

Administrator Evaluation Task Force

Final Report



Senate File 2284

Iowa Department of Education

Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319-0146



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Iowa Code 284A.7 Evaluation requirements for administrators

A school district shall conduct an annual evaluation of an administrator who holds a professional administrator license issued under Chapter 272 for purposes of assisting the administrator in making continuous improvement, documenting continued competence in the Iowa standards for school administrators adopted pursuant to section 256.7, subsection 27, or to determine whether the administrator's practice meets school district expectations. The evaluation shall include, at a minimum, an assessment of the administrator's competence in meeting the Iowa standards for school administrators and the goals of the administrator's individual professional development plan, including supporting documentation or artifacts aligned to the Iowa standards for school administrators and the individual administrator's professional development plan.

Section 9. Statewide Educator Evaluation System Task Force

1. The director of the department of education shall convene a task force to conduct a study regarding a statewide teacher evaluation system and a statewide administrator evaluation system.
2. The task force shall be comprised of at least 12 members as follows:
 - a. Eight members shall be appointed by the director to represent education stakeholders and practitioners knowledgeable about the Iowa core curriculum and may include members currently serving on the department's teacher quality partnership teacher evaluation system.
 - b. One member shall be the deputy director and administrator of the division of learning and results of the department of education or the deputy director's designee.
 - c. One member shall represent the area education agencies.
 - d. One member shall represent a certified employee organization representing teachers licensed under chapter 272.
 - e. One member shall represent a statewide organization representing school administrators licensed under chapter 272.
3. The person representing the area education agency shall convene the initial meeting. The task force shall elect one of its members as chairperson. After the initial meeting, the task force shall meet at the time and place specified by call of the chairperson. The department of education shall provide staffing services for the task force.
4. To the extent possible, appointments shall be made to provide geographical area representation and to comply with sections 69.16, 69.16A, and 69.16C.
5. The task force shall develop a statewide teacher evaluation system and a statewide administrator evaluation system that standardize the instruments and processes used by school districts, charter schools, and accredited nonpublic

schools throughout the state to evaluate teachers and administrators. The components of the statewide teacher evaluation system shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a. Direct observation of classroom teaching behaviors.
 - b. Balanced consideration of student growth measures, when available for tested subjects and grades, to supplement direct observation of classroom teaching behaviors.
 - c. Integration of Iowa teaching standards.
 - d. System applicability to teachers in all content areas taught in a school.
6. The task force, at a minimum, shall include in its recommendations and proposal a tiered evaluation system that differentiates ineffective, minimally effective, effective, and highly effective performance by teachers and administrators.
 7. The task force shall submit its findings, recommendations, and a proposal for each system to the General Assembly by Oct. 15, 2012.

Task Force Membership

Troyce Fisher, School Administrators of Iowa, Des Moines

Steve Miller, Iowa Association of School Boards, Des Moines

David Tilly, Iowa Department of Education, Des Moines

Anne Sullivan, Area Education Agency 267, Cedar Falls

Tom Buckmiller, Drake University, Des Moines

Dave Versteeg, Montezuma Community School District, Montezuma

Amy Moine, Waterloo Community School District, Waterloo

Michelle Lettington, Waukee Community School District, Waukee

Julie Schley, Sioux Center Community School District, Sioux Center

Kathie Danielson, Des Moines Public Schools, Des Moines

Elliott Smith, Iowa Business Council, Des Moines

Duane Magee, Iowa Board of Educational Examiners, Des Moines

Non-Voting Task Force Membership

Byron Darnall, Iowa Department of Education, Des Moines

Matt Ludwig, Iowa Department of Education, Des Moines

2012 Meeting Schedule

Date	City	Facility	Time
August 9	Des Moines	Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center at Veterans Memorial	1 to 4 p.m.
August 29	Waukee	Waukee CSD Central Administration Office	9 a.m.to 5 p.m.
August 30	Waukee	Waukee CSD Central Administration Office	8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Introduction

History of Administrator Evaluation in Iowa

During the 2002 legislative session, the Iowa Evaluator Approval Training Program (IEATP) was mandated for any educator who wanted to obtain the new evaluator license and renew their administrative endorsement and the corresponding general administrative endorsement. The initial training and materials for IEATP-Level I were developed by area education agencies, the School Administrators of Iowa, the University of Northern Iowa, and the Southeast Regional Laboratory in cooperation with Iowa Department of Education personnel. A statewide application process for potential trainers was implemented, and 65 trainers were selected. Level I training began in the fall of 2002 and was delivered in five regions across the state by state-approved trainers. The outcomes identified for the IEATP-Level I training sessions included:

- Building an understanding of the Iowa Teacher Quality Legislation, the Iowa Teaching Standards, and the Iowa Standards for School Leaders.
- Interpreting how the Iowa evaluation requirements will be met in Iowa schools.
- Defining, preparing, and applying Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, and Decisional questioning techniques in pre- and post-conferencing.
- Practicing observation techniques in the educational setting.

