



# Illinois State Board of Education

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Guidance Document 13-17

## Guidance on Peer Evaluation in Teacher Evaluation Systems in Illinois

*This document is intended to provide non-regulatory guidance on the subject matter listed above.  
For specific questions, please contact the person(s) identified in the document.*

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# Guidance on Peer Evaluation in Teacher Evaluation Systems in Illinois

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## Type of Guidance

This guidance document provides background information on peer evaluators and recommendations for utilizing peer observations in teacher performance evaluations. As a guidance document, the following is intended to support districts in understanding this topic and provide a foundation for making decisions about the district’s evaluation system.

Although the local education agencies (LEAs) in Illinois that are receiving Race to the Top (RTTT) funds are required to implement peer evaluations as part of a summative teacher evaluation system, those not receiving RTTT funds are allowed but not required to use peer evaluation in teacher evaluations. LEAs not required to include peer evaluation also may use this guidance to inform decision making.

The Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) states:

Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the board and the exclusive representative of the district’s teachers are hereby authorized to enter into an agreement to establish alternative procedures for teacher evaluation, remediation, and removal for cause after remediation, **including an alternative system for peer evaluation and recommendations.** (105 ILCS 5/34-85, emphasis added)

The Illinois Administrative Code states:

This Part establishes the minimum requirements for the establishment of valid and reliable performance evaluation systems for certified employees, pursuant to Article 24A of the School Code, that assess both professional competence or practice and student growth. The purposes of this Part are to... c) **establish criteria for locally developed programs to prequalify and retrain evaluators.** (23 Ill. Adm. Code 50.10(c), emphasis added)

Evaluators may be “other individuals qualified under Section 24A-3, provided that, if such other individuals are in the bargaining unit of a district’s teachers, the district and the exclusive bargaining representative of that unit must agree to those individuals evaluating other bargaining unit members” (105 ILCS 5/24A-2.5).

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Nonregulatory Guidance for PERA and SB 7 document states:

Yes, [a school district can use peer evaluators for teacher evaluations in the 2011–12 school year], provided that if the peer evaluators are represented by a union, the district

and union have agreed to those peer evaluators evaluating other bargaining unit members.... **Note that peer evaluators, like any other evaluators, must be pre-qualified pursuant to Section 24A-3 of the School Code prior to conducting any evaluations in the 2012-2013 school year or beyond.** (ISBE, 2012, 29, emphasis added)

The Illinois RTTT phase three application states:

All Participating LEAs must incorporate the following elements into their performance evaluation systems:

- A formal peer evaluation system that is used for a significant portion of summative evaluations and can be used as part of evaluations during teacher remediation
- The use of positive performance evaluations as part of the basis for selecting peer evaluators and mentors (State of Illinois, 2011, p. 38–39)

All participating RTTT LEAs are required to pilot peer evaluations by the 2013–14 school year. Peer evaluation may be used for formative purposes in 2013–14; however, the peer evaluations must be incorporated in the summative evaluations (i.e., for stakes) during the 2014–15 school year.

## Scope of Guidance

This guidance document provides examples of how to incorporate peer evaluations as a significant portion of teacher performance evaluation and remediation in two main ways:

- **Peer observers are used as part of performance evaluations for all teachers.** Peers observe the teacher classroom practice as part of performance evaluations that occur on a regular basis (usually annually). Peer observers only conduct observations and provide feedback in post-observation conferences as part of the performance evaluation process.
  - Peer observers usually apply for the position and participate in training on both the process and their responsibilities to other teachers (i.e., giving performance feedback).
  - Evidence from observations conducted by the peer observer is used as part of the educator’s summative performance evaluation, but an administrator determines the final evaluation and rating.
- **Consulting teachers are used as part of aligned peer assistance and review (PAR) programs for novice and/or struggling teachers.** The PAR program is designed to support and evaluate novice and struggling teachers within a school.
  - In the PAR program, mentor teachers (usually referred to as “consulting teachers”) conduct observations of teacher practice and provide coaching and mentoring support to those teachers throughout the school year.
  - Consulting teachers usually apply for the position and participate in training on both the process and their responsibilities as a mentor.

