

MAKING THE GRADE VIRTUAL TOWN HALL MEETING

Responses to Questions Not Addressed During the Town Hall Meeting

November 1, 2011

- 1. What are the types of data and/or evidence that will be used to determine teacher effectiveness and what specific data will be used for teachers in subjects without standardized tests?**

The teacher evaluation system being developed by the PA Department of Education will (PDE) incorporate multiple measures of teacher effectiveness. The measures includes 50 percent classroom observations (based on the Charlotte Danielson Framework of Effective Teaching) including evidence that demonstrates behaviors associated with improving student achievement. The remaining 50 percent would be multiple measures of student achievement. For students in tested grades/subjects, the 50 percent student achievement is proposed to be broken down as follows:

- 15 percent building level data
- 15 percent teacher specific data
- 20 percent locally determined student achievement data (and validated by PDE)

For teachers in untested grades and subjects, the 50 percent student achievement would be:

- 15 percent building level data
- 35 percent locally determined student achievement data (and validated by PDE)

In addition, Mathematica Policy Research is working, based on the Round I Pilot, to develop a value-added model (VAM) for estimating the contribution of individual teachers and principals to growth in student achievement and assess the relationships between these VAM measures and the observational measures to identify which components of teacher practice have the most impact on student growth. These “power components” can then be helpful in identifying a measure of student achievement for teachers in non-tested grades/subjects.

- 2. Will there be adaptations to the teacher evaluation tool for career and technical teachers?**

No, the teacher tool will not be adapted to any specific groups of teachers. However, the data that is used to evaluate student achievement may be different and include assessments that are unique to these students.

The rubric will not be adapted for any specific classroom teacher. However, rubrics will be developed for non-classroom professionals such as guidance counselors, school nurses, etc.

- 3. Why was 50 percent selected for the student achievement measure and how will this system work for all schools?**

Fifty percent was chosen because it represents as strong and meaningful standard. Twelve other states have enacted statutes that include a 50 percent measure. Fifty percent student

performance allows for an important balance between student achievement and other measures of teacher effectiveness.

4. How does the new teacher evaluation tool align with differentiated instruction?

The Danielson model facilitates the use of differentiated instruction.

5. Were any teachers in the first pilot rated “unsatisfactory” – and if so, how many?

None of the teachers in the first pilot received an “unsatisfactory” rating as all teachers involved in the pilot had previously been rated satisfactory.

Note: PDE specifically asked that neither marginal teachers nor non-tenured teachers be involved in the first pilot.

6. Will the principal evaluation tool align with the teacher evaluation tool?

The principal evaluation tool is planned to follow the teacher evaluation tool by one year. This is being done to ensure that the two evaluation tools are aligned and utilize the same language and format.

7. How will the evaluation tool be adapted for non-teaching professionals (such as nurses, counselors, librarians)?

A separate rubric for non-teaching professional employees will be developed to measure the 80 percent observation of non-teaching professionals and 20 percent on measures of student achievement.

8. Was peer evaluation used or considered in the pilot?

Peer evaluation was discussed as part of the concept that multiple evaluators and/or evaluations can improve the outcome. While the model designed is planned to be used by a supervisor, it could be adapted for multiple evaluator use.

A very important issue to note is that the process PDE used in the Round I Pilot (Momentum Grant) was very collaborative and included a state-level stakeholder group, comprised of teachers, school board members, business leaders, principals, superintendents, Intermediate Unit representatives, teachers unions, and community-based organizations. The stakeholder group convened two workgroups (one for teacher evaluation system and one for school leadership evaluation system) to determine the criteria to be used to measure teacher and principal effectiveness including student achievement.

In addition, Suzanne Lane from the University of Pittsburgh was brought on as the Researcher/Evaluator for the first pilot. In her final report, Suzanne surveyed all pilot 1 participants and conducted focus groups with participating teachers and interviews with principals/supervisors. The results of this work were used to inform the second, and much larger, pilot.

Participants in the Round II pilot, including teachers, will serve a critical role in developing and finalizing new evaluation tools.

9. What will be the qualifications for evaluators and what preparation will they receive?

PDE plans to issue an RFP to obtain an online program that will provide training for evaluators to ensure that there is reliability, accuracy and consistency in how evaluators rate teachers and principals (inter-rater reliability) and to identify and eliminate any deviation over time (rater drift).

