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REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

# Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program

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**Authorizing legislation:** RCW 28A.405.100

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary..... 3

Governance..... 4

Professional Learning.....4

Implementation ..... 5

Educator Performance Data ..... 6

Funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation ..... 8

Conclusion and Next Steps ..... 9

Acknowledgments.....10

References.....10

## List of Tables

**Table 1:** Professional Development Content and Audience ..... 5

**Table 2:** Teachers Rated Using a Four-tiered System, 2014–15..... 6

**Table 3:** Principals Rated Using a Four-tiered System, 2014–15..... 7

## Executive Summary

The revised Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP) focuses on continuous improvement. TPEP is the result of legislation passed in 2011 and 2013.

In Fall 2013, every provisional teacher and principal started using the revised process. Those on probation also moved to the revised process. This process includes observations and measures of student growth. Some experienced staff also moved to the revised process in 2013–14. Districts continued to phase in staff during 2014–15. As of 2015–16, all eligible certificated staff have moved to the revised system.

Two groups study TPEP and report to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). American Institutes for Research (AIR) used the 2014–15 results of the School Employee Evaluation Survey (SEES) to share data about educator performance. The University of Washington (UW) is researching:

- How districts use their teacher training funds to support TPEP.
- How districts collect evaluation data and use it to promote teacher and principal growth.
- Principal retention and support.

OSPI receives state and grant funding to support TPEP. With state funding OSPI offers regional trainings on the leadership and instructional frameworks and feedback skills. Some trainings are also offered online. The state also funds a day for districts to share their TPEP learning.

In July 2015, OSPI received a \$1.74 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This has funded a revision of the eVAL electronic evaluation tool. The grant has also paid to teach evaluators how to use the tool. Other grant activities include:

- Developing teacher leaders.
- Trainings focused on measuring student learning during a lesson.
- A student perception survey pilot.

The grant activities end in July, 2017.

## Governance

The Legislature created the TPEP Steering Committee in RCW.28A.405.100. Members include representatives from:

- Association of Washington School Principals
- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Washington Association of School Administrators
- Washington Education Association
- Washington State Parent Teacher Association
- Washington State School Directors Association

The partners meet monthly to monitor implementation, provide guidance to OSPI and discuss potential solutions for challenges that arise in the field. Members bring multiple perspectives to each conversation and act on consensus. The “[state and local decisions matrix](#)” and “[TPEP FAQs](#)” are living documents that provide districts guidance to supplement the RCW and the WAC.

## Professional Learning

The 2015 Legislature appropriated five million dollars for TPEP teacher training in fiscal year 2016, and \$3.935 million for program support, including:

- District funding to support principal and principal evaluator training.
- Development and delivery of TPEP professional learning in the nine educational service districts.
- Continued professional learning for the state network of instructional and leadership framework specialists.
- Continued development of a cadre of specialists to provide professional learning in giving meaningful, learning-focused feedback to teachers and principals
- A “TPEP Colloquium” to share best practices.
- Support for the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP) and the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) to provide professional learning to principals and their evaluators, and to district Human Resource specialists.

The University of Washington’s Phase One status report includes a description of the professional development content and audience funded by the TPEP Teacher Training Fund. While a focus of the training is familiarizing new employees with the framework and process, districts are also moving toward deepening the understanding of the framework, student growth, the framework and connections to the state learning standards (Table 1). Funds were used for teacher compensation for extra time or substitute teachers, as well as paying for trainers or facilitators and purchasing books, videos, and copies for training.

**Table 1: Professional Development Content and Audience**

|                                  | # Districts | Percent |
|----------------------------------|-------------|---------|
| <b>Total:</b>                    | 223         | 100%    |
| <b>-No Data</b>                  | 10          | 4%      |
| <b>Audience</b>                  |             |         |
| <b>-New employees</b>            | 175         | 78%     |
| <b>-Mixed audience</b>           | 129         | 58%     |
| <b>-Grade Teams</b>              | 118         | 53%     |
| <b>-Department Teams</b>         | 98          | 44%     |
| <b>-Cross-district job alike</b> | 66          | 30%     |
| <b>-Cross Content Teams</b>      | 65          | 29%     |
| <b>-Other</b>                    | 32          | 14%     |
| <b>Content:</b>                  |             |         |
| <b>-Student growth measures</b>  | 199         | 89%     |
| <b>-Framework and rubric</b>     | 198         | 89%     |
| <b>-Evaluation Process</b>       | 187         | 84%     |
| <b>-Evidence and artifacts</b>   | 178         | 80%     |
| <b>-Connections to CCSS</b>      | 145         | 65%     |
| <b>-Other</b>                    | 24          | 11%     |

