

MPS Special Report: Teacher Evaluations

May 24, 2012

Mesa Public Schools is committed to continuously improving systems and procedures to benefit our students and staff. Developing and implementing a new evaluation system for teachers has been a significant undertaking this year. The new system meets the requirements outlined in state statutes while addressing the goal of helping teachers refine their professional practice and improve student learning.

Understanding state requirements

A 2010 state law was enacted to change the culture of education in Arizona and to improve how teachers are evaluated. Arizona Revised Statute § 15-203(A) (38) requires the Arizona State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt and maintain a model framework for a teacher evaluation instrument that includes quantitative data on student academic progress that accounts for 33 to 50 percent of evaluation outcomes.

The SBE approved the Arizona Framework for Measuring Educator Effectiveness, which complies with all legal requirements of the statute while providing school districts with some flexibility to develop their evaluation system. The state's framework requires:

- Annual evaluation of teachers
- Rubrics for teaching performance aligned with national teaching standards (InTASC) as approved by the State Board of Education
- Multiple annual classroom observations that account for 50 to 67 percent of the evaluation outcomes
- Multiple student academic progress measurements that account for 33 percent to 50 percent of the evaluation outcomes



The MPS evaluation process

Through a collaborative effort involving teachers, principals, curriculum and instruction specialists, professional development leaders, and research and evaluation staff members, MPS has developed a teacher evaluation process that aligns with the state's framework. It also aligns with our vision, mission, core values, priorities and goals that are part of the district's strategic plan.

Our new teacher evaluation process, which includes measurements of teaching performance and student academic progress, is designed to enhance teaching and increase student achievement through targeted professional development and data-informed decision-making. It is intended to bring clarity, conversation and improvements to teaching and learning by:

- providing a district-wide common definition of effective teaching
- embracing meaningful discussion and collaboration about teaching practices
- focusing on continuous growth for all teachers
- identifying and emphasizing those strategies that have greater impact on student learning



Key components of the evaluation process

The new MPS *Teaching Performance Evaluation* is a collaborative process leading to improved teaching performance, increased student academic progress and continuous school improvement. All certificated teachers who engage directly in the instruction and assessment of students will use the new process beginning with the the 2012-2013 school year.

The **teaching performance** component will account for 60 percent of a teacher’s final evaluation rating and will be determined by their performance on the Framework for Teaching rubric developed by educator and researcher Charlotte Danielson (see box on page 4).

The **student academic progress** component will account for 33 percent and will be calculated through the use and review of required student achievement data. The **continuous school improvement** component will account for 7 percent and will be determined by on the achievement of goals identified in the school’s incentive plan.

Based on established rubrics, the performance indicators of Highly Effective, Effective, Developing and Ineffective will be used to rate teachers in the individual areas of teaching performance, student academic progress, and continuous school improvement.

Let’s look at the components in more detail.

Teaching Performance

The performance evaluation emphasizes that collaborative planning precedes the work in the classroom; a positive, engaging, student-centered classroom environment must be in place for instruction to occur; and teachers embracing high professional standards contribute to better instruction.

Administrators will be required to conduct annually a minimum of two formal observations and a minimum of two walkthrough observations for each teacher. The two formal observations must be observations of complete and uninterrupted lessons with at least 60 calendar days between visits. At least one of the formal observations will be announced.

Following each formal observation, teachers will submit to their administrator a completed *Teaching Performance Self-Reflection*. Feedback from teachers regarding their performance is an extremely important part of the new evaluation process.

The evaluator must provide written feedback to the teacher shortly after each formal observation. Teachers will be evaluated on 22 components based on the evidence collected from pre-conferences, formal and walkthrough observations, and post-conferences.

The results from the evaluation will be used to determine a teacher’s *Teaching Performance Profile and Rating*. The levels of performance as they relate to teaching performance are defined as follows:

Performance Indicators

Highly Effective

There is evidence of high levels of knowledge, implementation and integration of performance standards, along with evidence of leadership initiative and willingness to model and serve as a mentor for colleagues. This rating refers to professional teaching that innovatively involves all students in the learning process and creates a true community of learners. Teachers performing at this level are master teachers and leaders in the field, both inside and outside of their school.

