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How Louisiana Evaluates Teacher Effectiveness: Implementing Act 54 and COMPASS

- Act 54 of 2010 is a model law that mandates new parameters for teacher and principal evaluations.
- An evaluation score consists of two equally weighted components—1) a quantitative measure of student growth, and 2) a qualitative measure of performance using traditional evaluation techniques, such as classroom observations.
- Educators and principals who are rated ineffective must be placed on an intensive assistance plan. If a teacher is still rated ineffective after completing an intensive assistance plan, then disciplinary action will be taken.

Overview

In 2010, Governor Jindal and the Louisiana Legislature passed Act 54, a model law that mandated new parameters for educator evaluations. Most importantly, it required that half of educator evaluations be based on measures of growth in student achievement. In order to comply with Act 54 and to enhance teacher effectiveness across the state, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) has developed COMPASS as a new statewide evaluation and support system.

In accordance with Act 54, an educator's final COMPASS score will consist of two equally weighted components. The first component is a quantitative

measure of student growth, using one of three methods—value-added, common assessment, or Student Learning Target data—depending on the type of course under evaluation. The second component will be based on qualitative measures of performance using traditional evaluation techniques, such as classroom observations.

Stakeholder Involvement

The details of COMPASS were developed with a great deal of stakeholder input. Act 54 provided for the establishment of an Advisory Committee on Educator Evaluations (ACEE), which was composed primarily of teachers. The ACEE committee met at least monthly for over one year and provided recommendations on the following:

1. The development of the value-added assessment model;
2. The identification of student growth measures for grades and subjects for which value-added data is not available, as well as for personnel for whom value-added data is not available; and
3. The adoption of standards of effectiveness for qualitative observations.

These recommendations were approved by BESE in 2011. In addition to ACEE committee meetings, the LDOE held statewide meetings with teachers, principals, and district staff to gather feedback. An online survey of teachers, principals and district staff were conducted. Finally, the Department convened content-specific focus groups that provided input into the development of frameworks for the value-added model, common assessments, and Student Learning Targets. All are discussed in further detail below.

Quantitative Measures

As required by Act 54, fifty percent of educators' COMPASS evaluations will be based upon quantitative student data.

1. **Value-Added Data:** For Tested Grades and Subjects,² a value-added model will be used to evaluate teachers. Value-added assessment is a statistical approach that combines a student's test data from prior years, demographic factors of the individual student (comprising up to 10% of the value-added model), and current year LEAP or iLEAP results to determine whether the student made the expected amount of progress given their history. The value-added assessment compares actual student achievement for eligible students to the expected achievement of those same students to determine if the student has made more, less, or a typical amount of progress. Currently approximately 35% of teachers receive a value added score. Over the next 2-3 years, it is anticipated that roughly 50% percent of Louisiana teachers will be evaluated using value-added data.

2. **Common Assessments:** There are a number of subjects that are not assessed by standardized tests, also known as Non-Tested Grades and Subjects (NTGS). For these subjects, where available, state-approved common assessments have been developed, with the input of teachers and educational professionals, that will comprise part of the body of evidence measuring students' attainment of learning targets. The LDOE will release a list of state-approved common assessments at the beginning of each academic year.

3. **Student Learning Targets:** Finally, there are non-tested subjects for which there are no common assessments available, such as or music. For these subjects, progress towards pre-determined, teacher-developed Student Learning Targets shall govern the student growth component of the evaluation. Student Learning Targets are goals designed by individual teachers that express an expectation of growth in student achievement over a given period of time, as well as common measures for assessing attainment of those goals. Each school districts may define consistent Student Learning Targets across schools and classrooms for teachers with similar assignments.

At the end of the each academic year, all teachers and administrators will be able to access a report of their quantitative score – whether based on value-added, common assessment, or Student Learning Target data. The report will provide teachers' quantitative evaluation score on a scale of 1.0 to 5.0. Teachers who receive a score lower than 2.0 are considered ineffective. Quantitative results for school principals and leaders will be determined by a roll-up of the value-added, common assessment, and Student Learning Targets data for individual students and teachers.

