

**ESSA Educator Effectiveness Work Group
MacKay Building, Pierre, SD
April 19, 2016**

The meeting of the ESSA Educator Effectiveness Work Group began at 10:00 a.m. on April 19, 2016, in the MacKay Building, Pierre, South Dakota. The Effectiveness Work Group was formed to make recommendations to the South Dakota Department of Education (DOE) pertaining to changes in requirements for educator effectiveness in the new reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act known as the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA).

Welcome

Teri Bissonette, McRel International North Central Comprehensive Center, welcomed the members and introduced Melody Schopp, Secretary of Department of Education. Schopp welcomed the members of the group. She reminded the group that the teacher and principal evaluation process was found in the ESEA Flexibility Waiver that US ED granted to South Dakota. The waiver process and educator evaluations were eliminated with the enactment of ESSA. South Dakota has state laws that pertain to the evaluation of both teachers and principals. The Commission on Teaching and Learning may wish to remove some of the restrictions on the process since the elimination of the ESEA Flexibility Waiver. The Work group was asked to make recommendations pertaining to the current evaluation process. What recommendations would they make to the Commission on Teaching and Learning and to the Accountability Workgroup pertaining to this new flexibility? What is best for the students, teachers, and administrators in their schools?

Workgroup Membership

Members of the workgroup who were present: Nancy Block, Webster Area School District; Katherine Bray, East Dakota Education Cooperative; Tom Cameron, White River School District; Debi Caskey, Douglas School District; Kiley Cumbow, Pierre School District; Jeremy Hurd, McLaughlin School District; Shelly Jensen, Brookings School District; John Julius, Rapid City Area School District; Amanda Keller, Custer School District; Rob Lewis, Redfield School District; Kathy Meyer, Huron School District; Steve O'Brien, Watertown School District; Janeen Outka, East Dakota Education Cooperative; Chrissy Peterson, Meade School District; Sharla Steever, TIE (Technology & Innovation in Education); Robin Wiebers, University of South Dakota; and Michelle Powers, Brookings School District.

Overview of Teacher and Administrator Effectiveness Process

Carla Leingang and Matt Gill, SD DOE, presented a slide presentation reviewing how the teacher and administrator effective process has developed in South Dakota. A brief overview was provided beginning with 2010 and the establishment of minimum professional performance standards for teachers. As required by state statute, a work group recommended the Danielson Framework that was adopted as the SD Framework for Teaching. In 2012, the ESEA Flexibility Waiver was granted.

South Dakota used a collaborative process to develop the current teacher evaluation process that is currently being implemented. Principal Evaluation is scheduled to be implemented in school year 2016-17. With the signing of ESSA, we have the opportunity to re-evaluate the effectiveness system.

Work Process

Bissonette led the group through a series of small and large group discussions to consider a number of questions pertaining to the teacher and principal evaluation systems. The results of the group discussions are attached.

Wrap-up

The work group determined that their next meeting will be scheduled through a survey of the members. More information will be sent to the work group pertaining to any of their requests. The work group will also receive information about the discussion of the other work groups prior to the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:30 pm

Principal Professional Practice Discussion

South Dakota Framework for Effective Principals

The small group agreed that having a standard framework and rubric allows for a more consistent system of measuring professional practices. As the system is new there is not enough experience to give quality feedback at this time. The DOE trainings for administrators have been helpful.

- The group would suggest creating a larger list of specific artifacts to go with each component.
- Reporting of a professional practice rating seems to have some timing concerns and may have an impact on how districts will address it.
- **Principal** - The group did not agree with the definition of “principal”. They question whether language needs to be added that principals evaluate teachers. The group agrees that the “professional practice rating” should include at least one component from each of the six domains. The group did not have enough information to determine whether the observable and non-observable domains are measured effectively.
- **Assistant Principal** - The group agreed that principals and assistant principals should have different requirements or expectations. An assistant principal may not be an instructional leader. Assistant Principals should not be evaluated in areas that are not in their control. An assistant principal may not be able to be evaluated on all six domains. A guided component selection is needed at the district level. A comment from the group was made on requiring some sort of certification for assistant principals who are evaluating teachers.
- **Assistant Principal** – The group agreed that assistant principals not be evaluated on all six domains. They also indicated that six components from four domains would give the district more flexibility. They recommended that the districts make the decision as to the role of the assistant principals and whether that role involves evaluating teachers.
- **Assistant Principal** – The DOE has no certification requirements for an assistant principal. The group recommended that this needs consideration as there may need to be some minimum requirements, certification, or alternative certification.
- **Principal evaluation timelines** – The group recommended that the implementation year remain as 2016-2017. The group discussed evaluation frequency. Should the frequency be a district choice? The group would recommend consideration pertaining to the years when a principal is not evaluated. When a principal is in an off evaluation year, is there a document that a principal can have in hand that provides support for his/her work.
- **Evaluators** – The group agrees that assigned evaluators should be trained in the evaluation model and that this should be determined at the district level.
- **Multiple appointments** - The group recommended that it was a district level decision to determine how a person with multiple appointments such as superintendent/principal is evaluated.
- **Time commitment for observations** – Are there ways to decrease the amount of time it takes to complete observations? The group decided that over time the evaluation process will improve through the experience and best practices of the evaluators.
- **Training for observers** – The group agreed that the Framework should be covered during the internship portion of a conferred degree. The group would encourage training for administrators on the evaluation process in the Framework. Training through conferences or a self-paced course would help provide consistency and professionalism.