By June 2006, more than 2,300 participants had completed IEATP-Level I training and earned four renewal credits toward their administrator/evaluator licenses.

As the initial evaluator approval course began in 2002, school leaders and other educational organizations began the process of identifying the Iowa Standards for School Leaders. Using the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards for School Leaders as a model, these professionals drafted the standards that were officially approved by the State Board of Education in 2007 and integrated into the evaluator approval training and preparation program requirements.

Following the 2007 legislative session, the Iowa Department of Education, School Administrators of Iowa, AEAs, and other education agencies determined the content and instructional structure for the renewal courses: IEATP Level II- Evaluation of Teachers and IEATP Level II-Evaluation of Administrators. The trainings were designed to focus on the evaluation of teachers using the Iowa Teaching Standards and the evaluation of administrators using the Iowa Standards for School Leaders. The IEATP Level II-Evaluation of Administrators was designed for superintendents and other educational leaders responsible for the evaluation of administrators' skill attainment and enhancement. Fifty trainers were educated during the spring of 2007. Eleven professors of educational administration at institutions of higher education participated in the training to enhance their course content and work with potential new Iowa principals and

superintendents. The outcomes identified for the IEATP Level II-Evaluation of Administrators training included:

- Revisiting and applying the Iowa Standards for School Leaders.
- Recognizing effective principal behaviors that increase student achievement, including use of data, alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and first- and second-order change.
- Applying effective leadership behaviors that enhance student achievement.
- Practicing coaching skills that enhance a school leader's role as an instructional leader.
- Modeling the principal evaluation process, including the design and use of an individual professional development plan. The plan is a required component of the evaluation process for teachers and leaders in Iowa.

To provide further support for school leaders and evaluators in Iowa schools, School Administrators of Iowa leadership and members developed a model evaluation resource guide that may be accessed on the School Administrators of Iowa website: www.sai-iowa.org. Although this guide is not a requirement, it has been implemented by many districts in furthering their efforts to improve teaching, learning, and leadership.

During the 2009-10 school year, enrollment began to decline in Level I and II trainings, and as a cost-saving measure, AEAs began canceling face-to-face training. However, leaders new to Iowa or prepared at institutions outside of Iowa were required to seek Iowa evaluator licenses. In January 2011, the Iowa Department of Education phased out face-to-face training and combined Levels I and II training into an online course, iEvaluate-Teacher or iEvaluate-Administrator, for anyone needing an administrator/evaluator license. The outcomes of the training are consistent with those identified in the face-to-face training. If an educator enrolls in a state-approved school administrator preparation program, the evaluator approval program is embedded in the coursework.

An Evaluator Advisory Committee was established during the 2009-10 school year by the Iowa Department of Education and included representation by school districts, AEAs, institutions of higher education, School Administrators of Iowa, the Iowa Association of School Boards, and the Board of Educational Examiners. The committee's purpose was to work collaboratively to analyze data about evaluator approval in Iowa, to read and reflect on research and practice in evaluation practices that improve teaching and learning, and to design ongoing evaluator approval. In 2011, the Evaluator Advisory Committee unveiled *Assessing Academic Rigor* for professionals who need to renew their administrator and/or evaluator license and have successfully completed Evaluator I and II. The outcomes established for Level III include:

- Continue to build and demonstrate knowledge of the Iowa Teaching Standards and the Iowa Standards for School Leaders.
- Build the capacity of administrators/evaluators to understand rigor and how to support classroom level instruction and student learning.
- Practice including supportive/facilitative, directive/instructional, collaborative, and transformative coaching skills.
- Incorporate the new knowledge and skills into the educator professional development plan.

It should be noted that a majority of this work – establishing standards, development of evaluator training modules, statewide training of trainers, creating model evaluation resource guides, and implementation of the work – would not have been possible without the generous support of the Wallace Foundation’s Cohesive Leadership System Grant of nearly \$9.5 million awarded to the Iowa Department of Education and subcontracted to the School Administrators of Iowa for 10 years, along with support from hundreds of Iowa school leaders who dedicated time and energy to accomplish the work.

