Ohio Educator Standards Board Recommendations for Revising the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System

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Introduction

The Educator Standards Board (ESB) began reviewing the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) in fall 2016 at the request of State of Ohio Superintendent of Public Instruction Paolo DeMaria with the explicit purpose of reviewing and providing recommendations for updating the existing OTES. Superintendent DeMaria requested the ESB identify opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing evaluation system while addressing the complexities of teaching and learning and being attentive to educator accountability.

To meet these objectives, the ESB, representing varied stakeholder voices from across Ohio, held four meetings between October 2016 and January 2017 to discuss the merits and potential challenges inherent in each recommendation. Each of these meetings lasted one and a half days and focused on specific components of the OTES. These meetings were facilitated by staff from American Institutes for Research (AIR) and focused on creating consensus around each recommendation and across all members of the ESB. It is through shared deliberation and consultation that the ESB offers these recommendations to be considered for implementation in order to improve the existing teacher evaluation system.

These recommendations are intended to provide educators with additional clarification and insight aimed at increasing the integrity and intended benefit of the OTES as that of a professional growth model for teacher development and advancement. This report summarizes the recommendations of the ESB regarding revisions to the OTES, including the rationale behind these recommendations. The recommendations include the following:

- Recommendation 1: Update OTES Rubric

- Recommendation 2: Embed Student Growth into the Revised OTES Rubric

- Recommendation 3: Remove Shared Attribution

- Recommendation 4: Embed the Alternative Framework Components as Sources of Evidence in the Revised OTES Rubric

- Recommendation 5: Structure and Timing of Observations Tailored to Meet the Needs of Teachers in Order to Focus on Improvement and Growth

- Recommendation 6: Provide a Professional Growth Process for Teachers Rated Accomplished and Skilled

Recommendation 1: Update OTES Rubric

Overview of Current OTES Policy

The current OTES rubric is aligned to the Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession and is [available online](#).

ESB Recommendation

Revise the OTES rubric based on the identified concerns of the ESB with the support of external expert(s) and ESB guidance. The revisions will maintain the same domains and alignment to the Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession. Following are the recommendations for the rubric revisions:

- Improve clarity in the distinctions between performance levels.

- Embed student growth indicators into the rubric (see Recommendation 2 for more details).

- Streamline the rubric to clarify descriptors and reduce redundancy (especially language around differentiation).

- As a separate guidance document, identify possible sources of evidence which

  - Indicate how student learning measures may be used as a source of evidence for specific indicators.

  - Indicate which indicators are observable.

  - Provide guidance for teachers as to how to gather formative and summative evidence of performance.

- Continue the use of the OTES rubric to arrive at holistic ratings for teacher performance.

The ESB also recommends a process for determining these specific revisions in which the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) will collaborate with at least one national expert in rubric design and assessment of teaching to assist with the rubric update. The expert(s) would focus on the concerns identified by the board but will also share other concerns or recommendations based on their expertise. The ESB will review the expert's analysis and feedback in order to recommend final changes to the rubric.

Rationale for Recommendation

The current OTES rubric has been used as part of educator evaluations for approximately five years which has given evaluators and teachers sufficient time to identify its strengths and weaknesses. The ESB has indicated that although many educators across Ohio have expressed commitment to the rubric and see its value in improving educator practice, making specific revisions to the rubric will improve its efficacy and reframe the evaluation system as a process focused on professional growth. Specifically, these rubric revisions will help evaluators provide teachers with more specific, useful, and relevant feedback, strengthen opportunities for

professional conversations, and enhance professional development planning. The board also believes these revisions will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the evaluation process for educators.

Recommendation 2: Embed Student Growth Measures in the Revised OTES Rubric

Overview of Current OTES Policy

Under the current framework, teacher performance and student growth measures are separate, weighted components evaluated in isolation of the other and are later combined to produce a final summative evaluation rating.

