



# Designing and Implementing “Next Generation” Teacher Evaluation Systems: Lessons Learned from Case Studies of Illinois Districts

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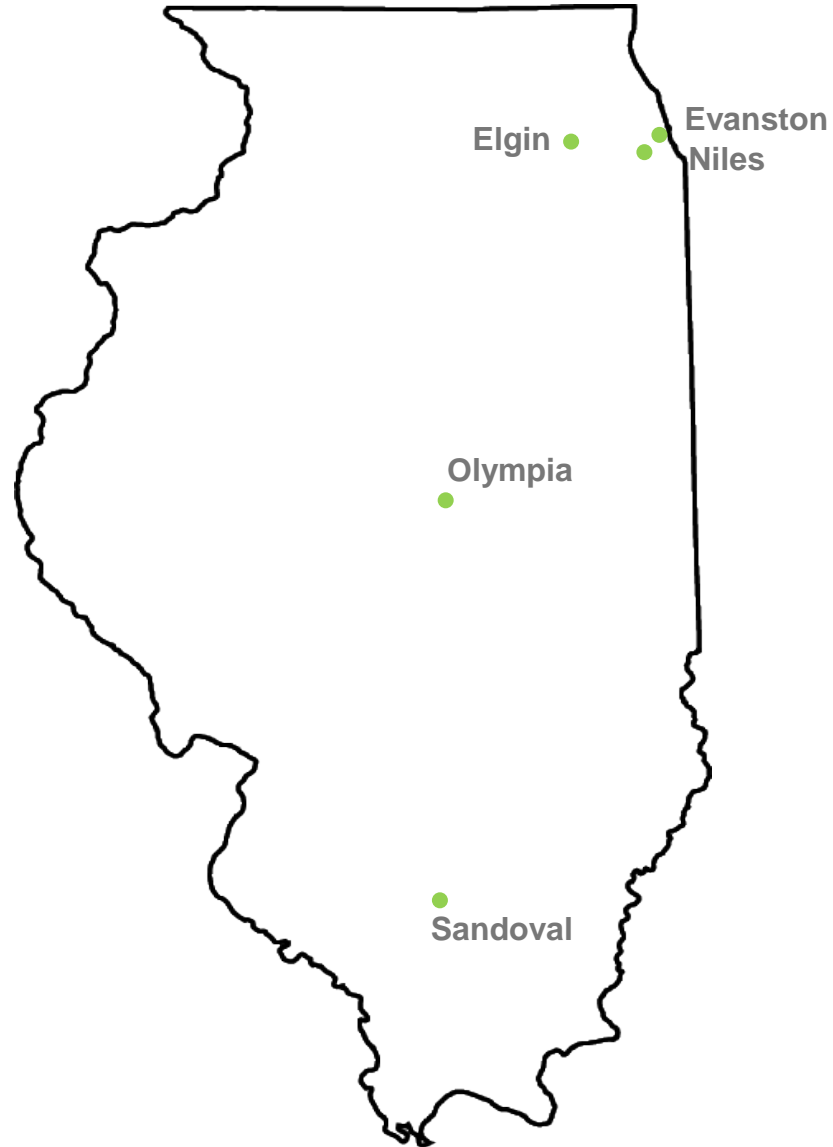
# Purpose of Study

- Analyze key lessons learned in Illinois districts identified as leaders in teacher evaluation
- Inform other districts as they design and implement "next generation" teacher evaluation systems under PERA.

# Methodology: Case Studies

- Spring-summer 2012 case studies in five Illinois districts identified as “ahead of the curve”
  - Sought diversity in terms of geography, demographics, program components, and stage of implementation
  - Interviews with 4-6 key decision-makers (central office, principals/evaluators, and teachers) in each district

# Case Study Districts



# Characteristics of the Evaluation Systems

- Various stages of implementation
- All used some form of the Danielson Framework for teacher performance measure
  - Observation cycles tended to hew to state minimum guidelines
- Only one included student growth in teacher evaluations

# Overview

- **These systems were seen as a huge upgrade over the status quo**
- **But there were still some challenges...**
  1. Securing buy-in and understanding
  2. Using observations to improve instruction
  3. Building the capacity of evaluators
  4. Incorporating student growth
- *The rest of this presentation will focus on the specific challenges in these four areas – and case study districts' strategies and suggestions for overcoming these obstacles*

# Challenge #1: Cultivating Buy-In & Understanding

- Buy-in problematic, especially in first year
  - Distrust between teachers and administration
  - Anxiety surrounding PERA
- District training typically did not include teachers
  - Implementation dependent upon principal understanding and buy-in

