Uniform Performance Evaluation of Teachers and Administrators in Nevada

System Guidelines White Paper

February 17, 2012 Edition

Nevada Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC)

February 2012

Nevada Teachers and Leaders Council Membership

Pamela Salazar, Chair	Representing Nevada Regional Professional Development Program
Barbara Surritte-Barker, Vice Chair	Representing Teachers
Linda Archambault	Representing School Administrators
Christine Cheney	Designee for Chancellor of Nevada System of Higher Education
Theresa Crowley	Representing Teachers
Rorie Fitzpatrick	Designee for State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Kathleen Galland-Collins	Representing Teachers
Sharla Hales	Representing School Board Members
Robert McCord	Appointed Expert in Education Policymaking
Theo McCormick	Representing School Board Members
Heath Morrison	Representing School Superintendents
Dale Norton	Representing School Administrators
Mary Peterson	Appointed Expert in Education Policymaking
Theodore Small	Representing Teachers
Kimberly Tate	Representing Parents

Overview

This *Systems Guidelines White Paper* sets forth preliminary recommendations established by the Nevada Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC). It is expected that this document will be useful in informing diverse stakeholders about the preliminary thinking of the TLC, and that it will be especially relevant for Nevada school districts as they engage in planning efforts about current and/or future expansion or revision of existing teacher and administrator evaluation systems. The document explains why this change is happening, describes the background behind the creation of the TLC, and addresses the opportunities the work of the TLC presents. The paper also documents the beliefs the TLC has identified which will drive final recommendations, the goals and purposes of the evaluation system, and the categories of performance against which teachers and administrators will be evaluated. Also noted are considerations with regard to balancing local autonomy and priorities with statewide uniformity, as well as initial thinking with regard to purposefully phasing in a new statewide evaluation system. Lastly, the appendix contains a set of definitions to support understanding of the terms associated with the development of the performance evaluation system and the content of this document.

Introduction

Enhancing educator evaluation presents Nevada with an unprecedented opportunity for systemic reform that can initiate the process of repositioning Nevada at the top in education. Educator evaluation can serve as the foundation to increasing educator effectiveness, retention, and equitable distribution of effective teachers and administrators. Nevada has an opportunity to recognize this strong connection by aligning educator preparation and licensure, student standards, curriculum and instruction, and in-service professional learning with educator performance evaluations.

Promoting educator voice in the design and implementation of performance evaluation is imperative so that the model is perceived as fair, accurate, and useful for the stakeholders it is designed to support. Therefore, educators should be considered integral to the design process. Building a system whereby educators consider the process equally advantageous, and not as happening to them, will go a long way in gaining stakeholder support and improving teacher capacity and student outcomes. Such a system presents opportunities for:

Students to:

- be taught and supported by a highly effective educator
- meet academic expectations – graduating from school college and career ready
- take on ownership for their own learning
- have a voice in determining the performance evaluation of educators

Educators to:

- positively impact the achievement of students in Nevada
- grow professionally through targeted, sustained professional development and other supports
- monitor student growth, identify quality instructional practices, share effective educational methods with colleagues, and for effective practice to be acknowledged and rewarded

- reflect upon practice and take ownership for their professional growth
- participate in constructive dialogue and obtain specific, supportive feedback from evaluators

Districts/Schools to:

- ensure all students are taught by a highly effective educator
- ensure that all educators are adequately supported
- allocate resources and supports based upon identified needs
- make more informed human capital decisions
- provide educators with clear performance expectations aligned to professional responsibilities

The Need for Systems Change

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. In a national analysis of evaluation systems, the New Teacher Project study *The Widget Effect* (2009) found many design flaws with evaluation systems, including the following considerations:

- infrequent evaluations
- evaluations not focused on behaviors and practices having a focused impact on student learning
- evaluation ratings of "satisfactory" and "unsatisfactory", a "pass/fail" system making it impossible to differentiate great teaching from good, good from fair, and fair from poor, and whereby 99% of educators in many districts earned a "satisfactory" rating
- evaluations that did not provide useful feedback on classroom instruction, and
- lack of use of evaluation results to make important decisions about development, compensation, tenure or promotion.

