

## Discussion Notes: Educator Evaluation Breakout Session

Stakeholder Session #1 | April 28, 2016

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### I. Overview

Jeanne Harmon of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) led morning and afternoon breakout sessions with participants focused on the potential impact and opportunities of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) on educator evaluation in Pennsylvania. CCSSO provided an overview of the following elements of ESSA:

- ESSA eliminates the waiver requirement that states establish teacher evaluation systems based in significant part on students' performance on statewide assessments.
- ESSA eliminates the “highly qualified teacher” (HQT) requirements of No Child Left Behind.
- While HQT requirements are eliminated at the federal level, ESSA maintains the requirement that schools receiving Title I-A funds ensure that poor and minority children are not taught by “ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced” teachers at higher rates than other children (also known as “Equitable Access to Excellent Educators”). The law does not define these terms, however, and states must detail the measures they will use to evaluate and report on progress.

Given these changes, participants were asked to contemplate the ways Pennsylvania might leverage newfound flexibility to improve the current [“Educator Effectiveness”](#) system in Pennsylvania – established through [Act 82 of 2012](#) and related regulations.

### 2. Discussion Points

Participants were encouraged by the facilitator to consider priority areas related to educator certification that work group members should contemplate as they begin their work in June. In particular, breakout session participants focused on the following key questions.

#### **GOALS: What does Pennsylvania’s ideal educator evaluation system look like in five years given the opportunities created by ESSA?**

- Keep Danielson “Framework” but jump on opportunity with ESSA to change evaluation system
- Enhance credibility of current evaluation system (partial credibility exists on observation/practice side, but lacking on the other half, including School Performance Profile serving as the 15 percent building score in Educator Effectiveness)
- Create a system that accounts for the effects of poverty
- Components of educator effectiveness must be tied to research and evidence
- Create a system which measures student growth against an accepted standard rather than against all other students who took statewide assessments (PSSAs, Keystones).
  - Example: Use reading on the fifth grade level last year to equate one year of growth.
- Focus on growth over achievement (not necessarily PVAAS)
- Streamline process of observation
- Recognize multiple needs for differentiation (roles, content area, experience level)
- Incorporate reflection piece, peer observation (interaction/feedback)
- Develop a teacher evaluation system that more accurately distinguishes “effective” from “ineffective” teachers (i.e., modify cut scores)

- Define/provide support (not just professional learning) more broadly, including professional development, mentoring programs, etc.
- Increase value of non-traditional content areas/teachers
- Effective and fair equity plan
- Use Classroom Diagnostic Tool (CDT) for ongoing assessment
- Establish transparency around purpose of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) to drive teacher reflection and inform practice
- Multiple measures, specific to teacher assignment, that informs teacher and principal effectiveness
- Identify deficiencies in practice to inform better instruction by embedding measures of student learning into observation component
- Provide prescriptive support for struggling teachers/educators
- Teacher evaluation based on a growth mindset
- Simplified/less complicated system that is practitioner-driven
- Incentivize collaboration and collegial supports

**CHALLENGES: What challenges and barriers stand in the way of achieving these goals?**

- Current observation process is cumbersome (i.e., PA-Etep & Teachscape, Talented)
- Current focus on growth is one time/year (vs. ongoing)
- Concern with current equity plan
- Impact of Act 82 as it pertains to evaluation of all educators (credibility of SPP as building level score)
- Ensuring teacher quality in schools with a high SPP score but poor instructional practice
- Concerns about capabilities of administrators making decisions about equity of teacher responsibility

**STRATEGIES: What are some possible strategies for overcoming those challenges?**

- Establish multiple criteria to use for “effective instruction” and address different content areas and experience levels of educators
- Maintain the observation piece of both teacher and principal evaluation.
- Eliminate any connection of the right side of the wheel to the observation (do not quantify or score), and instead collect this data to have critical conversations about curriculum, instruction, and cohorts.
- Mirror other state formulas for parameters in the teacher evaluation system and create a system that accounts for the effect of poverty on learning
  - Make an allowance in the SPP score, if it remains
- Focus on SLOs as measure for growth (help make subgroups important)
- Focus on growth over achievement by looking at all student learning measures as a three year trend (SPP, TSD/PVAAS, SLO)
- Incorporate self-assessment into measure of effectiveness
- Include summary component relative to outcome or performance growth attained as part of supervision process each year
- Impact of process and other factors on tenure and Type I to II (timeliness of data to complete evaluation)
- Use ongoing formula assessment as part of the evaluation process
- Drop late summary results so interpreting is more timely and tied to instructions
- Determine what needs to be evaluated for each position (i.e., classroom teacher, school nurse, librarian, etc.). Each item gets scored with 1-2-3-4-5. Individual and evaluator complete evaluation separately then meet to determine final score.

