

October 14, 2014



## Santa Fe Public Schools

### Response to Legislative Education Study Committee Request for Information

**1. Based on the PED approved plan for your school district/charter school, outline your school district/charter school implementation timeline of the Educator Effectiveness System (EES) for teachers and principals this school year.**

*Santa Fe Public Schools implemented our PED approved plan at the beginning of the 2014-15 school year.*

**2. Which online system does your school district/charter school use to help implement the EES?**

Santa Fe Public Schools uses TeachScape for implementation of our EES in the 2014-15 school year.

**Does your school district/charter school plan on using this system next year?**

*Yes, Santa Fe Public Schools plans on continuing its use of TeachScape for the 2015-16 school year.*

**3. By licensure level, what is the number and percent of teachers in your school district/charter school in each of the following groups:**

- **Group A:** teachers who teach grades and/or subjects that can be meaningfully linked to the standards-based assessment;
- **Group B:** teachers who teach grades and/or subjects that cannot be meaningfully linked to the standards-based assessment; and
- **Group C:** teachers who teach in kindergarten, first, and second grades.

**Please outline the number and percent of each group's effectiveness ratings (i.e., exemplary, highly effective, effective, minimally effective, or ineffective).**

*The number and percent of each group's effectiveness ratings are provided in the chart on page two.*

Group	Ineff	Min. Eff	Eff.	Highly Eff.	Exemplary	Total
<b>A*</b>	21	133	154	47	1	<b>356</b>
	5.9%	37.36%	43.26%	13.2%	0.28%	<b>100%</b>
<b>B</b>	2	73	156	28	0	<b>259</b>
	0.77%	28.19%	60.23%	10.81%	0	<b>100%</b>
<b>C</b>	4	31	81	43	4	<b>163</b>
	2.45%	19.02%	49.69%	26.38%	2.45%	<b>100%</b>
<b>U**</b>	0	0	4	0	0	<b>4</b>
	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total</b>	27	237	395	118	5	<b>782</b>
	3.45%	30.31%	50.51%	15.09%	0.64%	<b>100%</b>

\*Compared to group B, group A has a 87% higher change of being rated minimally or ineffective.

\*\*U – an unknown group listed in NMPED data

**4. For principals and assistant principals, what is the number and percent of these administrators in your school district/charter school in each of the following groups:**

Group A: New Mexico licensed administrators (Level 3-B); serve as Principal/Director, Assistant Principal, Dean of Students, or Athletic Directors; and supervise and evaluate certified teachers; and

Group B: district-level administrators; and Athletic Directors and Deans of Students that do not have Level 3-B licenses.

Please outline the number and percent of each group's effectiveness ratings (i.e., exemplary, highly effective, effective, minimally effective, or ineffective).

*Santa Fe Public Schools does not collect administrative evaluation information in this manner. The District uses a performance compact, or balanced score card, to evaluate administrators.*

**5. Has your school district/charter school shared the data and results of the "District Educator Effectiveness Summative Report" with your teachers and principals? Why or why not?**

*Yes, Santa Fe Public Schools has shared the data and results of the "District Educator Effectiveness Summative Report" with our teachers and principals because of community requests for the information.*

**6. Did your school district/charter school participate in the New Mexico's Teacher and School Leader Evaluation Pilot Project for the EES? If so, outline any differences between the pilot and your most recent EES ratings, if any.**

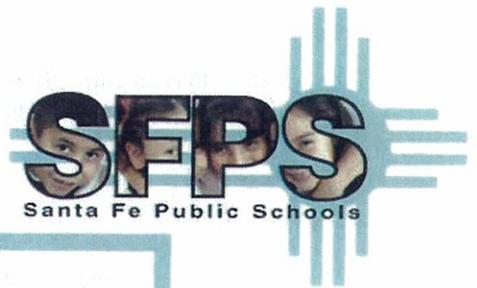
No, Santa Fe Public Schools did not participate in the New Mexico's Teacher and School Leader Evaluation Pilot Project for the EES.

**7. Please add any other comments you might have addressing lessons learned in implementing your evaluation system.**

*See attached documents:*

- *Clarification Request - NMPED Teacher Evaluation Implementation - Letter from Superintendent Joel Boyd to Secretary-Designate Hanna Skandera on October 13, 2014*
- *Commentary: We need to get teacher evaluations right – published in the Santa Fe New Mexican on September 20, 2014*

October 13, 2014



**Via Email**

Hon. Hanna Skandera  
Secretary-Designate  
New Mexico Public Education Department  
300 Don Gaspar Avenue  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Re: Clarification Request - NMPED Teacher Evaluation Implementation

Dear Madam Secretary:

In an effort to continue developing a statewide system of evaluation as a valid tool for improvement, and clarifying or improving all aspects of the evaluation process, the Santa Fe Public School District is seeking clarification regarding the legal implications of the New Mexico Public Education Department's (NMPED) NMTeach District Education Effectiveness Summative Report ("Summative Report"). NMPED has directed districts to provide their teachers with NMPED's Summative Report and, when necessary, take corrective employment action with regard to teachers rated by NMPED as "minimally effective" or "ineffective". However, a closer examination of NMPED's regulations reveals the need for clarification by NMPED as to whether the corrective actions are the result of district observations and evaluations of individual teachers or the result of NMPED's Summative Report rating of individual teachers.

