Performance Evaluation Advisory Council Meeting

Friday, March 27, 2015

10 a.m.–3 p.m.

Meeting Notes

Presenters Attending: Kevin Kennedy (Urbana School District 116), Jean Korder (Urbana School District 116), Dr. Diana Zaleski (Illinois State Board of Education [ISBE])

Members Present: Kristen Adams, Vince Camille, Christi Chadwick, Dawn Conway, Paula Crane, Dr. Randy Davis, Dr. Gail Fahey, Larry Frank (Illinois Education Association [IES]) for Audrey Soglin, Dr. Hector Garcia, Kurt Hilgendorf, Steven Isoye, Joseph Matula, Stephen Ponisciak, Dr. Diane Rutledge, Michelle Standridge, Dr. Rich Voltz

Member Present Through Telephone: Stephanie Bernoteit

Observers Present: Amy Alsop (Illinois Federation of Teachers), Dr. Terri Carman (Consortium for Educational Change), Jessica Handy (Stand for Children), Dr. Cynthia L. Heidorn (DuPage Regional Office of Education [ROE]), Rito Martinez (Illinois Center for School Improvement), Dr. Beth Sullivan (DuPage ROE), Janet Tate (IES), Rachel Trimble (Midwest Comprehensive Center [MWCC]), Dennis Williams (ISBE)

Facilitators Present: Rebecca Bates, Larry Stanton, and Gretchen Weber (American Institutes for Research [AIR])

I. Approval of February Minutes and ISBE Updates
   a. Dr. Diane Rutledge called the meeting to order and called for the approval of the February minutes. Minutes were approved.

II. Balanced Assessment and Joint Committees Presentation
   a. Dr. Diana Zaleski presented on the Balanced Assessment ISBE website and the supports available for districts. Dr. Zaleski reported on the progress of support for balanced assessments. She reported that ISBE has added three new modules, which are the Statistical Measurement Models, Guidance for Special Populations, and the State Performance Evaluation Model. She plans on reorganizing the Balanced Assessment website sequentially, so that the tools are presented in the same order that districts should use them. She is also continuing to work with districts to develop examples of student learning objectives based on teacher-developed assessments in noncore subjects, such as high school welding and elementary school dance. Also, Dr. Zaleski reported that ISBE has developed a new assessment literacy module that is available on the Moodle platform. The goal is for Moodle’s record keeping function to make it possible for districts to grant teachers professional development credit for completing the modules. The next set of local assessment support workshops will take place in April and focus on elementary science. Dr. Zaleski also reported that Achieve has selected Illinois to pilot a new assessment inventory tool. Several districts, including Urbana School District 116, are piloting the tool.
b. Dr. Zaleski introduced Jean Korder, director of the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Department for Urbana School District 116 (Urbana), and Kevin Kennedy, chair of the Mathematics Department at Urbana High School, who copresented on how Urbana School District 116 has aligned work on assessment with its work on teacher evaluation. They began by discussing the legislation that has impacted schools over time, then moved on to their work to determine their assessment process and their move to using data to inform instruction and to communicate. They discussed the conditions needed to build balanced assessments, which begins with determining philosophy and developing assessment literacy. Jean Korder shared the assessment beliefs Urbana has developed, which include the following:

1. Assessment is central to instruction and is used to enhance student learning.
2. The purpose of assessment is to help students be motivated to learn, reach achievement targets, and take responsibility for their own learning.
3. Assessment methods will be appropriate and purposeful, resulting in information that will drive teaching and learning.
4. Students will be full partners in assessment and will come to understand how assessment and evaluation affect their academic success.

Kurt Hilgendorf asked about the types of assessments that are used. The presenters stated that Urbana uses a variety of assessments, including grade level and standardized assessments. Kurt Hilgendorf asked what kind of data is gathered; the presenters stated that Urbana captures both qualitative and quantitative data to drive the process. Larry Stanton asked if the teachers are aware of the beliefs. The presenters responded with, yes, they are, and commented that the flexibility built into the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) to make local decisions has helped this process.

