

NCLB WAIVER SUMMARY: EDUCATOR EVALUATION

While the application developed by the U.S. Department of Education for states seeking waivers from the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) required many specific details about states' efforts to improve education, it did not require a comprehensive list of such endeavors. Therefore, Indiana's approved waiver plan may not capture all that the state is doing to improve education. State officials also note that they must resolve some details before implementing the new evaluation system. The following summary covers the evaluation aspects of Indiana's waiver plan as it stood when approved. It may not tell the complete story of educator evaluation in the state, however, as that work continues to evolve.

PROMISING ASPECTS OF PLAN:

- The state has developed standardized training for its evaluation model and plans to deliver training to districts beginning this spring.
- Any teacher with a negative impact on student growth cannot receive a rating of effective or highly effective.
- Teachers who rate poorly on the new evaluation system cannot obtain or retain tenure.

ISSUES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION:

- Districts may develop their own evaluation systems and these systems will be posted publicly, but the state only plans to thoroughly review the systems of districts applying for its pay-for-performance grant monies. This leaves no guarantee that all systems will satisfy the state evaluation requirements or have validity and reliability.
 - The state is still finalizing the details of its principal evaluation system, but currently provides little information about how it will use the new system to improve practice.
 - The state will look to identify any disconnection between school accountability ratings and evaluation ratings. While this could help the state monitor system implementation, it is important that the state's response to such discrepancies not deter highly effective teachers from working in underperforming schools.
 - The Department of Education did not require states to address the issue of equitable access to effective teachers as part of their waiver plan. Yet, for those students most in need of effective teachers, this is an important part of improving teacher quality. It is critical to view each state's plan in this context. Indiana does not outline a strategy for promoting equitable access. However, districts could choose to use funds from state performance pay grants to incentivize highly effective teachers to teach high-needs students.
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EVALUATION DESIGN

What are the components of the state’s proposed teacher and principal evaluation system, and how are those components weighted?

- For teachers: three models exist, depending on the type of classes taught:
 - For those teaching half or more “growth model” classes (classes for which Indiana Growth Model data are available, which are grades 4-8 in math and English language arts): 50 percent practice; 35 percent individual growth (IG), 10 percent student learning objective (SLO), and 5 percent school-wide learning measure (SWL)
 - For those teachers teaching less than half “growth model” classes: 60 percent practice, 20 percent IG, 15 percent SLO, 5 percent SWL
 - For those teachers teaching no “growth model” classes: 75 percent practice, 20 percent SLO, 5 percent SWL
- For principals: the weighting and final measures were not finalized at the time the waiver application was submitted. The approved plan describes a summative rating composed of a Principal Effectiveness Rubric rating, and student learning measures such as whole school growth, A-F school accountability grade, district goals, and school goals.

What roles will the state and districts play in developing and implementing an evaluation system?

- The state has developed a model teacher evaluation system. LEAs may modify the model system or adopt their own plans, but these must meet minimum state criteria.
 - However, any teacher with a negative impact on student growth cannot receive a rating of effective or highly effective, regardless of the local rating system.

How will the state measure student growth in tested grades and subjects? Will the measure be comparable across LEAs within the state?

- Student growth for teachers who teach at least one tested subject consists of some combination of individual growth model scores (where available), individual-student learning objectives, and a small portion from a school-wide learning measure.
- The waiver plan states that Indiana state law requires evaluations to include significant factors of student growth and achievement, and that they must include state-mandated assessment results and Indiana Growth Model data when available (grades four to eight, in math and English language arts).
- The portion of the student growth measure based on the individual growth-model scores appears to be comparable across local education agencies (LEA)s within the state.
- At the time of its application, Indiana was still developing its growth measure for principals, but the version at the time included whole school growth, accountability grades, district goals, and school goals.

How will the state guide development of student growth measures for non-tested grades and subjects?

- In the state model, student growth consists primarily of student learning objectives, with a small portion coming from a school-wide learning measure.

How will the state approach observations of classroom instruction and other measures of teacher and leader practice?

- Observations of teacher practice will be conducted using the Indiana Teacher Effectiveness Rubric, developed by a state teacher evaluation advisory cabinet. All teachers must receive a minimum of two extended observations per year (one per semester) and at least three shorter observations.
- Teachers will be evaluated by both a primary and secondary evaluator, but the state's plan does not provide further detail about who these evaluators will be.
- For principals, the plan says that the measures of practice in Indiana's Principal Effectiveness Rubric were based on exemplars from across the country.

Will all educators be evaluated at least annually?

- Yes.

USE OF EVALUATIONS

How will the state use teacher and principal evaluations to inform individual professional development and to improve instructional practice?

- State law mandates that evaluations support teachers by including feedback that is tied directly to professional development.
- The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) has redesigned the state's Title II(a) application to help guide schools in leveraging federal dollars for targeted professional development (PD), but aims for PD decisions to be made at the local level.
- Both the teacher and principal evaluation models will include a collaborative goal-setting component to set growth goals for student achievement, as well as teacher and principal effectiveness, although there are no further details.

How will the results of teacher and principal evaluations inform personnel decisions?

- Professional status: Teachers hired after July 1, 2012 must receive at least three ratings of effective or greater in a five-year period to earn professional status. One ineffective rating for a tenured teacher leads to loss of professional status.
- Teacher staffing and dismissal: One ineffective or two consecutive "improvement necessary" ratings can lead to dismissal for probationary teachers, though this is not required.

- Teacher advancement and compensation: A modified plan must be approved by 75 percent of a district's teachers to qualify for a portion of the state pay-for-performance competitive grant funds.
- For principals: no details are provided.

Will the state use educator evaluations to ensure students have equitable access to effective teachers?

- The Department of Education did not require states to address the issue of equitable access to effective teachers as part of their waiver plan. Yet, for those students most in need of effective teachers, this is an important part of improving teacher quality. It is critical to view each state's plan in this context. Indiana does not outline a strategy for promoting equitable access. However, districts could choose to use funds from state performance pay grants to incentivize highly effective teachers to teach high-needs students.

IMPLEMENTATION OF EVALUATIONS

How will the state train educators and evaluators in the new evaluation system?

- The state has developed standardized training for the state-developed evaluation system, will model training for all trainers, and participate in Q & A sessions by phone at each training event.
- Regional educational service centers (ESCs) will deliver statewide training on RISE model to districts in spring/summer 2012.
- IDOE created the Educator Effectiveness and Leadership Division to provide technical support to ESCs and LEAs.
- The state will train teacher preparation programs in Indiana's RISE evaluation and development model.

How will the state ensure the reliability and validity of LEA evaluation systems?

- The state education authority (SEA) will publish all district evaluation system plans on its website.
- LEAs must provide the SEA with evaluation results annually, which the SEA will report to the State Board of Education and publish online in aggregate form.
- The state will look to identify discrepancies between school accountability ratings and educator evaluation ratings.

How does the state address other implementation considerations, such as ensuring a robust teacher-student data link or managing the rollout timeline?

- The state will pilot the system in six districts this school year, train all districts on the new state system in the spring of 2012, and implement new systems by July 2012.

- IDOE intends to collect best practice professional development ideas during the six-district pilot to update its guidance materials that will inform statewide implementation.