



Increasing student achievement through teacher development and evaluation

Kickoff meeting of TDES committee addresses teacher quality, accountability

At their first meeting on Dec. 10, 2010, members of the Teacher Development and Evaluation System (TDES) Steering Committee exchanged ideas and participated in an exercise designed to elicit participants' expectations, questions and vision on issues affecting teacher development and evaluation.

Christine Fowler-Mack, Cleveland Metropolitan School District chief of staff, and David Quolke, Cleveland Teachers Union (CTU) president, agreed that the meeting provided a collaborative springboard for a decision-making process

that will only be as strong as the group's collective will to make it work.

"The development of our new Teacher Development and Evaluation System presents both a great challenge and a great opportunity for our District," Quolke said. "The [CTU] has long advocated taking ownership of our profession, and now is the time when teachers' voices can make a difference."

Fowler-Mack said, "These kinds of conversations are happening across the nation in the most forward-thinking districts, and it's exciting to know that Cleveland is one of them."

With a goal to ensure that every classroom is staffed with a quality teacher, the benefits of Cleveland's TDES will be far-reaching. Improved teacher quality translates to improved academic performance and, ultimately, more prepared and employable CMSD graduates.

Key to the success of the program, Quolke said, is the involvement of educators, rather than outsiders to education, in decisions that impact day-to-day classroom operations.

"Too often, those with limited knowledge of the profession and little or no experience in the teaching field have tried to define what good teaching is, how it should be measured and how it should improve student learning," said Quolke. He noted that the complexity of educating students in urban environments



where teachers face special challenges and hurdles is a complex issue.

"If we are to be successful, we must create a system that develops teachers' knowledge, enhances and improves skill levels, takes into account teaching and learning environments, and improves student outcomes," Quolke said.

Fowler-Mack said TDES is intended to provide students with a better education through a reformed way of evaluating faculty members. A new system of evaluation will focus on student improvement rather than just test scores, she added.

"The more our students grow in the course of their classroom experience, the more our teachers should be credited for it, rewarded for it and inspired by it," she said. "Our goal is to create a system that empowers teachers to be accountable and credited for results, while enabling teachers, staff and administrators to work together to achieve those results."

TDES Steering Committee

Peter E. Raskind, CMSD, Interim Chief Executive Officer

David Quolke, CTU, President

Christine Fowler-Mack, CMSD, Chief of Staff

MaryAnn Fredrick, CTU, 1st V.P., Wilbur Wright teacher

Eric Gordon, CMSD, Chief Academic Officer

Mark Baumgartner, CTU, Trustee-at-Large
Luis Muñoz Marin teacher

Karen Thompson, CMSD, Deputy Chief of Curriculum

Shari Obrenski, CTU, 3rd V.P. of Senior High/Special Groups, Jane Addams teacher

Donna Bowen, CMSD, Deputy Chief of Human Resources

Carmen Rodriguez, CTU, Rep. of PEAC/PAR Gov. Board
Garrett Morgan School of Science teacher

Renée Cavor, CMSD, Chief of Transformation

Jillian Ahrens, CTU, 3rd V.P., Memorial K-8 teacher

Susan Myers, PEAC/PAR Liaison

Wendi Kral, CTU, Membership Committee Chairperson,
Peer Math Coach

Meri-Alice Davis, ER&D Local Site Coordinator,
Joseph M. Gallagher teacher

Angela Minnici, AFT

Stephanie Myers, AFT

Paula M. Bevan, Consultant, Bevan Educational Solutions

Dr. Russell Brown, CMSD, Deputy Chief of Organizational
Accountability

Rojeana Howell-Curtis, CMSD, Academic Superintendent,
Growth Schools

Dr. Laura Purnell, CMSD, Deputy Chief, Leadership
& Growth

Excellent Teachers, Excellent Schools is a CMSD and CTU publication designed to increase student achievement through teacher evaluation and development.

We need your feedback and active engagement

During the week of Feb. 21, we will distribute a survey to staff to solicit your valuable input as a critical first step in this collaborative process.

