Pennsylvania Department of Education

June 8, 2011

Testimony on Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems

Good morning, I'm Carolyn Dumaresq, Deputy Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education for the Department of Education and with me is Theresa Barnaby, Director in the Department's Teacher Certification and Preparation Bureau. Thank you to both Chairman Piccola and Chairman Dinniman and distinguished members of the Education Committee for the opportunity to discuss an important tool for education in Pennsylvania. I also want to publicly thank you for your leadership in proposing Senate Bill 1087 which initiates an evaluation system that we can work on collaboratively. The Pennsylvania Department of Education recognizes that quality evaluation of teachers and principals is a critical foundation for improving educators' practice and thus student achievement and for the education reforms envisioned by both the General Assembly and the Corbett Administration.

As evidence for the importance of this system and the need for a comprehensive evaluation system, I would like to point to a release that PDE issued today. PDE has collected teacher and principal evaluation data for the 2009-10 school year from Pennsylvania's public school districts, Intermediate Units, career and technical centers and charters schools.   This information is vital for making sure that we are able to increase student achievement and provide quality feedback for educators. Teacher quality should be based on a proven tool that measures a teacher's impact on student achievement. Unfortunately the current system only uses the categories of "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" and provides no useful feedback to educators to allow them to modify their practice to benefit students.

Theresa has been very involved in the development of this collection and I will let her explain the details of this process. PDE provided each of these Local Education Agencies with a uniform spreadsheet of questions and data including a description of their evaluation system, whether it included student achievement data, whether the resulting ratings were used for retention, promotion or salary and the aggregate percentage of satisfactory and unsatisfactory principals and teachers for the 2009-10 school year. The results of this locally reported data is currently on PDE's website for both the school and district levels for the public to view and study.

The results of these evaluations are significant. Statewide, the information shows that 99.4% of all rated teachers and 99.2% of all rated principals received a "satisfactory" rating. Only 0.6% and 0.7 % of rated teachers and principals respectively were categorized as "unsatisfactory" in these evaluations. We believe that these results show the need to have a broad, multi-measure evaluation system to measure performance and effectiveness. We will be better able to gauge our educators' levels of performance and also allow them opportunities for development or guidance with an effective evaluation system in place in order to target an improvement plan.

What these results tell us more than anything is that our current data evaluation system is not up to the task of addressing the needs of today's demands. In this discussion, we should be cognizant of the fact that Race To the Top also included educator evaluations as an integral piece of the competition for funds. A robust and comprehensive evaluation system such as the one we are discussing today would have been advantageous to our previous applications to those funds. As the U.S. Department of Education has recently announced another round of Race to the Top, such a system is likely a criteria that the U.S. Department of Education is interested in seeing as part of a state's educational structure.

We are still waiting on final guidelines from the U.S.D.O.E. on the current round of Race To The Top to understand how it will be implemented. We are confident that an effective teacher and principal evaluation system will be needed for a successful application from our Commonwealth, even if it is in a preliminary stage such as our current pilot.

Process

To develop a system that is accurate and fair, PDE is undertaking a pilot project from which lessons learned will inform the development of a full, statewide evaluation system. Pennsylvania is currently field testing an evaluation system through a grant from the Gates Foundation awarded to Team Pennsylvania Foundation. Under the guidance of a steering committee (members include representatives from PSBA, PSEA, Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers and business community) with the assistance of three research entities we have been meeting since the fall of 2010 to discuss critical issues and foundational elements for a pilot program. The pilot work has proceeded along two main strands. The first strand has involved the development of new evaluation models (practice models) focused on practices of teachers and principals that are proven to increase student achievement. The new practice models are currently being implemented with the participating teachers and principals in four LEAs: Allentown, Cornell, Mohawk School Districts and Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit 5. The second strand involves the correlation of these practices to value-added models (VAMS) to determine what practice(s) most closely aligns to high achievement of their students.

The Gates Foundation grant in the amount of $800,000 is being used to help inform the development of statewide policy, tools and processes to evaluate teachers and principals in which student achievement is a significant factor affecting performance ratings. The grant itself has been awarded to Team PA, which acts as the facilitator for discussions and as an administrator of the grant. Alongside the pilot program, PDE is closely monitoring the work of Pittsburgh Public Schools—PPS also received a Gates Foundation grant in the amount of $40 million that is more comprehensive in terms of the scope of work but is similar in regards to redesigning an evaluation policy, tools and processes.

