

Nevada Educator Performance Framework
Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC) Models for a
Statewide Performance Evaluation and Support System for Teachers and Administrators
Materials associated with Public Workshop scheduled for December 14, 2012

Legislative Charge to the State Board of Education

Adopt necessary regulations for implementation of the statewide educator performance framework created by the Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC) and authorized by the Nevada Legislature.

System Context

The TLC, a multi-disciplinary stakeholder group comprised of educators and policymakers, has created two models — one for teachers and one for administrators — to establish the Nevada Educator Performance Framework. This Framework has been carefully and thoughtfully deliberated across a fifteen-month process. The Framework is driven by state values, and is guided by research, emerging policy, and nationally recognized expertise.

System Goals

The Nevada Educator Performance Framework:

1. Fosters student learning and growth;
2. Improves educators' effective instructional practices;
3. Informs human capital decisions based on a professional growth system; and
4. Engages stakeholders in the continuous improvement and monitoring of a professional growth system.

Two documents are provided herein to support understanding by the State Board of Education and members of the public with regard to the models created by the Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC), as authorized and required through the passage of Assembly Bill 222 in the 2011 legislative session.

1. Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC) Summary of Nevada Educator Performance Framework: Final Models for Teacher and Administrator Evaluation in Nevada

This summary establishes the rationale that Nevada's system of educator performance evaluation must change and the incumbent solution for supporting educators to increase their effectiveness in order to elevate student achievement. Described herein is the creation of and the work conducted by the Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC) and the evaluation models developed by that Council, along with associated legislative changes necessary for the State Board of Education to adopt regulations aligned to TLC directionality. Finally, considerations associated with the implementation of Nevada's next generation accountability and support system for teachers and administrators are identified.

2. Recommendations Regarding Regulatory Adoption Process for Development and Creation of a Statewide System of Performance Evaluation and Support for Teachers and Administrators in PreK-12 Public Schools

This document sets forth a recommended course of action for the State Board of Education to consider with regard to the adoption of regulations that serve to create and require implementation of a statewide performance evaluation and support system for Nevada educators. The document describes functions (e.g., workshops, hearings), recommended actions, and the associated rationale for each recommendation.

Note: Additional materials will be available at the workshop on December 14, 2012, and posted online by that date as well at
http://www.doe.nv.gov/Boards_Commissions_Councils/Commissions_and_Councils/Teachers_and_Leaders_Council/Teacher_and_Leaders_Council/

Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC)
Summary of Nevada Educator Performance Framework
Final Models for Teacher and Administrator Evaluation in Nevada

Introduction

This summary establishes the rationale that Nevada's system of educator performance evaluation must change and the incumbent solution for supporting educators to increase their effectiveness in order to elevate student achievement. Described herein is the creation of and the work conducted by the Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC) and the evaluation models developed by that Council, along with associated legislative changes necessary for the State Board of Education to adopt regulations aligned to TLC directionality. Finally, considerations associated with the implementation of Nevada's next generation accountability and support system for teachers and administrators are identified.

The Need for Change

It is widely suspected that not all Nevada teachers are sufficiently qualified to provide instruction that results in student mastery of standards and college and career readiness upon graduation, nor that all administrators are readily able to provide highly effective instructional leadership for their schools. However, Nevada districts' current systems of evaluation do not yield the necessary data to definitively address this issue and to inform associated human capital decisions. Current evaluation systems do not sufficiently identify educators' strengths and weaknesses, lead to the delivery of professional development aligned to educator need, nor to guide promotion, tenure, and dismissal decisions. National research (Reform Support Network, 2011) has demonstrated that too few current educator evaluation systems are effectively used to: provide teachers and administrators with the training and tools they need to be effective; better identify and meet individual professional development needs; provide targeted intervention to help struggling educators; make personnel decisions; and reward the accomplishments of effective educators. Implementation of evaluation systems has been perceived as a perfunctory exercise, with insufficient measurement of characteristics directly linked to student achievement.

Nevada's Solution

In 2010 Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) were amended to allow the opportunity for teachers to be evaluated using student achievement data. In 2011, substantive changes were required to the evaluation of teachers and administrators, through the passage of Assembly Bill 222. This bill was created through the collaboration of multiple stakeholder groups and the concepts were brought forward for legislative consideration were generated via consensus of the teachers' association, school district leaders, and Nevada Department of Education (NDE) personnel. AB 222 created the Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC) and charged the group to create school administrator and teacher evaluation models to present to the State Board of Education, who is then charged with adopting regulations that guide the implementation of this Nevada Educator Performance Framework.

