



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
- 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 in each district



Characteristics of the Evaluation Systems

- Various stages of implementation
- All used some form of the Danielson Framework for teacher performance measure
- 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 understanding and buy-in
 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 examples of strategies and suggestions from the case study districts from the case study districts*

Challenge #1: Cultivating Buy-In & Understanding

- Buy-in was 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: 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
- **Other strategies:**
 - Gather all perspectives
 - Train teachers early, consistently, and continuously
 - Develop a shared vision of quality instruction
 - Align teacher evaluation with other district priorities and initiatives

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: 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
- **Other Strategy: Conduct more frequent classroom observations**

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: Use Multiple Observers**
 - 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
 - Can reduce burden on principals, increase the number of observations, *and* support teachers
- **Other Strategy: Streamline the system wherever possible**

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

CCSR Chicago Studies

Chicago Excellence in Teaching Pilot (EITP) 2008-2010

- **Found observation ratings positively related to student value-add**
- **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

Chicago Implementation 2012-2013

- Chicago implementing PERA in all schools—focus this year on non-tenured teachers
- Observation ratings= at least 75% of total
- Two kinds of student growth as per PERA mandate:
 - Performance tasks 2 times/year—elementary: all grades/ subjects, high school: all core subjects
 - NWEA MAP grades 3-8; non tested grades assigned school level literacy growth
- Implementation issues similar to downstate and EITP
- Implementation report out late summer

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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