Following the advisory groups' review of new tools and processes in the fall of 2010, training for teachers and principals in pilot districts began in January 2011. The pilot currently in process is

using newly designed draft tools and processes. A final report of this pilot is expected this summer and will be provided to this committee.

Included in this final report will be the product of Mathematica's data analysis of test scores and VAM's as they compare to the practice items that have been identified earlier in strand one. Mathematica is one of the researchers that is assisting the steering committee analyze the impact of our efforts. They are a national policy research organization that has considerable experience in education research. As with the other two research groups, their only involvement in this program is analyzing data and sharing any relevant experience with the steering committee.

Moving forward, we expect to continue the voluntary pilot program for other LEAs beginning this fall with expanded pilot groups and more processes available in January of 2012.

Elements of Evaluation System

The teacher model includes rubrics for evaluation, including evidence that demonstrates behaviors associated with improving student achievement as outlined below:

- Planning and preparation—selecting standards-based lesson goals and designing effective instruction and assessment;
- Classroom environment—establishing a culture for learning and appropriate classroom management techniques that maximize instructional time;
- Instruction—the use of research-based strategies which engage students in meaningful learning and utilize assessment results to make decisions about student needs; and
- Professional responsibilities—using systems for managing student data and communicating with student families.

There will be an analysis to identify correlating evidence between the behaviors noted above with growth in student achievement. The results will allow the behaviors that correlate with student achievement to be used in evaluating teachers for whom no formal, standardized assessment data may be available. There will also be the ability to have identification of multiple measures of student achievement for use in the evaluation of teachers and principals. As this system will be using multiple measures, another input that will play a significant role is the use of PVAAS data.

As a whole, our vision is to have the practice model, which includes observations, comprise 50 percent of a final rating while the other 50 percent will be comprised of multiple measures of student achievement including building level data (using state administered exams and PVAAS data), teacher data for content areas for which there is a state test (using state administered exam scores and PVAAS) and other multiple measures that will be elective.

PDE's goal is to be able to fairly evaluate educators based on their effectiveness in serving students. This evaluation system will emphasize effectiveness based on student results, not qualifications based on credentialing requirements.

Development of Evaluation System

As we progress through the fall pilot, we will continue to refine all of the involved components and further identify multiple measures of student achievement. There will also be an ongoing effort to develop state infrastructure to gather and report on the student achievement measures. Throughout this process, one element in the evaluation system that we still must determine is the balance of factors and weighting within these factors.

Training for the use of the evaluations will be conducted through the Intermediate Units with each school district/charter working with the IU in their region. The fall pilot of this system will be voluntary for LEAs just as the current pilot is. We can accommodate up to 20% of the LEAs to participate in the training in the fall and begin implementing the practice model in January 2012. If we are successful, we would seek two more rounds of pilots to occur over the next two years for remaining LEAs.   There will be continued monitoring and research of the system to assure reliability throughout each round of participation. Based on the information gathered and experience gained through these pilots, we will have more knowledge to help guide the policy making process in the near future.

In terms of outputs from this evaluation system, there should be an emphasis placed on professional development to support teacher behaviors that are identified in the system. There will also be strong collaboration with teacher preparation institutions to maintain an efficient transition.

In the development of these evaluations, we currently project another round of an evaluation pilot would be $800,000. As PVAAS data is currently not available at the classroom level, we anticipate an additional $1.4 million would be needed in order to capture the necessary data.

Benefits of Evaluation System

In addition to having an effective multiple measure evaluation system for teacher and principal effectiveness that can be used as a tool to help improve student achievement, we can derive other benefits for such education decision making. A reliable and valid system should be the basis for decisions involving tenure and retention or dismissal of staff. The use of such an evaluation system could also be used as a benchmark to assist with decisions involving furloughing of employees. It can also play an important role in discussing performance pay incentives for educators that have a documented role in improving student achievement.

Thank you again to both chairs for the opportunity to be here today to discuss this crucial tool for our educational system and we look forward to working together with you on a comprehensive

evaluation system. I would like to now take this as an opportunity to answer any questions that members of the committee have at this time.