Qualitative Measures

Historically, the qualitative evaluations used for teachers and school leaders were neither uniformly created nor applied. Going forward, in accordance with Act 54, the fifty percent of the statewide

COMPASS evaluation composed of qualitative measures of performance will be based on the Louisiana Leader Competencies and Performance Standards³ and the Louisiana Teacher Competencies and Performance Standards.⁴ These new standards were developed by LDOE in collaboration with Louisiana educators. Teachers' adherence to the standards will be evaluated using a preponderance of evidence and gathered over time through both classroom observations and site visits and through critique of submitted materials (i.e. lesson plans, assessments, and professional development certifications).

An evaluator⁵ must conduct a minimum of one formal, announced observation and at least one other informal, unannounced observation of instructional practice per academic year. Each teacher observation must occur during at least one complete lesson. For both formal and informal observations, evaluators must provide feedback following the observation. Then, at the end of the academic year, using the qualitative rubric, evaluators shall assign the evaluated teacher or leader a score ranging between 1.0 and 5.0, where a score lower than 2.0 is considered ineffective.

Composite Evaluation Score and Appeals

All teachers and administrators will receive a COMPASS rating at the end of the year that combines their quantitative student growth score and their qualitative score into a final composite score. The final evaluation score will be the average of quantitative and qualitative scores and will be represented by a number between 1.0 and 5.0 that correlates to the ratings below:

1.0 - 1.9	Ineffective
2.0 - 2.6	Effective: Emerging
2.7 - 3.3	Effective: Proficient
3.4 - 4.0	Effective: Accomplished
4.1 - 5.0	Highly Effective

Educators who are rated ineffective on either the quantitative or qualitative component will receive a final rating of ineffective and must be placed on an

intensive assistance plan within 30 days. If a teacher is still rated ineffective after completing an intensive assistance plan, then disciplinary action will be taken.

Each school district must establish grievance procedures so that an educator may appeal his/her score. The grievance procedures must ensure that the evaluated teacher or leader 1) receives a copy of his/her evaluation; 2) is entitled to provide a written response to their evaluation; and 3) is entitled to hearing before the superintendent or his/her designee if the conflict is not resolved between the evaluator and evaluated teacher or leader.

Moving Forward

Pilot testing for the value-added portion of COMPASS began during the 2009-2010 school year in 24 schools. Value-added pilot testing continued through the 2010-2011 academic year, expanding to 21 school districts composed of over 2,000 teachers. During the current 2011-2012 school year, these same 21 districts are piloting the integrated COMPASS system, combining both the quantitative and qualitative measures of educator effectiveness. The value-added portion of COMPASS is also being implemented statewide in the current academic year. In fact, all affected teachers and leader were provided with their growth targets at the outset of the academic year. The LDOE is on track for statewide implementation of the complete COMPASS system during the 2012-2013 school year, in accordance with Act 54.

References

¹ Tested Grades and Subjects are those tested by iLEAP, LEAP, and End-of-Course Tests. iLEAP and LEAP tests apply to the four core content areas – English-Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science in grades 3-8. End-of-Course Tests are available for Algebra I, Geometry, English II, English III, Biology, and American History.

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³ Administrators will be evaluated using 17 performance standards that fall under five competencies: Ethics and Integrity, Instructional Leadership, Strategic Thinking, Resource Management, and Educational Advocacy.

⁴ Teachers will be observed according to 11 revised teaching performance standards that fall under four competencies: Planning, Instruction, Environment, and Professionalism.

⁵ Teacher evaluators are LDOE-certified school principals, assistant principals, or the evaluatee's respective supervisory level designee. Other designees, such as instructional coaches and master/mentor teachers may also conduct observations to help inform the evaluator's assessment of teacher performance. Administrator evaluators must be LDOE-certified school district supervisors, chief academic officers, superintendents, or the evaluatee's respective supervisory level designee.