Any person employed under a teacher license who spends at least 50% of their time employed providing student instruction is evaluated using OTES, which includes student growth measures. Under the student growth measure component, teachers are divided into three categories:

- Category A: Teachers for whom teacher-level value-added data are available

- Category B: Teachers for whom data from an assessment that is on the ODE-approved vendor list are available

- Category C: Teachers for whom no teacher-level value-added or approved vendor assessment data are available

If value-added data are available, then the data must be used in accordance with Ohio Revised Code. If value-added data are not available, then ODE-approved vendor assessments must be used if available. If approved vendor assessments are not available, then local measures must be used in the teacher evaluation.

ESB Recommendation

Embed the student growth measures included in the current evaluation framework as sources of evidence within the rubric indicators in five of the ten specific domains in the OTES rubric:

- Knowledge of students

- Differentiation

- Assessment of student learning

- Assessment data

- Professional responsibility

Revised language to be included in the rubric would emphasize that student academic growth and achievement data must reflect both actual student academic achievement and growth and the efforts made by the teacher to use student data to inform practice. By embedding student achievement and growth measures as evidence in the OTES rubric, the evaluation system would no longer include student growth as a separate, weighted component rating. Because both student academic achievement and growth data, along with professional practice measures, would be included in the OTES rubric, final summative ratings would be calculated using the revised OTES rubric. The revised OTES rubric will be reviewed holistically.

Teachers will use available high-quality data illustrating student growth and achievement as evidence for specific indicators in the OTES rubric. The student growth and achievement data used for teacher evaluation must meet the criteria of high-quality (these criteria will be described in the rubric levels of performance). Available student growth and student achievement data (including ODE-approved vendor assessments, value-added data, and local measures such as district formative and summative assessments) will be used reflectively in instructional planning and in other applicable areas of the revised OTES rubric. Specifically, the criteria for selecting the data will require at least two measures of student learning (growth or achievement), including one student learning measure representing the current student cohort.

ODE is charged with creating criteria defining "high-quality student learning data," which will be outlined in guidance and training materials.

Rationale for Recommendation

By embedding student academic growth and achievement measures in the OTES rubric, the evaluation system will continue to emphasize the importance of a teacher's impact on student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). Modifying the way in which student academic growth and achievement data are included in teacher evaluations will allow teachers and evaluators to focus evaluation conversations around accountability, inquiry, data-driven instruction, and professional growth. Likewise, allowing teachers to demonstrate effective practice through both the *process* of using student achievement and growth data (i.e., using data to differentiate and adjust instruction) and the *outcomes* highlighted through student achievement and growth data (i.e., helping all students grow, helping low-performing students close their achievement gaps) will provide a clearer picture of how teachers use data in ways that improve both instruction and student learning.

High-quality data are important to help ensure that student growth and achievement measures used as evidence of teacher performance accurately capture student learning and promote effective teaching. Requiring teachers to use available, high-quality student growth and achievement data (including ODE-approved vendor assessments, value-added measures, and local measures such as district formative and summative assessment) will promote the analysis of meaningful data by teachers and districts which reflects local needs and contexts. Likewise, using both formative and summative data as evidence allows teachers to demonstrate growth and promotes efficiency by recognizing the work that educators are already doing. To ensure that both formative and summative data are meaningful and reliable, ODE will establish high-quality criteria which all growth and achievement data must meet.

Recommendation 3: Remove Shared Attribution

Overview of Current OTES Policy

Shared attribution is defined as a student growth measure that can be attributed to the group. This measure was intended to encourage collaboration across educators in a building or district. Currently, districts can use a cohort, building, or district value-added rating; content-area and specialized-area building team's value-added progress score from the building or district report card; or a building-based or district-based vendor assessment composite or local measure.

ESB Recommendation

Remove the use of shared attribution in calculating teacher evaluation ratings.

Rationale for Recommendation

Shared attribution does not accurately measure individual teacher performance or student growth because the measure uses assessments for a cohort of students that the educator does not teach. In addition, this measure did not encourage collaboration across educators as intended.

By embedding student growth measures within the revised rubric, OTES places a greater focus on a teacher's individual performance on improving student learning. Shared attribution would not be a valid source of evidence for an individual teacher's performance or provide relevant data for an evaluator to provide feedback focused on individual improvement.

