Performance Evaluation Advisory Council Meeting

Friday, January 29, 2016

10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Meeting Notes

Members Present: Angie Adams, Kristen Adams, Ben Boer, Vince Camille, Dawn Conway, Paula Crane, Randy Davis, Gail Fahey, Larry Frank (for Audrey Soglin), Hector Garcia, Jessica Handy, Kurt Hilgendorf, Diane Rutledge, Stephen Ponisciak, and Michelle Standridge

Observers Present: Amy Alsop (Illinois Federation of Teachers), Teri Carman (Consortium for Educational Change), Jennie Jian (Chicago Consortium on School Research), Mark Klaisner (West 40 Regional Office of Education), Brian Schwartz (Illinois Principal Association), and Brad White (Illinois Education Research Council)

Present via Phone: Matt Clifford (Midwest Comprehensive Center)

Facilitator Present: Rebecca Bates, Larry Stanton, and Gretchen Weber (American Institutes for Research)

I. Approval of December Minutes and Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Updates

Diane Rutledge called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. She asked for the approval of the December 2015 minutes. Gail Fahey motioned to approve, and Paula Crane seconded. The minutes were approved. ISBE had no updates for Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC). The February 26, 2016 meeting will be held virtually, and the March 2016 in-person meeting has been rescheduled to March 18, 2016.

II. Learning and Development: Chicago Consortium on School Research—Teacher Evaluation in Chicago

Jennie Jiang presented research by University of Chicago Consortium on School Research (UChicago Consortium) on teacher evaluation in Chicago. Jennie Jiang shared copies of the Teacher Evaluation in Chicago: Key Findings from Consortium Research, a retrospective that highlights key findings from previous research. The presentation focused on the January 2016 report Teacher Evaluation in Chicago: Differences in Value-Added Scores by Teacher, Student, and School Characteristics from the 2013–14 teacher evaluation data.

UChicago Consortium found that schools vary in the proportion of high and low ratings teachers received. High-poverty schools had a higher percentage of the lowest rated teachers as measured
by both observations and value-added. Low-poverty schools had a higher percentage of the most highly rated teachers as measured by observations. Prior research suggests many reasons for these patterns. UChicago Consortium also looked at culture and climate, teacher experience, teacher education, and minority status in relation to the observation and value-added scores. Differences in the types of classes or student composition could attribute to the findings; the UChicago Consortium is currently looking into these data.

Larry Frank asked about the interrater reliability of the evaluators. Jennie Jiang shared that UChicago Consortium is looking at this in another study. Kurt Hilgendorf shared experiences from teaching in different schools within the Chicago district, and he asked to what extent some of the differences in evaluation scores are rooted in the rubric by which we evaluate teachers. Jennie Jiang shared that UChicago Consortium does not know, but it is something that should be researched and studied. UChicago Consortium did look at the data at the domain level and talked to stakeholders about what should be changed. UChicago Consortium is having conversations on how the context of a school should interact with the rubric for teacher evaluation.

Diane Rutledge asked how do we break the cycle and get the best teachers in the neediest schools. Jennie Jiang responded that we also know from prior research that there is more direct instruction in higher poverty schools, which conflicts with the teacher evaluation rubric. Diane Rutledge also brought up principalship and how a principal’s recruitment and retention ability plays into the data. Kristen Adams shared that she can see the difference in instruction and is not sure how the reality of teaching can be reflected in a rubric.

Hector Garcia asked about the observers’ interrater reliability and whether the context of where they are conducting the observation has an impact on the rating. Jennie Jiang said a preliminarily finding is that having an evaluator of a different race than the teacher does not seem to have an impact on the rating, but there may be differences by race/ethnicity/gender in the types of classes taught by teachers.

Larry Frank shared that maybe the discussion needs to be how to apply the rubric in different schools based on the context of the schools because teachers may not be able to overcome what the student brings into the classroom. Ben Boer stated that it is important to consider the context, and it is important to make sure that the instruction is not poor, so we need to figure out ways to work on that problem. Brad White commented that it might not be pointing out a staffing problem, but a problem with the rubric. Because the value-added measure controls for poverty, it may be a circular conversation.

Within the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA), districts have the latitude to make decisions on the rubric, but PEAC members suggest that districts need to base decisions on data and trends. Larry Stanton suggested PEAC develop questions for districts to consider after they complete the evaluation cycle. Jennie Jiang said that the Chicago trends may have been happening before Recognizing Educators Advancing Chicago’s Students (REACH), but now the data make the process transparent and add to the need of having multiple metrics.

Kurt Hilgendorf asked about the variation within schools and teacher turnover. Jennie Jiang shared that UChicago Consortium would like to look at this for the next research piece because tenured teachers were evaluated during 2014–15. Gretchen Weber asked if there was the
potential to look at the qualitative pieces for rubric use from evaluators. Jennie Jiang shared that this is not in the scope of the study, but it may be something for future work.