- The consulting teacher presents midyear and end-of-year recommendations to a PAR panel composed of both union and district leadership (see page 9 for more information). The PAR panel must then decide if they wish to retain or dismiss the teacher.
- Districts may align an existing PAR program to a performance evaluation system used for all teachers by using evidence gathered through PAR (such as observations) as part of a teacher’s regular performance evaluation or by allowing teachers included in a PAR program to be exempt from regular performance evaluation.

## Types of Peer Evaluation

### Peer Observations in Teacher Performance Evaluations

A *peer evaluator* or *peer observer* may be a teacher serving in any role but is often a teacher serving in a leadership capacity as an instructional leader, mentor, or other specialized role. Peer observers may or may not serve as classroom teachers during the school year in which they are conducting observations; however, they must have served as teachers for a significant period of time in the past and meet other criteria for the position. A peer observer must not serve in an administrative or direct supervisory role but may have some responsibility over other teachers based on the position. If peer observers conduct formal evaluations for which they must also conduct post-observation conferences, they must be PERA trained. Principals or other administrators—not peer observers—should have responsibility for summative performance evaluations, although the evidence gathered by peer observers is still included in the summative rating. This evidence should be in written form and include data from the observation, any rubrics or observation forms, scoring, and any feedback or next steps provided.

The professional practice component of evaluations is usually measured primarily through classroom observations. Although principals often conduct classroom observations throughout the school year for a variety of purposes, it may be challenging for principals to conduct all necessary classroom observations for teacher evaluations. Having peers conduct observations of teacher practice can reduce the time burden on the principal and help ensure that observers have relevant pedagogical expertise. The Measures of Effective Teaching project found that having more observers increased the reliability of ratings (Ho & Kane, 2013). Districts can better ensure the reliability of observations by using peer observers to increase the number of observers and observations of practice. Teachers also recognize that having a peer observer contribute to teacher performance evaluations, in addition to an administrative observer, provides the following benefits:

- Like administrators, teachers can provide high-quality, specific feedback on performance. This can increase the emphasis on improvement and development rather than accountability alone.
- Teachers can engage in professional development to learn to provide clear and specific recommendations for improving instruction that draw upon recent classroom practices.
- Teachers with similar content and grade-level experience can learn to readily recognize common classroom challenges and practices specific to a teacher’s content and grade level.

- Teachers value opportunities to have professional conversations about their instructional practices with other similarly qualified educators, including opportunities for overall improvement and ways to address the specific needs and challenges of individual students.

The ISBE Teacher Leader Endorsement (23 Ill. Adm. Code 25.32) was created based on these benefits to districts and allows teachers to obtain a special teacher leader certification. This formalizes the teacher leader role and recognizes how teachers may serve in non-administrative leadership and support roles, such as peer observer. The district should base selection criteria on appropriate professional skills by hiring peer observers who have had a minimum number of years successfully teaching in the district and who demonstrate leadership and collegiality, communication skills, and knowledge of pedagogy. Districts also may require peer observers to have a history of high effectiveness scores, although this may not be feasible when first implementing the evaluation system.

### Peer Observer Roles

It is important to consider what types of peer observers are most compatible with the district. Peer observers may support the evaluation process in the following ways:

- Contribute to support and evaluation **or** evaluation alone.
- Conduct informal observations **or** formal observations.
- Gather evidence on some aspects of practice **or** all aspects of practice.
- Conduct some observations **or** all observations.
- Work exclusively in one school **or** across the district **or** across districts.
- Work with specific types of teachers (e.g., specific grades or subjects, veteran, novice, struggling) **or** all teachers generally.
- Serve as peer observer part-time **or** full-time (Osta and Grodsky, 2012).

The peer observer's role in the overall performance evaluation can be more or less effective depending on the district's size and culture. Districts should consider the following factors when designing the role of peer observer:

- **Financial cost.** Using peer observers requires districts to hire supplemental teaching staff to replace observers when they leave the classroom. Districts also need to train and evaluate peer observers on observation protocols and scoring to ensure that their scores are valid and that they use rubrics with fidelity.
  - Smaller districts may not have the resources to hire enough peer observers to specialize in specific subjects or grade levels. Likewise, smaller districts may not have enough teachers of specific subjects or grades to justify full-time specialized peer observers. Smaller districts should carefully assess the number of peer observations that teachers of specific subjects and grade levels will require to determine the role of the peer observer.