# Cultivating Buy-In & Understanding:

- **Strategy: Gather all perspectives**
  - Balanced & diverse representation on design committee
  - Use of facilitators, consultants, and examples from other districts
  - Ongoing monitoring to continuously gather feedback
- **Strategy: Develop a shared vision of quality instruction**
  - Clear performance standards and rubrics can provide common vision/language for quality instruction
    - And show next steps for improvement
  - Teachers held accountable for high expectations & principals/evaluators held accountable for performance management



# Cultivating Buy-In & Understanding:

- **Strategy: Train teachers early, consistently, and continuously**
  - Transparency in design process
  - Teachers need to understand how they're being evaluated
    - Not just process but standards and rubrics
  - Pitfalls of voluntary/optional training sessions
  - Revisit regularly

# Cultivating Buy-In & Understanding:

- **Strategy: Align teacher evaluation with other district priorities and initiatives**
  - Link to existing human resources systems (hiring, mentoring, etc.) or other initiatives
  - Can serve as the “glue that holds the rest together” and reinforce other initiatives, rather than just another add-on

# Cultivating Buy-In & Understanding:

- **Strategy: Start soon and implement gradually**
  - Consider phasing in with low-stakes pilot
  - Try not to start/change mid-year
  - Takes a lot of time – start planning ASAP

# Challenge #2: Using Observations to Improve Instruction

- Systems good at pinpointing weaknesses, less successful transforming these into strengths
- Concerns with the accuracy and usefulness of evaluation ratings
- Meeting the needs of teachers at *all* levels
- Concern that PERA/SB 7 might shift focus away from formative elements

# Using Observations to Improve Instruction

- **Strategy: Build Evaluator Capacity**
  - *A lot* of training for evaluators
  - Interactions between evaluators to calibrate ratings
    - Jointly observing and rating teachers
    - Formal/informal mentoring
  - Growth through Learning/Teachscape for PERA

# Using Observations to Improve Instruction

- **Strategy: Link observations to professional development**
  - Reinforce view of evaluation and PD as a cycle
  - Use evaluation ratings to direct PD
  - Don't just merely identify weaknesses and poor performers – leverage best practices

# Using Observations to Improve Instruction

- **Strategy: Conduct more classroom observations**
  - Reduce concerns about accuracy, offer better feedback, provide opportunities to improve
  - Few districts were able to do this, but some suggested possibilities:
    - Frequent, unannounced observations (if evaluators are trained)
    - Re-prioritization of principal's role/duties
    - Peer evaluation

# Challenge #3: Reducing the Burden on Principals

- Ultimate impact highly dependent upon principals and their implementation
- Principals have many new responsibilities in these new evaluation systems
  - More (and more thorough) classroom observations and conferences than in the past
- Competing responsibilities make it difficult to prioritize teacher evaluation



# Reducing the Burden on Principals

- **Strategy: Streamline the system wherever possible**
  - Allow evaluators to conduct more observations, be more efficient, focus on improvement
  - Examples:
    - Technology (internet, iPads, software, real-time feedback)
    - User-friendly guidebooks/toolkits
    - Customized calendars and pre-populated forms

