

**Task Force for Improving Education  
Effective Teachers and Leaders  
June 7, 2013**

Committee members present: Rod Lewis, Janie Ward-Engelking, Phyllis Nichols, Mary Ann Ranells, Katie Pemberton, and Penni Cyr.

Others present: Marilyn Whitney, Office of the State Board of Education (OSBE), Allison McClintick, OSBE, Jason Hancock, State Department of Education.

Nick Smith, Chief Deputy Superintendent with the Idaho State Department of Education provided an overview of the work that has been done with respect to teacher and leader effectiveness and evaluation over the past several years. The State Department has convened several task forces related to teacher/principal evaluation.

Task Force looked at definitions of effective teacher and principal. Penni commented that the Task Force adopted the State of Colorado definitions.

**Definition of Effective Teachers**

Idaho's effective teachers have the knowledge, skills, and commitments that ensure equitable learning opportunities and growth for all students. They strive to close achievement gaps and to prepare diverse student populations for postsecondary success. They facilitate mastery of content and skill development, and identify and employ appropriate strategies for students who are not achieving mastery. Effective teachers also develop in students the skills, interests and abilities necessary to be lifelong learners, as well as skills needed for democratic and civic participation. They communicate and model high expectations to students and their families and find ways to engage them in a mutually-supportive teaching and learning environment. Because effective teachers understand that the work of ensuring meaningful learning opportunities for all students cannot happen in isolation, they engage in collaboration, continuous reflection, on-going learning and leadership within the profession.

**Definition of Effective Principals**

Idaho's effective principals recognize their accountability for the collective success of their schools, including the learning, growth and achievement of both students and staff. As the school's primary instructional leader, effective principals enable critical discourse and data driven reflection about curriculum, assessment, instruction and student progress, and create structures to facilitate improvement. Effective principals are adept at creating systems that maximize the utilization of resources and human capital, foster collaboration, and facilitate constructive change. By creating a common vision and articulating shared values, effective principals lead and manage their schools in a manner that supports the school's ability to promote equity and continually improve its positive impact on students and families.

The group agreed these definitions were thorough and satisfactory.

Nick noted that the statewide evaluation framework that was adopted in 2009 is based on Danielson framework and was the first revision since 1997.

He explained that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus funding from the federal government impacted teacher evaluations. If Idaho accepted funds, the state had to collect results of every teacher and principal evaluation and make them public. The State Department was able to negotiate with US Department of Education to report in aggregate only by district and only

with schools with 5 or more teachers or 5 or more principals. The Idaho Attorney General counseled not to go lower than the number of 5. However districts are required to use individual teacher evaluations for decision making. A further requirement was stipulated that districts report whether they are using student achievement data for evaluations. At the time, there wasn't a statewide system to gather achievement data. ARRA also required that each district's evaluation model be collected and reported. Changes also have to be resubmitted.

Nick noted that the Students Come First laws required student achievement and parental input as part of teacher evaluations.

Recommendations from the most recent Teacher/Principal Evaluation Task Force were presented to the State Board of Education in April 2013.

Nick explained the ESEA waiver application requirements with respect to evaluations. Among these was that

- Districts are required to use evaluations to inform professional development needs and practices. The proposed framework prescribed 3 levels of performance. Unsatisfactory, Basic and Proficient.
- Multiple measures were to be used including student growth and parental input.
- Guidance would be developed on how to monitor districts (including a tool to evaluate the evaluations)

With respect to the multiple measures used, the state developed the Idaho growth model, which was based on the Colorado growth model developed by Damian Betebenner with the National Education Policy Center.

Nick explained that a rubric is being developed to ensure that measures are valid and reliable. Student achievement measures have been identified.

There are also a number of training efforts in progress. All administrators will be required to have proficiency training in evaluation and observation by 2018.

With respect to how student achievement factors in, Nick explained that 33% is based on growth and student achievement (only one of the measures is required to be the ISAT). The 33% was based on the recommendation of the Gates Foundation MET study, which looked at student achievement and student observation. The rest of the evaluation is based on multiple measures, which can include measures such as end of course (EOC) exams.

For those areas not assessed under ISAT or required to be assessed under NCLB, a district can adopt a number of other identified measures of student achievement or growth or they can develop their own.

The framework requires that evaluations be done on a regular basis, including one evaluation annually that would include, at minimum, 2 observations. This allows for multiple touch points between teacher and administrator. All evaluations of teachers are to be done by May 1 with the first observation by January 1 to allow for modifications and improvement.

One area that could be strengthened is in how the evaluation can provide clear, timely and useful feedback that guides professional development.

Nick explained that until recently there were no standards for principal evaluation.

