Dear Illinois Educator,

November is here and that means PERA Joint Committees in all school districts across the state of Illinois should have begun meeting. Districts are either well on their way or just starting out on their journey to full implementation of the Performance Evaluation Reform Act.

We will continue to provide you with guidance in the process through our Virtual PERA Coach. In this second issue, we will focus on the second and third parts of the flowchart that reflects work to be done by your district: Developing a Communication Plan and Evaluating Professional Practice.

We know that each district is in a different phase of implementation. But, we hope that every district can benefit in some way from the examples and guidance this publication offers. We continue to encourage our early implementers to share with PEAC any documents or experiences that can benefit others who are just starting out. You can share by clicking the link here.
Importance of Collaboration and Developing a Communication Plan

Collaboration is a key component emphasized by the Illinois legislature in the PERA legislation and the guidance documents produced by the Illinois State Board of Education and PEAC to support teacher evaluation work. The role that collaboration plays in the evaluation process cannot be overstated. It is the key to ownership and commitment to the process and the resulting evaluation plan.

Once the joint committee has established the collaborative nature of their work, the next task is to develop a two-way communication plan to inform and seek input from stakeholders about the evaluation process. Our early implementers remind us of the importance of a well-thought-out communication plan. Investing time on a communication plan at the front end of the process can lead to much smoother implementation on the back end. Even if your
PERA joint committee has been meeting for some time, it is still advisable to review (or create) your communication plan. Read more.

Questions to Consider When Developing a Communication Plan

What needs to be communicated?
Who are the primary stakeholders?
How will you involve these stakeholders in the process?

- How will you ask stakeholders for feedback?
- How will you provide updates and feedback opportunities in several ways and through different channels?
- How will you use a representative stakeholder group in the design and decision-making process?
- Do joint committee members have a specific communication charge to share information regularly with the people they represent?


Who Are the Stakeholders?
Stakeholders can vary for each district but can include the following groups:

- School board members
- District leaders
- Teacher union leaders
- School leaders
- Teachers
- Parent/Teacher Organization
- Families
- Community leaders

Communication Throughout the Phases of the Process
Communication plans should be designed for

Observations of Teachers

How often must a teacher be observed?

Are there any specific requirements for either formal or informal observations of teachers' professional practice?

Answers . . .

Weighting the Components of Teacher Practice

Neither PERA nor its Administrative Rules define the relative weights of the components of teacher practice or how ratings of components of teacher practice are to be combined into a final rating of teacher practice. School districts are charged with making those decisions. Many districts are doing this through their PERA joint committees or teachers’ unions.

PEAC recommends that the following questions be considered as district evaluation systems are developed:

1. Should a weight be assigned to the domains and/or components of the instructional framework?
2. What is the minimum level of performance required for each level of practice?
3. Should a rating on a single component of the framework determine the overall rating of practice?
the entire process of improving the evaluation system including its initiation and all implementation phases. Needs change at various stages. The type of communication during the design of the system will be different from that needed during implementation and the process of gathering feedback. Plans should include updates on efforts to build the evaluation system, celebrations of successes as the work moves forward, and recognition of stakeholder contributions. Communicating success in terms of implementation efforts, changes in teacher practice, and student outcomes can be a powerful way to ensure buy-in and secure stakeholder investment. Highlighting successes also reinforces, inspires, and energizes teachers.


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Additional Resources

**Guidance on Collecting Non-Observable Evidence**
This PEAC guidance document provides general recommendations for collecting evidence of teacher practice that is not observable during classroom observations.

**Guidance on Evaluating Beginning Teachers**
This PEAC guidance document provides background information on evaluations for beginning teachers and recommendations for ensuring that teacher performance evaluations are appropriate for and support the professional learning of beginning teachers.

**Guidance on Evaluating Teachers of Special Populations**
This PEAC guidance document provides recommendations, guidance, and examples for districts to use when considering how to evaluate the professional practice and measure student growth of teachers of students with disabilities, English learners, or Early Childhood.

**Interactive Guide to Successful Teacher Evaluation**
This is an interactive tool developed by the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders in collaboration with the NEA to guide teachers and teacher leaders in examining five common challenges during the implementation of a teacher evaluation system. The five challenges are time, communication and stakeholder engagement, educator development and support, alignment with other initiatives, and data availability and support.

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**Resource Links From Issue 1**
Click here to view the resource list from the October issue of Your Virtual Pera Coach.

Also note that you can contact your local ROE/ISC if you would like assistance and/or a trainer to deliver the materials created by Foundational
Additional Subscriptions
Would you like other members in your
district/organization to receive future issues of the
Virtual PERA Coach?

Questions or Topic Suggestions
Use this link to submit questions or topic suggestions
for future issues

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