**QUESTION:** Do NMPED regulations require corrective action for teachers rated "minimally effective" or "ineffective" when: 1) a written evaluation is personally completed by the school district near the end of a school year and contemporaneously provided to the teacher, or 2) a NMPED's NMTeach District Education Effectiveness Summative Report subsequently compiled and then provided by a school district to the teacher?

**REGULATORY ANALYSIS:** Although NMPED procedurally advises school districts to place teachers on professional growth plans once they have received "minimally effective" or "ineffective" ratings on NMPED's NMTeach District Education Effectiveness Summative Report, NMPED regulation indicates a different trigger for corrective action. NMPED's regulations at NMAC Rules 6.69.8.1 through 6.69.8.13 appear to trigger corrective action at the time that the person evaluating the teacher presents the evaluation to the teacher, typically immediately prior to the end of the then-current school year. Specifically, Rule 6.69.8.11 "Evaluations, Observations, Reports and Post-Evaluation Conferences" addresses the process from observation through placement on a professional growth plan and beyond. Read in succession, Rule 6.69.8.11 subparagraphs (H), (I), and (J) seem to provide the process for how a professional growth plan is issued to a teacher rated "minimally effective" or "ineffective":

- (H) Every person who evaluates a licensed school employee ... shall submit an original written report to the school district superintendent and an exact copy to the licensed school employee being evaluated ....
- (I) A licensed school employee rated minimally effective or ineffective may provide a written statement in response to their effectiveness evaluation....
- (J) *Every person who rates a licensed school employee minimally effective or ineffective shall describe in detail the minimally effective or ineffective performance and inform the licensee in writing:*

- (4) *that if the employee has an employment contract, the employee shall be placed on a performance growth plan for 90 school days from the receipt of the notice of minimally effective or ineffective performance....*

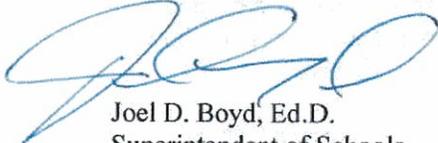
The language of the NMPED regulation appears to indicate that a 90 school day professional growth plan begins when the person evaluating the teacher presents the evaluation to the teacher, with no reference to NMPED's Summative Report, which may be issued several months later during the succeeding school year. For example, over 30 Santa Fe Public Schools teachers were placed on professional growth plans or had other action taken as a result of the personal observations and evaluations performed by the district prior to the conclusion of the 2013-14 school year. However, in the fall of 2014, 27 teachers who were originally rated "effective" in personal observations and written evaluations were rated in NMPED's Summative Report as "minimally effective" or "ineffective". Accordingly, clarification of the trigger for action to be taken and the timing of that action is crucial, otherwise the following issues also arise:

- Teachers who make important student gains in the last school year and are rated effective or better at the time of personal observation and written evaluation may be subsequently rated lower based on NMPED's Summative Report and its use of criteria from two and more years earlier that do not reflect the teachers' current capabilities; and
- Principals who personally deemed a teacher as effective or better may need to subsequently develop a professional growth plan that does not reflect actual personal observations and written evaluations.

#### **CONCLUSION - NEED FOR CLARIFICATION**

As we have previously discussed, Santa Fe Public Schools remains committed to identifying and improving valid measures of teacher effectiveness and student learning. The differences between NMPED's guidance and the language of its regulations necessitate clarification from NMPED to ensure consistent evaluation implementation statewide. Without regulatory reference to NMPED's Summative Report or to the next steps resulting from "minimally effective" or "ineffective" ratings in the Summative Report, it is difficult to discern the actions legally required of school districts by NMPED. Thus, SFPS respectfully seeks clarification of the required statutory or regulatory effects of the NMPED Summative Report and the timing of any professional growth plans resulting from teacher observations and evaluations.

Respectfully,



Joel D. Boyd, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

Cc: SFPS Board of Education

## **Commentary: We need to get teacher evaluations right**

**By Joel D. Boyd | Posted: Saturday, September 20, 2014 7:00 pm**

Every year on the first two days of school, I visit every school in the district to welcome back students and teachers. Largely celebratory, my visits to classrooms on these days are brief and begin with a somewhat standard script:

“My job as superintendent is to make sure that you have everything that you need for a successful school year. Do you have everything that you need?”

Generally, the response is a choral “yes” from the class, but this year, one elementary student chose to defy convention.

“Dr. Boyd,” he said, “all I need to have a successful school year is a good teacher.”

In one statement, this fourth-grader clearly summarized what researchers have held true for more than 20 years. The single greatest school-based factor in determining the academic success of any student in a single year is the quality of the teacher in his or her classroom. This conclusion, most notably presented through a large-scale analysis of Tennessee test scores in the late 1990s, has been heavily debated but largely supported by every notable piece of literature on the topic in recent years. In 2010, Stanford economist Eric Hanushek calculated that the impact of a teacher on a child’s academic development is so great that above-average teachers generate hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional future earnings for their students.