Recommendation 4: Embed the Alternative Framework Components as Sources of Evidence in the Revised OTES Rubric

Overview of Current OTES Policy

OTES currently includes an optional alternative framework structure focused on teacher effectiveness which includes a third measure as 15% of the teacher evaluation. Under the alternative framework, student growth is weighted at 35% of the final summative rating, teacher performance is weighted at 50%, and the remaining 15% consists of an alternative measure. Currently, a district choosing to use the alternative framework can select one or any combination of the following components as 15% of each teacher's evaluation:

- Student portfolios
- Student surveys
- Peer review
- Self-evaluation
- District-determined measures

ESB Recommendation

Remove the alternative framework as a district option in teacher evaluation. In lieu of its removal, the alternative framework components, as currently defined by ODE (student portfolios, student surveys, peer review, self-evaluation, district-determined measures), will remain as optional sources of evidence of teacher effectiveness within the revised rubric.

Rationale for Recommendation

The revised OTES as proposed by the ESB eliminates weighting of any specific measures and the need for an alternative framework. The alternative framework was designed to give districts additional flexibility and ameliorate the stakes of separate student growth measures. By embedding student academic growth and achievement as required indicators and evidence within the revised rubric, this separate alternative framework is no longer needed. However, districts still maintain the flexibility to use any of the alternative components as optional sources of evidence within the revised OTES rubric.

Recommendation 5: Structure and Timing of Observations Tailored to Meet the Needs of Teachers in Order to Focus on Improvement and Growth

Overview of Current OTES Policy

Currently under OTES, the process to evaluate teacher performance includes the following:

- A professional growth or improvement plan

- Two formal observations, each 30 minutes or more in length

- Walkthroughs

- Pre- and post-observation conferences as best practice

A formal observation is defined as either announced or unannounced, conducted for an entire class period, lesson, or minimum 30 minutes, analyzed using the Teacher Performance Evaluation Rubric, and having results reviewed with the teacher during a post-observation conference. A walkthrough is defined as either announced or unannounced, conducted for less than 30 minutes, focused on instruction, past conferences, or any area of the OTES rubric, and providing teachers with immediate feedback either in writing or in person.

ESB Recommendation

For teachers on a full evaluation cycle, the required number (two) of formal observations and optional number of walkthroughs will be maintained, along with a required end of annual cycle conference with the evaluator. Essential components of the evaluation remain but are adjusted to meet teacher needs:

- Formal holistic observations: examine holistically/comprehensively all areas of the rubric and conducted for an entire class period, lesson, or minimum 30 minutes.

- Walkthroughs: focus on gathering evidence on specific identified areas of improvement or growth and conducted for less than 30 minutes.

- Formal focused observations: focus on gathering evidence on specific identified areas of improvement or growth (and evidence for other indicators if appropriate) and conducted for an entire class period, lesson, or minimum 30 minutes.

- Summative conference: focus the summative conference at the end of the year so teachers have a conversation around all evidence collected across the year.

A formal holistic observation would be announced and conducted at the beginning of the year (first semester). The pre-observation conference is optional, but a post-observation conference is required during the first semester. Walkthroughs (or focused observations) will occur thereafter to focus on specific area(s) needing support. For teachers on the full evaluation cycle, a formal focused observation (announced or unannounced, based on local decision, and the identified

areas of focus) is conducted in the second semester. Consideration for nonrenewal requires a third formal observation cycle (including walkthroughs or focused observations).

The ESB is recommending a timeline for conducting observations and conferences for teachers on a full evaluation cycle as outlined below:

First Semester

- Optional self-assessment by the teacher

- Development of the professional growth plan (or improvement plan if needed) and discussion with the evaluator to review the plan: plan will focus on continuous improvement and supporting district, building, and individual teacher goals

- Pre-observation conference (optional, best practice)

- Formal holistic or comprehensive observation: announced observation in which the evaluator collects evidence for all applicable areas in the rubric

- Required post-observation conference: evaluator and teacher discuss observation results and identify area(s) of focus