What have we learned about the quality of evaluator approval training from Iowa school administrators? According to a survey completed in 2008 by practicing Iowa administrators, including 180 superintendents and 451 principals:

- Approximately 66 percent of the superintendents reported that they meet individually with each of their administrators to discuss their professional development plan and provide feedback on his/her growth.
- Superintendents indicated that when district administrative teams focus on monitoring and evaluation, topics include progress toward building/district goals (76 percent), progress toward individual professional development goals (71 percent), and progress toward the knowledge and skills of the Iowa Standards for School Leaders (45 percent).
- Superintendents shared that they used questioning/coaching techniques learned in evaluator training frequently (49 percent) or almost always (26 percent).
- Seventy-one percent of superintendents in the survey indicated that IEATP training changed the way they work with their administrative teams with the focus on the Iowa Standards for School Leaders and conversation coaching opportunities that are facilitative/collaborative/directive being the most significant.
- Ninety-two percent of the superintendents indicated they were evaluated annually.
- The following three areas were identified by superintendents as needing more training and professional development: dealing with marginal staff members (54 percent), blending of coaching and evaluation (46 percent), and skills in using Fierce Conversations (41 percent).
- Eighty-five percent of the principals indicated that their job performance evaluations were completed annually.

- Principals shared that their evaluators/supervisors held them accountable for student learning through annual reports of student achievement data (24 percent); establishing clear goals and measurable targets for the year with ongoing reporting of progress toward the target (24 percent); and annual goals established for the year with reports once or twice a year (23 percent).
- Thirty-six percent of the principals stated that their evaluators/supervisors met annually with them to discuss individual professional development plans and to provide feedback on performance/growth. Thirty-four percent indicated it was done twice a year.
- Seventy-two percent of the principals shared that they used questioning/coaching techniques learned in evaluator training.
- Asked what has changed about the way they work with staff as a result of their previous evaluator training, principals indicated a stronger focus on the Iowa Teaching Standards (71 percent), conversations/coaching opportunities focused on individual growth plans (61 percent), and conversations/coaching opportunities focused on building/district professional development (53 percent).
- Sixty-eight percent of the principals reported that evaluator training in their daily work was helpful, but they need further training in dealing with marginal staff members (67 percent), skills in using Fierce Conversations (40 percent), and the blending of coaching and evaluation (40 percent).

History of Administrator Mentoring and Induction

Following the 2006 legislative session, requirements of, and funding for, administrator mentoring and induction were established. School Administrators of Iowa, in collaboration with the Iowa Department of Education, developed a state model program. The program's stated goal was, and continues to focus on, increasing the beginning principal's confidence to accomplish the goals the principal was hired to achieve, and to meet entry-level competencies in the Iowa Standards for School Leaders. Initially, a state appropriation of \$1,500 per beginning administrator was allocated for the program. That appropriation was removed in 2009. Now the program operates on a fee-for-service basis with mentors receiving no compensation for their services. A school district may choose to design its own program; however, it must meet the following requirements:

- Provide support, professional development, and access to a variety of information sources critical to a beginning administrator's success as a leader of student achievement.
- Develop competency in the Iowa Standards for School Leaders.
- Evaluate the fidelity of the district's program.

In an effort to support mentors and mentees during their initial year as school leaders, the mentoring and induction program requires:

- Assignment of a quality mentor who is in a comparable position and geographic proximity to the mentee. The mentor is expected to provide regular contacts with the mentee through face-to-face meetings and the use of e-mail, telephone, or other technology.
- Training for the mentor, which addressed program expectations to fulfill mentor responsibilities, support strategies to help mentees, reporting requirements, resources to use with the mentee, and coaching and mentoring skills.
- Statewide meetings for mentees and mentors at which professional learning and best leadership practices and resources are provided.
- A website that contains resources on a variety of topics relevant to a beginning administrator's needs.
- Monthly e-mail messages to mentors and mentees that provide resources, coaching tips, suggested topics and questions, and accountability measures.
- Trouble-shooting supports if/when either the mentor-mentee relationship isn't strong, or the mentee encounters difficulties the mentor does not feel competent to address.
- Program evaluation to assess the quality of the program and its value to the mentee.
- Technical assistance for the mentee's supervisor related to procedural requirements for evaluation and licensure.
- An advisory committee made up of mentors and mentees that provide input for program improvement and sustainability.