## Implementation

The University of Washington has completed the first round of visits for case studies, in which they are examining implementation in ten geographically and demographically diverse districts that have been constructively engaged in implementing TPEP. Several districts have been making changes in their organizational structures to better coordinate their Human Resource and Teaching and Learning departments. Another common change

(well documented beyond the case study districts) is the increase in support for school administrators, especially elementary principals, to meet the additional workload demands of implementation. This generally takes the form of hiring deans of students or assistant principals.

Initial visits with the case study districts indicate a wide variation among schools within a district in TPEP implementation. Concerns exist about the degree of rater agreement across schools (and across districts), especially as changes in leadership take place.

In the fall of 2015, with a growing realization that due to the employment risks involved, teachers and principals on the Focused evaluation process were not choosing an area of challenge, but rather an area of strength, the TPEP Steering Committee considered and moved forward with changes to the Washington Administrative Code governing the conduct of the Focused evaluation. This process, which is reserved for teachers and principals who have already completed provisional status and have demonstrated practice at the Proficient (3) or Distinguished (4) level, assigns the score from the most recent Comprehensive evaluation to the Focused evaluation. This allows teachers and principals to tackle difficult areas of their practice without fear of endangering their employment status. Districts were given the option of implementing these changes in the 2016–17 or 2017–18 school year.

Changes were also made in the rules governing teacher observations, to allow for observations of teachers in assigned duties that match the work of the criteria, which sometimes take place outside the classroom setting. The Steering Committee will monitor the effects of both changes and revisit as necessary. See [“WAC Changes”](#) and [“WAC Change FAQs”](#) for details.

## **Educator Performance Data**

### **2014–15 School Employee Evaluation Survey (SEES)**

OSPI collects educator performance data every fall for the prior year in the School Employee Evaluation Survey (SEES); this data set is then analyzed by the American Institutes for Research (AIR). The first full year of TPEP implementation was 2013–14, when 65 percent of classroom teachers and 79 percent of school administrators were evaluated using the revised system. In 2014–15, just under 84 percent of teachers and 95 percent of principals were evaluated under the revised system.

The practice of the majority of teachers and principals evaluated on the revised system was rated as “Proficient.” Fewer than one percent were rated “Unsatisfactory,” a statistic consistent with previous years. Depending on the framework, an additional three to five percent were rated “Basic.” Twenty-six percent of teachers and sixteen percent of principals were rated “Distinguished.” (See Table 2 and Table 3)

**Table 2: Teachers Rated Using a Four-tiered System, 2014–15**

| Rating         | Sum    | Percentage |
|----------------|--------|------------|
| Unsatisfactory | 96     | <1%        |
| Basic          | 1590   | 3%         |
| Proficient     | 33,852 | 70%        |
| Distinguished  | 12,614 | 26%        |
| Total          | 48,152 | 100%       |

**Table 3: Principals Rated Using a Four-tiered System, 2014–15**

| Rating         | Sum   | Percentage |
|----------------|-------|------------|
| Unsatisfactory | 9     | <1%        |
| Basic          | 135   | 5%         |
| Proficient     | 2,191 | 79%        |
| Distinguished  | 434   | 16%        |
| Total          | 2,769 | 100%       |

Districts with fewer than 2,000 students had a slightly higher percentage of teachers receiving a “Basic” rating, and a lower percentage of teachers receiving a “Distinguished” rating than larger districts. The only notable difference among instructional frameworks was a higher percentage of “Proficient” and lower percentage of “Distinguished” ratings for districts using the Marzano instructional framework. For principals, districts with more than 15,000 students had a higher percentage of “Basic” and “Distinguished” ratings, particularly in districts using the AWSP leadership framework

Differences in ratings may be due in some cases to sample size and in others, the degree of rater agreement and of understanding of and fidelity to the framework. The SEES report to be released in the spring of 2017 will capture the first year of full implementation (2015–16) and, therefore, baseline data.

