Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC)

January 25, 2013

Meeting Minutes
Illinois State University Alumni Center, Normal, Illinois

Members Present
Kurt Hilgendorf, Kristen Adams, Michelle Standridge, Dr. Bette Bergeron, Dick Spohr, Don Daily, Diane Rutledge, Steve Ponisciak, Vicki Phillips, Joseph Matula, Angela Chamness, Stephanie Bernoteit, Dawn Conway, Rick Voltz, Janet Tate (representing Audrey Soglin), Randy Davis on phone

Observers Present
Amy Alsop (Illinois Federation of Teachers), Kathy Shaevel (Illinois Federation of Teachers), Brad White, David Osta (Illinois State Board of Education [ISBE]), Tim Thomas, Judy Hacket, Tina Butterbrough, Amy Balenger, Jennifer Garrison (Sandoval School District 501), Mary Jane Morris (Consortium for Educational Change [CEC]), Lynn Holdheide and Amy Elledge, The Center for Great Teachers and Leaders.

Facilitators Present
Gretchen Weber, Larry Stanton, Nick Pinchok, and Cassandra Meyer (American Institutes for Research [AIR])

Meeting Called to Order
The meeting was called to order at 10:13 a.m. by Dr. Linda Tomlinson.

I. Welcome, Announcements, and Updates[1]
a. 2013 Meeting Dates
Linda Tomlinson noted the different locations for several of the meetings in the first half of 2013, as indicated on the agenda. Gretchen Weber asked whether there was still interest in having the dates moved to Monday for the meetings in the second half of 2013. The committee indicated that Friday dates are fine. Vicki Phillips noted that the decision about meeting dates needs to occur so that meeting spaces can be scheduled.

II. Approval of December minutes
Kurt Hilgendorf moved to approve the minutes. Dawn Conway seconded the motion.

I. Welcome, Announcements, and Updates

- **b. Race to the Top (RTTT) Update:** David Osta provided an update about Race to the Top. (It was Christi Chadwick who provided the update at the December meeting.) RTTT districts are eager to have information from the PEAC committee so they can use it to make progress on implementing teacher evaluation. RTTT districts are implementing the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) requirements first, along with School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools. RTTT districts have some tension—in implementing, first they are going to carve the path for PEAC, but the RTTT districts also will have the earliest questions and needs. RTTT districts would love to have as much information as possible and love to lead the way. RTTT districts are

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excited to hear about work PEAC doing related to Type I assessments. There is a meeting with the RTTT districts in one week. Vicki Phillips and Angela Chamness will attend the meeting to provide a PEAC update. David Osta noted that peer evaluation is a requirement of RTTT. Some RTTT districts have done some initial work on that and are excited that PEAC may be sharing some information about that topic. Some RTTT districts already have peer assistance and review program in place and others are eager for guidance. There is a challenge in small districts to implement peer evaluation and they are looking for good information from PEAC. ISBE and the RTTT team are always looking for good information from leading groups and districts in the field. Some of those leading districts are in the RTTT cohort. Mr. Osta wants districts to hear from each other. He told PEAC members that, if they know about any leading districts that might be interested in presenting to RTTT districts or having RTTT districts doing a site visit, some RTTT districts may be interested.

Joseph Matula asked whether all districts are developing a local plan; Mr. Osta confirmed that they are.

Diane Rutledge stated the intention to keep connections between RTTT districts and PEAC, telling Mr. Osta to let PEAC know if he is hearing things from RTTT districts that they would like PEAC to move on. Mr. Osta stated that they would be open to addressing any specific questions from PEAC.

III. Implementation Update by Jennifer Garrison

- Vicki Phillips introduced Jennifer Garrison, the superintendent of Sandoval School District. The district has a SIG school and receives RTTT funds.

  Ms. Garrison described the Sandoval school district: As the superintendent, she is the only central office staff member, and the district has two buildings. There are 160 students in Grades 9–12. The district has a good relationship with their union. The district is trying to change its climate and be a leader in the state. The district is working with CEC on the evaluation component of their SIG grant at Sandoval High School. Ms. Garrison highlighted the importance of having support in implementing the evaluation component because the cost was significant. No other district in her ROE could afford that.