- Larger districts may be able to hire enough peer observers to specialize in specific subjects or grade levels. These types of peer observers are more likely to spend most or all of their time observing teachers in schools where they have not taught previously. Because these types of peer observers have no previous relationship with most or all of the teachers they will observe, it is important that they have opportunities to build rapport with teachers via pre-observation conferences or goal-setting activities.
- **Defining and communicating roles.** Because peer observers perform some administrative functions, peer observer roles need to be negotiated into labor agreements and clearly communicated to staff. It is important that the peer observer role is carefully designed to ensure that the teacher remains a peer and does not take on additional administrative tasks.
  - In a large district, peer observers may distribute their caseload to avoid observing teachers in schools where they have previously taught.
  - Smaller districts may have peer observers conduct informal observations that only contribute to formative feedback if there are concerns about peer observers contributing to the evaluations of teachers with whom they have previously worked as colleagues.
  - All districts should look to collective bargaining agreements and seek feedback from the local union about whether and how to require peer evaluators to return to the classroom at the conclusion of their role. In addition, if local bargaining agreements specify that union members may not evaluate each other, the district should ensure that any one peer observer does not determine the majority of a teacher’s performance rating in any evaluation domain. The district can do this by ensuring that any one peer observer does not conduct the majority of observations for a single teacher and that the peer observer plays no part in determining a teacher’s overall effectiveness score or rating.
  - All districts should consider requiring full-time peer observers to return to their roles as classroom teachers after serving as peer observers, to ensure that the peer observer role does not serve as a pre-administrative role and is not seen as a first step toward an administrative track.
- **Objectivity.** If teachers serve as peer observers within their own schools, their objectivity may be questioned. Whether this is a perceived or legitimate concern, high-quality training, observer monitoring, and retraining are critical to reduce subjectivity.

Table 1 provides examples of the variety of potential roles and responsibilities for peer observers in different districts. See Table 2 for more details regarding each example district.

**Table 1. Examples of Peer Observer Roles**

Peer Observer	Role and Responsibilities	Source
Master Educator: full-time	Master Educators are highly qualified content experts with extensive teaching and leadership backgrounds. They serve in this role full-time and do not have responsibilities outside of conducting observations and providing feedback to teachers across the district. Master Educators may be hired from within the district or externally.	<a href="#">District of Columbia Public Schools</a>
Peer Evaluator: full-time or part-time	Peer Evaluators are classroom teachers who are hired by the district to contribute to performance evaluations for at least one year. <b>Peer Evaluators that serve in a full-time position are sometimes required to return to their role as classroom teacher after the completion of their role as evaluator to ensure that they are truly “peers.”</b> Peer Evaluators may conduct observations or gather other evidence, but they do not conduct the summative evaluation. Peer Evaluators are typically hired from within the district.	<a href="#">Alamance-Burlington School System</a>  <a href="#">Hillsborough County Public Schools</a>
Mentor: part-time	Mentors are classroom teachers who also serve in a mentoring or coaching role for novice or struggling teachers in the district. If part of a PAR program, the mentor also conducts an evaluation and provides personnel recommendations for these teachers. <b>If part of a regular performance evaluation, the mentor only contributes to evaluations for teachers with whom they do not have a mentoring or coaching relationship.</b> Mentors spend most of their time coaching teachers and spend limited time as evaluators. Mentors are hired from within the district.	<a href="#">Hillsborough County Public Schools</a>

### Selecting and Preparing Peer Observers

The success of peer observers is highly dependent on two factors: selection and training. Teachers who are strong candidates for peer observer roles should possess the following characteristics:

- Consistently high effectiveness ratings, especially in instructional practices
- Positive relationships with other educators in their schools
- Active participation in schoolwide support and collaboration opportunities

Candidates for peer observer roles often independently apply for the position several months to a year prior to taking on the peer observer role and spend substantial time in training prior to conducting observations. In aligned PAR programs, many consulting teachers observe the entire

PAR process and undergo training for a full year prior to taking on the role. Regardless of their role and type of commitment, training for peer observers should include the following:

- Observation procedures, including timeline, caseload, and data security
- Observation tools, including data collection rubrics and scoring
- Best practices for ensuring consistency, accuracy, and fairness in scoring
- Curriculum and standards for the teachers being observed
- Best practices for teaching, cultural competency, and methods for avoiding personal biases and opinions in scoring
- Professional interactions with observed teachers, including **how to talk effectively about instructional practice with other teachers** (Although principals and other administrators often have experience talking to teachers about their classroom practices, peer observers may not begin the role with this experience or the skills necessary to communicate effectively about teaching in a post-observation conference.)
- Evaluation procedures overall
- Prequalification (certification) demonstrating reliability and validity of scoring **prior** to conducting observations and periodically thereafter (at least once a year, preferably several times a year) (Peer observers should not conduct actual observations until they have passed the prequalification exam.)

