

# PEERS Frequently Asked Questions

## A Brief Overview of PEERS

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has contracted with SAS EVAAS to provide the web-enabled Pennsylvania Educator Effectiveness Rating System (PEERS). PEERS allows all administrators and teachers across the state to view their evaluation metrics and to capture and store this information electronically as well as obtain a print version. The system pre-populates Act 13 forms for educators using PIMS data from LEAs and allows evaluators to input ratings for each evaluation component. Additionally, the forms can be designated by the LEA to individuals who are responsible for the evaluation process.

PEERS is hosted within the existing PVAAS application, which already provides LEA/district, school, and teacher value-added reports, as well as the verification mechanism for student-teacher linkages by teachers and principals. PEERS includes evaluation metrics for:

- Observation/Practice
- Building-level data
- Student Performance Measures (SPMs)
- Teacher-Specific data

PEERS includes the following key features:

- Participation is free and voluntary for all LEAs
- Access is available through a user's PVAAS account
- Secure access is available to final summary rating reports (13-1, 13-2, 13-3, and 13-4)
- More than one evaluator may have access to an individual's rating form during the input phase in developing the summative report
- PEERS pre-populates the Building Level Data
- PEERS pre-populates the teacher-specific component for the PVAAS 3-year rolling average
- PEERS pre-populates the teacher-specific achievement measure (% P/A) as calculated with roster verification data for LEAs to choose to use (or use a locally calculated measure)
- Data entry flags and cues to check for data entry errors
- LEAs/Districts may determine and choose year of available data (year prior or current year)
- PEERS can be used alone or in combination with other supervision systems

Educator Effectiveness resources can be found on [SAS](#).

The intent of this FAQ is to provide LEAs with responses to the most frequently asked questions about PDE's PA Educator Effectiveness Rating System (PEERS) tool, available to all LEAs within PA.

## **1. What is PEERS?**

PEERS, or PA Educator Effectiveness Rating System, is a free, voluntary, web-based version of the Act 13 PA Educator Effectiveness semi-annual and annual rating tools, PDE 13-1, 13-2, 13-3, and 13-4. It is available to local education agencies (LEAs) for the evaluation of classroom teachers, non-teaching professionals, and principals/school leaders.

PEERS allows educators across the state to view their own evaluation metrics and to capture and store this information electronically as well as obtain a print version.

## **2. How do I get started using PEERS? Does my LEA need to sign up or register?**

No, LEAs do not need to register or sign up to use PEERS. PEERS is available to all LEAs at any time.

## **3. How can I access PEERS?**

Developed by SAS® EVAAS® under the direction of PDE, PEERS is hosted within the existing PVAAS web application, and is accessed through the PVAAS login page.

Use of the existing PVAAS account management system allows for easy and secure access to PEERS. Users will access the system through PVAAS accounts they currently hold (if applicable), or through new accounts that are created locally. Users must enter their PVAAS username and password, and check an acknowledgment of “Access to Confidential Data” to access the system on the PVAAS website.

Remember: You are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of the information provided in PVAAS. User accounts are intended for one user; each person should have his/her own PVAAS user account.

## **4. Why is PEERS considered a tool for the “final portion” of the supervision and evaluation process?**

PEERS provides users with a web-based system to complete the summative forms of Act 13, i.e., the PDE 13-1, 13-2, 13-3, and 13-4. PEERS does not manage the “front end” of the supervision process, such as scheduling observations, data collection and recording, pre-observation conference, etc.

PEERS includes evaluation metrics for Observation & Practice, Building Level Data, Student Performance Measures, and Teacher Specific Data - including PVAAS growth data and achievement measures.

## **5. Can we use PEERS in combination with other supervision and evaluation systems?**

Participation in PEERS is voluntary. It is an LEA decision to use some or all of the functionality in PEERS.

LEAs can use the entire PEERS application or specific components of PEERS. It is possible to use PEERS as a stand-alone rating tool for completing the semi-annual and annual evaluation forms. Or, PEERS can be used in combination with other systems an LEA may already have in place.

## **6. What are some of the features of PEERS?**

PEERS pre-populates demographic information from PIMS on the PDE 13-1, 13-2, 13-3, and 13-4, including LEA name, school name, educator name, and PPID. Staff are linked to their respective default evaluator(s): school administrator and district administrator. Additional evaluators, including co-evaluators, can be added to PEERS.

For each educator evaluated under Act 13, PEERS defaults to the most likely final rating tool, using the position code from PIMS. LEAs can change the form if the educator's position requires a different form than the default, e.g., change from 13-1 to 13-3 or change from Professional Employee to a Temporary Professional Employee.

Note: It is the LEA's responsibility to determine the appropriate rating form (13-1, 13-2, 13-3, and 13-4 PDE) for the semi-annual or annual evaluation of professional employees in the various roles within an LEA, as defined and guided by Pennsylvania Rules and Regulations, Title 22 (22 PA. Code Ch. 19).

PEERS pre-populates the Building Level Data and the LEA has the option of choosing the school year. The Building Level score is converted to the 0-3 score for 13-1, 13-2, and 13-3.

PEERS pre-populates the Teacher Specific Growth Measure, which is the PVAAS three-year rolling average if and when available for a teacher. The three-year rolling average is converted to the 0-3 scale for the final rating form in PEERS. PEERS will also prepopulate the Teacher Specific Achievement Measure, percent Proficient or Advanced, if the LEA chooses to use this calculated measure. LEAs may choose to calculate this measure locally.

The "ready for conference" feature allows the evaluator(s) to conference with an educator prior to the official release and signature on the summative form. It mirrors the process followed in the typical supervision/evaluation sequence.

