



## Washington State Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

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### ‘Critical Questions’ Series May, 2011

## What’s Happening with the Teacher Principal Evaluation Pilot (TPEP)? Wenatchee School District’s Experience

Wenatchee School District is one of eight school districts and one educational service district chosen to participate in the state Teacher Principal Evaluation Pilot (TPEP). We felt we were prepared for the task, since we had recently invested six years of work creating and implementing a new teacher evaluation system in our district. We believed the knowledge and work from that process would contribute greatly to the new state model. Also, we wanted to be part of the process, not just the recipient of a model handed to us.

### The Law

In March of 2010, the Washington State legislature passed Engrossed Second Senate Bill 6696 (E2SSB 6696), a law requiring

- The revision of the teacher and principal evaluation system.
- A pilot project that would provide funding to selected districts that would then develop systems that would align to the new requirements.
- All districts in the state of Washington are required to adopt evaluation systems that align to the new requirements by the 2013-14 school year.

The law requires pilot districts to create new teacher and principal evaluation models that must be aligned to eight new criteria using a four-tiered rubric. It requires the identification of, or development of, appropriate multiple measures of student growth. It also requires professional development programs and evaluator training for teachers and principals. The new tools must be piloted and evaluated during the 2011-12 school year. A state Teacher Principal Evaluation Pilot (TPEP) Steering Committee was formed to manage the process.

### The Process

In Wenatchee, we formed three committees: a Steering Committee made up of the superintendent, four administrators and three teachers; a Teacher Committee with five administrators and six teachers, and a Principal Committee with six administrators and five teachers.

Among committee goals were to

- Develop evaluation tools that reflect current research and promote professional growth.
- Review the current tools and retain those aspects that are effective and eliminate or revamp those aspects that are not.
- Build off of previous work and experiences.
- Effectively use multiple measures of student growth for building/instructional improvement.
- Develop tools that are truly beneficial, not just the fulfillment of a requirement

We brought in Scott Poirier, formerly Assistant Superintendent for secondary education at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), currently the K-12 Education Coordinator for the Washington Education Association (WEA), to work with us on the creation of evaluation rubrics.

Then the committees rolled up their sleeves and got to work. The Teacher Committee began aligning existing district evaluation descriptors to the new criteria set forth by the state. They created new descriptors and identified evidence and measures for evaluating performance criteria and student growth.

The Principal Committee identified research-based characteristics of effective principal evaluation to create rubrics keeping with the characteristics and standards of effective leadership. They wrote the 'gold standard' for each criterion and aligned indicators to each gold standard, then differentiated the language for each of the four tiers.

Communication and transparency are an important part of the process. Face-to-face is always best, so we meet with building staffs for interactive dialogs. We also have a website rich in information, including budget (we were allotted \$115,000 in grant funds to support our work.), goals, meeting minutes, committee members, links to state resources, and newsletters. We mail print newsletters and send eNewsletters to the community, and use email to communicate with all staff.

In January, the Steering Committee attended a TPEP-sponsored conference in Spokane, where we submitted the rubrics-in-process to national education expert, Charlotte Danielson. At this juncture the state TPEP steering committee recognized the importance of including instructional frameworks in conjunction with evaluation tools. Wenatchee has been working with Robert J. Marzano, PhD, a leading researcher in education, for our instructional framework. We began matching evaluation criterion to the Marzano framework. We also began work on determining a summative rating.

Currently we have posted our rubrics on our district Evaluation Pilot website and are preparing to submit our rubrics to the TPEP Steering Committee.

### **Lessons Learned So Far**

One of the biggest lessons we've learned is that a collaborative working relationship is a must. We also realized that we didn't know what we didn't know, so technical support from WEA and the OSPI has been extremely beneficial. The work of finding the 'cut-line' has been challenging. We learned that an instructional framework is critical for creating a teacher evaluation tool, and that implementation of the new model will change the way we look at professional development. Professional development will now align to the instructional framework, where in the past professional development focused more on content-specific instructional strategies.

### **Challenges – Now and in the Future**

We're squeezing a tremendous amount of work into a very short period of time. We have the challenge of changing our culture to provide accountability, while supporting and ensuring growth. Developing a method to use data in determining impact on student learning has been a challenge. Constructing a summative rating has been a challenge, but thanks to some great math minds on our committees, we're feeling confident about our method.

### **What's Next**

- We are developing a pilot year plan and beginning the process of selecting fifty teachers from a pool of teachers who apply to participate. All principals will be evaluated using the new rubric.
- We are creating a Professional Development Plan for use of the new tools, including calibration training, and we are developing a plan for evaluating the new tools.
- In June 2011, OSPI will collect and analyze materials from the pilot districts and make recommendations to the Legislature regarding the adoption of one or more of the systems for use by districts in the state. We will pilot the new evaluation system in 2011-2012. We'll evaluate, modify, and pilot again in 2012-2013. The following school year, 2013-2014, we will launch the full implementation of the new evaluation system in all school districts in Washington State.

It's a task whose time has come. Creating the best possible schools is the ultimate outcome of effective evaluation. Positively impacting teacher and principal quality and student learning is the gold standard we are striving to achieve.

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