At the same time that evaluation systems have come under fire, years of research tell us that providing students with effective teachers is the most important variable for achieving student success (New Teacher Project, 2009). Key to this success is the articulation of expectations for teachers, and the implementation of models of supervision that are aligned to standards. We also know that effective teachers must be supported by effective administrators. Quality Counts (2012) gives Nevada an overall grade of C- for the Teaching Profession, with a C for accountability for quality and a D for building and supporting capacity. Clearly change is needed within the state.

Ten years of collecting and analyzing "highly qualified" personnel data, as gathered in response to the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), have revealed that assessing educator capacity and impact is much deeper than considerations of licensure and years of experience. Accordingly, national and state reform agendas to improve educational outcomes for PreK-12 students have begun in earnest in the last three

years to shine a spotlight on educator evaluation systems. As spurred by the Obama Administration's Blueprint for Reform: The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), competitive Race to the Top funding was made available to incentivize states and districts to focus on assessing and developing educator capacity, including using student achievement data as a central measure to diagnose and classify educator success. In 2010, then-Governor Gibbons created the Nevada Blue Ribbon Task Force, which was charged with developing a set of recommendations for overall reform of public education for Nevada's children. A central tenet for the reform agenda that emerged was that every student should be taught by a great teacher and every school building should be led by a great administrator, and that in order to accomplish these outcomes, changes were needed in Nevada statute and regulations, including a need to establish a uniform performance evaluation system for Nevada educators.

Nevada's Directive

In 2011, Assembly Bill 222 — as approved in a bi-partisan effort of the Nevada Legislature and embraced by Governor Sandoval — created the Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC) and requires this body to submit recommendations to the State Board of Education concerning the adoption of regulations for establishing a statewide uniform performance evaluation system for teachers and site-based administrators. A first set of recommendations will be presented to the Board by June 1, 2012, with final recommendations to be presented to the Board on December 6, 2012. Based upon the recommendations, and after obtaining stakeholder input, the State Board of Education shall adopt regulations establishing a statewide evaluation system no later than June 1, 2013.

AB 222 specifically states that teacher and administrators are to be:

- 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
- Provided the means to share effective educational methods with other teachers and administrators throughout the State
- Classified under a four-tier design in which each teacher and administrator must be rated as highly effective, effective, minimally effective, or ineffective.

Guiding Beliefs for a New Educator Evaluation System

The following beliefs support an underlying vision for all educators to be supported in their development to be effective so that all students master standards and attain essential skills to graduate high school ready for college and highly skilled for career success. Accordingly, the TLC believes that:

- Educators will improve through effective, targeted professional development, as identified through the evaluation process and connected to district improvement plans/goals, that informs and transforms practice.

- An effective evaluation system must include clear expectations for both professional practice and student growth as well as fair, meaningful, and accurate feedback.
- The evaluation process will engage stakeholders in a collaborative process that informs practice and positively influences the school and community climate.
- The evaluation system must include student, teacher, and administrator achievement and performance as measured over time using multiple measures, multiple times, over multiple years.
- An effective evaluation system must include observation of practice.
- Educator evaluations must be consistent with and supported by federal, state, district, and school-level systems.
- A consistent and supportive teacher and administrator evaluation system includes opportunities for self-reflection and continuous, measurable feedback to improve performance of students, teachers, administrators, and the system.
- The evaluation system is a part of a larger professional growth system that consistently evolves and improves to support the teachers and administrators that it serves.
- The evaluation system is implemented with fidelity, ensuring that all educators and evaluators are adequately trained.

Evaluation System Goals*

To improve performance for all educators and students, Nevada will develop and implement an accountability 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
4. Engages stakeholders in the continuous improvement and monitoring of a professional growth system.

* These goals may be refined over the course of recommendations development.