Summary reports on released forms are available to evaluators, including reports displaying the final performance ratings, broken out by annual, semi-annual, and periodic ratings. Summary data for the Observation and Practice ratings is available, displaying the numbers of educators in each of the performance ratings in each of the

four domains. Also available is an educator summary report, showing each educator assigned to that evaluator, their assigned ratings in each of the measures, the overall performance rating, and the final ratings. These reports include an extract feature, allowing data to be converted to Excel files. Summary reports in PEERS provide information required on the annual PDE evaluation summary report.

**7. How secure is the system? Who has access?**

Data are housed securely within PVAAS. Users access PEERS using the existing PVAAS account system, through accounts that currently exist for these users or through new accounts that are created locally. Only the LEA has access to its data in PEERS.

No individual evaluations or summary reports completed in PEERS or any evaluation results are reported to or accessed by PDE. Pursuant to 24 P.S. § 11-1123(i), LEAs have the responsibility to report aggregate results of all professional, temporary professionals, principals, and non-teaching professional employees to PDE.

**8. Are multiple years of information/rating forms available in PEERS?**

Evaluators and teachers view one year at a time, with previous year data available as well. LEAs are encouraged and free to make local decisions regarding what they choose to print and/or store electronically at their own site each year. LEAs also have the option of extracting data from PEERS. The data extract includes data from all released 13-1, 13-2, 13-3, and 13-4 forms.

**9. What do evaluators see when they access PEERS to complete evaluations?**

Evaluators see a list of their educators, pre-populated with information from PIMS. If educators need to be added or removed from their list, they can work with their PVAAS District Admin (or district “Administrative Evaluator(s)”) to have these changes made. Each professional employee has a defaulted/most likely form (either the 13-1 or 13-3). LEAs can change to a different form, if needed, e.g., change from 13-1 to 13-3, or from 13-3 to 13-1.

Note: It is the LEA’s responsibility to determine the appropriate semi-annual or annual evaluation of professional employees in the various roles within an LEA, as defined and guided by Pennsylvania Rules and Regulations, Title 22 (22 PA. Code Ch. 19).

**10. Can more than one evaluator contribute to the completion of summative evaluation form?**

Yes! More than one evaluator may have access to an individual’s rating form during the input phase in developing the semi-annual or annual rating. The system is designed with a “lock” feature: users input information into the forms *one at a time*, eliminating the

danger of overriding one another's changes. Additionally, the PEERS system allows evaluators to view who the co-evaluators are for each specific educator, providing for enhanced communication among evaluators.

**11. Are final rating form calculations done automatically in PEERS?**

Yes! For example, the Observation & Practice section allows the evaluator to enter the 0-3 rating for each domain of the Danielson framework. The values are updated automatically when a rating value is entered or changed. The final value is also calculated once all the ratings are populated and is updated any time a rating value is changed.

**12. What if an educator is employed in a school that does not have a Building Level Score?**

If an educator is associated with a school that does not have Building Level Data, then the Observation & Practice value is automatically substituted.

**13. How is Teacher Specific Data entered?**

The Teacher Specific Data of the 13-1 requires the evaluator to enter both percentages (weightings) and ratings for the applicable parts for each educator as some of the percentages or other rules may be LEA specific. Once there is a three-year rolling average for PVAAS teacher specific data, this value will automatically pre-populate. The PVAAS three-year rolling average will be converted to the 0-3 scale in PEERS.

PEERS will also prepopulate the teacher-specific achievement measure (% Proficient/Advanced), converted to a 0-3 scale. The LEA can choose to use this prepopulated achievement value or the LEA may choose to calculate this measure locally.

If an educator does not have any available and applicable data as determined by the evaluator/LEA to support these metrics, PEERS substitutes the LEA Selected Measure rating. If the percentages entered do not total 100%, the system will flag the entry.

**14. How is LEA Selected Performance Measure entered?**

The LEA Selected Performance Measure is similar to Building Level Data, in that it allows the evaluator to enter a single value or multiple values. If the educator is a non-teaching Professional and has no LEA Selected Measure rating, the Observation & Practice value is substituted.

**15. Can the evaluator make changes to the semi-annual or annual forms on the summary page?**

The summary section is the accumulation of all the previous sections and ratings. This view is not editable, but rather allows the educator and evaluator to see how the sections combine to produce the performance rating.

If an evaluator needs to edit any sections of the form, s/he can navigate using the links at the top of the page or by using the pencil icons on the summary screen.

#### **16. How do educators and evaluators “sign” a semi-annual or annual evaluation form?**

Once the summary form is ready for viewing by the educator, it can be printed, and a handwritten signature obtained. This typically follows the “ready for conference” stage of the process, in which the completed (but not yet released to educator) form is shared and discussed with the educator. Following the conference phase, the educator’s form is released and a printed copy is signed by the educator.

#### **17. Where can I get more information or support?**

You can find more information about PEERS by clicking on the Pennsylvania Educator Effectiveness Rating System (PEERS) link located on the PVAAS loginOpens In A New Window page. Various supports and resources are available. (District Admin and School Admin account holders can access the PEERS resources in the Online Help when logged into the PVAAS password-protected site.) Email [pdepvaas@iu13.org](mailto:pdepvaas@iu13.org) for assistance accessing these resources.

For questions or support related to PEERS, please contact [pdepvaas@iu13.org](mailto:pdepvaas@iu13.org).

For questions or support related to PA Act 13, Educator Effectiveness, and PA policy, please contact PDE at [RA-PDE-Evaluation@pa.gov](mailto:RA-PDE-Evaluation@pa.gov).