What have we learned about administrator mentoring and induction?

- All accredited public and nonpublic school districts in Iowa must have a state-approved administrator mentoring and induction program.
- In 2007, results indicated that beginning principals felt confident in all but three areas: the ability to use conflict productively, finding time for personal rejuvenation, and allocating resources appropriately to accomplish building goals.
- Beginning superintendents reported feeling confident in providing leadership to principals and other district central office staff, as well as working with a district leadership team to accomplish goals. In two areas – finding time for personal rejuvenation and taking time for reflection on professional practice – approximately half of the superintendents reported “not feeling confident with coaching and support” or “not sure” they can do the task.

Executive Summary

The Work

On July 24, 2012, Iowa Department of Education Director Jason Glass formally invited members to the Administrator Evaluation Task Force¹ at the request of Anne Sullivan, AEA 267 assistant chief administrator. The director asked the task force to review the evaluation requirements for administrators and to make recommendations to standardize the instruments and processes used by schools throughout the state.

The task force initially met on Thursday, August 9. At the invitation of the School Administrators of Iowa, task force members met with Vanderbilt University's Joe Murphy, a respected national researcher and developer of the Val Ed 360 feedback system. The intent of this dialogue was to identify attributes of a quality school leadership evaluation system and to determine additional resources needed to craft recommendations to the Legislature by October 15. At this meeting, the task force also scheduled August 29 and 30 to continue its work.

During the August meetings, Troyce Fisher agreed to facilitate the task force in constructing the recommendations. The meetings involved examining current administrator evaluation requirements, reviewing the history of evaluator approval in Iowa, and sharing data points gathered from school leaders about IEATP. Troyce Fisher proposed a "theory of action" to frame recommendations for a system that promotes administrator effectiveness. In an effort to vet the theory of action, members were provided resources to assess whether the theory of action reflects evidence-based practices. Task force members were then asked to scrutinize other administrator evaluation systems (New Mexico, Maryland, Delaware, Illinois, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Ohio systems; Hillsborough County Schools; Val-Ed; McREL System; Reeves Model; School Leadership Evaluation Model; and School Leader IMPACT) by looking at the major components, links to criteria identified in the theory of action, and questions it raised. After an intensive review and professional discourse, members drafted short- and long-term recommendations for an Iowa Administrator Evaluation System. The recommendations were categorized, summarized, and vetted against the Theory of Action.

The committee believes an exclusive focus on the wrong drivers of individual evaluation and accountability for both teachers and administrators will divert precious resources of time, energy, and money from the more robust work of creating learning systems.

¹ Recommendations for a statewide teacher evaluation system will be issued by a separate task force, the Teaching Standards and Teacher Evaluation Task Force.

Those beliefs are reflected in the following theory of action (logic model) that grounds the recommendations that follow.

Principals Effectiveness System Theory of Action

- If principals are given clear standards, criteria, descriptors and rubrics that define best practices and that specify clearly differentiated levels of performance;
- If principals are expected to set and accomplish rigorous goals tied to the learning needs of their students and staffs;
- If principals are provided the necessary supports that will build their skills as instructional leaders and system-builders (e.g. quality professional learning opportunities);
- If principals are provided expert mentoring during their first two years of service and engage in a rigorous vetting process to determine if a principal's license should be granted;
- If principals know what good instruction looks like and how to coach for its improvement;
- If principals participate in communities of practice with other principals and system leaders that focus on improving learning for students and staff;
- If principals regularly engage in self-reflection about their practice;
- If principals who are in under-performing schools are supported with executive coaches who support the principals in the work of building collective capacity around targeted learning goals;
- If principals are provided adequate resources from the system to improve learning;
- If principals are freed from routine managerial tasks that take time away from instructional and system leadership (through provision of School Administration Managers, e.g.);

AND

- If principals' supervisors can distinguish between levels of performance with reliability and validity;
- If principals are provided ongoing formative assessments about their performance through regular conversations with their supervisors and 360-degree feedback mechanisms;
- If the principals performance evaluation system factors in accomplishment of stated goals and student achievement and student growth measures;
- If principals are provided the system supports necessary to remove incompetent teachers;

AND

- If there is a coherent theory of action for school improvement and educational reform delivered through the prek-12 system from the Department, AEAs, and associations to school districts;

THEN

Principal effectiveness will be high; the collective capacity of staff will increase; group quality will be enhanced; and under-performing staff will be removed.