Main Purposes of the Evaluation Framework**

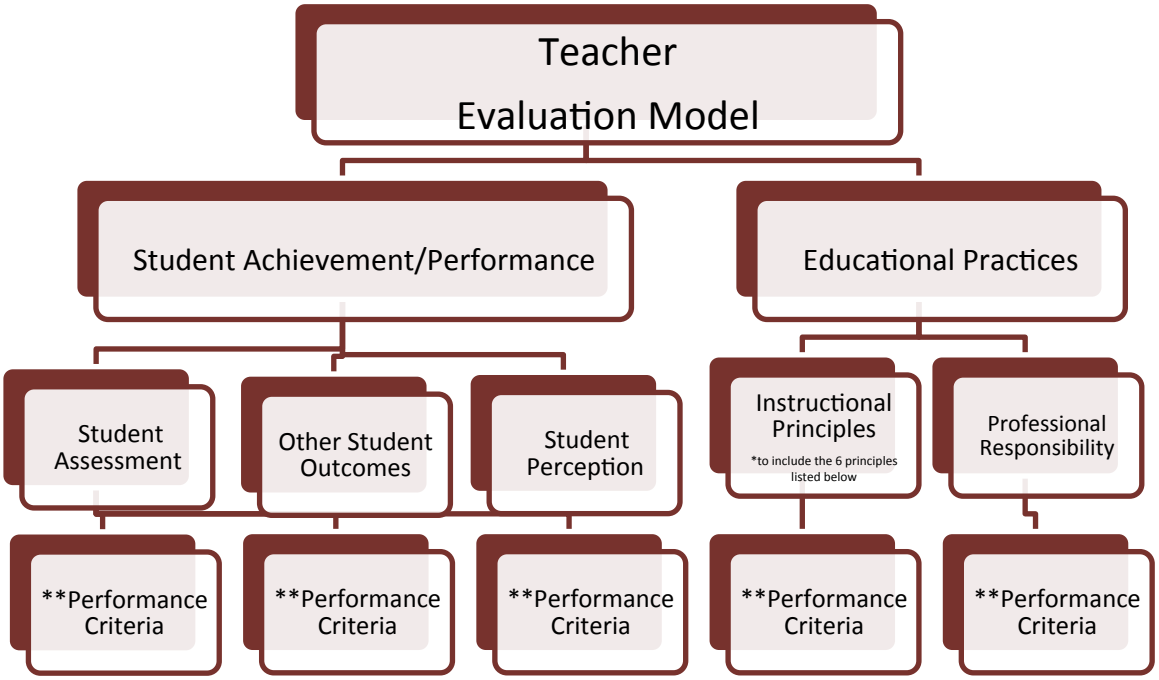
The overall purpose of Nevada's Educator Evaluation Framework is to identify effective instruction and leadership, and to establish criteria to determine:

- whether educators are helping students meet achievement targets and performance expectations *(supports goals 1 & 4)*
- whether educators are effectively engage families (*supports goals 1 & 2)*
- whether educators are collaborating effectively (*supports goals 1, 2, & 3*)
- the professional development needs of educators (*supports goals 1, 2, 3 & 4*)
- human capital decisions including rewards and consequences (*supports goal 3*)
- educators who use data to inform decision making (*supports goals 1, 2 & 4*)

**These purposes may be modified as the TLC work continues and as the evaluation framework is implemented, researched, and validated.