10. Will administrators have the time necessary to adequately meet the demands of the new teacher evaluation process?

The proposed legislation (House Bill 1980) was amended in the House Education Committee to extend the time for implementation of the new tools. At this point in time, the plan is for the teacher evaluation tool to go into effect for the 2013-14 academic year and for the principal and non-teaching professional tools to go into effect in the 2014-15 academic year.

Administrators will need to dedicate time to effectively implement the tools but the outcome will be a more robust evaluation tool that will help to drive supports for teachers and likely save administrators time in the long-run.

PDE is also looking at online tools to help administrators work efficiently. The rubric, data and professional development resources are all being studied and proposed. PDE is building a system to improve the evaluation process, not just a new form.

11. Can you share the evaluation tool used in the pilot?

The rubric which is the framework for the evaluation tool is posted on the Teacher Evaluation Project website. The link to this site is directly linked from the PDE Home page under Hot Topics: www.education.state.pa.us

or by the following direct link:

<http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/newsroom/7234/page/1034646>

12. Does the evaluation tool lend itself to the development of an improvement plan for teachers?

One of the major benefits to the new evaluation system being piloted is that it provides more opportunities for one-on-one conversations between teachers and their evaluators. Instead of receiving either a “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” rating, teachers will receive more information and input on areas where they excel and also on areas where they could improve. This input can then be used to develop an individualized professional development plan for teachers to ensure they get the supports they need to be their most effective. Resources for the professional development are located on the SAS portal.

13. What is PSEA’s involvement and position on this issue? Is PSEA represented in the pilot districts?

PSEA has been involved in the Round 1 pilot from the beginning. Numerous PSEA representatives served on the stakeholders group and the teacher evaluation workgroup. Participating teachers from all four pilot 1 sites are PSEA members.

In addition, the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers (PFT) was a key partner in a separate project in the Pittsburgh Public Schools called the Empowering Effective Teaching initiative. PFT has been an active partner in the development of the new teacher evaluation system being piloted as part of the Empowering Effective Teaching initiative. Pittsburgh representatives have also been involved in the Round I Pilot/ Momentum Grant advisory group.

14. How will teacher preparation programs change as a result of this work?

It's too early to tell at this point, but postsecondary education is represented on the stakeholders group. In addition, it is likely that the current 430 Student Teaching Evaluation Form will be replaced by an instrument aligned with the new teacher evaluation rubric. Higher Education representatives will be involved in its development.

15. What supports will PDE provide during the statewide transition to a new teacher evaluation system?

PDE will continue to use professional development opportunities and tools provided by the Department to advance the effort. In addition, PDE has contracted with the PA Intermediate Units to provide training for district employees who will be evaluating teachers.

16. How will we ensure that the components of the student performance measure are valid?

We will work to ensure data validity in a number of ways:

- *The use of multiple measures to evaluate teachers and principals – including student growth and achievement on standard assessments.*
- *For the VAM measurements, the evaluation system will look at three years of data to eliminate any data “noise” that may occur in a single year.*
- *A system of training and monitoring to ensure inter-rater reliability and minimize rater drift.*

In addition, PDE is developing strategies to evaluate and advise its strategy.

17. What is the timeline for statewide implementation of the new teacher and principal evaluation systems?

Legislation (House Bill 1980) introduced by Rep. Ryan Aument (R-Lancaster) and approved by the House Education Committee on November 16th calls for the teacher evaluation system begin with the 2013-14 academic year and the principal and non-teaching professionals' evaluation systems take effect in the 2014-15 academic year.

18. How will student backgrounds (such as poverty, etc.) that effects student achievement be addressed in the new evaluation system?

VAM measures look at student growth rather than student achievement at one point in time. For students with factors/backgrounds that are shown to affect student achievement, the VAM measures the growth the student has achieved during the school year – whether or not they reach grade-level proficiency.

19. Are teacher evaluation results accessible under Right to Know?

Individual teacher results would not be subject to Right to Know, but aggregate data such as the survey data compiled for the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund would be subject to Right to Know. This data is currently public on PDE's website.

20. With funding cuts, how do you sustain instructional coach positions?

While instructional coaches are helpful in supporting teachers, the new teacher evaluation system does not rely on coaches for implementation.