The PERA process included a joint committee, the Architecture of Accomplished Teaching, a review of comprehensive assessment system, and a simple growth model (SGO) using type II and type III assessments. Urbana is still improving the process and shared lessons learned from the process. The biggest lesson learned was that conversations about student learning are more important than compliance. Kevin Kennedy shared the impact from a teacher’s perspective and included quotations from other teachers and administrators in the district. He discussed how his department has used the SGO process to advance curriculum and instruction around the Common Core State Standards.

In response to questions from Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) members and meeting attendees, the presenters shared the following information:

Collaboration—the district has built regular time into elementary and secondary schedules for collaboration.

Sustainability—the district has curriculum, instruction, and development work closely with professional development and the program council, so they can share practices throughout the district.

Time—the district verified that the one thing teachers ask for is more time.

Setting targets—the district uses the administrators and administrator training to encourage discussions among administrators, teachers and teacher teams in order to create strong SGOs. They field tested last year, and this is the first year of full implementation, so they will be able to look at historical data in the future.

III. Local District Implementation and Evaluation System Design Committee Meetings
a. These meetings were used for the final preparation of committee reports to PEAC.

IV. Lunch

V. Local District Implementation and Evaluation System Design Committee Presentations

a. StevenIsoye shared for the Evaluation System Design Committee. The committee had
discussed the Urbana School District 116 presentation and felt it made sense to develop a
framework or process that includes a logical sequence to approach assessment. In guidance
supporting evaluation system design, the committee will include that the process is a work
in progress and the conversations are important. The guidance may be in the form of a case
study with an executive summary, with the stages or steps of the sequence and with the big
ideas embedded. Steven Isoye asked if PEAC had anything in addition and if it made sense
to move forward with this work. Dr. Gail Fahey asked if there was a process in place or a
systems approach to find out who has information to share on these topics. An updated
draft on guidance on the summative ratings was not available, so that will be tabled for a
future meeting.

In response to question 2 (teachers who perpetually receive needs improvement rating), the
committee discussed various approaches to guidance and would like to provide guidance
rather than rules and focus on how to work with a teacher to move them out of needs
improvement. The recommendation is to look at how to help the evaluator and the teacher
to look at the best practices for moving out of needs improvement. Gretchen Weber asked how
this process would look. Steven Isoye said that the committee would look at teacher
douncils and evaluation practices. Larry Stanton added that the teacher would have a
professional development plan that would help move the teacher.

Paula Crane asked if a teacher could perpetually get needs improvement. Steven Isoye
responded that, with a robust professional development plan, the teacher would either move
to a satisfactory rating or not meet the plan. Joseph Matula added that guidance on a robust
professional development plan would be supportive. Paula Crane asked what would happen
if a teacher does not grow and remains the same. Steven Isoye said that it is difficult to
create a hard and fast rule with so many mitigating circumstances that may impact the
teacher being in needs improvement, so it is difficult to make a rule. Larry Stanton added
that the committee agrees that a teacher should not perpetually be in needs improvement,
but the focus is on supporting the teacher and providing the guidance. Kurt Hilgendorf
asked how many teachers fall into this category. Vince Camille shared that the state is
going to start to collect this data.

Dr. Fahey brought up the school report card and asked if teacher ratings are intended to be
on the report card. It is not on the report card currently. Steven Isoye added that in 2015,
there are plans to report the percentage of teachers with a summative rating of proficient
and excellent on their most recent evaluation. Dr. Rich Voltz asked Kurt Hilgendorf how
the growth measures changed the teacher ratings in Chicago Public Schools. Kurt
Hilgendorf said that he is going to check because it has been a process. Question 3
(clarifying content and implementation of professional development plans for needs
improvement rating and how they differ from remediation plans for unsatisfactory ratings)
will be rolled into question 2 as the committee reviews the professional development plan.
The committee will work on a draft for this guidance.

b. Dr. Hector Garcia presented for the Local District Implementation Committee, which had
three topics of conversation, as listed below:
1. The committee has a number of questions for ISBE on the guidance it provided for administrator academies. The next topic was an update on the implementation survey. AIR has the data, but it has not been analyzed because the survey just closed, and the results will be sent to PEAC in the next couple of weeks.

