



Illinois State Board of Education

February 2013

Guidance Document 13-03

Guidance on District Decision Making

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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Printed by AFL-CIO (AFSCME Local #288 and IFSOE Local #3236) Employees



Guidance on District Decision Making

Introduction

The purpose of this guidance document is to provide district and union leaders and Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) Joint Committees in Illinois engaged in the revision of their teacher evaluation systems with a set of guiding questions that can help support decision making and system development.

The Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) lays out a staggered implementation schedule across the state for complying with the new teacher-evaluation guidelines.

Group	Implementation Date*
300 schools in Chicago Public Schools (CPS)	September 1, 2012
Remaining CPS schools	September 1, 2013
Schools receiving School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding	By the date specified in their grant agreement
Lowest performing 20% of Race to the Top districts	September 1, 2014
Lowest performing 20% of districts and Remaining Race to the Top districts	September 1, 2015
Remaining school districts	September 1, 2016

*School districts and their exclusive bargaining agent may agree in writing to move the implementation date (implementing the full system, including student growth). It shall be no sooner than September 1, 2013, and such agreement must be submitted to the Illinois State Board of Education.

Note: PERA does not require that school districts implement teacher practice components of the performance evaluation plan prior to the implementation date shown above and/or before the student growth portion of the performance evaluation plan will be implemented.

Because of the importance of comprehensive communication, this guidance document begins with suggestions for communication. With the required changes to teacher evaluation, communication of each decision is critical for increasing stakeholder buy-in and for ensuring successful implementation. The communication strategies can be used at the beginning or end of the process as well as throughout the development of the teacher evaluation system.

After the communication section, this document includes system development questions that focus on three areas: design, student growth, and implementation. District and union leaders and teams can use these questions to lead them to a set of decisions and conclusions about how the new teacher evaluation system will look in the district. For each area, a list of resources is included to help inform district decisions.

Communication

It is essential for districts to communicate decisions related to the new teacher-evaluation system to all stakeholders.

In the midst of a lot of change and reform work, human beings often have two very different but similar reactions, each creating unique challenges for communication in educator evaluation redesign. The first reaction occurs when a person is not actively engaged in a reform effort or program, such as a pilot. The tendency is to ignore most news or information. This is a normal coping mechanism to manage the endless information coming our way. It is difficult for routine news to penetrate this block in a meaningful or lasting manner. When a change is actually implemented, an individual can feel surprised and unprepared. He or she will believe that the change is happening without adequate planning and management.

The second situation occurs when an individual is actively and consistently attending to the information coming his or her way about a particular topic. One result can be a sense of being overwhelmed by information, options, and details—especially if the issue has ambiguous elements or unknowns. This individual may feel powerless to manage and integrate change and may lose sight of the underlying purpose. And between these two different reaction profiles are many variations—all of which complicate the process of planning and delivering communication.

Multiple methods of two-way communication can ensure stakeholder buy-in to the new system and will help ensure successful implementation and long-term sustainability. These communication channels may include e-mails, newsletters, multiple opportunities for face-to-face meetings, websites, telephone hotlines, school-level points of contact for answering questions, and other methods.

The district and union should ensure regular communication with the following stakeholders:

- School board members
- District leaders
- Teacher association leaders
- School leaders
- Teachers
- Parents and families
- Community leaders

Communication Questions

The district and teachers union should consider the following communication questions in relationship to the three sets of system development questions (design questions, student growth questions, and implementation questions)¹:

Question 1	
Are the district and union providing regular updates to stakeholders about the design and decision-making process?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	



Question 2	
Are the district and union asking stakeholders for feedback?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	

¹ Information summarized from American Institutes for Research. (2010). *Performance management communication guidebook: Communication tool for teacher evaluation*. Washington, DC: Author.



Question 3	
Are the district and union providing the updates and feedback opportunities in several ways and through different channels?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	



Question 4	
Are the district and union using a representative stakeholder group in the design and decision-making process? Do those committee members or task force members have a specific communication charge to share information regularly with the people they represent?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	

By consciously making decisions about communication, district and union leaders can prevent the spreading of misinformation and can ensure that stakeholders throughout the district are on the same page.