Categories of Performance/Evidence for Evaluation

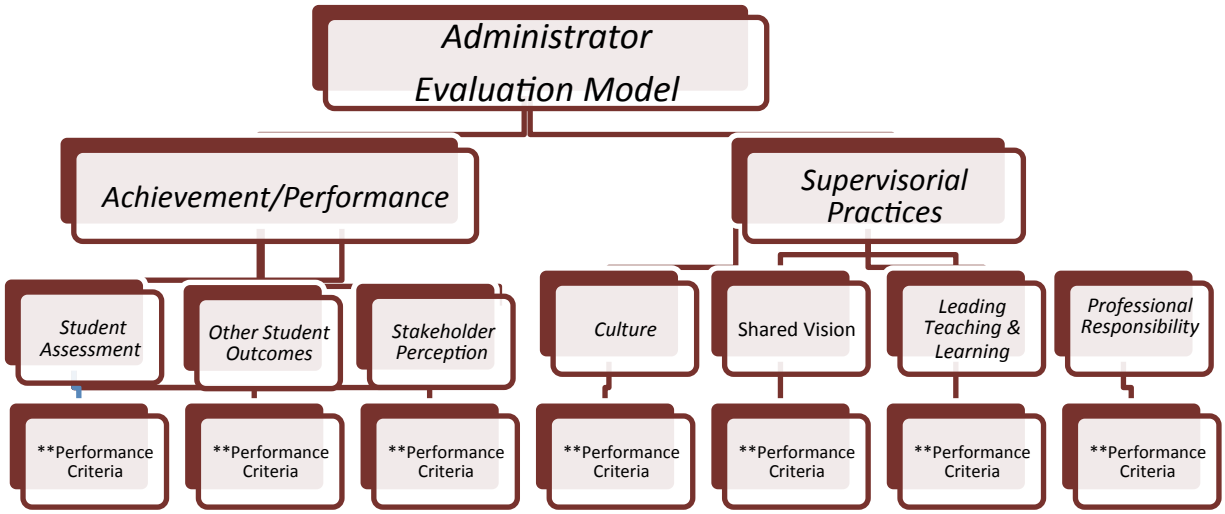
The working framework represented below characterizes the draft categories of performance/evidence in which teachers and administrators will be evaluated. The TLC believes that the teacher and administrator categories of performance should align. Decisions related to the percentage of each category have not been determined as of the publication date of this *Systems Guidelines White Paper*.



<u>* Instructional Principles</u>

1. New learning is connected to something already learned (knowledge base, prior experience).
2. Students are clear about intended learning and performance criteria.
3. Learning tasks have high cognitive demand for diverse learners.
4. Students engage in meaning-making through discourse and other strategies.
5. Students engage in metacognitive activity.
6. Assessment is integrated into teaching and learning.

***Performance criteria will be established during March-May, 2012.*



***Performance criteria will be established during March-May, 2012.*

Statewide Uniformity & Local Implementation Considerations

This content will be discussed during the TLC meeting on March 5, 2012 in Las Vegas.

Evaluation Models, Indicators, Measures, and Performance Criteria

The TLC will need to recommend characteristics of the model(s) (i.e., system by which the measures are combined to make performance decisions) to be used to evaluate educator effectiveness and indicators/measures that operationalize the potential models. Issues related to the indicators and measures are anticipated to include:

- Review of research and documentation on potential classes of indicators, as well as performance criteria (e.g., validation studies, description of where they have been employed);
- Description of potential measures to be used within each class of indicators;
- Advantages of using potential indicators and measures;
- Challenges facing successful implementation of potential indicators and measures

The choice of model(s) is related to but somewhat independent to the selection of indicators/measures. Issues related to selection of the model are anticipated to include:

- Determination if certain indicators and/or measures are mandatory or illustrative;
- Pros and cons of the State developing sample effectiveness models;
- Potential subscores within each measure;
- Pros and cons of various methodologies for combining the various measures to obtain a rating of highly effective, effective, minimally effective, or ineffective;

- Design studies to evaluate the implementation of local educator effectiveness models as part of a state continuous improvement plan.

Stakeholder Involvement and Communication

The TLC recognizes that evaluation systems are more likely to be accepted, successfully implemented, and sustained if stakeholders are included in the design, implementation, and revision process. Beyond stakeholder representation within the TLC, the council anticipates the possibility of stakeholder input throughout the process via surveys, focus groups, and/or town hall meetings. Information gained from these sources will be used to design and/or modify the evaluation system accordingly. Additionally, the TLC anticipates developing a strategic communication plan portraying a clear and consistent message and detailing steps for the broader school community about implementation efforts, results, and future plans for implementation. The specifics of this work will be determined during the meeting of the TLC on March 5, 2012 in Las Vegas.

Differentiating the Evaluation Framework

The TLC believes that setting high expectations for educators across all teaching and supervisory contexts is critical to improving student outcome and school systems. However, there may be situations in which the instructional practices, roles, and responsibilities vary according to content, student populations, and discipline. As indicators and measures are determined and the work of the TLC ensues, the TLC will consider the need for differentiation based on the role of the educator given differences in assignments and responsibilities. The TLC will consider whether the indicators and measures would very according to:

- the specific role and responsibilities of the educator;
- the grade level (e.g., elementary, middle, and/or high school)
- the level of experience
- the context in which they work (e.g., co-teaching)
- the performance level (e.g., the need for more intensive services)

Purposefully Phased-in Implementation

In order to realize desired results, the TLC believes the evaluation framework must be developed and staged in a calculated and thoughtful manner so that expectations for both performance and assessment are clearly articulated and fidelity is maintained throughout implementation. The TLC will continue to deliberate over the appropriate phase-in process to ensure quality implementation and outcomes.

