

Amend the Education Reform Legislation

Because It's Not Too Late to Get It Right

Teaching

Data beyond classroom observations is required to gain a valid picture of the teacher.

Even when the observation process is meticulously implemented and ensures for multiple evaluators, the inability to observe teachers on a regular basis makes it difficult to ascertain overall teacher performance.

Research indicates that in order to triangulate information gathered in classroom observations, a multitude of other resources must be examined to develop an accurate assessment of classroom practice.

More assessment data of a variety of types, not less, improves validity and enhances the differentiation of teacher practice.

The legislation is counter to research and is reductive and flawed.

- It prohibits all other measures of teacher practice, including student conferences, parent conferences, lesson planning, goal setting, artifacts of teacher practice, or any other non-observation indicia for APPR purposes.
- The legislation reduces the validity of the data collected during classroom observations by disallowing opportunities to triangulate findings using other evidence. This limitation, combined with a singular growth score, or even two growth scores, reduces an evaluation of teacher

effectiveness to a single test and, for most tenured teachers, two classroom observations typically 40 minutes in duration.

- The increased use of state assessments further weakens the validity of the evaluation system.
- The reliance on a growth score, and limiting observations to what is observed in the classroom, further narrows the curriculum, ensures a greater emphasis on a high-stakes assessment, and limits the validity of teacher evaluation.

The bill should be amended.

The legislation should be amended so that school districts can use multiple measures to inform the accuracy of classroom observations, including student surveys, artifacts (including student portfolios), lesson plans, locally developed assessments, parental interactions, student interactions outside of the classroom, participation in and collegial support for professional practice, unit design and other research-based indices.

Testing

Multiple assessments over multiple years are required to determine teacher effect.



Research indicates the use of student performance data in teacher evaluation requires an array of assessments representing different intervals of times throughout the year, and over multiple years, in order to be valid.

These include state assessments, growth measures, end of course benchmark assessments, common assessments, SLOs (using proficiency scales), and student surveys.

None of these assessments is useful or credible in isolation of the other or in a singular year.

The legislation runs counter to research because:



- Singular ratings inappropriately define the evaluation conclusion.
- The new matrix requires the teacher be rated ineffective or developing, even if they are rated effective or highly effective in the teacher observation component, based on an ineffective rating in the subcomponent growth category of a single test.
- The legislation discourages the use of the second independent assessment by giving more weight to a state growth measure.

It ensures that the state growth measure supersedes all else.

- District can use an additional state growth measure or purchase an additional exam. If the independent optional subcomponents are used and the teacher receives an ineffective rating, the teacher must be rated ineffective overall. Only if both measures in the student performance category are based on state-provided exams can the teacher achieve a rating of developing.

The bill should be amended.



The Commissioner should be directed to form a team of psychometric experts and practitioners to create a subcomponent growth measure that includes multiple forms of assessment, including growth, achievement, and locally developed measures examined over multiple years, to discern the impact of teacher practice and student growth. The unrealistic timeline to complete this in less than two months should be rejected as impossible and irresponsible.

Tenure

While the legislation purports to extend tenure, its effect is to shorten it.



Research indicates that by the end of the fourth or fifth year, most teachers are competent and confident in lesson development, classroom management, and the ability to deviate from the routines of daily teaching.

Developing effective teachers requires carefully implemented mentoring and supervision.

Utilizing multiple and varied assessments over multiple years and examining resources and student needs renders a meaningful and ethical high-stakes decision about teacher effectiveness in the awarding of tenure.

The legislation runs counter to accepted research because:



- The legislation requires a teacher or principal receive three annual ratings of effective or highly effective in their first four years. Research indicates that it takes between four and five years to become competent.
- A teacher new to the profession who is rated developing in his or her first two years must be fired, even if the district believes the teacher will develop into a highly effective teacher, and even though research indicates it is unlikely a teacher would be competent in his or her first two years.
- The disproportionate weight given to state growth scores disadvantages teachers in low-resource districts, who are less likely to have supports for students and their professional development.
- Local control in determining whether a teacher's professional growth is likely to continue is no longer a consideration. The disallowing of experience and professional judgment is catastrophic.

The bill should be amended.



The bill should be amended so that new teachers are afforded a reasonable period of time to develop their professional practice based on the standards established in research. The exercise of local expertise in tenure decisions should be reinstated as a valuable part of the decision-making process. The use of subcomponent growth measures and an array of other measures examined over the course of a probationary period, including growth, achievement, and locally developed measures, should be required as a part of a comprehensive determination in the awarding of tenure.