  Ms. Garrison described how the Sandoval Joint Committee has organized itself and chosen to work together: The Sandoval Joint Committee calls itself the Design Committee when working on learning information. The Joint Committee members are members of the Design Committee. This Design Committee decided to implement the Framework for Teaching with a few local modifications; it is implementing 20 of the 22 components in the Framework for Teaching. The district is implementing a revised teacher practice component of a teacher evaluation system this year. Instead bringing the information from the Joint Committee back to the teachers to vote, the union president opened up the committee membership and let the members know that anything the Joint Committee decided would be implemented. As the district implements teacher practice, they are asking teachers for feedback to tweak the teacher practice component during the summer. The teacher practice component of the teacher evaluation represents a change from the previous Sandoval teacher evaluation system, under which no teacher was rated unsatisfactory. Right now, three of the 42 teachers in the SIG school are in remediation.

  It has taken Sandoval two full years, including summer work, to get model developed locally. It will take student growth longer to develop that teacher evaluation. When the Joint Committee

meets, the meetings last a full day. Piloting student growth at the high school will begin this semester; next year at high school will be fully implementing student growth, and teacher evaluation will be piloted in Grades K–8.

Ms. Garrison described the decisions related to student growth that the Joint Committee has made, as well as the associated training: The district will implement student learning objectives as the process for measuring student growth. Ms. Garrison shared the district student learning objective framework, which includes criteria and guiding questions.

- The district expects teachers to collaborate during weekly professional learning community times when students have early release. Ms. Garrison highlighted the fact that there would be no way to do this work without release time built into the master schedule. There is a lot the district is working on—including Common Core, assessment development, and PERA.

- Ms. Garrison discussed some of the logistical rules the district has decided on. Teachers are required to write two student learning objectives (SLOs). There are guidelines for different levels of teachers and elective teachers, and Ms. Garrison described some of those. Building principals will have the responsibility to make sure no group of students is being excluded, buildingwide.

- Sandoval has realized there is no perfect Type I assessment. The decisions the district made are being revisited as the pilot begins. The district also is creating Common Core grade-level assessments for Type II assessments. For Type III, the district will need to have professional development sessions on creating quality assessments. The Joint Committee is developing a rubric in February for teachers on expectations about Type III assessments. Finding the time locally for professional development is very important for this process. Districts must have professional development time. All half-day sessions this year are dedicated to SLOs.

Ms. Garrison summarized the successes and challenges of the development process and the information that the district could use from PEAC:

- Successes of the process: The Design Committee collaborates effectively. The district partnership with CEC has been a key to success. RTTT did not provide this district with a lot of money. Implementing the teacher practice component seems to be working to improve instruction.

- Challenges of the process: There is a lack of high-quality Type I assessments PK–1. There is a lack of value-added data in Illinois; other states that have implemented student growth have historical value-added data, which is necessary for comparisons. There is a lack of guidance on a student growth model for special education teachers. The district is afraid to make a decision related to special education, only to have the guidance come out from PEAC that calls for a different decision.

- What Sandoval needs from PEAC: The district needs the guidance of PEAC expectations as soon as possible. There is a big communication gap between PEAC and the field. The ISBE website does not make it easy to find PEAC documents. PEAC should realize that an effective teacher evaluation system developed locally will take time to develop.

- PEAC members asked a few clarifying questions about the decisions made by the Sandoval School District and the things that Ms. Garrison said.

IV. Communication Strategy Update

a. Branding decision   Gretchen Weber showed two branding options for communications from PEAC. One is branded as PEAC and one as PERA. The PEAC committee has several documents that are waiting for finalization before sending them out to the field; choosing the branding is the last step. Committee members discussed the benefits of both branding options, including the fact that PEAC makes it clear that people are involved in the process.

Five PEAC committee members voted for the PEAC branding and three for PERA. Nonvoting members did not express an opinion.

Vicki Phillips explained the steps for the approval of guidance documents. They will be sent to ISBE for legal approval. Guidance documents would not change for any reason, other than aligning them with the law if they are not so aligned. Gretchen Weber described the six steps for materials dissemination.

Next Steps: AIR will brand the finalized and approved documents with the PEAC logo.

