

2013 CEREMONY BREAK-OUT SESSION: ADDING YOUR VOICE TO THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION

EDUCATOR EVALUATION SYSTEMS



DISCUSSION SUMMARY

About 70 people (approximately 2/3 of whom were administrators) attended the Roundtable Discussion on Educator Evaluation Systems as part of the National Blue Ribbon Schools 2013 Ceremony. Josh Klaris, 2013-2014 Principal in Residence, and Greg Mullenholz, 2011 Washington Teacher Ambassador, both with the U.S. Department of Education, facilitated the discussion.

Participants were asked to discuss issues related to teacher and leader evaluation in their schools, then write responses in terms of the following questions:

- What is your school doing to ensure that teacher and leader evaluation systems are fair, thorough, and valid? How do you know these goals are being met?
- How is your school using educator evaluations to continue to develop teachers and leaders?
- How are educator evaluations contributing to professional learning? How should they be?
- What is your vision for what educator evaluation will look like in your school at the end of the year? And the end of next year? What will you and your school use to evaluate your success?

Following a couple rounds of table discussions, Josh Klaris and Greg Mullenholz asked a representative from each table to distill ideas raised. Key themes that emerged within participants' discussions centered around how evaluation could—and should—drive professional development, the importance of using multiple measures for a well-rounded and thorough evaluation, and how evaluation could benefit teachers, leaders, and schools by identifying strengths and areas in need of improvement. Below are some details and key points raised from the discussions, as well as some illustrative quotes.

What is your school doing to ensure that teacher and leader evaluation systems are fair, thorough, and valid? How do you know these goals are being met?

Collaboration.

"Goal meetings with administrators and teachers start each year."

"Administrators are going into classrooms as teams to observe teachers and compare notes to ensure we are consistent in feedback to the teacher."

"Our system is rubric-based. It was jointly developed by teachers and administrators."

- Schools are coming together within their districts to discuss strategies and compare notes on creating fair and useful evaluation tools.
- Administrators are working with teachers to create evaluation tools in a joint effort so that they provide helpful information, not just judgment.

- Establishing inter-rater reliability is key. Observations are done in pairs or teams, and/or recordings are discussed in groups to make sure everyone is in alignment.
- Regular meetings and/or discussions between administrators and teachers give everyone a voice in how evaluation is implemented.
- Administrators and teachers work together to set rigorous, individualized goals so teachers know what they are working toward.

Multiple Measures.

“As a district, we have decided to improve our locally created evaluation tool to add to the required aspects of the Missouri tool.”

“Each teacher must prepare a professional portfolio of their work, including evaluations.”

- Growth measures allow teachers to see immediate results so they know what is working and what is not.
- Rubrics set standards and can be completed by administrators and/or teachers so everyone know what is expected. Self-assessment is possible.
- Schools and districts are creating their own local measures to use along with state tools, providing multiple ways to capture growth and success.
- Self-assessment, including tools like teacher portfolios, can be helpful because they provide a fuller, more thorough picture.
- Student surveys can provide alternative perspectives. Ultimately, students are the ones who are supposed to benefit so it makes sense for them to have a voice.

How is your school using educator evaluations to continue to develop teachers and leaders?

Evaluation as a Way to Measure Personal Growth.

“The system is an ongoing collaboration between teacher and evaluator to achieve growth goals.”

“The rubric has actually brought conversations on teacher performance, which is positive. That give and share time has been productive.”

“Conversation with all three administrators to show importance. Allows for multiple angles of feedback and ideas, also holds each of us accountable.”

- If goal-setting start early, it turns evaluation into part of the growth process.
- Evaluation stimulates conversation about teaching and drives self-reflection.
- Rubrics should be used to provide feedback, not just judgment. Evaluation does not need to be seen negatively, but rather as a tool for growth.
- Teachers strengthen their own skills when they informally evaluate each other and discuss or reflect on what they see.
- Evaluation connects personal growth to performance measures. Teachers should see how they are building their skills and strengths.
- Goals for growth can be identified at multiple levels—individual, building, and district. Evaluation data reflects not just on teachers, but on the school community.

