Reader's Workshop, hands on explorations balanced with other types of instruction)
- At least 75% of classroom time involves the students actually working or attending, rather than transitioning, getting organizing, or participating in tasks that do not further learning
- Tasks are differentiated so that students are engaged in events that support a high rate of success for most classroom activities (e.g., stations offer multiple routes to knowledge gathering, students learn how to quickly self-select an appropriately leveled text for independent reading so that they make maximum use of a short reading period)
- Schedules and routines include time allocations for conferring, small-group instruction, *and* individualized interventions in most subject areas on a daily basis
- The first and last 5 minutes of a lesson are carefully planned to provide entry and closure for important ideas and concepts (rather than using this time for clean-up, passing around papers, etc.)
- Instructional and procedural routines are clearly established throughout the day
- Lessons and tasks allow for flexibility based on changing needs of students or levels of understanding

*Evidence of this Aspect*

In order to document ways in which you use time to enhance teaching and learning, you *may* include the following artifacts:

- Copies or photographs depicting clearly articulated schedules or routines (e.g., a board that shows how students are organized and rotated through tasks or centers)
- Lesson plans, copies of routines, photos, or reflections that demonstrate ways in which you get students on task quickly and efficiently (e.g., Problem of the Day posted for students to begin upon entering class, accessible, labeled book baskets or math manipulatives that engage students immediately after a transition)
- Classroom map and reflection depicting ways in which you cycle through the classroom during a particular daily time period to interact with small groups and individuals during an instructional period
- Student work samples or plans that reflect meaningful engagement during the first or last five minutes of a lesson (e.g., a student journal entry summarizing understandings at the end of a lesson, a description of challenging dilemma you posed for students to wonder about until the next lesson)
- Samples of instructional routines that occur throughout the day
- Reflections on changes you made in a lesson, in response to student needs or other events, that may have posed a need for flexibility or altered your timeframe
- Copies of student contracts used to clearly communicate routines and standards

## Year One: Instruction

*Communication and Clarity: How do I communicate things clearly?*

In this portfolio section, characterize the ways in which you **provide clarity in instructional approaches to maximize learning opportunities**. The following approaches, some of which are described in *The Skillful Teacher*, may help to frame your thinking:

- Introductions to new material are carefully planned
- Time during instruction is routinely allocated to monitor understandings and misconceptions
- Multiple methods for developing complex concepts are utilized (e.g., discussion, modeling, manipulatives, varied texts)
- Instruction and directions are explicit
- Opportunities for activating prior knowledge are built in to lessons and tasks
- Connections between concepts and lessons are transparent
- Opportunities for reteaching and reviewing are available for students if needed
- **Expectations are clearly stated regarding quality and quantity of work**
- **Rubrics** are used to make evaluation practices transparent
- **Homework policies and routines are clear and reviewed often**
- Regular **communications with parents** allow sharing of both achievements and needs
- Opportunities for **home-school** connections occur throughout the year

*Evidence of this Aspect*

In order to document ways in which you provide clarity in your instruction to enhance teaching and learning, you *may* include the following artifacts:

- Description of signals you have students use to indicate understandings or confusion (e.g., thumbs up, red or green card turned over on desk to indicate student needs help or is ready to move on)
- Student work samples that show responses to dipsticking (e.g., one question quiz, reading response log page, journal entry)
- Audio or video tape of a student conference where you delve into the root of misconceptions or confusion
- Lesson plan that demonstrates ways in which you activate prior knowledge or make connections to past learning
- Lesson plan or video tape that demonstrates ways in which you explicitly model strategies or skills for students, rather than merely describing a strategy/skill or simply providing directions on what to do with a strategy/skill
- Copies of **rubrics** used to communicate clear goals around the quality of student work
- Anchor papers used to show your students exemplars of various performance levels in a rubric
- **Study guide** that communicates your expectations to students and parents regarding the most important information for students to know
- **Newsletters and parent communications** that apprise parents of events, achievements, student needs, support programs, etc.