I. Welcome, Announcements, and Updates[2]

- **c. Strategic Plan Update:** Gretchen Weber discussed the revised strategic plan, which was passed out to participants. She summarized the work of previous months, today's topics, and new topics in each month from January through June. One change was the creation of a Stage 5 of work, which is to disseminate information. Today there are several pieces of information at Stage 5.

  Diane Tomlinson asked Kurt Hilgendorf to provide an update on the work of the Illinois Shared Learning Environment (ISLE) Committee. ISLE is designed to be a state-level data collection system and to provide technology infrastructure support, since some districts have a great infrastructure and others do not. Evaluations will be effective if useful data gets into the hands of teachers who understand it, who can then use it to improve their instruction. ISLE is intended to have some impact on that. The committee met earlier in January and plan to meet every other month. Ben Bohr and Amy Alsip also are on the committee. The ISLE Committee would love to speak with districts about their challenges and successes with using data infrastructure. Amy Alsip noted that ISLE is in its early stages and said that RTTT districts have committed to implement it when it is live (34 districts). Dr. Diane Rutledge mentioned the appropriations process related to the data infrastructure and how funding is needed to fully implement PERA.

  Dr. Vicki Phillips described some related work with teacher licensure. ISBE has been looking at the new licensure system that will combine two old systems to be the educator licensure information system (ELIS), starting on July 1. Within ELIS, districts will have the capacity to upload evaluation information. There is ongoing discussion about how the two systems (ELIS and ISLE) will work together.

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V. Topics in Stage 1: Introduce

- **a. Measuring student growth for teachers of students with disabilities:** Lynn Holdheide (with Amy Elledge) from the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at the American Institutes for Research gave PEAC a presentation on the topic of measuring student growth for teachers of students with disabilities. She clarified that special education teachers are not listed explicitly on the presentation title because teachers of students with disabilities may not be special education teachers.

  There are several considerations for states when evaluating teachers of students with disabilities. The first is making sure instructional rubrics (like the Framework for Teaching) work for teachers of students with disabilities.

  Dr. Holdheide noted the lack of research on instructional rubrics. There is no research to show whether they disproportionately place teachers of students with disabilities in the low range. For example, direct instruction might be the research-based instructional strategy appropriate in a certain situation, but an instructional rubric might cause a teacher using that strategy to score lower in the areas of higher order thinking and questioning.

  Some options for states related to instructional rubrics:
  - Some states (e.g., Pennsylvania and Massachusetts) use the same the rubric to evaluate teachers of students with disabilities but provide numerous examples of how that may look in practice. An example related to respectful environment was added that says "Does the teacher follow the behavioral plan?"
  - Some states (e.g., Nevada and Pennsylvania) are focusing on the preobservation conference, so the teacher can articulate things to the evaluators.
  - Some states (e.g., Nevada, and possibly Iowa) are focusing on evidence-based instructional practices, narrowing the scope of the rubric to focus on these research-based practices.
  - Consideration of roles and responsibilities—rubrics and standards can be modified to align with roles. Additional indicators can be added specific to the professional association. Dr. Holdheide described the Pennsylvania strategy for pulling together practitioners, both instructional and specialist support personnel, to go through Framework for Teaching. Instructional personnel added examples. Specialist support personnel modified the Framework for Teaching and aligned it with national association standards. Charlotte Danielson does not object to Pennsylvania doing this work. There are 11 additional rubrics Pennsylvania created, and it is piloting and validating these rubrics.

Vicki Phillips clarified the fact that Illinois has excluded support personnel from being evaluated on student growth.

PEAC members discussed the importance of preobservation conferences and postobservation conferences and conversations in allowing teachers to share important contextual information with their evaluator.

At the request of a PEAC member, Dr. Holdheide provided more details about the rubrics that Nevada is developing for support personnel. A PEAC member mentioned that existing rubrics are being used in Illinois, and Dr. Holdheide noted that the Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE) has a taskforce working on this topic too.

Another important consideration for states when evaluating teachers of students with disabilities is measuring growth for students with disabilities.

Dr. Holdheide stated that assessments for special education students are often the same as the assessments for general education students. Sixty percent of students with disabilities are receiving services in the general education environment. Federal requirements state that 99 percent of a state's students with disabilities must take the general state assessment. For that reason, special education should not be treated like a separate subject; instead, teachers of students with disabilities should be included and considered in discussions of assessments for content areas and grades.