Development and Implementation Timeline

Given the rigorous timeline, the tasks facing the TLC are considerable and may be well beyond the capacity of the TLC alone. Therefore, the TLC may commission the efforts of technical assistance agencies to carry out specific deliverables with the understanding that the work will be directed by the

TLC. Included below is a tentative development and implementation timeline that will guide the work of the TLC.

Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC)
Proposed Development and Implementation Timeline

Content of Regulations
To be provided to State Board December, 2012

Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Framework

- Agreement on Common Assumptions/Vision Statement
- Identification of Evaluation System Goals across 3-5-7-10 years
- Identification of Evaluation System Purpose across 3-5-7-10 years
- Value Statement Regarding District vs. State Models – adopt, adapt, or revise existing
- Definition of Standards
  - Standards of Evaluation
  - Teaching Standards
  - Leader Standards

Deliverables: (February/March)

- TLC Position Statement (February)
  - Vision/Assumptions
  - Goals
  - Purpose
  - State vs. Local Control Value Statement
- Standards Development (March) *(Developed via Subcommittee)*
- Feedback from Stakeholder Groups (February on)

Evaluation Process

- Will a pilot be conducted prior to implementation? If so, how will pilot sites be selected?
- Will the evaluation system be a gradual roll-out? If so, what will the timeline be?
- If local flexibility is provided, what process will be employed to ensure evaluation standards are met with fidelity (e.g. approval process, monitoring/reporting requirements)?
- Will the evaluation "process" be differentiated according to teaching context, experience, prior performance?
- Will the TLC require evidence of stakeholder involvement in the decision process in the evaluation design?

Deliverables: (March - May)

- Draft white paper language including regulatory recommendations for specific timelines for implementation
- Draft white paper language including regulatory recommendations for allowance of local flexibility
- Draft white paper language including regulatory recommendations for the approval/monitoring process and the adoption of state and/or local models.
- Draft white paper language including regulatory recommendations for allowance of differentiation according to context, experience, performance, and/or role.

Categories of Evidence

- What will constitute the 50% of student achievement data?
  - Will this include growth modeling? Other classroom based assessments? Both?
  - Will there be some flexibility in the growth measures at the local level? If so, will parameters be established to ensure valid and reliable measures?
  - Will the measures be the same for all educators across content, context, and student population?
  - Will group or school based growth be included?
- What will constitute the other 50%?
  - Will it include use of evidenced-based instructional practices/collaborative practices/professional practice/family & student perceptions?

Deliverables: (May - July)

- Draft white paper language including regulatory recommendations providing specifics of what needs to be included in the 50% student achievement –including negotiables/non-negotiables.
- Draft white paper language including regulatory language recommendations for specific categories of evidence that will constitute the other 50% - including negotiables and non-negotiables.

Specific Indicators (Measures) of Evidence

- What menu of measures will the evaluation systems include and which will be negotiable/non-negotiable?
  - Demonstration of Student Growth
    - Growth modeling
    - Other classroom based measures
    - Student Learning Objectives
    - Team/School Based Growth
    - Other indicators (e.g. grad rate)
  - Demonstration of Instructional Practice
    - Observation Rubrics
    - Self-Assessments
    - Student/Parent Surveys
    - Portfolios
    - Evaluation of Artifacts

Deliverables: (May – July)

- Review of research and documentation on potential measures.
- Selection of potential measures to be used by LEAs
- Determination if certain measures are mandatory or if parameters need to be met.
- What weight(s) will be applied to the measures – are they negotiable?
- How will each indicator of evidence be combined to obtain a rating of highly effective, effective, minimally effective, or ineffective.