System Development

There are three sets of system development questions, which are related to design, student growth, and implementation. District and union leaders can use these questions to lead them to a set of decisions and conclusions related to the design of their teacher evaluation system.

Design Questions

This set of questions discusses the overall design of the teacher evaluation system.

Question 5	
Have the district and union identified the goals and purposes of the evaluation system?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	



Question 6	
Have the district and union identified a framework that will serve as a basis for the teacher evaluation system?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	



Question 7	
Have the district and union identified measures that will be used in teacher evaluation other than observation and student growth?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	



Question 8	
Have the district and union specified guidelines for each measure (including a detailed process and district-specific timelines)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	



Question 9	
Have the district and union specified how each measure will be combined to come to a summative rating?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	

Resources

The following resources can be used when coming to decisions related to system design:

- *A Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation Systems: A Tool to Assist in the Development of Teacher Evaluation Systems:* <http://www.tqsource.org/publications/practicalGuideEvalSystems.pdf>
- *A Practical Guide to Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness:* <http://www.tqsource.org/publications/practicalGuide.pdf>
- *Everyone at the Table: Engaging Teachers in Evaluation Reform:* <http://www.everyoneatthetable.org/index.php>
- Case studies of teacher evaluation systems in action: <http://resource.tqsource.org/evalmodel/>

Student Growth Questions

This set of questions focuses on the student growth component of the new teacher-evaluation system.

Question 10	
Have the district and union identified which Type I assessments are available or being developed in the district and which Type I assessments will be used for different teacher groups?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	



Question 11	
Have the district and union identified which Type II assessments are available in the district and which Type II assessments will be used for different teacher groups?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	



Question 12	
Have the district and union identified which teacher groups will use Type III assessments for both of their student growth assessments?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	



Question 13	
Have the district and union identified a process for using the types of assessment that are appropriate for their categories of teachers as part of evaluation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	



Question 14	
Have the district and union identified how growth will be defined for the types of assessment that are appropriate for their categories of teachers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	

Resources

The following resources can be used when coming to decisions related to student growth:

- *Key Considerations When Measuring Teacher Effectiveness: A Framework for Validating Teachers' Professional Practices:* http://www.aacompcenter.org/cs/aacc/download/rs/26517/aacc_2011_tq-report.pdf?x-r=pcfile_d
- *Approaches and Considerations for Incorporating Student Performance Results From "Nontested" Grades and Subjects Into Educator Effectiveness Determinations:* http://www.nciea.org/publications/Considerations%20for%20non-tested%20grades_SMKB2011.pdf
- *Challenges in Evaluating Special Education Teachers and English Language Learner Specialists:* <http://www.tqsource.org/publications/July2010Brief.pdf>
- *Measuring Teachers' Contributions to Student Learning Growth for Nontested Grades and Subjects:* <http://www.tqsource.org/publications/MeasuringTeachersContributions.pdf>

Implementation Questions

This set of questions focuses on the implementation of a revised teacher evaluation system.

Question 15	
Have the district and union come to an understanding about how these decisions will be related to the collective bargaining process?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	



Question 16	
Have the district and union communicated details about the new teacher evaluation system with teachers and evaluators?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	



Question 17	
Have the district and union created a training plan for teachers and evaluators?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	



Question 18	
Have the district and union determined what data will be collected at the district and school levels during the evaluation cycle?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	



Question 19	
How will the district and union monitor and evaluate the design and implementation of the new teacher-evaluation system?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Response:	

Resources

The following are links to useful resources related to implementation:

- *A Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation Systems: A Tool to Assist in the Development of Teacher Evaluation Systems:* <http://www.tqsource.org/publications/practicalGuideEvalSystems.pdf>
- *Communication Framework for Measuring Teacher Quality and Effectiveness: Bringing Coherence to the Conversation:* <http://www.tqsource.org/publications/NCCTQCommFramework.pdf>
- *Everyone at the Table: Engaging Teachers in Evaluation Reform:* <http://www.everyoneatthetable.org/index.php>