FACT SHEET
TEACHER EVALUATIONS
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Administrators and teachers are working together to implement new educator evaluation tools that better reflect the caliber of instruction happening in the classroom. The Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA), signed into law in 2010, changed how teacher and principal performance is measured by requiring new evaluation models that offer comprehensive feedback and consider student growth as well as professional skills and practices.

The new evaluation systems provide clear, consistent descriptions of what outstanding teaching and leadership should look like as well as give local districts the time and opportunity to design their own systems that meet state rules and the needs and culture of their schools and community.

To meet the professional practice component, qualified evaluators conduct evaluations aligned to the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards. In order to be an evaluator, educators must successfully complete a State Board pre-qualification program. The program involves rigorous training and an independent observer’s determination that the evaluator’s ratings properly align to the State Board’s requirements. Evaluators must observe, collect evidence and provide timely feedback as part of the evaluation process. Teachers and principals are evaluated using a system of four ratings: Excellent, Proficient, Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory. Districts are also working to strengthen the professional development opportunities for teachers to support student improvement.

PERA also requires that, for the first time, principal and teacher evaluations will be tied to data and indicators of student growth as a “significant factor.” While early implementer districts such as Chicago Public Schools (CPS) have already begun incorporating student performance into evaluations, state law staggers the implementation of teacher evaluations that include student growth. All Illinois districts are required to fully implement the student growth component into their evaluation systems no later than the 2016-17 school year. This requirement does not mean that educators’ jobs depend on standardized test results. Rather, student growth is one portion of a teacher’s performance evaluation rating, specifically at least 25 percent in the first and second years of implementation. From the third year on, student growth must be at least 30 percent of the rating.

New Educator Evaluations in Illinois
- Ratings are based on the evaluation of teacher practice and student growth.
- Districts form agreements with teachers or union representatives to develop their own evaluation systems that meet minimum state standards.
- Districts default to the state model for matters regarding the use of data and indicators of student growth that could not be agreed upon.
- All districts must implement the student growth component in their systems during the 2016-17 school year.
Local control is an important part of the new evaluations as districts have options to create an evaluation system that best meets their unique needs. For teacher evaluations, a Joint Committee composed of equal representation selected by the district and its teachers or, where applicable, the teachers’ exclusive bargaining representatives, has the ability to design its own evaluation system that meets minimum state rules. The first meeting of a Joint Committee must occur by Nov. 1 of the school year immediately before the school district’s implementation date (for example, Nov. 1, 2014, for a district with a 2015-16 implementation date). The committee has 180 days to agree on how to incorporate data and indicators of student growth into its own evaluation system. If the committee cannot agree on its own plan, the district must then implement those aspects of the state model regarding the use of data and indicators of student growth about which the Joint Committee is unable to agree. The administrative rules require that student growth comprises 50 percent of the performance evaluation. The State Board’s proposed rules for incorporating student growth under a state model was published for public review, with feedback due in late August. The State Board will then consider the model for approval in September.

Illinois Administrative Code Part 50 outlines how student growth should be incorporated into evaluations, including a definition of “significant factor” and the type of assessments to be used.

Read more at www.isbe.net/rules/archive/pdfs/50ARK.pdf. Additional information is available on ISBE’s website at www.isbe.net/PERA.

Public Feedback

The state model for incorporating student growth was published in the Illinois Register and on the ISBE website for public feedback for 45 days. To see the proposed rules, visit www.isbe.net/rules/proposed/default.htm and look for “Proposed Amendments to Part 50 (Evaluation of Certified Staff under Articles 24A and 34 of the School Code).”