Effective

There is evidence of increased knowledge, implementation and integration of performance standards, and clear proficiency and skill in the performance area. This rating refers to successful, professional teaching that is consistently at a high level. It would be expected that most experienced teachers would frequently perform at this level.

Developing

There is evidence of basic knowledge and implementation of performance standards. Integration of performance standards is not regularly evident. This indicates that the teacher has the necessary knowledge and skills to be effective, but the application of those skills is inconsistent.

Ineffective

There is little or no knowledge and minimal implementation of performance standards. The teacher does not meet minimal performance standards and needs substantial improvement. This rating refers to teaching that does not convey an understanding of the concepts underlying the component. This level of performance is doing harm in the classroom or hinders learning.

Student Academic Progress

Within the evaluation process, individuals will be identified as Group A or Group B teachers. Teachers with classroom-level student achievement data aligned to Arizona's academic standards will be identified as Group A teachers. All other teachers will be identified as Group B teachers. For example, Group A teachers include high school math, junior high science, world language and 4th grade teachers, while Group B teachers include welding, choir, PE teachers and math interventionists.

Appropriate classroom-level or school-level data will be used to determine a teacher's *Student Academic Progress Profile and Rating*. Group A teachers will use required state assessments and district assessments to determine their rating. Group B teachers will use school-wide data from the state AIMS assessments to determine their rating.

Prior to the end of the first quarter, the administrator will confirm with the teacher in a student academic

progress conference which classroom-level data or school-level data will be used.

Teachers will be moved from Group B to Group A after the Curriculum and Instruction department has reviewed and confirmed appropriate student achievement measurements that have been developed by a specific group/subject area. Teachers will be moved from Group B to Group A as an entire district-wide group (e.g., elementary PE, welding, culinary arts, choir). The state expects all teachers to eventually move to Group A.

Continuous School Improvement

Each year, schools develop a school improvement incentive plan, which includes school-wide goals that include quality service, attendance, drop-out rates, graduation rates, professional development, AIMS, CRTs and AZELLA. The results of these school-wide goals will be used to determine each teacher's *Continuous School Improvement Profile and Rating*.

Steps to implementation

Evaluators and teachers will be trained in the use of Danielson's Framework for Teaching and in the implementation of the teacher evaluation process. Evaluators are presently receiving training from consultants, which will be followed up with web-based training and certification in the framework. In June, evaluators will be provided with an overview of the implementation of the evaluation process.


In preparation to train all teachers, a cadre of evaluators and specialists are receiving training from consultants, and additional hours of web-based training and certification.

During the first four teacher preparation days of the 2012-13 school year, teachers will receive one half day of training in the evaluation framework from the district's cadre of trainers.


Teachers will also receive the Danielson book *Enhancing Professional Practice*. This book defines the rubric for teaching performance.

In August, teachers will receive an overview of Danielson's Framework and access to online resources via Teachscape, which is a comprehensive set of classroom observation tools designed to increase the organization and efficiency of observations. These tools include videos, tutorials and a professional online learning library.

Ongoing professional development and practice with the rubric will be implemented throughout the year and integrated among our MPS district initiatives through the Professional Learning Community process as well as on early release, late-start and other professional development days.



The new MPS Teaching Performance Evaluation is a collaborative process leading to improved teaching performance, increased student academic progress and continuous school improvement.



Danielson's Framework for Teaching

Danielson's Framework for Teaching, which will be used as the teaching performance evaluation for each teacher, is organized into four domains and 22 components. The four domains are:

- Domain 1: Planning and Preparation
- Domain 2: Classroom Environment
- Domain 3: Instruction
- Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

MPS will refer to Danielson's Framework for Teaching as the Teaching Performance Evaluation. The research-validated framework will allow MPS to engage in reflective dialogue around evidence of good teaching and share a common understanding of expectations and outcomes that promote improved student learning. Evidence of teacher performance will be gathered for all four domains and all 22 components of the framework.

Evidence for Domain 2 and Domain 3, Classroom Environment and Instruction, will be gathered primarily through classroom observations. Evidence for Domains 1 and Domain 4, Planning and Preparation and Professional Responsibilities, will be provided by the teacher and gathered through the review of lesson plans, student work, communication logs, conversations about teaching practice, and other instructional artifacts.