The TLC was charged with guiding the development of a system that when adopted by the State Board will ensure that teachers and administrators are:

- evaluated using multiple, fair, timely, rigorous and valid methods which includes pupil achievement data (as required by NRS 386.650) to account for at least 50% of the evaluation;
- evaluated on use of practices and strategies to involve and engage the parents and families of pupils in the classroom;
- afforded a meaningful opportunity to improve their effectiveness through professional development that is linked to their evaluations; and
- provided the means to share effective educational methods with other teachers and administrators throughout the State

The TLC includes representation of teachers; school, district, and state education administrators; higher education; school boards; and parents; as well as additional experts in education policy making. The TLC was established in September 2011, began meeting in October 2011, and met for 18 full day, public meetings across a fifteen-month period. The TLC also created four task forces to help establish the recommendations, to include the Communications Task Force, Models Task Force, Indicators/Measures Task Force, and Classroom Observations Task Force. These task forces brought forward additional representation and expertise from active teachers and principals, association leaders, and others and met more than 10 times across the spring, summer, and fall of 2012.

The TLC established four primary goals to guide the work, determining that in order to improve performance for all educators and students, Nevada will develop and implement an educator accountability and support framework that:

1. Fosters student learning and growth;
2. Improves educators' effective instructional practices;
3. Informs human capital decisions based on a professional growth system; and
4. Engages stakeholders in the continuous improvement and monitoring of a professional growth system.

National Expertise Supporting the TLC

As the designated administrative support to the TLC, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) accessed some of the highest quality technical assistance and expertise in the country to generate the development of a fully articulated and robust performance evaluation system that will support teachers and administrators in elevating student achievement. These experts include the following: Ms. Lynn Holdheide from the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center), Dr. Stanley Rabinowitz and Ms. Sujie Shin at the Assessment and Accountability Comprehensive Center at WestEd (AACC); and Dr. Margaret Heritage, Dr. Barbara Jones, and Ms. Sandy Change at the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST). Further undergirding the work of the TLC was expertise made available through the resources of WestEd's Southwest Comprehensive Center, through which Nevada has been a member of a four-state cohort collaborative since October of 2010, and engagement in CCSSO's State Collaborative for Educator Effectiveness (SCEE), which Nevada joined in 2011. Finally, the resources brought to bear through Nevada's receipt of a grant from the National Governors' Association (NGA) were instrumental, to include the expertise of Dr. Tabitha Grossman and communications consultant Ms. Carey Baird.