Evaluation Drives Professional Development.

“Educator evaluations will be used to influence professional development.”

“Collaborate to identify needs for the school, as well as individual teacher needs. Data driven.”

- Evaluation can increase the dialogue between administrators and teachers about what constitutes quality instruction.
- Evaluation rubrics provide clear examples of what makes for good teaching.
- Teachers’ strengths are highlighted during the evaluation process and can then be encouraged through professional development.
- Evaluation can highlight struggles within a school or district that can then be addressed through common professional development.
- Increased awareness of individual needs focuses individual topics for study. If teachers know what skills they need to work on, they can take the initiative.

How are educator evaluations contributing to professional learning? How should they be?

Formal Professional Development.

“Determining who needs what developed in what areas.”

“Identification of teacher strengths allows use of teachers as in-service or PLC leaders.”

- Evaluation identifies needs and lets administrators can plan professional development opportunities accordingly.
- Practices can be discussed as part of PLC time.
- Administrators should use rubrics to determine the areas where they need to help teachers.
- Strengths of various teachers can be identified and effective in-service or PLC leaders can be chosen based on them. Teachers can contribute in different ways on different topics.
- Professional learning should always be tied to evaluation systems. Evaluation provides the data for where learning should be focused.

Peer-to-Peer and Self-Directed Professional Learning.

“They [evaluations] are the cornerstone of professional learning.”

“Teachers need to be self-leaders.”

“Informal evaluations are my best way to see how teaching and learning is happening.”

- Peer observations are useful and teachers should share best practices. Collaboration is useful.
- Evaluation can lead to self-reflection on areas of strength and focus attention on areas in need.
- Self-assessment should be tied to goals.
- Evaluations drive frequent discussions regarding instruction between teachers and administrators, and within or across grade levels.

What is your vision for what educator evaluation will look like in your school at the end of the year? And the end of next year? What will you and your school use to evaluate your success?

Evaluation Will Benefit Teachers and Schools.

“Would like for all teachers to know their strengths/weaknesses. Also would like for all teachers to feel that they have value.”

“Accurate self-reflection – alignment between what I and teacher sees at the end of a lesson.”

“All teachers will be working to improve identified needs.”

- Teachers will improve and no one will be in corrective action.
- Schools will create a sense of open-door feedback where everyone feels comfortable sharing and helping each other.
- Principal and teacher collaboration will increase across all areas.
- All teachers will know their strengths and weaknesses, allowing them to know where to focus their skill-building and how they can help others.
- All teachers will feel they are valued members of the school.
- More time will be available for teachers to talk and learn from each other.
- More training will be provided to teachers, and the training will be keyed to needs as well as interests.
- There will be increased time for self-reflection, and teachers will be better at it, thus increasing their skills.
- Increased discussions about instruction will take place between teachers and between teachers and administrators.

Evaluation Measures Will Continue to be Refined and Understood, Leading to New Growth.

“Hopefully, the new system will lead to teacher growth and better relationships because the rubric should drive that goal.”

“I would like to develop a consistent walk-through evaluation.”

“More thorough understanding of rubric.”

- More peer observations will be used, allowing for teacher-to-teacher feedback and assistance.
- Schools and districts will continue to add rigor to state requirements, creating more useful and more thorough evaluations.
- Evaluation tools will keep/make the focus on teacher growth.
- Everyone will gain a more thorough understanding of evaluation tools so they can use them more effectively.

Multiple Measures of Success

“We will use teacher retention rate + evaluation results, as well as teacher climate surveys and “open door” feedback.”

“The discussion about instruction will continue to increase.”

- Success will be determined by multiple sources such as teacher retention rates, evaluations, and climate surveys.

- Evaluations will be aligned with and reflect student growth. There will be a clear and obvious link between teacher effectiveness and student learning.