

Maryland Council for Educator Effectiveness (MCEE) Minutes from Meeting of October 22, 2010

Absent:

Dr. Andres Alonso

Ms. June Streckfus

Minutes

Dr. Nancy Grasmick, MCEE Co-Chair, opened the meeting by asking for corrections or additions to the minutes of the August 26, 2010 and September 22, 2010 meetings. With no comments, it was moved and seconded to approve the minutes as presented.

Announcements

Ms. Betty Weller, MCEE Co-Chair reminded members to note any questions or concerns on an index card and present to either co-Chair or Renee Spence.

Dr. Grasmick announced that the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) has organized a national group, open to all states, to look at evaluating teacher effectiveness. She reported that currently twenty-four states have joined the effort and it is anticipated that many more will decide to participate. She reported that Maryland has joined the effort.

She also reported that there is a group of content area teachers who are working together to determine a fair method of evaluating non-tested content areas. She said that their input could be very helpful to this Council.

Review of Evaluation Framework Model

Ms. Pat Alexander, Managing Director, Affiliate UniServ and School Quality, MSEA

Ms. Geraldine Duval, Organizational Specialist, School Quality, MSEA

Ms. Jan Erskine, Organizational Specialist, School Quality, MSEA

Ms. Duval discussed the following overarching goals of creating a Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation Model:

- designed to improve instruction by focusing on teaching and learning; and
- engendering a system that is fair, transparent, timely, rigorous, and valid

She provided several samples of research input from various experts in the field of testing and assessments. Ms. Duval provided and discussed the basic pillars of the MSEA Model. Ms. Duval provided two framework options which both incorporate five domains:

1. planning and preparation
2. the classroom environment
3. instruction
4. professional responsibilities
5. student growth

She reported that domains one through four are based on Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching*. She noted that each domain is assigned a 20 percent weight toward a teacher's evaluation.

She noted that domain five, student growth, under Framework One would be based on an Average Student Growth Score (AFGS) based on locally determined multiple measures, calculated from two clearly articulated points of time; and calculated for all qualifying students in a teacher's class(es).

Ms. Duval said that domain five, under Framework Two, would be divided equally between an AFGS and an Individual Professional Growth Plan (IPGP) based on current student performance data and aligned with the school's improvement goals; developed collaboratively with the primary evaluator and the evaluatee to enhance the educator's individual practice; and aligned to standards.

She discussed the strengths of the proposed Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation Model and opened the floor for questions from the Council.

Mr. Melendez expressed concern that Framework Two would be "diluting student growth percentage." Ms. Erskine reported that schools currently submit plans for improving student test scores which would serve as the IPGP.

Senator Kelley asked how would the twenty percent weight for student growth meet the General Assembly's dictate of student growth being a "significant percentage" of teacher evaluations. She asked, "How are you going to operationalize this? Is there specific research? What kind of research?"

Ms. Erskine said that she can provide some specific research from a study that she can provide to the Council. She explained the process to be used by setting goals and looking at expected growth for each student.

Senator Kelley said that she agrees that “standardized tests are not the be all and end all of everything.”

Ms. Erskine expressed her support of the group of content area teachers who are working on the non-tested areas.

Delegate Kaiser noted that the MSEA proposal does not include MSA results in determining student growth. Ms. Erskine said that there are many problems associated with using MSA results. She said, “The test was not designed to judge teacher effectiveness.”

Mr. Barclay expressed his concern that twenty percent for student growth on an evaluation is not what the General Assembly meant as “significant.” Ms. Erskine said that while student growth is very important, knowing what behaviors enhance growth is also very important.

In response to a question by Mr. Barclay about what a “qualifying student” represents, Ms. Erskine said that a qualifying student must attend school 95 percent of the school year, have a better than limited facility for the English language and have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that is being fulfilled with all the resources necessary.

Dr. Grasmick cautioned that all services on an IEP must be provided to a student under federal mandate.

Mr. Burton expressed concern that domains one through four all happen outside the classroom and that they are given too much weight.

Ms. Erskine said that Dr. Danielson insists that the four domains are equally as important as the fifth. She noted that these percentages are simply suggestions and that MSEA is not “wedded” to these figures.

Senator Kelley noted that there are varying reasons for disqualifying students which are outside of a teacher’s control.

Ms. Pipkin suggested that a rubric would clarify some of these issues. She also suggested that the Council look at what local school districts are currently using to evaluate their teachers. She noted that the NCLB requirement for schools to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) validates student attendance. She suggested that some models could reflect the use of special education services being provided to students.

Dr. Grasmick cautioned not to marginalize children with disabilities by compromising special education standards.

Ms. Walker said that Dr. Danielson has been very helpful and asked if the proposed Model could be used for beginning teachers. Ms. Erskine said that new teachers will probably need more support and suggested that the evaluation is part of that support process.