Other concerns related to measuring growth for students with disabilities include their different learning trajectory, accommodations in assessments, student mobility, test scaling, and shared responsibility between general and special education teachers. As to assessments, accessibility is something to be considered as well as training for assessment developers.

Dr. Holdheide summarized some challenges and considerations for using student learning objectives (SLOs) when teaching students with disabilities. It is possible that providing them for students with disabilities could be overlooked. Therefore the growth (or lack thereof) could go unnoticed. One potential solution is to make sure all students are addressed by SLOs. There is a greater need for training for teachers in implementing SLOs and interpreting data. The state could also consider how SLOs can be aligned with response to intervention.

Measures of growth for those students who take alternative assessments is a difficult topic; there is no easy solution for this group of students and teachers. There are three organizations developing Common Core–aligned alternative assessments. There is strong belief in the field that individualized education programs (IEPs) should not be used directly for guiding teacher growth. IEPs can, however, data and information used in the development of a growth measure or SLO.

Dr. Holdheide concluded with some considerations for a state model, including the need for differentiation within student growth based on role and function and the weighting of measures.

She had several questions for the PEAC committee and recommended looking at what is occurring already at the grass roots in Illinois.

When asked about which states have the best models, Dr. Holdheide recommended the states that are focusing on the validation process. The focus might be different if the tight timeline of implementation requires high-stakes decisions need to be made soon. PEAC members requested examples of how other states have approached the work. Kurt Hilgendorf stated that Chicago Public Schools has started thinking about this topic.

Vicki Phillips reminded PEAC that, as part of the RTTT work, ISBE issued a request for sealed proposals for learning assessment systems and it was nonresponsive. That will go out and request a contractor to do some of the things mentioned in this presentation. When content-area groups are brought together, special education and ELL teachers would be integrated into those groups.

I. Welcome, Announcements, and Updates[3]

- **c. Growth Through Learning Update:** Mary Jane Morris, executive director of CEC, provided PEAC members with an in-person update on the evaluator training program. She distributed a memo to the committee members describing current pass rates. Ninety-five percent of registered users have completed Modules 1–3, and 91 percent have completed Module 4. Fifty-four percent of evaluators have completed module 5 on student growth. A new assessment became available for those individuals who could not pass the Module 2 assessment. So far, 51 of the 56 users who had exhausted all their retest options have signed up.

  The CEC conducted an external evaluation of the Growth Through Learning modules. The results from that evaluation were distributed to PEAC members. Growth Through Learning plans to ask users about their implementation of the information they learned at the training in February.

V. Stage I: Introduce

Guidance

B. Guidance on Peer Evaluation in a Teacher Evaluation System:

Gretchen Weber passes out a guidance document on peer evaluation as part of a teacher evaluation system, a document not sent in advance of the meeting.

Both PERA and the Illinois administrative code allow for peer evaluation. The Illinois Phase 3 RTTT application included the requirements of using peer evaluations by 2014–15.

There are two ways to include peer evaluation: peer observations in teacher performance and peer assistance and review (PAR) programs.

After summarizing the benefits of peer evaluation, peer evaluator roles and examples in three districts were discussed: DC Public Schools, Alamance Burlington County [North Carolina] School System, and Hillsborough County [Florida] Public Schools.

In DC Public Schools, master educators conduct observations full-time.

PEAC members brought up the topic of evaluating peer evaluators.

PAR Programs: Ms. Weber provided an overview of PAR, including its origins as a process separate from teacher evaluation. Some information on cost was included in the overview. Toledo was not included as an example because its practice is not really peer evaluation. A PEAC member suggested including Toledo in a discussion of the origins of the program.

In discussing this document, PEAC members brought up the following topics:

- All observers and evaluators must pass the required trainings, if that evidence is going to be used in a teacher's summative rating.

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- A distinction needs to be made between teachers observing each other for the purpose of teacher evaluation and teachers doing so for the purpose of continuous improvement.

An overview of the final Measures of Effective Teaching Report is already on the February PEAC agenda.

A Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers webinar will occur on February 11 from 2 to 4 p.m. (CT) with Dan Long. The presentation will be recorded. An invitation will be sent to PEAC members, but the invitation is open to everyone.