- PDE can provide all LEAs with suggestions and national recommendations regarding non-teaching professionals, professional to student ratio (example – counselor to student ratio of 1:250)
- Identify and articulate evidence-based strategies for attracting teachers to low-performing schools for inclusion in state equity plan
- Focus on growth as an ongoing process versus annual – continuous discussion on areas of strength and those needing improvement; develop systems of supervision and evaluation based on growth, not compliance
- Consider non-content/non-academic areas (career and technical education, etc.)
- Change timelines for student assessment so that they are relevant for the teachers
- Communicate in terms of teaching (vs. teacher) effectiveness, emphasize effectiveness rather than ineffectiveness, and focus on instruction rather than the person
- Revisit teacher evaluations in light of the multiple influences that educators have on “learning,” attending to a more developmental lens (cognitive, social/emotional), and domains 2 and 4 in Danielson (specific student measures)
- Leverage teacher leaders
- Support collaborative relationship between educator and supervisor to individualize/personalize evaluation, support, improvement, reflection
- Data used to drive improvement
- Best practices identified and modeled
- Look at structure/restructuring (ex., class prep, class size, scheduling, differentiated expectations based on context/situation, collaboration time, creative funding)
- Develop a system of support prior to evaluation for teachers to learn their role in the process to be their own advocate and encourage self-reflection
- Create an easy place to access all supports
- Eliminate the “buzz word of the day”
- Clear, focused communication, less complicated system that is more easily understood by teachers
  - Recommended shrinking the pieces of the educator effectiveness pie to 50 percent observation/practice and 50 percent growth.
- Blended innovation (both high- and low-tech, synchronous and asynchronous, face-to-face and virtual)
- Think about “support” more broadly than professional development (i.e., less pressure, more planning time, differentiated class size based on experience and degree of difficulty, etc.)
- Mandate use of student learning measures under the observation and practice category, not as separate pieces of teacher evaluation
- Build specific time to develop support for struggling educators and ensure follow-through with some sort of coaching model
- Use a peer assistance and review process (Master Teacher/Consulting Teacher model)
- Work with professional organizations (NSTA, NCTE) to determine best resources to support struggling educators
- Provide/create clear definitions and examples for each component rated in observation and practice
- Add a layer of peer evaluation to teacher removal process
- Develop colleague networks, video bank, etc., to “show” and share effective practice
- Support and incentivize practitioner action research

**RESOURCES NEEDED: What additional information is required?**

- PA Department of Education, [Educator Effectiveness \(web page\)](#)

- Includes links to [Act 82 of 2012](#), rules and regulations, [Educator Effectiveness Administrative Manual](#), and guidelines for the submission and review of locally developed alternative rating tools.
- [PASA/PAESSP/PSEA white paper on Educator Effectiveness and Evaluation](#) (2015)

### **Other Questions & Considerations**

- **Technology and Innovation:** The word “technology” appears 65 times in ESSA; “innovation” only appears 25 times. How do we as a state think through an innovative lens across all areas of the law? The word “technology” is often an unnecessary barrier and is not equal to innovation. Pennsylvania should consider an ongoing education leadership “Innovations Lab” or think tank that is constantly thinking outside the box, sharing practices and metrics, etc.
- **Family and Community Engagement:** Family and community engagement is not an integral part of teacher and leadership prep. How can we provide “blended opportunities” for educators, education leaders, and parent leaders on Framework FCE, PTA, and ongoing research?
- **Act 82 of 2012:** Breakout session participants expressed a need to clearly understand the existing requirements of Act 82, as well as the need for collaboration with the House and Senate Education Committees and other members of the General Assembly to gain their buy-in and support with recommended changes.
- **Librarians and Community Partners:** Need to clearly define roles for librarians, library instructors, and non-instructors to begin to assess how ESSA impacts roles and opportunities. Partnerships with local public libraries as well as college/university libraries should also be explored.

### **3. Key Takeaways & Next Steps**

A few central themes emerged from the educator evaluation breakout session discussions:

- Participants emphasized the need for authentic and ongoing input from teachers, administrators, and other practitioners in the development of educator evaluation systems and supports (professional development, etc.).
- Participants emphasized an ideal system of educator evaluation that would incentivize and meaningfully support collaboration between peers as well as intensive supports, like mentoring, coaching, and other assistance.
- Significant portions of the discussion centered around the importance of a revised SPP in order to improve the educator evaluation process and ensure equitable access to excellent educators for all students in Pennsylvania.
- What opportunities does ESSA present to re-envision what school looks like through innovative practices and disruption? Participants spent time discussing reimagined learning and teaching spaces, including restructured supports, blended learning, teacher collaboration, time shifting within the school “day,” instructional rounds, and other practices.

Breakout session participants identified those takeaways and the preceding themes as areas where members of the Educator Evaluation Work Group should begin their initial discussions in June.