- Walkthroughs: evaluator conducts walkthroughs to gather ongoing evidence for identified area(s) of focus and may include evidence for other indicators as appropriate

Second Semester

- Walkthroughs: evaluator conducts walkthroughs to gather ongoing evidence for identified area(s) of focus and may include evidence for other indicators as appropriate

- Formal focused observation(s): announced or unannounced observation(s) in which the evaluator collects evidence for identified area(s) of focus

- End of annual cycle conference: evaluator and teacher discuss results of all observations, walkthroughs, and focused observations across the year, discuss evaluation results, and identify areas of focus for the following year. This conference will also include discussion and support for the teacher focusing on identified area(s) and revisiting progress on the teacher professional growth plan

Rationale for Recommendation

It is important that observations allow teachers to demonstrate authentic, effective practice and professional growth. By ensuring teachers and evaluators to focus the walkthroughs and second formal observation on identified areas for professional growth, the process further promotes OTES as a system focused on improving practice and emphasizing the importance of professional growth plans. In addition, during the second semester this approach will streamline the evaluation process for educators by focusing on identified areas in need of improvement.

Recommendation 6: Provide a Professional Growth Process for Teachers Rated Accomplished and Skilled

Overview of Current OTES Policy

Under the current OTES, districts have the flexibility to decide how often to evaluate teachers. Districts choose among the following options:

- Evaluate all teachers annually.

- Evaluate Accomplished teachers every three years.

- Evaluate Skilled teachers every two years.

In addition, teachers under consideration for nonrenewal <u>and</u> entered into a limited contract or an extended, limited contract require at least three formal observations as currently outlined in ORC.

For districts that choose to evaluate Accomplished teachers every three years or to evaluate Skilled teachers every two years, the following conditions are required during the years in between full evaluations:

- Professional growth plan or improvement plan

- One observation

- One conference

- Use student growth measures process to determine and maintain a rating of average or higher to continue the less frequent evaluation cycle

ESB Recommendation

The ESB recommends maintaining the frequency of full evaluations for teachers rated Accomplished (a full evaluation once every three years) or Skilled (a full evaluation once every two years). However, the ESB recommends adjusting the process during the years in between full evaluations. In these years, teachers rated Accomplished will submit a teacher-directed professional growth plan to an evaluator chosen by the Accomplished teacher. Teachers rated Skilled must develop a professional growth plan (PGP) in collaboration with the evaluator, focusing on specific areas as outlined in observations and the evaluation.

For both Accomplished and Skilled teachers, there will be one required conference each school year in which the teacher and evaluator discuss goal progress. Prior to the conference, the evaluator will review evidence of the teacher's professional growth and/or progress towards the goals included in the PGP. These goals will be measurable, long-term, and focused on refining practice. Teachers must demonstrate professional growth and/or progress towards the goals included in the PGP. Teachers who do not demonstrate growth or progress toward the goals must revise or refine their PGP and be provided supports (as appropriate, determined by the evaluator). The Accomplished and Skilled teachers remain on their respective cycles on the

revised model except in circumstances when an evaluator determines the need for additional support. Evaluators may always work with teachers who are struggling in any given area regardless of where they are in the evaluation cycle.

Rationale for Recommendation

The ESB recommends maintaining the evaluation cycle because the board believes the cycle is appropriate and efficient. In addition, the current evaluation cycle promotes continued professional growth for teachers and promotes efficiency by focusing on specific skills or indicators. However, requiring a professional growth plan focused on specific areas of growth and a conference allows Accomplished and Skilled teachers to receive feedback and more opportunities to continue to grow as professionals. The intent of the revised process is to promote continuous improvement and help teachers reflect on their own individual progress toward their PGP goals.

Conclusion

Culture is driven by the mindsets of the individual and the collective. The ESB recommendations intend to develop a culture and mentality of continuous improvement within the education system. The ESB recommendations accomplish this objective.

Finally, the ESB appreciates the opportunity to review OTES and provide recommendations for enhancement of the existing system. The ESB would like the opportunity to review any additional revisions of processes and supporting documents prior to release and implementation of changes to OTES.

References

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