Principal Evaluation: Student Growth

- Current rules require a minimum 25% of the school growth score to be based on the School's SPI, AMOs or a combination. The work group recommended the elimination of the 25% of growth score and make 100% based on Student Learning Objectives (SLO). This follows the recommendation for the teacher student growth rating.
- The group believes the SLO process should be continued and that 100% of school growth for teachers and principals be factored by SLOs. The group stated that using teacher surveys as a factor should be a district decision.
- ARSD 24:58:03:04. Alternative student growth model rule allows districts the choice of not using SLO results as a component of school growth for administrators. The work group felt that flexibility should be continued for districts that have submitted alternative plans.

Large group - Principal Effectiveness Recommendations

- Principal evaluation – Keep the implementation year as 2016-2017.
- Principal evaluation rules require principals to be evaluated: First four years of employment - evaluate once per school year: Five or more years of employment - evaluate at least every other year. The work group recommended that the timeline remain as is in the framework as there is not enough time or data to warrant a change at this time.
- Currently a plan of assistance is required for any principal not meeting the requirements. The work group recommended removing this language from legislative rule. This should be a state recommendation to work with principals and establish a plan of assistance to support the growth of principals who show promise, but need supports to continue in their roles in their current district.
- The state minimum evaluation requirement definition found in ARSD 24:58:03:02 requires districts to combine the professional practice rating and school growth rating into one summative effectiveness rating. The work group would recommend that the components of the evaluation tool do not have to be combined; a district can choose to combine them at the local level. The group feels that the summative matrix should not be a requirement. The summative rating matrix is unnecessary, if not being used at the state level. A district may use them as they see fit to combine them. The workgroup stated that the system does increase professional growth and development. The process for evaluation needs to be focused on professional growth for the principal and through conversation and self-reflection about ways to improve practice and goals. The system should remain as is as it provides clear, timely, and useful feedback.
- "Summative effectiveness rating" is defined as the combination of a principal's or assistant principal's professional practice rating and school growth rating into one of the following categories: Below Expectations, Meets Expectations, or Exceeds Expectations. The workgroup recommended keeping the rating categories the same, but that there could be potential conversation about adding a level, if it is kept.
- The work group stated that it is important to provide flexibility for evaluators to use professional judgment during the evaluation process to make adjustments based on circumstances.
- The work group would recommend that the accreditation review process be used exclusively to ensure the minimum requirements of the educator effectiveness rules are met through the accreditation review process.

Teacher Evaluation: Professional Practices

South Dakota Framework for Teaching (Danielson Framework)

Measuring effectiveness based on the SD Framework for Teaching

- The group stated that it is a challenge using components for special education.
- Some districts focus on the SLO and do not focus so much on professional practices.
- The Danielson model is very good and has great opportunities for communicating with staff. District staff persons have something in front of them to look at and all see the same thing.
- The evaluation process is intended to inform personnel decisions; however, it is still perceived as determining the employment decision of a teacher.
- The framework/process should help to inform opportunities for teachers such as opportunities to work with other teachers, teacher leaders, etc.

Does having a standard framework and rubric result in a more consistent measure of professional practices?

- Some professional assignments are difficult to align with the components.
- The rubrics work well for new teachers and those who are basic, but less useful for advanced teachers.
- Districts select components in different ways.
- Some evaluators find it difficult to evaluate veteran teachers who are unaccustomed to the new tool and rubric.
- The group asked how do teachers get comfortable with the evaluation tool when they are evaluated every two years?
- To improve the consistency of measuring professional practices additional efforts needs to be made in looking at special education needs and the needs of others who do not quite fit with some of the components.
- The group also suggested it would be good to be able to leave feedback at the time of the observation rather than after the fact.