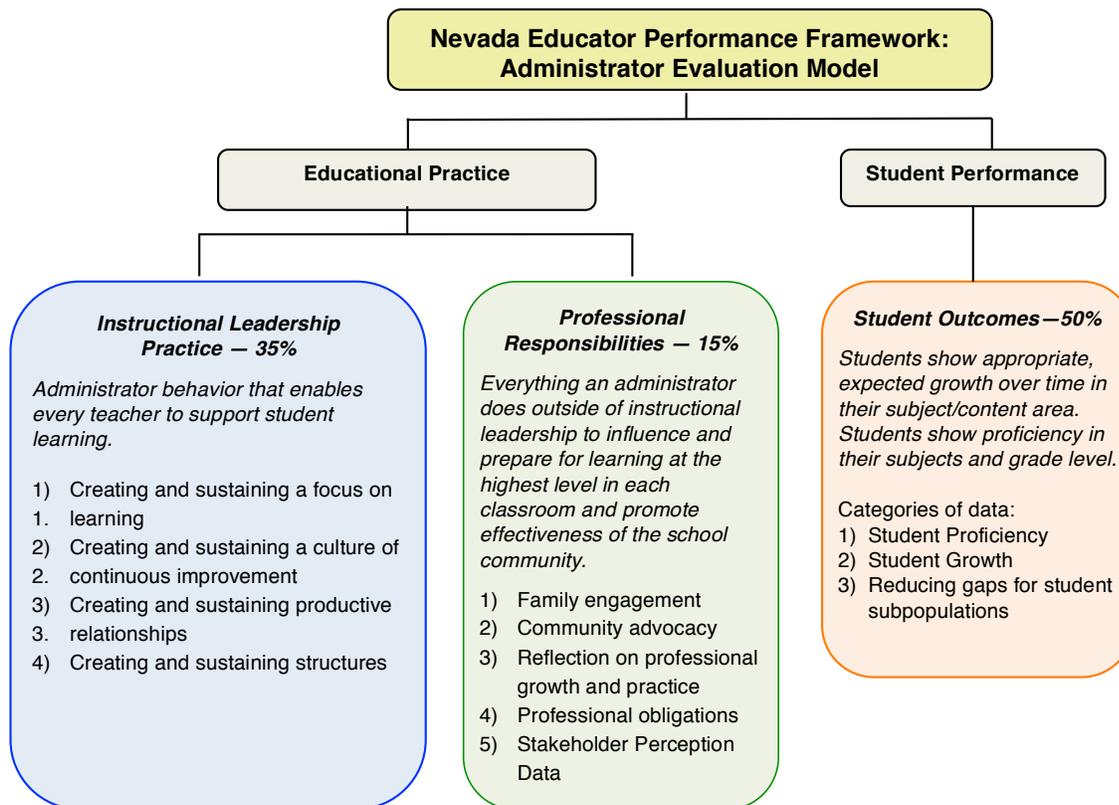
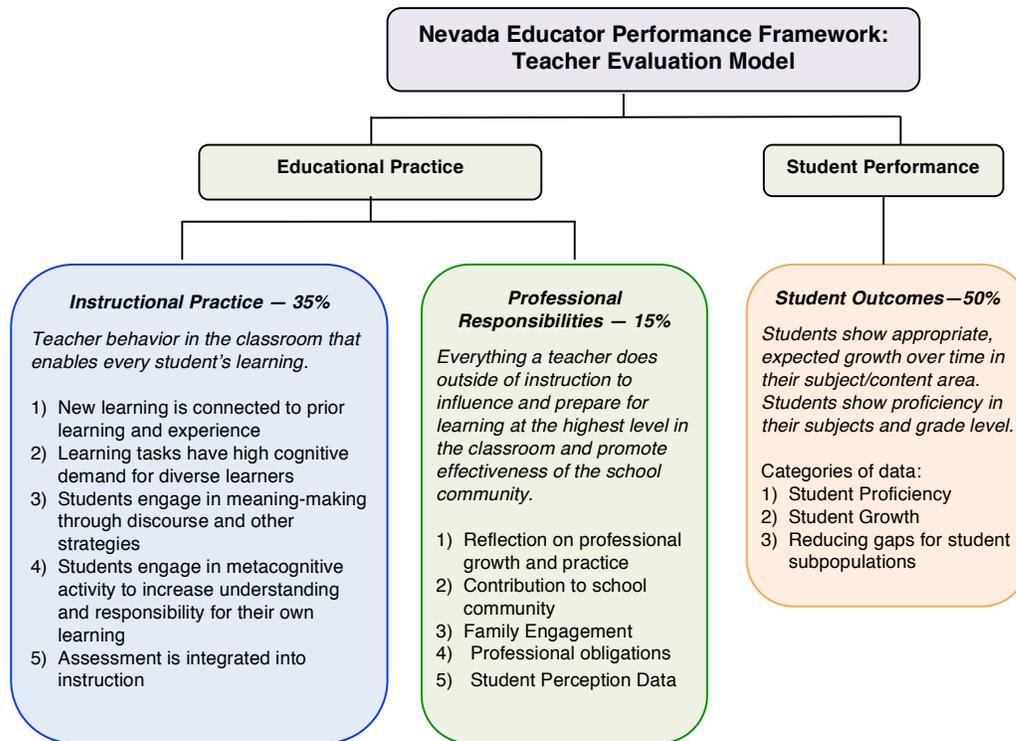
Decision Drivers

The following considerations have driven the TLC's recommendations:

- 1) Statute and Regulations
- 2) Values
- 3) Research
- 4) Costs and resources
- 5) Fairness – both real and perceived
- 6) Technical considerations (e.g., reliability, validity, bias, consequences)
- 7) Practices in other states
- 8) Coherence with other NV accountability programs (e.g., Nevada School Performance Framework)
- 9) Capacity as it exists now and as it can be expanded over time
- 10) Value of individual indications and the overall system vs. the burden of implementation