Although peer observers may have received training in the evaluation system as part of a districtwide training for all instructional staff, it is important that they receive specialized training specific to their role. The training for peer observers should align to the administrative training but should include additional training on how to give appropriate feedback and engage teachers in conversation about practice. Peer observers must therefore be PERA trained but also have additional training and support for giving performance feedback. Districts may use online prequalification (certification) for some calibration exercises, such as scoring of video lessons, but they should ensure that in-person calibrations are required for components such as providing feedback.

Table 2 provides more detail about example districts' peer observation models.



**Table 2: Examples of District Models of Peer Observation**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>District of Columbia Public Schools</b></p> <p>The Master Educator role was created in response to teachers’ repeated requests to be observed and evaluated by objective content experts. Master Educators do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe specific types of teachers by grade and content area and serve in their role full-time.</li> <li>• Conduct two out of four formal observations for most teachers.</li> <li>• Conduct observations and gather evidence in the same way as the principal, provide written feedback to the teacher, and hold postobservation conferences.</li> </ul> <p>For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Evaluation Guidebooks</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Master Educators</a></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Alamance-Burlington School System</b></p> <p>In North Carolina, all nontenured teachers must have one formal observation by a peer evaluator and three formal observations by an administrator. In the Alamance-Burlington School System, all tenured teachers are trained as peer evaluators and may conduct peer observations of nontenured teachers at their school.</p> <p>For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Peer Evaluation Resources</a></li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Hillsborough County Public Schools</b></p> <p>In Hillsborough County Public Schools in Florida, peer observers and mentors both conduct formal observations of teacher practice. Teachers have between three and 11 observations per year, depending on their status and previous rating. Peer observers and mentors conduct the majority of observations for novice or struggling teachers. This model also includes the following guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer observations carry greater weight than principal feedback toward the ratings of direct instructional practices. For the four Danielson domains, which are used to measure teacher practice, peer observers and mentors contribute to a greater portion of the rating for the first three domains than the principal; however, the principal is solely responsible for the fourth, “Professional Responsibilities,” rating.</li> <li>• Peer observers work full-time conducting observations and providing teachers with feedback; however, mentors only spend approximately 10 percent of their time contributing to performance evaluations. The mentors are able to ensure reliability by dual-coding observations and convening workgroups to share best practices.</li> <li>• Although peer observers and mentors are not assigned to observe only teachers of specific grades or content areas as explicitly as in other districts (such as District of Columbia Public Schools), the district does provide training to align curriculum and evaluation efforts across different schools.</li> </ul> <p>For more information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Teacher Evaluation Handbook</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Design and Implementation</a></li> </ul>	



## Consulting Teachers' Observations in Aligned PAR Programs

Several districts across the country have implemented PAR programs during the last three decades. Some districts have chosen to align the PAR program with their performance evaluation system, which is one method for using peer evaluators in performance evaluations. A PAR program is a professional induction and support system that is jointly controlled by the local union and district administrators. PAR programs involve a panel of union representatives (teachers or union staff) and district administrators, usually with a slight union majority, and expert “consulting” teachers who serve as mentors. Principals may be asked to refer struggling teachers based on professional judgment and/or evaluation results. Teachers in the PAR program receive support through activities such as observation, modeling, coaching, and guided study with their consulting teacher. The consulting teacher also conducts a formal evaluation of the teacher and presents recommendations, which may include dismissal, continued PAR participation, or successful completion of the program, to the PAR panel. Consulting teachers in PAR differ from those who are assigned to assist teachers on a remediation plan in that PAR consulting teachers only work with teachers enrolled in the PAR program who may or may not have a remediation plan depending on the design of the PAR program. PAR programs vary widely based on the teachers served (novice, struggling, or both), the role of school administrators, and alignment to district-wide performance evaluations. Different PAR programs have different criteria for consulting teacher positions, but consulting teachers usually apply for the position and submit a portfolio demonstrating their teaching expertise, positive staff relationships, and communication skills.