Our students know that having a good teacher is critical to their success and highly regarded researchers have proven it. So one might reasonably ask why we haven’t done more to recognize high performers and rid classrooms of low performers. Why can’t we ensure beyond a doubt that we have a high-quality teacher in every classroom in every school? That’s the urgent question that has placed New Mexico and other states in this quandary of test-based teacher evaluations.

### **Ensuring a good teacher in every classroom**

While the literature is clear on the importance of having good teachers, it is far less clear on what it takes to be a good teacher. The popularly held belief that experience and advanced degrees lead to better teaching has been widely debunked as mythology. More than one study has found no apparent impact on students related to master’s degree attainment by teachers and limited differences in teacher quality past three years of experience. Locally, the New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee recently reported that the state investment into teacher quality through the tiered licensure system resulted in no significant difference in the educational outcomes for children when comparing across current teacher licensure levels.

If good teaching or the characteristics of quality teachers can't be defined objectively based on inputs, then it seems logical to look to classroom outputs for a better solution. Hence, the current movement toward statistical test score analysis and outcome-based measures of teacher effectiveness. The concept seems simple enough — if we know that student learning is largely driven by teacher quality, we should be able to derive the quality of a teacher from the amount of learning of his or her students.

On the surface, this paradigm shift makes complete sense to most people both inside and outside of the profession. Indeed, I was one of the early supporters of our state's new accountability system, which combines classroom observations and other measures with multiple years of growth data on standardized student tests to rate teachers. I encouraged others to move forward quickly with implementation — our children deserve rapid improvement.

### **The promise vs. reality of measuring teacher effectiveness**

Unfortunately, as we learned through the first year of implementing New Mexico's system, the test score component of a teacher evaluation system has proven far more difficult to implement than originally thought. This one aspect of a more robust evaluation system is now causing real problems as states try to make good on the promise of delivering timely and transparent feedback to teachers on the quality of their practice.

The teacher evaluation issues that have arisen have been widely reported and have now exhausted the emotions of classroom teachers, interested parents and impartial observers. Yet it is important to understand the basis for some of these concerns as we collectively craft a clear path forward.

First, while loads of data are now conceivably available, the systems used to analyze that data seem woefully inadequate. In New Mexico, we have seen at least three shifts in overall teacher evaluation results in just a three month span due to either incomplete or inaccurate calculations. At best, these shifts have reduced the level of confidence of stakeholders across the state in the system. At worst, they call to question the validity of every evaluation for teachers in New Mexico.

With the well-documented insufficient funding for education in New Mexico, it remains unclear how our state can afford to fund the type of systems necessary to validly analyze evaluation data and produce errorless evaluations for tens of thousands of teachers in a high-stake environment. To be successful, this type of large-scale, complex initiative must be adequately funded. Current funding levels are anything but.

Second, the complexity of developing valid calculations does not seem to allow for timely feedback or immediate professional growth. The statistical models currently used in New Mexico and other states make it impossible to use end-of-year standardized test data for teachers that

originate from the year of evaluation, rendering the ratings for some improving teachers as near useless.

For example, in at least one case in Santa Fe, a teacher at a school that made important student gains this past year was clearly rated as effective based on multiple observations by two different experienced administrators. However, the teacher's overall evaluation deemed him ineffective because of low test scores from two and more years back. In this case, one of two things could be occurring and neither is beneficial for improving student learning. Either the administrators were misguided in what effective teaching looks like or the teacher improved markedly in the rating year and is now being penalized for prior low performance.

The problems with the former are obvious, and the problems with the latter bring about another important area for discussion. The principal who deemed the teacher as effective is now, based on the law, charged with developing an improvement plan. How can the principal develop a meaningful improvement plan for the teacher when she believes that he is doing good work and has not observed anything in his practice that would require the mandated improvement? In other words, how can she guide the teacher to do something different when she already believes that what he is now doing is good?

### **Let's pause and get it right**

Hopefully, we are all on the same page with improvement in teacher quality being the end goal of the evaluation system. If we are, then we should all recognize that while outcome-based accountability for teachers holds real promise for improving our classrooms, we need to press the pause button and delay the use of standardized test scores as a high-stakes component within the evaluation system until we resolve the obvious problems. If not, we run the risk of losing the credibility of the system as a valid tool for improvement and the momentum for positive educational change that is currently taking place.

To be clear, a delay is not a stop. The value of the data is real, and returning to the ways of the past is unacceptable. Over the course of my career in education, I have most often been in positions where I am calling for an increased pace to reform. Just a few months ago, I wrote a letter to the Santa Fe Public Schools community to remind our partners that our children cannot wait for improvements in the classroom. However, while we must continue to recognize that time is of the essence, we must also recognize the critical need to get all aspects of the evaluation process right. It's going to take longer than any of us would like as well as more funding than is currently provided. But I would hope we can all agree that our kids are worth it.

*Dr. Joel D. Boyd is superintendent of the Santa Fe Public Schools.*