Professional Practice Rating

- The group agreed that the professional practice rating should include all the domains. They suggested that if domain 1 and 4 are not handled effectively, then domains 1 and 3 are not going well either.
- The recommendation has been that evaluators should be allowed to provide feedback on other components.
- A natural part of the evaluation is looking at the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher. Allowing feedback only on the evaluation components can stop an administrator from talking about other areas that need discussion. The administrator feels limited as the area was not one of the selected components. Flexibility needs to say that you can allow for additional information to be part of the evaluation.
- The evaluation has been interpreted that non-selected items are outside of the allowed boundaries. The rules were never intended to limit. When districts develop their evaluation systems, they consider incorporating flexibility in addressing components outside the selected minimums.

State minimum evaluation requirements

- The group discussed whether the professional practices should have four rating options. They recommended keeping the four options.
- The group also stated that there is a misconception on the required number of formal and informal observations. The rules do not require a minimum number of observations.

Definition of a “teacher”

- The group recommended that language should be added that a teacher may be someone who may or may not have a certificate. Also, anyone directly providing instruction to students should be evaluated.
- The group did not recommend that the definition change when discussing special education teachers and Title I pull-out teachers. They did not recommend that the definition change. Districts need to apply the definition properly. Also, note was taken that long-term substitutes who are temporarily replacing a teacher should not be evaluated. School librarians who are providing instruction should be included in the definition of a teacher, but this depends on the instruction, all day every day. This would be on a case-by-case basis.
- School service specialist are not considered a teacher under this definition. The group recommended that each district needed to look at the instruction they are providing and compare it to the definition as many have dual roles. More guidance should be provided in this area.

Other

- Are there ways to decrease the amount of time it takes to complete observations? The group stated that the observation time is not what takes time. One suggestion was that veteran teachers should have discretion to have fewer formal and informal observations. After demonstrating certain proficiencies the veteran teachers are able to do professional goals.
- Veteran teachers need more options to select components.
- DOE does not plan to require observers to complete Teachscape Focus for Observers. The group indicated that going through the training made them a better evaluator.

Teacher Evaluation: Student Growth

- **Student Learning Objectives** – The group made comments about their experience with SLOs that there is a lack of rigor; there is a struggle with pre-post assessment and effective assessments. The SLOs do result in more meaningful observations and increased collaboration. The teachers and administrators are increasingly more aware of curriculum and formative assessments and data planning for professional development. The group would recommend that districts work on better communication between the district and the teachers. The group also recommended that the student growth component continue to be part of the teacher evaluations.
- **Teacher evaluations** – The group recommended decreasing the frequency of evaluations for tenured teachers from every other to every third year. The group asked what happens if districts don't use all state minimum requirements when evaluating teachers in the district?
- **Student growth** - The group agreed that the current definition of “student growth” and “student growth rate” is fine. The group would recommend removing the reference to state

assessments from the student learning objectives definition found in the statute. The SLOs should be measured by an agreed upon assessment method. The SLOs should be approved by a district evaluator and the definition of instructional period should be determined by the district. It should be a local decision whether teachers write their SLO based on a single class of students or multiple classes. The group agreed that a district choosing to use a method other than SLOs to measure student growth must complete the crosswalk process.

- **Definition of teacher** – The group agreed that the definition of a teacher is fine. They also stated that school librarians who teach should not be included in the definition; however, this is a district decision. DOE did not intend for school service specialists, school counselors, speech language pathologist to be included in the definition of a teacher. The group agreed.
- The group decided it would be beneficial to identify procedures to guide teachers through analyzing student needs and establishing priorities for student learning starting with training on the broad evaluation piece, not just the SLOs. There is interest in work to identify procedures by which teachers develop and document rigorous, realistic student growth goals, but this needs to be a local decision to implement. The crosswalk document is helpful and does not need to be changed.

Teacher Effectiveness Recommendations

- The group recommended that all teachers be evaluated in years one through three at least annually.
- The group also recommended that when a teacher has more than three years of total experience as a teacher, but is new to a district, the new district should make a local decision on when evaluation occurs.
- The group recommended changing the statute to give the local school district the authority to evaluate certified teachers in the fourth contract year and beyond not less than every three years.
- The group recommended that districts have the authority to split the evaluation process for teachers in their 4th year and beyond. (professional practices one year, growth the second year)
- The group would recommend that teacher evaluation not be included in the accountability system as DOE also recommends.
- The group recommended that the professional practice rating and student growth rating should be combined into one summative effectiveness rating; using the rating matrix as a recommended outline is fine.
- The group determined that if the SD Teacher Evaluation system is implemented correctly and with fidelity it does help to increase professional growth of teachers. The districts are responsible to implement the framework properly.
- The group agreed that more weight should be placed on professional practice ratings than on student growth as is the current rating.
- The group recommended that DOE continue to ensure the minimum requirements of educator effectiveness rules through the accreditation review process.