



The Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) *Illinois PTA offers answers to questions about PERA*

The Illinois Performance Evaluation Reform Act of 2010 (Senate Bill 315; Public Act 96-0861) requires all public schools in Illinois to implement standards-based evaluation systems that include student growth indicators for principals, assistant principals, and teachers, based on the PERA timeline, which for most districts is by 2016.

Beginning September 1, 2012, the following requirements of PERA 2010 are in place across the state:

- A four-category rating system (excellent, proficient, needs improvement, and unsatisfactory) will be used for evaluations of principals, assistant principals, teachers in contractual continued service (i.e., tenured teachers), and probationary teachers (i.e., non-tenured teachers)
- Performance evaluations of principals and assistant principals will include data and indicators of student growth as a “significant factor”

Based on the PERA timeline, most school districts will be required to phase in the use of student growth indicators in teacher evaluations by 2016.

As of September 1, 2012:

- Schools receiving federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds must pilot use of student growth indicators in teacher evaluations per their SIG agreement.
- At least 300 Chicago public schools will use student growth indicators in teacher evaluations.

Statewide implementation of changes in teacher evaluation will be complete as of September 1, 2016. Information on district-level implementation dates is available at www.isbe.net/PEAC/html/faqs.htm.

To prepare for evaluations changes, evaluators of teachers and principals have been required to undergo rigorous evaluation training and to become pre-qualified to observe and evaluate professional practices and use student growth indicators as a “significant factor” in evaluations, per PERA requirements. For more information on training, called the Growth Through Learning initiative, visit <http://www.growththroughlearningillinois.org/>.

Why is PERA good for Illinois?

PERA – in combination with Senate Bill 7, which became Public Act 97-0008 in 2011 – represents a significant step forward for school improvement in Illinois. Together, these measures require administrators, school boards, principals, and teachers to share responsibility and accountability for school improvement, student learning, and achievement.

Why is the state making these changes?

Studies have shown that some current evaluation systems don't accurately or objectively measure how teachers or principals are doing, or identify their strengths and areas for growth. Moreover, most current evaluation systems do not formally connect student growth measures with educator performance. And professional development is too rarely linked to performance evaluation.

PERA 2010 requires districts to use well-designed, research-based evaluation systems that provide principals and teachers with:

- Constructive feedback.
- Opportunities for reflection on professional practice.
- Professional development opportunities that help educators improve professional practices to better improve student learning.



Have other states made similar changes? Were they successful?

Many school districts around the nation have begun work to improve teacher evaluation systems, in some cases incorporating student growth measures. It's important to note that changes in Illinois were developed with the involvement of many education stakeholders, including teachers.

What happens if state supports are not available to meet the required PERA implementation timelines?

The implementation deadlines are delayed for each day the state delays the much needed supports.

Where can I find more detailed information regarding PERA?

An advisory group, the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC), holds monthly meetings. Information about the group and on meeting dates can be found at www.isbe.net/PEAC/meetings/meeting/htm. FAQs about PERA are available at www.isbe.net/PEAC/html/faqs.htm.

How is the Illinois PTA involved with PERA?

The Illinois PTA has representatives who sit on the P-20 Council in Illinois, which serves as a statewide advisory committee to education issues including teacher evaluation. Illinois PTA also had a representative on the Growth Through Learning Advisory Committee. For more information about the P-20 Council, visit their website at

<http://www2.illinois.gov/gov/P20/Pages/default.aspx>.