### **District Use of Evaluation Data**

Results of the 2014–15 SEES show that districts’ top uses of educator evaluation data, both teacher and principal, are to make decisions about professional development and areas of improvement. There are 71 districts that report using teacher evaluation data in making teacher assignments, and 45 that do so in staff assignments for principals. Districts were

not asked about their use of educator evaluation data in making decisions about reductions in force in 2014–15, but are asked this question on the 2015–16 survey; the data should be released in the spring of 2017. AIR’s full report on the 2014–15 results of the SEES can be found at [http://k12.wa.us/TPEP/pubdocs/AIR\\_Analysis\\_2014-15\\_SEES\\_Data.pdf](http://k12.wa.us/TPEP/pubdocs/AIR_Analysis_2014-15_SEES_Data.pdf).

In the University of Washington’s initial inquiry, districts involved in the case studies indicate that the criterion-level TPEP scores and student growth data are most useful at the school level; summative scores are not providing support for determining instructional improvement efforts, as they are too broad. Principals are using the instructional frameworks to focus professional conversations about areas for teacher growth.

## **Funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**

In addition to legislative funding, the agency currently has a \$1.74 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that will extend through July, 2017. The bulk of the funding has provided for substantial revisions of the eVAL electronic evaluation tool to increase its functionality and better support evaluation processes and procedures that were still evolving as the initial format was unveiled. Some funding has been dedicated to supporting principal and district administrator use of the tool as a time-saving measure.

Another portion of the funding is supporting a pilot study exploring the formative use of student perception surveys. Seven districts are piloting a number of different survey instruments with their principals and teachers over the 2015–16 and 2016–17 school years. District participants are developing resources to support student perception learning, and sharing their learning with colleagues, districts, and stakeholders.

Grant funds are also being used to develop professional learning modules on formative assessment and train a cadre of teacher leaders who can present these in districts statewide.

Impacts from the student perception work and the use of eVAL will be part of the University of Washington’s study on the status of TPEP implementation.

## Conclusion and Next Steps

Now that eligible teachers and all principals are using the revised TPEP system, districts need different types of support. Specifically, they need help diving deeper into the instructional and leadership frameworks.

Districts will still need financial support to train new teachers, principals, and principal evaluators. They will also need help to provide training in areas identified in evaluations. Absent this, the model will lose a critical focus on growth.

The state has made a significant investment in evaluation. To honor this investment, we must:

- Support the statewide group of framework specialists.
- Continue trainings through the ESD and state associations.
- Maintain the eVAL system.

The state will also need to keep current on licenses with the owners of the rights to the frameworks. At least one of them will no longer be free in the next biennium. It is possible that others may soon require annual fees.

Districts are beginning to see how good evaluation can improve student, teacher, and principal growth. Success in this next phase will depend on:

- Maintaining critical investments.
- Creating a long-term research plan.
- Supporting districts as they use TPEP to inform professional learning.

## Acknowledgments

The success of the Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program is the result of collaboration with a number of partners. These include:

- American Institutes for Research
- Association of Educational Service Districts
- Association of Washington School Principals
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession
- Danielson Group
- Learning Sciences International
- Miravia
- University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership
- University of Washington Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy
- Washington Association of School Administrators
- Washington Education Association
- Washington School Personnel Association
- Washington State Parents and Teachers Association
- Washington State School Directors Association

## References

American Institutes for Research analysis of School Employee Evaluation Survey (SEES) data. [2014–15 SEES Data Analysis from AIR](#) (Teacher and Principal)

School Employee Evaluation Survey (SEES) [data](#)

University of Washington. “Organizational Learning and Evolving Professional Development in the Implementation of Washington’s Revised Educator Evaluation System.” Phase One Status Report, April 2016; Phase Two Status Report, August 2016. Available upon request to the Educator Effectiveness Office, OSPI.

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