Ms. Walker expressed concern that the proposed forty hours of professional development is too high. Ms. Erskine said that RTTT funding could supplement support for this proposal. Ms. Walker asked about the Evaluator Proficiency Exam (EPE) and Ms. Erskine responded that extra attention is being given to principals on how to be a good evaluator.

In response to a question by Mr. Ratliff, Ms. Erskine said that the Education Act gave the ultimate authority to local school systems and that many school systems are already using the Danielson method for evaluations. She said that this proposal provides equal importance to all of the domains and that over use of student growth would be a mistake.

Dr. Leak reiterated the need for rubrics and asked for information on which school systems are currently using the Danielson method. In response to a question by Dr. Leak, Ms. Erskine discussed what constitutes a “qualifying student.”

Dr. Finan asked if there is an attendance qualification for teachers as well as students. Ms. Erskine agreed that this is a valid point that should be addressed as well.

Dr. Grasmick thanked the presenters for their thoughtful presentation and reminded members to provide any questions or concerns on an index card provided to them.

Subcommittee Assignments

Dr. Grasmick announced that the Council will be divided into subcommittees which will meet independently and provide a report to the entire group. She urged members to engage experts if assistance is needed. She asked that they include the following in their report:

1. definitions of effective/highly effective teacher and principal
2. interpretation of a growth model
3. what are the domains
4. what professional development will be needed

Dr. Grasmick said that the subcommittees dealing in non-tested areas will need to look at other opportunities such as the Maryland Model for School Readiness.

Ms. Weller distributed a chart which outlines the Council member assignments to four subcommittees.

Committee Resources

Dr. Megan Dolan, USDE

Dr. Dolan explained that she is working with several other states on how to measure and improve teacher effectiveness. She said that the Delaware State Education Association is looking at measuring student growth by assigning a one-year student growth by labeling the teacher “effective.” A teacher that provides a student with a one and one-half year’s growth could be labeled “highly effective” and less than one year’s growth could result in an “ineffective” label.

Dr. Dolan discussed the various growth models being used by other states and offered to provide this information to the Council members. She stressed the need for a common vocabulary and noted that approximately 59 percent of courses are in non-tested areas. She noted that teachers in Delaware are very positive about having standards in non-tested areas. She said that on the national stage there is a movement toward “credible and useful” knowledge for students. She noted that Delaware staff has asked teachers to prepare proposed assessments and to help select and train arbiters. Dr. Dolan said that standards will start low and increase over several year and that she anticipates that she will be able to provide this group with Delaware’s proposed standards by January, 2011.

Dr. Dolan said that while there are not a lot of experts in this field, there are many studies that have been done and she is able to provide those studies for Council members to assist in their deliberations. She offered many resources from her office for the Council’s use.

In response to a question by Mr. Melendez regarding dealing with ineffective employees, Dr. Dolan said that teachers should receive help during their beginning years as well as ongoing professional development and be provided a plan to improve their effectiveness in the classroom.

Senator Kelley urged the need for mentoring for beginning teachers to keep good teachers in the classrooms. She suggested that professional development can be offered online as well as in a classroom setting.

Ms. Bost urged that professional development opportunities should allow for group discussions rather than done in isolation.

Dr. Grasmick encouraged members to read the section on professional development in the RTTT application.

Committee Work

Dr. Grasmick asked subcommittee members to reconvene at 11:55 a.m. and designate a facilitator to report back on their progress.

PreK-3

Facilitator: Judy Walker

Ms. Walker said the group discussed expanding the Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) to measure student growth by providing a pre- and post-assessment of student knowledge.

Tested 4-8

Facilitator:

Dr. Bonita Coleman-Potter expressed the need to know what other evaluation systems are currently being used in Maryland schools. She said that the group is grappling with the definitions of teacher and principal. She said that the group will pull examples from their own resources and come together on consensus regarding a growth model. A group member said there was discussion about who are considered teachers, who should be evaluated and what variations should be in the evaluation documents.

Dr. Coleman-Potter said the Subcommittee members need more information on a federal model. Senator Kelly said that principals may not be the proper person to conduct evaluations since they are generalists and do not deal with specifics in the classroom.

Non-tested 4-8

Facilitator:

Dennis Pataniczek said that the group will need to interview teachers to see what they are currently doing to measure performance.

Ms. Bost said that the subcommittee members would like to participate in discussions with the group of non-tested content area teachers who are working on this issue. Dr. Grasmick said she will provide the subcommittee with the dates that this group will be meeting.

High School

Facilitator: Christopher Barclay

He said the subcommittee worked on a definition for highly effective and effective teachers and principals. He said that the group is requesting Dr. Danielson's definitions

and will look at the National Board Certified Teacher definition as well. He described the task of standards of measurement as “daunting.”

In response to a suggestion by Dr. Grasmick, the Council agreed that a presentation on what is currently being used to evaluate and train principals would be helpful.

With no further discussion, the meeting ended at 12:15 p.m.

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