PAR programs have many benefits, including the following:

- Emphasis on improving teaching quality
- Savings through the retention of effective educators and reductions in contested dismissals
- Practice-focused professional development and specific, high-quality feedback for teachers
- Meaningful union involvement in ensuring teaching quality
- Leadership opportunities for effective teachers
- Promotion of a professional culture of teaching (Goldstein, 2007; Johnson et al, 2010; Payay, 2009, 2011)

PAR programs usually have strong support from teachers, union leaders, and district leaders where they are implemented. Teachers especially tend to see PAR programs as fair and effective because they allow teachers to be involved in all steps of the process. In order to implement a PAR program effectively, districts should take several challenges into account:

- PAR programs require a significant initial investment: they may cost anywhere from \$3,000 to \$9,000 for each teacher enrolled (Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, 2012). These costs can be offset or mitigated, however, by increased retention rates because each teacher who leaves can cost the district between approximately \$5,000 and nearly \$18,000 (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007).

- PAR programs can help build positive relationships between districts and unions, but they also require active cooperation among school administrators, district administrators, and union leaders.
- Peer review elevates the level of dialogue about teaching and learning. Although peer review may be controversial for experienced teachers if their peer reviewer has recently worked as a fellow classroom teacher at the same school, PAR programs that assign consulting teachers with care may avoid this issue.

Prior to the recent widespread changes in teacher evaluation policies, PAR programs were sometimes aligned to district performance evaluation systems but more often functioned separately. Most districts that have long-established PAR programs have not integrated the PAR program into updated evaluation systems that include student growth and/or more frequent evaluations. Aligning the district PAR program (or similar mentoring or induction program) to performance evaluations can help support novice teachers in becoming proficient and provide remediation for teachers who have areas needing improvement. Aligned PAR programs should do the following:

- Include formal processes for sharing formative and summative feedback based on the same practice standards as performance evaluations.
- Have a clear and rigorous process for selecting consulting teachers based on evaluation results and other qualifications. Consulting teachers and peer observers may have similar roles and responsibilities or even serve in a dual role in smaller districts.
- Clearly outline the intersection between the PAR program and the district-wide performance evaluation process. This may be done in a few different ways:
  - PAR and performance evaluations may be aligned, or PAR evaluations may take the place of performance evaluations.
  - Observations conducted and evidence gathered through PAR processes may also count for performance evaluations (where appropriate and if the observations meet PERA requirements) to reduce the burden on evaluators.
  - Novice teachers may be exempt from summative performance evaluations until they have successfully exited the PAR program.
  - Struggling teachers may be identified for participation in PAR programs through performance evaluation results and may be exempt from regular performance evaluations during their participation in the PAR program.

Table 3 provides examples of how different districts align PAR programs with their regular performance evaluation process.

**Table 3. Examples of Alignment Between PAR Programs and Performance Evaluations**

**219 Niles Township PAR Program**

The Niles Township, Illinois, PAR program is fully aligned to performance evaluations in the district. The district has four full-time consultant teachers that serve first-year, second-year, and struggling teachers in the district, which has about 400 teachers overall. Each consulting teacher must go through the Growth Through Learning evaluator prequalification training and has a caseload of no more than 15 teachers. If the consulting teacher works with a struggling, tenured teacher, that teacher counts as two teachers for the caseload. The PAR panel in Niles Township has five teachers and four administrators who hear evaluation reports, discuss progress, and make a final recommendation for retention or release to the superintendent. The consulting teachers also make recommendations for retention or release for the first- and second-year teachers, but the PAR panel makes the sole recommendation for retention or release for struggling tenured teachers.

Consulting teachers conduct several observations throughout the year; however, they also consider evidence from observations conducted by administrators. The consulting teacher gives up to three reports per year to the PAR panel on a teacher's performance and is responsible for giving the final, summative evaluation rating to a teacher. In this system, the PAR process serves as the regular performance evaluation with the addition of the administrator's observation evidence, which would usually be included in performance evaluations.