*Models of Teaching: How do I vary my teaching style?*

In this portfolio section, characterize the ways in which you **vary teaching patterns to maximize instructional opportunities**. The following approaches, described in *The Skillful Teacher*, may help to frame your thinking:

- Explicit models demonstrate exemplars and behaviors for students to try (e.g., modeling how you think aloud as you read text, using a graphic organizer that allows students to inductively identify important concepts or connections)
- Carefully constructed questions engage students in the inquiry process (e.g., What do you see? Do you notice a pattern? How would you classify them? What strategy might you use to figure it out? What would happen if...?)
- Lessons built around connections and activation of prior knowledge help to develop new understandings
- Independent opportunities foster student ownership and differentiated tasks
- Small-group opportunities allow for sharing of knowledge, peer-modeling of skills and strategies, and promotion of collaborative inquiry
- Whole-group opportunities allow for clearly stated goals, collective modeling, closure at end of a lesson or series of tasks, and monitoring for feedback or general understandings

*Evidence of this Aspect*

In order to document ways in which you vary your instructional approaches to enhance teaching and learning, you *may* include the following artifacts:

- Lesson plan or excerpt from a plan that details ways in which you explicitly model a strategy or skill for a whole-class, small-group, or individual lesson
- Video or audio tape that demonstrates modeling of a skill or strategy
- Copy or photo of an anchor chart used to help students make connections to a prior lesson or task
- Copy or list of posted questions to which you frequently refer in order to activate prior knowledge or stimulate connections (e.g., When you read that page, what do you see? What do you hear? What do you think about?)
- Copies or photos of guidelines that govern processes used in independent or small-group instruction (e.g., chart showing various jobs of group members, anchor charts describing the scientific method, chart helping students locate just-right books)
- Whole-class and small-group lesson/unit plans
- Records of student conferences that document approaches to individual instruction or intervention
- Student work samples generated from whole-class, small-group, and individual tasks with a written reflection describing how the varied approaches helped to support different types of understandings
- Lesson plan and accompanying reflection that shows ways in which you **differentiated instruction and the tangible outcomes resulting from this type of planning**

## Year One: Curriculum

### *Objectives and Assessment: What should I teach?*

In this portfolio section, characterize the ways in which you **frame objectives to maximize learning**. The following approaches, described in *The Skillful Teacher*, may help to frame your thinking:

- In lesson plans, objectives are routinely documented to reflect what students will do, rather than what the teacher will do (e.g., “Students will determine important information from the book.” rather than “I will ask students to read the book and then pass out a worksheet about determining important information.”)
- **Coverage objectives** are documented in lesson plans where the goal is to describe what content the teacher will cover and what answers students will recite (e.g., I will describe the three types of rocks and students will read to find out how each rock was formed.)
- **Activity objectives** are documented in lesson plans where the goal is for students to finish a task (e.g., Students will create a diagram of the water cycle.)
- **Involvement objectives** are documented in lesson plans where the goal is for students to participate and enjoy an experience (e.g., After participating in a read-aloud of *Everybody Needs a Rock*, students will engage in a discussion about the story.)
- **Mastery objectives** are documented in lesson plans where the goal is for students to know or be able to do something specific (e.g., Students will measure the volume of liquids using a graduated cylinder.)
- **Thinking skill objectives** are documented in lesson plans where the goal is for students to develop a certain thinking skill or strategy that can be transferred to any content (Students will compare and contrast types of cells using a Venn Diagram.)
- Assessments guide the planning of objectives

### *Evidence of this Aspect*

In order to document ways in which you craft objectives to enhance teaching and learning, you *may* include the following artifacts:

- Lesson/unit plans with clearly stated objectives
- Written reflection on the types of objectives (coverage, activity, involvement, mastery, thinking skill) seen most often in your planning and ways in which you have, or might, enhance those objectives
- Student work samples that directly demonstrate achievement of stated objectives
- Samples of tools you use to develop thinking skill objectives such as graphic organizers, anchor charts, and reading response logs
- Description or reflection about where the objective came from for each included lesson (e.g., data collected from an assessment, school or district expectations, student interest, frameworks, current events)
- Samples of assessments, data, or observations used to help determine certain objectives
- **Examples of the use of technology by teachers and/or students to further understandings in relation to an objective**

## Year Two: Motivation

*Expectations: How do I communicate appropriate expectations for my students?*

In this portfolio section, characterize the ways in which you **set clear expectations to help maximize learning**. The following approaches, described in *The Skillful Teacher*, may help to frame your thinking:

- Details of expectations for student performance are clearly stated, discussed, and/or posted
- Expectations are routinely reviewed
- Expectations are explicitly modeled by the teacher
- Expectations persist even when faced with student resistance
- Feedback on student work is provided to students promptly and includes thoughtful comments, suggestions, questions, or verbal conversation
- Achievement is acknowledged in special ways
- Appropriate support and consequences are in place for when students do not meet expectations

*Evidence of this Aspect*

In order to document ways in which you communicate expectations to enhance teaching and learning, you **may** include the following artifacts:

- Copies of contracts, rubrics, or charts that detail expectations
- Lesson plans that demonstrate ways in which you modeled, discussed, or reviewed expectations for a task
- Reflection on your work with an individual student who struggled trying to meet expectations
- Student work samples that display feedback you have provided in relation to expectations (e.g., comments you have made on an exam or project, feedback recorded in a student journal that has helped a struggling student)
- Audio or video tape of a student conference during which you discuss expectations and strategies for meeting expectations
- Copies of awards, photos of student work displays, diagrams or other acknowledgements that honor achievement

## Year Two: Instruction

### *Communication and Clarity: How do I communicate things clearly?*

In this portfolio section, characterize the ways in which you **provide clarity in instructional approaches to maximize learning opportunities**. The following approaches, some of which are described in *The Skillful Teacher*, may help to frame your thinking:

- Instructional repertoire includes many explanatory devices (e.g., mental imagery, physical models, use of technology, modeling think-alouds, graphic organizers) that provide clarity for students
- Explicit instruction guides student work, discussion, and tasks (e.g., clear, focused questions, detailed directions, clear explanations for why activities are taking place and how activities connect to instruction)
- Instruction is regularly connected to the “big picture” (e.g., an agenda for the day or class is posted or discussed, the objective for a class or activity is clearly stated, prior knowledge is activated, connections are made between new learning and previous work, a summary helps students recognize what has been learned or accomplished)
- Multiple methods for developing complex concepts are utilized (e.g., discussion, modeling, manipulatives, varied texts)
- Opportunities for reteaching and reviewing are available for students if needed
- **Expectations are clearly stated regarding quality and quantity of work**
- **Rubrics** are used to make evaluation practices transparent
- **Homework policies and routines are clear and reviewed often**
- Regular **communications with parents** allow sharing of both achievements and needs
- Opportunities for **home-school** connections occur throughout the year

### *Evidence of this Aspect*

In order to document ways in which you provide clarity in your instruction to enhance teaching and learning, you *may* include the following artifacts:

- Description of signals you have students use to indicate understandings or confusion (e.g., thumbs up, red or green card turned over on desk to indicate student needs help or is ready to move on)
- Student work samples that show responses to dipsticking (e.g., one question quiz, reading response log page, journal entry)
- Audio or video tape of a student conference where you delve into the root of misconceptions or confusion
- Lesson plan that demonstrates ways in which you activate prior knowledge or make connections to past learning
- Lesson plan or video tape that demonstrates ways in which you explicitly model strategies or skills for students, rather than merely describing a strategy/skill or simply providing directions on what to do with a strategy/skill
- Copies of **rubrics** used to communicate clear goals around the quality of student work
- Anchor papers used to show your students exemplars of various performance levels in a rubric
- **Study guide** that communicates your expectations to students and parents regarding the most important information for students to know
- **Newsletters and parent communications** that apprise parents of events, achievements, student needs, support programs, etc.

### *Models of Teaching: How Can I Vary my Teaching Style?*

In this portfolio section, characterize the ways in which you **appropriately match patterns of instruction to students and objectives in order to maximize learning opportunities**. The following approaches, some of which are described in *The Skillful Teacher*, may help to frame your thinking:

- Lessons address not only content goals, but also objectives around the kind of thinking students are expected to demonstrate (e.g., inquiry, making personal connections, drawing conclusions based on data, using graphic organizers, group processing or consensus-building)
- Regularly varied teaching approaches address the learning styles of *all* students (e.g., direct instruction, independent practice, small-group investigation)
- Support for students who struggle with certain teaching styles is readily available (e.g., a clear goal for the lesson is provided at the beginning, a wrap-up or group share at the close helps to summarize important understandings, individual conferring happens during the lesson when ever possible, a variety of texts supports different ability levels during an inquiry-based model)

In order to document ways in which you vary teaching style during instruction to enhance teaching and learning, you *may* include the following artifacts:

- Lesson plans that include goals and procedures for both content and thinking skills or strategies
- Student work samples that demonstrate student thinking as understandings develop (e.g., reading response journals, completed graphic organizers, post it notes that document observations, connections, or questions, student self-evaluations)
- Copies/photos of anchor charts, rubrics, or student exemplars used to support struggling students during lessons that challenge their learning styles
- Reflection describing the varied styles employed and the associated challenges and successes

## Year Two: Curriculum

*Objectives, Learning Experiences, and Assessment: What should I teach and how can I continually adjust my teaching to match the needs and learning styles of my students?*

In this portfolio section, characterize the ways in which you **frame objectives and adjust teaching styles to maximize learning**. The following approaches, described in *The Skillful Teacher*, may help to frame your thinking:

- In lesson plans, objectives are routinely documented to reflect what *students* will do, rather than what the *teacher* will do (e.g., “Students will uncover recurring themes in work songs, spirituals, blues, and gospel songs.” rather than “I will distribute copies of work songs, spirituals, blues, and gospel songs for students to analyze.”)
- **Thinking skill objectives** (strategies or skills that are transferable to multiple content areas or types of tasks) are apparent and frequent in lesson and unit plans
- Assessment data is used to determine difficulty levels of tasks and materials
- Objectives are based on a variety of sources including assessment data, student interest, input from learners, state frameworks, district benchmarks, and school or community culture
- Resources used in lessons are rich and varied (e.g., texts, peer interaction, observation, multimedia tools, Internet, personal experience, primary source documents)
- The role of the teacher varies depending on the lesson or task (e.g., central figure, coach, facilitator, observer)
- Lessons and activities involve varied cognitive tasks (e.g., recall, comprehension, analysis, application, synthesis, evaluation)

### *Evidence of this Aspect*

In order to document ways in which you frame objectives and adjust teaching styles to enhance teaching and learning, you **may** include the following artifacts:

- Lesson/unit plans with student-centered objectives
- Written reflection on the types of objectives (coverage, activity, involvement, mastery, thinking skill) seen most often in your planning and ways in which you have, or might, enhance those objectives
- Student work samples that directly demonstrate achievement of stated objectives
- Samples of tools you use to develop thinking skill objectives such as graphic organizers, anchor charts, and reading response logs
- Description or reflection about where the objective came from for each included lesson (e.g., data collected from an assessment, school or district expectations, student interest, frameworks, current events)
- Samples of assessments, data, or observations used to help determine certain objectives
- **Examples of the use of technology by teachers and/or students to further understandings in relation to an objective**

## Year Three: Curriculum

*Assessment: What should I teach? How should I teach it? How can I be sure my teaching matches the needs of my students?*

In this portfolio section, characterize the ways in which you **use assessment to maximize learning opportunities**. The following approaches, described in *The Skillful Teacher*, may help to frame your thinking:

- Assessment data drives instructional decisions
- Assessments are based on the most important learning objectives
- Assessments are accompanied by clear criteria for success (e.g., rubrics)
- Students have ample opportunity to view models of what successful exemplars look like
- Multiple methods of data gathering are in place in order to obtain an accurate picture of student performance (e.g., standardized tests, journal entries, reading response logs, quizzes, projects, essays)
- Assessment data is carefully recorded and accessible
- Differentiation of instruction and student groupings are based on assessment data

*Evidence of this Aspect*

In order to document ways in which use assessment to enhance teaching and learning, you **may** include the following artifacts:

- Sample assessment tools that reflect a variety of methods utilized in your classroom
- Teacher feedback you have provided on student work that shows ways in which you communicate performance and/or progress in relation to objectives or rubrics
- Student work samples that represent additional attempts by the student, based on feedback you have provided (e.g., first and second drafts of a work sample with your feedback attached)
- Copies of rubrics you have used or developed that show clear criteria for success
- Videotape of a lesson during which you present student exemplars for a task or assignment
- Sample data you have used to create small groupings of students in your class (e.g., DRA data used to create small strategy groups, data from an essay assignment that you used to create peer-editing partnerships)
- Reflection on a lesson plan you developed directly in response to data you collected
- Student conference notes that reflect collection of qualitative and/or quantitative data

*Curriculum Design: How do I build and adjust the curriculum for effective instruction?*

In this portfolio section, characterize the ways in which you **build and adjust curriculum to maximize learning**. The following approaches, described in *The Skillful Teacher*, may help to frame your thinking:

- Curriculum includes objectives, learning experiences, *and* assessments that are clearly scaffolded and paced
- Curriculum includes regular assessment of important objectives with optional paths for instruction based on the results of those assessments
- Curriculum is organized around essential questions or key concepts, rather than topics
- Curriculum provides opportunities for the spiraling of key concepts and essential questions
- Curriculum incorporates integrated skills, strategies, or understandings from other subjects and tasks

*Evidence of this Aspect*

In order to document ways in which you frame objectives and adjust teaching styles to enhance teaching and learning, you *may* include the following artifacts:

- Copy of a curriculum map that shows scaffolding of a key concept or essential question over time
- Unit plan that reflects a deliberate sequence and duration of skills, strategies, and understandings
- Unit diagram/web showing where multiple points of assessment might steer instruction in particular directions
- List of essential questions or key concepts you will address or have addressed during the course of the year
- Photo of a bulletin board or anchor charts you have used to develop an essential question or key concept over time
- Reflection on ways in which your curriculum design allows for the spiraling of specific concepts
- Unit plan or curriculum map showing points of integration of other subjects or concepts