

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, Kentucky'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 Kentucky'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.

Kentucky's waiver application was approved based on a commitment by the state to provide the Department of Education with final guidelines related to their work on educator evaluation by the end of the 2011-12 school year. The department will then coordinate a peer review of the guidelines to ensure that they align with the state's waiver plan.

PROMISING ASPECTS OF PLAN:

- As Kentucky is developing its evaluation system, the state is also giving a lot of attention to implementation. Issues the state is addressing include developing a thorough definition of Teacher of Record that accurately links teacher and student data, which is essential to measuring teacher impact on student learning. In addition, the state is working to ensure inter-rater reliability, and to monitor the reliability and validity of district evaluation systems.

ISSUES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION:

- Although growing student learning is at the heart of what teachers do, the plan does not detail what measures will comprise the assessment of teacher impact on student learning or clearly outline the weight that will be given to this component in the state's evaluation system.
- The state plan gives significant attention to working out the evaluation process but provides scant information about how evaluation results will inform personnel decisions and professional development.
- 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. Kentucky's plan refers to providing school districts with access to data to inform the equitable distribution of teachers, but

the state does not provide detail on how it will use evaluation results to monitor and address inequities.

EVALUATION DESIGN

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

- The application does not outline the specific components and indicates that the weighting of the application components is still to be determined.

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

- The Kentucky State Board of Education is considering a plan to move away from approving individual district evaluation plans in favor of adopting a statewide system.
- At the moment, districts can submit their own plans, but must meet state expectations for validity and reliability.

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

- Student growth is one component of the Teacher Effectiveness Framework, but the state's proposed plan does not provide further detail.

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

- The state's initial field testing of the evaluation in a subset of Kentucky schools is intentionally organized to gather data on non-tested subject areas and whether the process, protocols, and instruments for evaluation are appropriate.
- The state is implementing program reviews that require teachers to use state and national standards to identify and develop common assessments.
- Teachers in non-tested subjects must also demonstrate proficiency in a goal setting process to measure student growth.

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

- The Teacher Effectiveness Framework outlines the standards of practice that teachers must demonstrate.
- For principals, the evaluation system will be based on the Principal Effectiveness Framework and will incorporate the Val-Ed 360 Process and use of the TELL Kentucky working conditions survey.

Will all educators be evaluated at least annually?

- The state did not provide information about how frequently educators will be evaluated.

USE OF EVALUATIONS

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

- The waiver application mentions providing school districts with access to professional growth data to target professional development needs.

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

- It is unclear how the evaluation results will be used in personnel decisions.

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. The waiver application mentions providing school districts with access to data to inform the equitable distribution of effective educators, but no further detail is provided.
- Districts that fail to meet highly qualified teacher requirements, have too many teachers identified as ineffective, and fail to meet Annual Measurable Objectives for consecutive years can be identified for Teacher Quality Improvement Status.

IMPLEMENTATION OF EVALUATIONS

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

- The state will launch a messaging campaign through its Leadership Network to prepare for the statewide pilot.
- District leadership teams will engage in a two-day professional development and will participate in ongoing monthly meetings throughout the pilot phase.

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

- State teacher and principal frameworks have gone through a content validity process.
- Evaluators must meet inter-rater reliability expectations.

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

- Local districts can stagger implementation during pilot year to ensure that they can implement with fidelity.
- The state is working with the Center of Education Leadership and Technology (CELT) to define a teacher of record and use this definition to link teacher and student data.