

Last July, folks in Idaho contacted me about the work you were doing with the tiered licensure and shared an early diagram of the plan. I spent some time thinking about questions I would raise from a "critical friend" perspective based on that early diagram. Those questions are below. I have not seen any later versions of the work you all have done, so I don't have a good sense of where you all are now.

I am traveling on the 30th so that day won't work for me. I think the questions below are still good ones because those are some of the issues that New Mexico had to solve.

If you all like, we can set up a time to visit in the future and talk more. I would like to know more details about the current plan so that I could be more specific and helpful.

Take a look at these questions and see what you think. Then we can trade emails and see how I can help you all with this important work.

From: Peter Winograd <peter.winograd.nm@gmail.com>
Date: July 11, 2013 at 8:03:50 AM MDT
To: "Peter Winograd (yahoo)" <pkwinograd@yahoo.com>
Subject: Idaho Review

Idaho Review

Request:

Review the 1-page diagram of Idaho's proposed Tiered Licensure System to see if it is a "decent place to start a plan?"

Introductory Remarks

Thank you for the opportunity to review Idaho's plans. I am very supportive of these efforts and the diagram looks very promising. I am a fan of tiered-licensure systems but they have a interesting challenges (as do any plans for ensuring teacher quality).

My questions below are some of those we dealt with in New Mexico. Please don't be discouraged by them. My intent is to be a critical friend so that you have a chance to think about them now rather than in front of some unfriendly committee.

Please feel free to call if you would like to talk about these in more detail. I am really good with questions, not so much with answers....

Questions:

1. What is the purpose for the change? In terms of a logic model, what are the intended short term and long-term goals of the proposed change? What is the problem that needs to

be solved?

What are the possible unintended consequences?

2. What is the current status of teachers in Idaho now? Is there a shortage of teachers? Is there low pay? Is there a need to improve student achievement?

3. What kind of system does Idaho have now? Is licensure or pay dependent on some form of training and experience? How will senior teachers currently in the system be placed in the proposed tiered licensure system? Will senior teachers be grand-fathered in to higher levels of licensure or will they have to start at the beginning and work their way up?

4. What will this cost in terms of funding? Will higher levels of licensure be associated with higher levels of pay? Does advancement through the licensure levels mean automatic advancement in pay?

If higher pay is associated with higher levels of teacher licensure, how will that impact the pay for principals? If upper level teachers are making good money, what incentives will exist for these experienced teachers to move to administration? New Mexico increased pay for principals after implementing a three-tiered licensure system (with higher pay) for teachers because many senior teachers had to take a pay cut to become principals. Their sense was that they were taking on more responsibility (and headaches) for less money.

5. How will the teacher preparation programs in Idaho align with the proposed tiered licensure system. Many teacher preparation programs have a set of competencies determined by accreditation programs like NCATE. How do these competencies align with those embedded in the tiered licensure system?

6. How will reciprocity with other states work? Does Idaho get a lot of experienced teachers from other states? How will the licensure level of those teachers be determined?

7. Who will evaluate the teachers' professional development plan? If it includes "artifacts", it sounds a bit like a portfolio. Evaluating these richer kinds of evidence takes time. Who will do that?

How will Idaho guard against potential conflicts of interest and the other real world impacts that come into play when "professional judgement" is used in teacher evaluation. New

Mexico went to blind scoring by independent reviewers because we saw that teachers were very rarely evaluated negatively by principals. There are too many interpersonal relationships and other land mines involved in rigorous teacher evaluations. Often it is easier for principals to help poor teachers move on to other schools or districts rather than to take on a nasty fight. We call that the "dance of the lemons" and I am sure it happens everywhere.

8. I think I understand from the diagram that teachers at the Initial Licensure level (Category A Contract) might lose their teaching license after 6 years. Taking a license is a property issue and raises all kinds of legal issues. There must be both a very careful review process AND the political courage to hold the line when the decision is made. Many of the teachers who lose their licenses seem to be related to all kinds of powerful people who will pull all kinds of strings to get licenses reinstated.

9. I think I understand from the diagram that teachers at the Professional Licensure Level may be moved back to an Initial Licensure Level and then potentially lose their teaching licenses. See the comments in Point 8.

10. So it turns out I am a bad teacher. It looks like I could rattle around in the Idaho system for six or more years before I was moved out. That is a long time to do damage to kids. How will you answer the charge that this system is not rigorous enough?

11. What are the extra duties or responsibilities that might be expected from a teacher with a Teacher Leader License? Is there extra pay for these extra responsibilities? Is the pay an set amount across the state or does it vary by duties?

12. How will any measures of student growth or value-added be integrated into the Idaho three-tiered licensure system? If student growth or value-added models of teacher evaluation are included, how will you handle the issue that one teacher at the Initial Licensure level is really helping his or her students and one teacher at the Professional Level or Teacher Leader Level is not having an impact on student learning?

13. The diagram indicates that Idaho plans to "Validate the Danielson Framework as an appropriate measure of teacher effectiveness." We have done a number of validation studies, so we have a good sense of the complexities involved. What does this really mean in the Idaho context?

14. So how many years does would it take for a great teacher on any measure to move through the system? Do I have to be a Initial Teacher for at least three years or could I move up quicker? I think I understand from the diagram the the Initial License is 1-6 years. Does that mean I can move up to Professional in 1year? How many years do I have to be at the Professional level before I can move up to the Teacher Leaders license?

Sent from my iPad

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On Apr 22, 2014, at 9:41 AM, Clark Linda <Clark.Linda@meridianschools.org> wrote:

Thank you for speaking with me this morning. I will greatly appreciate the materials that you have prepared for Idaho and apologize that you have gotten two requests for same. After I look through the materials, I will get back with you. If you can hold some time on 4/30 between 10 and 4 to speak with us, that would be great.

Dr. Linda Clark
Superintendent
Joint School District No. 2

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