Existing statutes are helpful in ensuring that a uniform performance evaluation system will support increases in student achievement. NRS Chapter 391 requires further refinement in order to support full implementation of the Council's recommendations. As with the work generated through the ESEA Waiver Application (i.e., Nevada's Education Performance System), stakeholder values have been at the forefront of the Council's decision making. The TLC has also taken heed of emerging research and set an expectation that Nevada will be a part of the continued national research agenda through piloting and validation efforts here in our state. The Council recognizes that fully implementing a system that works well will take significant investment and that to a degree, limited capacity (human and fiscal) exists to support fully the implementation of a comprehensive, robust system. However, the state cannot wait to start till such a time that we have all the resources to do it correctly. Accordingly, Nevada's system must be phased in across a timeline that considers target for years 1, 3, 5, 7, and 10. Decisions must be made to prioritize the resources as the schedule unfolds, balancing costs and resources as more become available through public, private, and philanthropic sources, and by minimizing costs as possible. Toward that end, for example, Nevada can and should plan to benefit from the work of leading states that are developing tests in non-tested grades and subjects, creating reciprocal benefits for our own and other states. It is necessary to realize though, that in order to implement a credible and legally defensible system, it will be critical to put existing resources behind the values the system is mandated to meet. Issues of fairness are paramount in this endeavor. Notably, the same indicator will be perceived as fair to one teacher or administrator and unfair to another. Consequently, the TLC's recommendations generate a system that is complex, that is designed to grow over the years, and that relies on the best data that we have available at any given time in order to best inform decision making about human capital. This work is not primarily about remediating under-performing teachers and administrators so much as it is about establishing the expectations for the most effective instruction and leadership, supporting educators to meet these expectations, and holding individuals and requisite systems accountable for such.

Nevada Educator Evaluation Frameworks



The power of Nevada's teacher and administrator evaluation models is that they concentrate on what matters most. Significant meta-analyses of the research on teaching and leading has guided the TLC to recommend a system that focuses upon five high leverage instructional principles for teachers and four high leverage instructional leadership principles for administrators. The research is clear that if educators are supported to master these elements and then practice them consistently across environments, students, and subjects, that positive student achievement will

result. A focused, deep orientation will yield tremendously greater gains than will a system that includes too many components for evaluators to understand and measure, and too unfocused a system of professional development. Also noteworthy is Nevada's attention, although in smaller measure, upon those things that educators do outside of their direct instructional engagement with students, called *Professional Responsibilities* within Nevada's Frameworks, to influence student performance. Most states include both instructional practice and professional responsibilities in their educator effectiveness evaluation systems, although they are not typically pulled apart as two separate domains. The TLC has chosen to do so because of a desire to send a strong message about the importance of highly effective instruction and the need for the alignment of professional development in these areas. Additionally, the TLC believes that while professional responsibilities are important, more weight should be given to actual instruction with students since this is the most important lever for student success. Family engagement, notably, is established as a specific focus strategy for Nevada educators, and is unique to our state. Importantly, Nevada is now becoming seen on a national front as leader in this arena.

The most debated component of all states' emerging next generation educator accountability systems, has to do with how to include student achievement data. In Nevada, roughly 25-30% of teachers instruct students in grades and subjects that are tested through the statewide assessment system (i.e., Criterion-Referenced Tests – CRTs, in grades 3-8 and 10, in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, and grades 4, 8, and 10 in Science). This makes it very difficult to attach trustworthy, statewide test scores to those teachers who provide instruction in what the research calls "non-tested grades and subjects", which unfortunately encompasses up to three quarters of Nevada's teaching force. This issue is resolvable. To do so will require refinements in NRS Chapter 391, as well as correctly focused allocation and distribution of resources over the coming months and years. Fortunately, Nevada is in the exact same situation as the remainder of our sister states that are taking on educator effectiveness systems work, and to an extent, can benefit from those states like Colorado, Florida, Delaware, North Carolina, Utah, and others, who have begun to pave the path for the development of content collaboratives, the generation of student learning objectives, and the creation of common assessments, in order to more ably assess student performance — with technical sufficiency — in subjects beyond reading, writing, and math.

Similar to stakeholder values resonant in the Nevada School Performance Framework, by which we will transition from NCLB's Adequate Yearly Progress or AYP model, the TLC's models value both student proficiency (did student meet the goal) as well as student growth (did student catch up, keep up, move up). An additional parameter in the TLC's models has to do with how well our educators are doing to support students in poverty, who are English Language Learners, and/or have disabilities. Nevada is in line with the work in other states in this regard. For those states developing new systems and for whom information was available, seven states use both growth and proficiency, one state uses only proficiency, 11 states are undecided at this time, and 32 states are looking to use only growth data.