Data Collection Needs

- Identify Data Collection Needs
  - What data are needed to inform progress toward evaluation system goals?
  - Determine the level of support needed to assist LEAs in collecting, warehousing, reporting, and interpreting evaluation data.
  - Determine the level of technical and financial support the NDE will provide to districts.
  - Consider implications for data collection beyond IT considerations such as personnel to conduct teacher observations, etc.

Deliverables: (June - September)

- Work with NDE and district IT/data personnel to determine data collection capabilities and needs. Review and align efforts with AB 229.
- Review internal and external funding sources to determine available resources for data programming and software needs.

Training Needs

- Identify Training Needs
  - Training for administrators and teachers on the evaluation process
  - Training for evaluators
  - Training on data collection and interpretation
  - Determine what level of support the NDE will provide to districts relative to training (e.g., funding, training modules, video library).

Deliverables: (September-October)

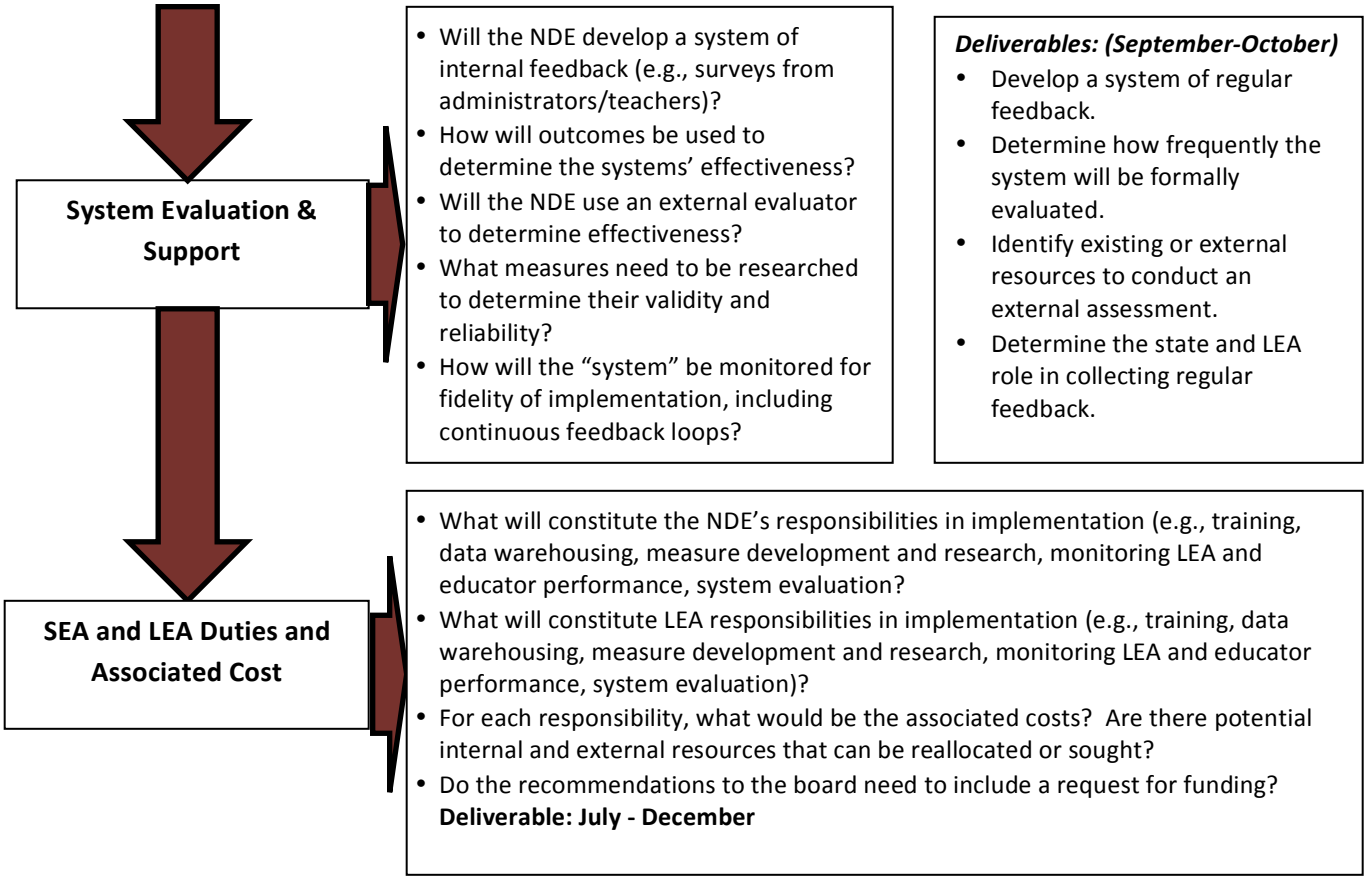
- Work with LEAs, IHEs, & RPDPs to determine training needs.
- Develop a training plan including responsible party, funding entity, and objectives.
- Determine if a train-the-trainer model would be effective.
- Determine if the state will monitor inter-rater reliability.