Vicki Phillips clarified information about the new teacher leader endorsement. The teacher leader endorsement is not content-specific but focuses on leadership practices. The first teacher leader program, from the University of St. Francis (in Joliet, Illinois), will undergo review before the licensure board on March 1. ISBE does not have thoughts about what a teacher leader may or may not do in a district. It is an employment decision of each district whether individuals with this endorsement will conduct peer evaluations. As someone bridging the gap between a full-time classroom teacher and an administrator, a person with teacher leader training and background would be put to good use in the peer evaluation role. But ISBE is not intending to make that determination. It was decided that, as part of this endorsement, teachers would not be required to receive the prequalification evaluator training.

Topics in Stage 4: Give Guidance

SM: Require

SM: Recommend

A. Student Growth Model for Type I Assessments (Model, Guidance)

The decision on a student growth model for Type I assessments will be put off until next meeting. The model and guidance documents will be distributed to PEAC members before that meeting.

Guidance

B. Student Growth for First Year Principals (Guidance)

PEAC members did not get this document by e-mail before the meeting. Larry Stanton summarized the main changes between this version and the previous one, which were a reduction in the number of examples, an improvement in example growth targets by including tiered targets, a greater emphasis on alignment with school improvement targets, and a differentiation between the concept of growth and the concept of attainment.

Council members gave the following suggestions on the *Student Growth for First Year Principals* guidance document:

- Add a definition of benchmark assessments, since the term is being used a little differently in this document.

- Change the word *should* to *may* in the first FAQ to avoid overreaching.

- Clarify that "new to the profession" means "new to the role."

SM: Recommend

C: Operating Guidelines for Student Growth Models in Teacher Evaluation Systems (Guidance)

Gretchen Weber identified two locations where information was changed to make it more general and less specific.

Council members gave the following suggestions on the Operating Guidelines document:

- Remove any reference to teachers being assigned student growth scores for classes or students they do not teach.

- Even teachers of small classes of students must have student growth as part of their evaluation—this requirement in the law needs to be made clear.

- Recommend using multiple years of data, especially for teachers with very small classes. Adding more years would improve the stability of the measurement.

- Consider mentioning the importance of the validation of student-teacher linkages—either here or in another guidance document.

Next Steps: AIR will make requested the changes to these documents and will highlight any section that is changed.

Topics in Stage 5: Publish

A. Type III Assessments: Student Learning Objectives (Model, Guidance)

SM: Recommend

Council members gave the following suggestions on the *Student Learning Objectives Guidance* document:

- Call the numbered sections chapters for clarity.

SM: Require

Council members did not share any changes for the *Student Learning Objectives Model System* document.

B. Summative Rating Combining Multiple Measures (Model, Guidance)

SM: Recommend

Council members gave the following suggestions on the *Summative Rating Guidance* document:

- Make it clear that the Joint Committee can define the ranges used in the two examples, highlighting the fact that they are examples, not suggestions. AIR will make this change.

- Two PEAC members also suggested, again, that a matrix example be added. AIR will follow up to make sure this option meets the legal requirements.

SM: Require

Council members gave the following suggestions on the *Summative Rating Model System* document:

- With some questions from PEAC members, Larry Stanton clarified why the decision was made to organize the matrix that appears in the *Model System.* The decisions were based on guidance from ISBE's general counsel about the legality of the system. The Illinois Federation of Teachers went on record saying that they think that in the *Model System,* more evidence should be required when the professional practice and student growth sections of the teacher evaluation scores are two levels apart. Larry Stanton clarified that the general counsel says that such a discrepancy is not wide enough to justify gathering additional information; the 50–50 weighting should be used to make a decision in that case.

Next Steps: AIR will make the requested changes to these documents.

Public comment:
Larry Stanton asked whether there was any public comment. There was no public comment. The meeting adjourned at 2:35.

SYMBOL KEY

Guidance = General guidance to all districts (includes topics related to principal evaluation, re-calibration of evaluators, etc.)

SM: Require = Required element of the state teacher evaluation model; any district unable to reach a collective bargaining agreement would default to these required elements of the state model.

SM: Recommend = Recommended element of the state teacher evaluation model; all districts can use these elements as guidance and can adopt, adapt, modify, or ignore them as best fits their district needs.

C = Communications document from PEAC to LEAs (shorter overview documents).