The TLC models rely upon student academic growth as the primary indicator for student outcome data. Research is incomplete about the reliability of all growth models as part of educator effectiveness systems. The TLC strongly believes that such models must be thoroughly reviewed as part of a statewide validation study efforts.

The models put forward by the TLC look to use what data are available now, attributing student achievement results to individual teachers when possible, and to use whole-school aggregate data to round out the system, both for tested and non-tested grade and subject teachers. The inclusion of whole-school data for those teachers who do teach in tested grades and subjects is desirable to ensure the technical rigor that state law and federal policies demand. As the system grows over time, the development of performance measures for non-tested grades and subjects must occur in order to be able to assess performance at the individual teacher level for those remaining 70-75% of our educators.

Implementation Considerations

System integrity is paramount to the success of this bold new accountability and support endeavor. Prior to full implementation, with resulting high-stakes human capital decisions, rigorous validation studies must be conducted on pilot implementation of the teacher and administrator frameworks. Resources will be needed to ensure that the system is tested for technical sufficiency and that requisite, resulting changes to the system are well developed and responsive to results of validation studies. Initially and over time, professional development and implementation monitoring will be mandatory for the system to work and to advance through a cycle of continuous improvement. Evaluators must attain the requisite knowledge, skills, and dispositions to collect data with validity and reliability. Educators must possess necessary understanding of the system dynamics in order to ensure that the evaluations are fair and that the data are used to guide aligned supports. Policy makers must understand the strengths and

weaknesses of the system, as it expands and matures across time, to support human capital decisions that are legally defensible and aligned to other reform initiatives and priority actions.

The Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs) will be vital in rolling out the new educator effectiveness system, both in training evaluators to collect data with sufficient technical rigor as well as to train teachers and administrators on the instructional and leadership principles in order to change their practice. The need for the statewide longitudinal data system as well as local student information systems to possess the necessary data with supreme accuracy and accessibility is of utmost importance. The NDE has been seen as a fundamental source of leadership in supporting the work of the TLC. This perception of leadership must be sustained and the NDE must continue to work to ensure alignment between educator performance systems and school and district performance systems, as well as to increase its capacity to implement thorough system monitoring undertakings. State and local policies that compel the generation of reports by school and district administrators must be scrutinized and revised as possible, so that administrators are able to be more present in classrooms and to focus most deeply on supporting teachers in consistently implementing the high leverage instructional principles. Resources must be assigned to support the implementation of full-bodied validation efforts so that the system is legally defensible, and refined to ensure technical adequacy.

Requisite Legislative Changes

In order for the State Board of Education to adopt regulations to implement the Nevada Educator Performance Framework, the following areas must be addressed through legislative refinement in the 2013 session.

- 1) Timelines for implementation must be adjusted to allow for validation work to occur to ensure:
 - a. Legal defensibility;
 - b. Alignment with the state's transition to Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and Common Core State Standards;
 - c. Evaluation of various growth model options; and
 - d. The ability to provide targeted feedback and supports to all of Nevada educators.
- 2) Student achievement data components must be expanded to allow for the adequate measurement of more teachers.
- 3) Details regarding teacher observations must be adjusted to support timing considerations.
- 4) The date for adoption of final regulations must be moved back so they Board can adopt regulations that are allowed under the NRS as revised in the 2013 session.

Next Steps

The Nevada Educator Performance Framework will be presented during a public workshop at a meeting of the existing State Board of Education on December 14, 2012. On January 14, 2013 the newly configured State Board will meet and will receive an overview of the recommendations and have targeted opportunities to ask questions and gain more information to fully understand the models. A public hearing will be held at the new Board's second meeting, scheduled for January 25, 2012. In order to move forward with the development of tools necessary to operationalize the system (observation rubrics, professional development modules, etc.), while simultaneously addressing the fact that some regulations cannot be adopted as recommended until legislation changes existing NRS, the Board will be supported to adopt the regulations across the winter and spring of 2013 in sequential stages.

Conclusion

With state policymakers and local stakeholders commitment to a new system of educator effectiveness, Nevada has made a definitive advancement towards elevating student achievement. Implementing the system with fidelity will yield improvements in students' college and career readiness. Importantly it must be noted that we cannot fire our way to a solution. Instead, highly capable teachers and administrators must be developed and supported through Nevada's new comprehensive system. Accordingly, resources must be aligned and commitments must be sustained to ensure that the new system is validated, refined, and implemented in full, consistent with the state's values and philosophy of school accountability and improvement.