Webinars providing more information on the Niles Township PAR program are available on the Illinois RTTT website: <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/racetothetop/htmls/training.htm>

For additional information, contact the PAR Panel Co-chairs:

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### **South Carolina ADEPT Cycle 1**

Although the South Carolina Department of Education does not require a PAR program statewide, the statewide evaluation system (ADEPT) includes similar induction and mentoring support for new and struggling educators. All first-year teachers undergo a process similar to peer assistance, in which they are assigned a mentor teacher who provides coaching, helps with goal setting, and gathers performance evidence including student growth. First-year educators only receive a formative evaluation; educators receive a summative evaluation at the end of their second year of teaching. The district's decision to grant tenure or not is based on evidence gathered from the induction and mentoring process, similar to most PAR programs.

For more information:

- [Mentoring Assignment Requirements 2012–13](#)
- [South Carolina Induction and Mentoring Program: Implementation Guidelines](#)

### **Montgomery County Public Schools**

Montgomery County Public Schools' PAR program is fully aligned with the district's performance evaluation system. All novice teachers participate in the PAR program. Experienced teachers who receive an unsatisfactory overall rating also participate in the PAR program if, after review, the need for assistance is confirmed. Teachers participating in the PAR program also continue to undergo the standard performance evaluation process; evidence gathered for standard performance evaluations may be used to help provide feedback and assistance to teachers.

For more information: [MCEA/MCPS Peer Assistance & Review Program](#)

### **Escambia County Public Schools**

Escambia County Public Schools' PAR program (START) is fully aligned with the district's performance evaluation system. All novice teachers participate in the program; their observations and gathering of evidence for the PAR process also serve as the practice component of their performance evaluation. Consulting teachers conduct and provide feedback on all aspects of the performance evaluation, including student performance, with the exception of the Professional Responsibilities domain of the practice component. Administrators conduct evaluations for all other teachers.

For more information: [Escambia Educator Evaluation \(E3\) System Components](#)

## Executive Summary: Guidance to Districts on Peer Observation

The following is a summary of guidance and recommendations to districts on using peer observation in teacher performance evaluations. ISBE has identified the following recommendations for districts that must or choose to include peer evaluation as a component of teacher evaluations:

- Tie peer evaluation to the district’s framework for teaching. Ensure that the same standards and expectations are clearly communicated among administrators, instructional leaders, mentors, evaluators, and teachers.
- Tailor the design to meet the district’s needs and conditions in the following ways:
  - If there is a PAR program or a similar induction or mentoring program in place, consider ways to align it to performance evaluations based on other models. The program may be used in conjunction with or in place of standard performance evaluations.
  - Consider the district’s size and administrators’ capacity when defining the scope of work for peer observers. Smaller districts may consider allowing peer observers to continue teaching in the classroom, while larger districts may consider allowing teachers to serve solely as observers and support staff for a specified period. All districts may consider giving peer observers more responsibility for assessing instructional aspects of the district’s framework for teaching.
- Include teachers, principals, and union leaders in planning for the system. For example:
  - Provide forums for teachers and principals to share their views on peer observers and raise questions prior to finalizing the system’s design.
  - Provide clear examples of how a certain type of peer observation would look in practice, addressing any concerns that may come up from practitioners and emphasizing fairness.
- Incorporate the following best practices:
  - Peers should conduct observations and provide formative feedback. Data collected by peers should be included in the calculation of the summative performance evaluation, but peers should not be responsible for conducting the summative evaluation.
  - Peer observers should be selected through a rigorous process. At the very least, they should demonstrate positive evaluation results and commitment to the school community.
  - Peer observers should undergo initial training specific to their role, including how to collect evidence, reduce bias, and effectively consult with teachers about their practice. They should continue to participate in recalibration exercises for reliability and trouble-shooting.
  - Consider piloting the peer evaluation system prior to full implementation. Piloting could include a “no stakes” or “formative” year and/or slowly increase the number of teachers participating.

- The work to implement the teacher evaluation system can occur simultaneously with peer observation planning. Peer observations may serve only as formative feedback in the first year, depending on training capacity at the district level.
- Involve principals and other evaluators early in the design process. Training should ground observation in the district's standards for teaching and evaluation expectations. Create opportunities for ongoing training and collaboration among administrators and peer observers.
- Consider the union's role in designing and communicating about the system. The district and union could issue a joint statement or otherwise collaborate on communication to enhance stakeholder support and understanding.

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