Gretchen Weber asked PEAC if there are implications for PEAC work based on this presentation. Stephen Ponisciak said that districts need to be careful in how they account for poverty and context in their student growth. Ben Boer suggested creating 10 interesting findings from research across the country that districts should be aware of as they build their system. Larry Frank likened this process to using Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers scores; at the end of the next year, districts will have data at the district level, but maybe the districts will need to know what they should expect to see. However, some of the questions can only be answered as years of data are collected and trends are developed. Ben Boer asked if ISBE can do this at the state level in order to provide better feedback on what is happening statewide. However, the state would need to collect observation and value-added data rather than summative data; it is difficult to evaluate the system at the state level with just the summative rating. Diane Rutledge suggested that committees discuss the presentation and consider the future implications for PEAC.

III. PEAC Committee Updates

Evaluator Training/Retraining. Vince Camille shared for the committee. The committee made revisions to the administrator academy template. The committee wrote a vignette for the student growth administrator academy. The committee will continue work on the academy during work time. They will need at least one more meeting to complete the work.

Systems Design and Implementation. Kurt Hilgendorf shared for the committee. The committee has considered how they would like to draft a guidance draft for assistant principal evaluation. They have a revised draft to review during work time.

Outreach and Engagement. Diane Rutledge provided an update for the Outreach and Engagement Committee. The Your Virtual PERA Coach newsletter has been regularly sent out and has been well received. Terri Carmen has been drafting the newsletter and the committee thanked her for the work on it. The committee will continue work on the newsletter. The committee would also like to bring districts to PEAC meetings to present. If the council members know of districts that can inform the work, then please share this with committee members.

Larry Stanton asked council member to share what they are hearing about the progress of PERA implementation. Paula Crane shared that she has heard from districts who have not started, districts that are piloting, and districts who have implemented PERA. Kristen Adams shared that she has heard similar information in that districts with changes in administration are not as far along with implementation. Michelle Standridge discussed a need in the field for PEAC to continue after 2017 because districts that continue to implement PERA may needs support. Gail Fahey shared DuPage County is having a PERA Student Growth Showcase, Tuesday February 2, 2016. Through planning the showcase, she found that some districts do not want to share their progress, but other districts are eager to share their progress. In these districts eager to share, the joint committees are made of teachers and administrators. At the showcase, three law firms will wrap up the event; the law firms shared that it has been “strangely quiet” in terms of PERA
implementation. Larry Frank shared that that some districts have made progress, but many still have not started to make decisions.

Diane Rutledge asked how PEAC can help those districts that have not started the process. Larry Frank responded that it is difficult for districts to find a place to ask questions; districts may not be sure where to go to ask for guidance. Brian Schwartz shared that administrators may need more guidance. Dawn Conway shared that in districts with people as resources, they have the personnel to approach PERA, but some of the smaller districts may struggle with having the capacity to approach it. She agreed there may be need for ongoing guidance. Hector Garcia added that his staff has been working really well as a joint committee, but the message to the rest of the teachers is more difficult. Diane Rutledge encouraged the PEAC committees to consider the needs of the districts when they break into work groups. Kristen Adams shared that teachers have a lot of trepidation about the student growth portion, and how their district has tried to communicate the message. Diane Rutledge asked if PEAC has ideas to address this. Gail Fahey suggested that they ask for feedback from the participants of the Student Growth Events as to what their needs are and what may help them. Larry Frank shared that districts do not need more written guidance, but that districts need to make decisions in order to for them to consider the questions that they have. Kurt Hilgendorf shared that the districts that implemented first had challenges, but other districts will continue to have struggles. Districts need to learn by doing, and this is something that the outreach and engagement committee needs to address.

PEAC broke into committees, and each committee addressed their specific tasks.

IV. PEAC Committee Reports

Evaluator Training/Retraining. The Evaluator Training/Retraining Committee reviewed the draft vignette that will be used to during the administrator academy on student growth. They are providing an opportunity for collaboration within the academy to provide time to build the skills of evaluators in conferencing with teachers on student growth data. They also determined what need to be completed to address each of the objectives for the academy and reviewed the academy proposal for alignment to the plans for the training. The committee left with clear next steps and assignments for completing the major components of the administrator academy. The committee will meet face-to-face at the Illinois Education Association (Naperville location) on February 26, 2016, to complete the draft of the administrator academy and accompanying materials.

Systems Design and Implementation. The Systems Design and Implementation committee reviewed a draft of the Assistant Principal Evaluation Guidance and responded to comments within the draft. They provided input to guide the next draft of the guidance, which will be reviewed during the virtual meeting on February 26, 2016. The committee also developed a timeline and action steps to ensure that the guidance would ready for full PEAC approval during the March 2016 meeting. The committee also discussed next steps and determined that they will focus on developing guidance for districts around collecting and reviewing evaluation data. The committee will meet virtually February 26, 2016.

Outreach and Engagement. The Outreach and Engagement committee discussed the UChicago Consortium presentation and determined they will create questions for districts to consider after
implementing PERA. This will be on the committees March 2016 agenda for publication in the May *Your Virtual PERA Coach*. The committee reviewed a draft of the February *Your Virtual PERA Coach* newsletter and made suggestions for changes. Terri Carmen shared progress updates for the March 2016 issue. The committee is considering the development of a communication toolkit for schools and districts. The committee plans to interview some districts implementing PERA in 2016–17 on their work. The committee’s next meeting will be virtual on Monday, February 29, 2016, at 1:00 p.m. CT.

V. Public Comment and Adjournment

There were no public comments.