TALKING POINTS

How New Teacher Evaluations Will Incorporate Student Growth and Support Improved Instruction

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- The Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA), signed into law by Gov. Pat Quinn in 2010, changed how teacher and principal performance is measured by requiring new evaluation models that consider student growth as well as professional skills and practices.

- The new evaluation systems are part of the state’s commitment to prepare all students for college and careers through well-equipped, highly prepared educators and clear expectations for achievement.

- The new evaluation systems provide statewide consistency for what outstanding teaching and leadership should look like and 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 in all school districts conduct evaluations aligned to the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards. Evaluators must successfully complete a State Board-approved prequalification 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. These evaluators then must observe, collect evidence and provide timely feedback as part of the evaluation process.
  - Since Sept. 1, 2012, teachers and principals have been evaluated using a system of four ratings: Excellent, Proficient, Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory.
  - Districts are working to strengthen the professional development opportunities offered to teachers in an effort to boost 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.

- It’s important to note that districts that are not early implementers need to prepare for addressing student growth in teacher and principal evaluations. Early implementers have found that one year for piloting the new system is helpful before full implementation begins.

- The student growth 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.

- Administrators and teachers are urged to read Illinois Administrative Code Part 50, which outlines how student growth should be incorporated into evaluations, including a definition of “significant factor” and the type of assessments to be used.
  - Part 50 requires that performance evaluations identify at least two types of assessments for evaluating each category of teacher and one or more measurement models to be used to determine student growth that are specific to each assessment chosen. These assessments and measurement models should align to the building and district’s school improvement goals.

- 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 shall occur no later than Nov. 1 of the school year immediately preceding 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 model for incorporating student growth was published in the Illinois Register for public feedback for 45 days. The rules were also presented during a State Board meeting and have been posted on the ISBE website. To see the proposed rules, go to [http://www.isbe.net/rules/proposed/default.htm](http://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).” The State Board will then consider the model for approval in September.

- To help districts prepare for implementation, ISBE has put together a comprehensive guidance document, which is available at [www.isbe.state.il.us/PEAC/pdf/student-growth-component-guidebook.pdf](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/PEAC/pdf/student-growth-component-guidebook.pdf).

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