Professional Development & Support

- How will data be used to determine professional development needs?
- How will the state ensure that all professional development efforts are research-based and provided with job-embedded supports?
- Will teacher participation in professional development and improvements in instructional practice be used as a factor in the performance evaluation?
- How will the evaluation process provide feedback to teachers, schools and districts?

Deliverables: (September-October)

- Collaborate with IHEs and other professional development providers to assist the SEA and LEAs to develop training plans.
- Review existing state and local funding structures to determine how professional development resources can be aligned to support PD identified needs.
- Determine a process of continual feedback on professional growth.



Stakeholder Involvement and Communication (On-going -beginning in February, 2012)

- Determine the appropriate stakeholders to assist in designing the evaluation framework.
- Identify how stakeholders will be used to determine effectiveness and need for modification.
- Determine how frequent feedback should be sought. Determine a method to obtain stakeholder feedback (e.g., town meetings, forums, surveys).
- Develop a mode of communication to keep stakeholder informed (e.g., website, emails, public announcements)
- Identify resources to communicate messages from the TLC.

TLC Glossary

Administrator - An individual within the school serving in a managerial or supervisory role, including principals and assistant principals. Administrators are generally charged with the evaluation of teaching and teachers, as well as curriculum and program development within the school.

Data - Information, including classroom observations, student achievement scores and artifacts, gathered during the evaluation process for determining teacher/administrator performance.

Defensible – Having grounds to deem a conclusion or judgment valid and reliable based on various measures and assessments.

Educator – within this context, inclusive of all teachers and administrators at a school level.

Evaluator - The individual in an evaluation system that collects educator data, analyzes the data, and collaborates with educators to make judgments regarding performance.

Feedback - Information and/or recommendations given to an educator about performance which is based on evaluation results. Feedback is intended to provide insight to the educator so that professional learning can be targeted and improvements in performance can be achieved.

Indicator - Categories of evidence used to determine effectiveness.

Measure- One component used to assess educator performance that is used to determine the total performance rating. A measure could be classroom observations, student achievement scores, student surveys or the evaluation of artifacts.

Model - The system by which the measures are combined to make overall performance decisions.

Performance Criteria - A quantifiable measurement that defines and gauges progress toward an established goal/standard.

Professional Development - The process by which teachers' and principals' competencies and capacities are increased. This includes all types of professional learning activities including professional development sessions, job-embedded support, coaching, observing and/or mentoring, peer reviews etc.

Reliability - The extent to which an assessment or tool is consistent in its measurement. There are several types of reliability:

- ***intra-rater*** - the degree to which an assessment yields the same result when administered by the same evaluator on the same teacher at different times
- ***inter-rater*** - the degree to which an assessment yields the same result when administered by different evaluators on the same teacher at the same time
- ***internal consistency*** - the degree to which individual components of an assessment consistently measure the same attribute
- ***test/retest*** - the degree to which an assessment yields the same result over time of the same teacher

Student Achievement - The performance of a student on a particular measure (usually a standardized assessment) at a single point in time.

Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Framework - The outline of the approach used to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers and administrators.

Validity- The extent to which an assessment or tool measures what it intends to measure..

Weight - The adjustment of a given measure to reflect importance and/or reliability that determines the influence of the overall performance rating. For instance, the educator observation rubric may account for 40% of the overall performance rating.