SO THEN

Student learning will increase.

Our Recommendations

Principals are critical players in improving and sustaining quality instruction in the classroom and, more importantly, improving student learning. In an effort to accomplish this outcome, a principal must:

- Create and sustain a vision and mission of the building and the district.
- Support a culture of continuous learning and improvement within the building.
- Engage with teachers and data on issues of student performance and instructional quality.
- Manage resources, such as human capital, time, and funding.
- Create a safe learning environment for students and staff.
- Develop relationships with parents, the community, and business/industry to support education.
- Influence student achievement by influencing student context.

As the state looks to develop a statewide administrator effectiveness system, it is imperative to consider its logic model, design, training, success measures, data collection, and actual implementation. The system will be responsible for setting statewide measures and dimensions with connections to, and coherence between, state-level frameworks and measures. The process must incorporate explicit criteria that are understandable and clearly stated and, at the same time, articulate good instructional leadership skills and behaviors. The use of both formative measures (e.g. 360-degree feedback mechanisms, regular dialogue with supervisors and peers, participation in teacher learning teams) and summative measures (in the context of achieving student learning goals) promotes increased accountability. As indicated in multiple resources, the principal effectiveness system must be adaptable to the principal's context, level of experience, student learning goals, and needs of both building and district.

Evaluator training must reduce variability in statewide evaluator training, certification, and reliability. In an effort to create these conditions, evaluators must have knowledge and skill in implementing statewide evaluation tools and processes. There should be initial training and support for all evaluators; a system for monitoring evaluator performance; and an opportunity to provide ongoing feedback, support, and coaching so the integrity of the system is maintained.

A data collection system should facilitate a standardized data collection process and timeline that will allow the system to increase its ability to change from year to year. In accomplishing this effort, the system needs to link to Iowa Standards for School Leaders, use multiple forms of data and evaluation, and determine how the findings will

be used. By engaging in the collective inquiry process, the system will identify professional development needs of principals and obtain a holistic view of principal performance. The system needs to communicate results to principals consistently and transparently.

- 1. Create, implement, and sustain a research-based rubric administrator effectiveness system that incorporates ongoing and formative tools and processes to promote continuous improvement of the administrator, the school, and the school system.** The administrator evaluation system will include a 360-degree feedback component; tiered performance levels tied to the Iowa Standards for School Leaders and building, district, and individual professional goals; and a research and development component that will be used to make system improvements and to inform stakeholders about progress in promoting educator quality.

The principal actions (above) have been identified by research as contributing to improved student performance and are reflected in the Iowa Standards for School Leaders, which have been adopted statewide. As the list of actions indicates, principals have an indirect effect on student learning by establishing conditions for better teaching and learning.

Iowa should create a research-based framework that clearly states in measurable terms the criteria for administrator effectiveness. Formative and summative measures of principal effectiveness should be aligned with the framework. Formative and summative evaluation tools should include a 360-degree feedback component; tiered performance levels tied to the Iowa Standards for School Leaders and building, district, and individual professional goals; and a research and development component that will be used to make system improvements and to inform stakeholders about progress in promoting educator quality.

- 2. Enhance and maintain professional supports for administrators performing at different levels of experience, and build the human and social capital within the system that will support their growth over time.** Administrators would have access to ongoing training in effective coaching and evaluation tools, techniques, and strategies, as well as how to support teacher learning teams, analyze student achievement data, hire the best teachers, and design systems that build collective capacity. Administrator professional learning communities must be initiated and sustained within the local district, region, and/or state with the emphasis on developing a network of support that enhances a collaborative and collective response to improving teaching and student learning. The

beginning administrator mentoring and induction requirement should be extended and required in the second year.

3. Develop, execute, and maintain a research and development component tied to the administrator effectiveness system with the purpose of evaluating, making system improvements, and informing stakeholders.

The system should include qualitative and quantitative measures, internal and external observations, promotion of pilot programs within school districts and AEAs, an advisory group that uses data and information to make system improvements, and personnel dedicated to supporting and sustaining a quality evaluation system in Iowa schools.

Conclusion

At the conclusion of the task force's work, one crucial message resonated: The administrator effectiveness system must function within the context of the larger system goals of improving learning and complementing other education priorities shaping education reform in Iowa. Along similar lines, the task force agreed that administrator evaluation serves as an important component, but not the entire component, of a system of administrator effectiveness. Evaluation serves as an outcome of consistent, ongoing feedback and coaching.

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