Rod noted that the framework seems to allow a considerable amount of discretion to school districts on what measures are used. With no consistency across the state, it is difficult to develop a statewide compensation program.

Jason Hancock explained that the 2008 pay for performance proposal, ISTARs, looked at how to incorporate teacher evaluations. It was determined that because there are aspects of performance evaluations that are subjective, it was problematic. There were also concerns about the pressure on evaluators to inflate ratings to ensure bonuses.

The group discussed teacher pay plans that have been developed at the local level. Phyllis explained that New Plymouth bases its PFP program on teacher developed goals related to student outcomes.

New Plymouth uses parental input, but that can be problematic. Responders tend to be either those who love the teacher or those who have an ax to grind. It is also easier to get surveys back from higher socio-economic schools. You could consider using parental input only from parents who attend conferences or have demonstrated engagement. The group discussed using student observations and feedback as recommend in the MET study.

Penni pointed out that parents aren't in the classroom and are not familiar with education practices. The input should be consistent with the way parents are involved in the schools.

Janie asked for reconsideration of the labels used in the evaluation. Basic is not a positive term. Nick explained that they are transitioning to a numbering system.

Nick noted that the legislature did approve \$300,000 for the proficiency exam for principals. 200-300 principals and administrators have been trained thus far. The Department of Education has asked for that funding again to get the majority of principals through the training. Many districts are doing the training in groups for discussion and dialogue. Nick further explained that districts still have the option of developing their own proficiency assessment and noted that the Bonneville District has a very impressive system that is aligned to the state framework. The State Department reviews and approves those local models.

Nick provided an overview of the draft of the Idaho Principal Evaluation Framework, which is similar to the Danielson Framework for teachers. The entire principal evaluation program for Idaho is new. It will be a pilot in 2013-14 with full implementation in 2014-2015. The group discussed adding language to include teacher input for principal evaluations. It was noted that a number of districts have implemented 360 degree evaluation.

Nick went through the timeline for adoption of the new evaluation framework. The ESEA waiver requires that states implement models in 2013-14 (at least a pilot) with full implementation in 2014-2015.

With the new rules developed after the repeal of Students Come First, there was a public comment period. When the rules go back to State Board in August, there will be a few modifications. Those include replacing the ISAT with Statewide Assessment for Federal Accountability Purposes.

The group talked about the transition from the ISAT to the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC). In 2013-14, districts will have the option to transition from ISAT to the SBAC aligned with the Idaho Core Standards. The transition will be required in 2014-15. There are concerns about test fatigue if you double test student. Having the two tests makes it difficult for the State Board to set cut scores. Educators are also concerned about being tested on something they just started teaching.

Mary Ann asked if there was discussion about taking a couple of years to complete the transition. Nick explained that the ESEA waiver requires full implementation in 2014-2015. However, the state will have to continue to offer the ISAT as a graduation requirement for several years. For the high school graduation requirement pieces, the state will have to continue to contract for the ISAT assessment for 4 years. Penni noted that teachers will need a lot of support. It's a vast change and will take more than a year or two to make this transition.

Katie commented that it will be difficult to gauge teacher effectiveness if they are teaching to the ISAT but teaching the common core.

Nick explained that the State could hold accountability but only if we abandon our waiver. To get Title I funds you have to have a statewide accountability system. The USDOE is giant bureaucratic machine making significant changes and they don't have all the answers yet.

Janie noted that the Task Force has not made recommendations pertaining to professional development and w/out that the teachers are not going to be on board. Teachers need collaboration time to implement all the new requirements. She noted the \$3.75 million that was appropriated for professional development for fiscal year 2014, which starts July 1. And, the \$21 million that was appropriated for compensation, up to 40% of which could be used for professional development.

The group discussed that some districts may not need that for professional development. For example, Melba is a district that doesn't need 40% for professional development as they have every other Friday dedicated to that purpose. They may choose to put that funding into differentiated pay.

Scott Grothe with OSBE gave a brief overview of his research regarding merit pay programs. A one-page research brief was provided to the group. He noted that the PACER (Pennsylvania Clearinghouse for Education Research) brief has a good summary of various PFP programs and their impacts.

Penni stated that the Task Force should not be considering pay for performance as the voters rejected PFP as part of the repeal of Students Come First. Rod commented that the Task Force needs to be cognizant that the state doesn't have a lot of money and that policy makers want to see the accountability. The assumption is that PFP does make a difference. The Task Force needs to evaluate whether it makes a difference or not by taking an objective approach. If the data doesn't indicate support the assumption, then the committee can report that conclusion, but the group needs to look at accountability systems as part of its report.

Next meetings were discussed and proposed included potential for a full-day meeting on June 21 or July 12. Agenda, tentative schedule and deliverables will be sent out.