

# Testimony for the House Education Committee

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February 6, 2015

# Discussion Questions

- What is the current state of educator evaluation in Vermont?
- What are AOE's plans for supporting improved educator evaluation in Vermont?

# Licensing vs. Evaluation

## Licensing

- *Verification* an educator has met *minimum criteria*
- Pre-requisite to be *eligible* to work
- State responsibility

## Evaluation

- *Assessment* of an *educator's performance* in the work
- Promotes professional growth
- Determines if you *continue to work* in your current job
- Supervisor's responsibility

# Current State of Evaluation

- **Educator Evaluation**

- 2012 State Board of Education adopted *The Vermont Guidelines for Teacher and Leader Effectiveness*, the guiding principles are summarized here

1. Evaluation should be a collaborative endeavor between the supervisor and employee.
2. Educators should be evaluated against clear standards and with opportunities for feedback prior to summative evaluation.
3. If an educator cannot meet standards with support, they should be removed from their positions.
4. Evaluation results should inform other systems to leverage resources.
5. Those being evaluated should play a role in shaping the evaluation process.
6. Student achievement should play a role in evaluation decisions.
7. Evaluation systems should be locally developed with hiring decisions made locally.
8. Evaluations should be conducted by trained and objective supervisors.
9. Resources for implementation and training of all staff should be adequate to the task.

# Current State of Evaluation

- **Link to Research**

- Evaluation systems fail when they are executed poorly or inconsistently
- In all evaluation settings, employees' participation in their evaluation is related to the likelihood of trusting the results and engaging in growth
- An important characteristic of a good evaluation system is the quality of the relationship between the supervisor and the employee
- There are specific skills evaluators need and these take resources and time to develop

# Current State of Evaluation

- **Teacher Evaluation in Vermont**
  - 80% based on observation and some form of the *Danielson Framework for Teaching*
  - Negotiated between each bargaining unit and its administration; embedded in contracts
  - Lack of evidence that teachers are receiving evaluations as intended by the systems in place
    - Principals see evaluation systems as overly complex, labor intensive given their other work duties
    - Teachers report evaluations are not helpful, don't help them grow or aren't carried out
  - Multiple SU/SDs have invested resources to improve teacher evaluation practices

# Current State of Evaluation

- **Leader Evaluation in Vermont**

- Nearly 100% based on observation and some form of the *ISLLC Leadership Standards*
- Frequently determined by the current superintendent, may not be recorded or documented in formal ways
- Lack of evidence that leaders are receiving evaluations on a regular basis
  - Principals report evaluations are not conducted while Superintendents report they are
- Under current statute, a Superintendent's assessment of a principal's performance for personnel decisions is not binding- actual practice varies by SU/SD and school boards can and do override Superintendents

# Should we have a state-wide system?

- **No, reasons not to**
  - The further from the employee the system is made, the less it is trusted or considered useful
  - Disrupts current good efforts of many school systems; high political resistance to usurping local control
  - Would not address adequately poor implementation at the local level
  - Costly to launch- estimate needing a minimum of 30 days of training (5 days for 6 groups, at roughly \$2000 per day this is \$60,000)
  - Costly to monitor, would need a technology partner to implement data collection

# Should we link evaluation to license renewals?

- **No, reasons not to**
  - Denying a license requires that absolute criteria have not been met and applied objectively and consistently to all applicants
    - Unless we can certify the evaluations are conducted in fair, objective ways, we put Vermont at risk for litigation and risk losing good teachers.
    - Disproportionately empowers supervisors, gives them more power over the employee than warranted.
    - An educator may be a poor fit for a particular school (low evaluation) but perform quite well in another school.
  - If we did it, we would need a state-wide system which we don't support either.

# What are we doing to improve Educator Evaluation?

- **Cataloguing our strengths and areas for growth**
  - **Spring 2015**
    - **Voluntary paper audit of SU/SD existing evaluation models for teachers and leaders**
      - Based on superintendent input, we anticipate 60-70% of SU/SDs will submit teacher evaluation materials; 30-40% will submit leader evaluation materials
      - Evaluated against a common rubric
      - Feedback to each SU/SD detailing the strengths and weaknesses in each model
      - Specified improvement timeline as needed
  - **Summer 2015**
    - Produce state wide picture of the “state of teacher evaluation”
    - Launch of web platform to share promising models from the field including audit scores, forms, contract language, training materials and contact information
  - **Spring 2016**
    - **Mandatory paper audit of SU/SD existing evaluation models for teachers and leaders**

# What are we doing to improve Educator Evaluation?

- **Addressing known areas of growth**
  - 2014-15
    - 8 day professional development opportunity for principals and superintendents relative to teacher evaluation and accurate ratings offered in partnership between AOE and VPA
  - Summer 2015
    - Launch on-line modules for principal training in teacher evaluation
      - Linked to Danielson Framework
      - Identifies and certifies key skills and rating accuracy
      - Free for the first 30 pilot principals
    - VPA Principal's Institute
      - Strand focused on refining principal skills for productive coaching conversations

• **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?**