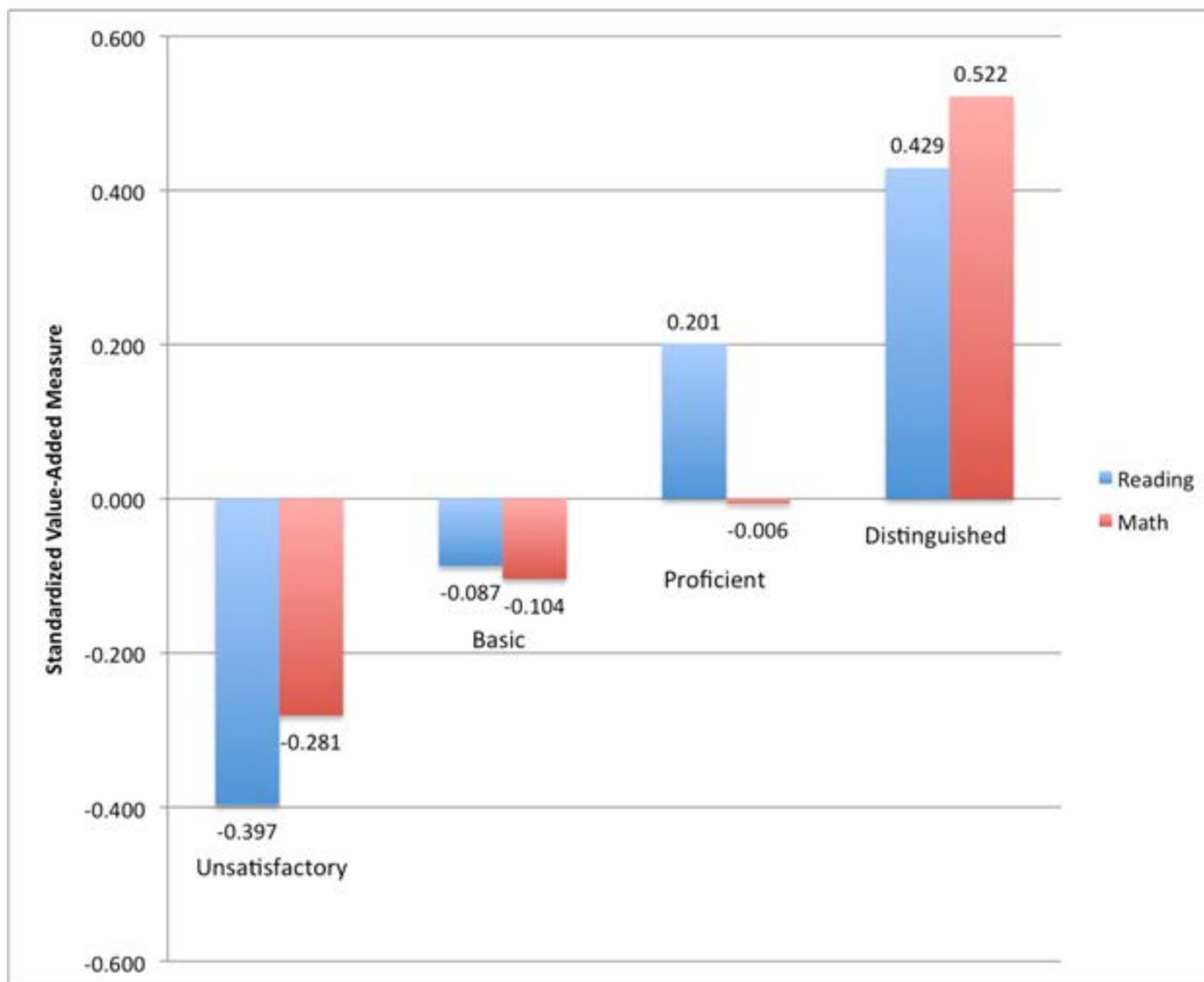
# Reducing the Burden on Principals

- **Strategy: Use Multiple Observers**
  - Can reduce burden on principals, increase the number of observations, *and* support teachers
  - Some used APs or other evaluators
  - Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) in Niles
    - Two full-time peer consulting teachers
    - Eight to twelve observations each year

# Challenge #4: Incorporating Student Growth in to Teacher Evaluation

- Only Evanston had done this
- Numerous concerns and unanswered questions:
  - Fairness and rigor across all subjects and students
  - Finding valid and reliable assessments for all subjects
  - Understanding growth models and PERA requirements
  - Buy-in, attribution, small sample sizes, etc.
- But, the case study districts generally accept that it's coming and want to focus on strategies and supports to help get it right
  - Multiple measures (PERA requirements)
  - Training on understanding and using assessment data

# CPS 2008-2010: Higher observation ratings related to higher value-added



# Chicago Pilot 2008-2010

- **Most participants positive, but many of the same challenges as in case study districts:**
  - Lack of teacher knowledge a barrier to trust in the system—need centralized communication
  - Teacher positive attitudes often dependent on principal skill and buy-in
  - Principals often struggled with logistics, time management
  - Principals wanted more support in their ‘new’ role as instructional coach

# Moving Forward

- Teacher evaluation reform is a work in progress and many unanswered questions remain
  - Communication and teacher understanding
  - Principals' role (gatekeeper, coach) with limited time
  - Possible lack of ratings consistency
  - Differentiated supports for teachers at all levels
  - Incorporating student growth
- These early districts informed by external organizations and out-of-state districts – next generation should be able to rely more on each other's experiences
  - **Make time to talk with each other**

# Questions or Comments?

## Resources:

***Designing and Implementing the Next Generation of Teacher Evaluation Systems (November 2012)***

<http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/publications/designing-and-implementing-next-generation-teacher-evaluation-systems-lessons-learned>

***Rethinking Teacher Evaluation in Chicago (November 2011)***

<http://ccsr/uchicago.edu/publications>

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