2. The committee would like to collect examples of ways in which districts are calculating growth. The committee asked AIR to reach out to organizations to see if they will share what they have. PEAC members were asked to share with AIR the names of the districts they know as showing growth. Dr. Voltz added that not many districts may be doing this, but we could go to the Race to the Top districts to ask for their examples of the formulas for the growth components. Vince Camille noted that the research report that is coming out in December will also address ways of calculating growth. Dr. Garcia added that it would be nice to bring Race to the Top Districts to the committee to discuss this process. Dr. Voltz added that there is constant revision, but Dr. Garcia said that it would be nice to have the latest version. Rachel Trimble shared that Julie Evans of ISBE would be the person to ask for this information. MWCC offered to reach out to ISBE to find examples of formulas for student growth objectives. Kurt Hilgendorf said Chicago Public Schools may be one place to look because they have a variety of formulas they are using.

3. Gretchen Weber provided updates from the provider support survey. The number one resource used is the guidebook for student growth, and there are some documents that are not being used. The committee received some possible documents for the toolkit and will look at those. Kristen Adams asked for an update from ISBE in April on how the Board is gathering the information on teacher ratings for the report cards.

VI. Communication Committee Meeting

   a. The provider support survey was discussed during the implementation committee report.

   b. The ISBE PERA overview slide presentation was divided into four smaller presentation decks that can be used individually. Members appreciated how the original overview presentation was broken down and how the information tied to the resources.

   c. ISBE shared data on the PEAC downloads and hits from Google analytics. The guidelines were meant to support the reading of the data. The technical assistance staff is looking at other ways to report the data. The information did show that the guidance documents are being used and people are going to the balanced assessment page from the PEAC page.

   d. The PEAC discussed criteria for evaluating resources for posting online. A possible way to vet information for the website was provided to PEAC as a starting draft. Joseph Matula felt that if districts submitted something, they may feel stifled if it is being evaluated. However, it is important to consider who will take responsibility for vetting and posting information. Dawn Conway asked whether posting will be for districts or vendors. Vince Camille said that vendor material would not be added. Dr. Fahey added that if we added other states’ information as well as local information, then best practices and learning can be shared.

       Dr. Voltz asked whether information needed to be vetted when the districts are posting and sharing themselves, because then joint committees can determine the quality of examples. Members expressed worry that if examples are posted by ISBE, then there may be an assumption that they are good examples. Dr. Voltz added that if the website explicitly states these are examples and that there is no PEAC endorsement, then it may not be a problem. The potential strength of the PEAC website having a screening process to
determine good examples is that it would make it easier for districts to determine quality. However, this may also keep districts from having the conversations of what they need to do locally, which relates to Urbana’s presentation of how important it is to have conversations.

Rito Martinez asked if there was room to differentiate between examples and exemplars and if there were questions to guide the review. Gretchen Weber brought up that the best way is to bring people together to have these conversations and maybe have both a conference and a place where information is posted. Bringing regional groups together through existing platforms may work to provide the opportunity to have the conversations and to develop communities of practice. Part of the rationale of having the Race to Top districts was to let them provide the learning process to the other districts. There may be a communications or messaging piece that is part of this conversation. The messaging is that we can provide examples, but the power is in the conversations. The collaboration message needs to be aimed at joint committees to tie management and labor.

Rito Martinez asked how PEAC was working with ISBE’s foundation support. The Evaluation System Design Committee discussed bringing in someone in to talk to them about this support. People would find examples useful, but without context around the examples, they may not be helpful. However, the first step is to get examples, and then after gathering examples, the next step may be to determine how to share the examples.

e. The next piece of business was the update on the proposal to The Joyce Foundation, though the people who would be able to provide updates were not present. The proposal has been shared, but the committee is waiting for the answer. The success of the proposal may fund current PEAC communication efforts as well as grow into further funding.

VII. Planning for April

a. Larry Stanton asked for any process improvements for the April meeting. The group had determined that brainstorming is best for the large group and webinar is better when they have documents to discuss. The webinar should have documents to support the conversations.

VIII. Public Comment and Adjournment

a. Jessica Handy referred to the stakeholder letter and shared the transcript from the senate floor on what was stated about the needs improvement ratings. Jessica Handy will e-mail this transcript to AIR.