NCSL Panel Discussion:
Reforming Principal and Teacher Evaluations

Senator Kimberly A. Lightford
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What motivated Illinois to pursue reform?

- When Race to the Top was announced in 2009, it came at a good time for Illinois. We had already been working on reforming education but with little success and not much cohesiveness.

- Even without Race to the Top, statistics indicated that Illinois’ previous evaluation system was ineffective. Under the previous system, 92% of teachers were rated excellent and less than 1% were rated unsatisfactory. We needed a system that was more quantifiable and that held principals and teachers more accountable.

- We decided to pursue legislation that tied evaluations to student progress, allowing us to see how principals and teachers make a difference in classrooms and schools.
Key Stakeholders

- Illinois State Board of Education, Advance Illinois, the Governor’s Office, Chicago Public Schools, School Management Alliance, IEA, IFT, AFSCME, SEIU, AFL-CIO, Teamsters, and a variety of other education reform groups.
Summary: Incorporates student growth into teacher and principal performance ratings as a “significant” factor (to be defined by ISBE in a collaborative rule-making process) and provides for a model evaluation plan that uses student growth as a major portion of the overall rating. The Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) has recommended the state model for principal evaluations include 50% of student growth. Local school districts can negotiate down to 30%, but if the joint committee cannot agree, they default to the state model. Establishes requirements for evaluation frequency and transparency, and phases in implementation gradually. Includes a review of early implementations to inform later implementation.
PERA: Changing principal and teacher evaluation

• Use student growth as a significant factor in rating performance.
• Align with research-based standards and professional competencies.
• Take into consideration the principal’s specific duties, responsibilities, management, and competence.
• Specify strengths and weaknesses with supporting reasons.
• Require all evaluators to be state-certified.
• Each principal must be evaluated annually prior to March 1 for annual contracts and the last year of a multi-year contract.

A revised rating scale:

- Excellent
- Proficient
- Needs Improvement
- Unsatisfactory
Keys for Implementing Reform

• Politics: Determine who the key stakeholders are.

• Participation: Bring everyone to the table and encourage collaboration.

• Process: Form special committees to study the issue and report to the larger assembly. Have a good negotiator.

• Policy: Be willing to compromise and look at what works and what doesn’t in other states.