Three things we have accomplished so far ...

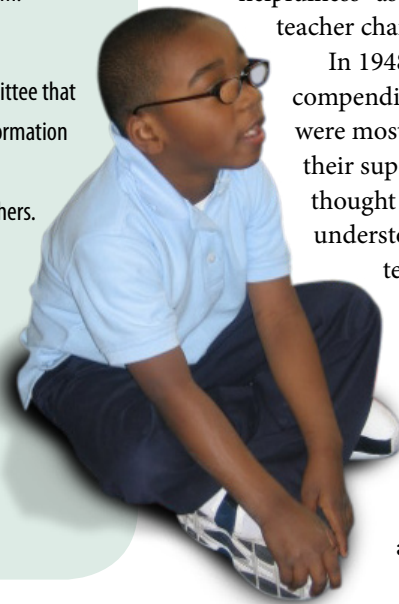
1. A shared vision of connection between teacher excellence and student achievement
2. A framework for a system that emphasizes teacher development
3. A collaborative code and protocol for moving forward

TDES launches newsletter to keep stakeholders engaged

As part of an ongoing initiative to improve teacher quality and accountability in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, members of the Cleveland Teachers Union and the CMSD administrative staff are committed to keeping stakeholders informed about the progress toward creating a new teacher evaluation system.

Excellent Teachers, Excellent Schools is a publication of the TDES Steering Committee that will highlight activities and provide information about innovative solutions designed to develop, reward and retain quality teachers.

Its purpose is to provide a communications link and opportunity to offer input among CMSD stakeholders, who have a vested interest in improving teacher quality and raising student achievement in our schools.



We're not alone, across the nation districts grapple with teacher evaluation

Teacher evaluation may be a national buzz word today, but the search for how best to provide students effective teachers is decades old.

In 1896, researchers asked primary students in Sioux City, Iowa, to describe the characteristics of their best teachers. (Nearly 87 percent of those young Iowans mentioned “helpfulness” as the most important teacher characteristic.)

In 1948, a research compendium noted that teachers were mostly evaluated by their supervisors, but no one thought that the supervisors understood much about how teachers helped students learn. In the late 1990s, a teaching-standard movement brought increased expectations for student performance and renewed concerns about teacher practice.

Today, most school districts are grappling with teacher evaluation, often spurred on by government and foundation grants. When awarding federal funds, President Barack Obama and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan highlighted the need to improve teacher effectiveness, which experts say makes the biggest difference in student success or failure.

In 2010, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation awarded \$335 million in grants, mostly to school districts, for developing evaluation systems to improve teacher effectiveness. Funds went to Hillsborough County, Fla. (Tampa), Pittsburgh, Los Angeles and Memphis school districts. These projects require principals and teachers to work together in developing a process to decide which teachers deserve tenure, promotions or dismissal.

CTU President David Quolke said the union “firmly believes it is the teachers – those who have daily contact with the children – who should help define the changes in education.”

Remembering the teachers who have made a significant difference in our lives ...

A common cry among educators and a common belief among all people is the critical role that teachers play in our lives.

Everyone can remember at least one teacher who impacted their lives in ways that were transforming. Either because they lifted us up when we were down, or they pointed the way when we felt lost. For some, it was a teacher who first ignited a thought, which became a turning point in our lives. For all, there is at least one teacher who stands out above the rest.

A national push for increased teacher quality and accountability has highlighted a common belief in the value of a great teacher and systemic weaknesses that exist in teacher evaluation systems throughout the nation.

Evaluation models in any work force that enable workers to be rated at the top of

the scale when the product of their work is average or below average is a model that needs to be re-evaluated.

Teacher evaluation models that show little or no correlation to student learning do not serve educational systems well and are detrimental to students whose hope for success is in the hands of the teacher.

The members of the TDES Steering Committee have much in common – not only because they agree on the importance of quality teaching in their own lives but also because they share the responsibility of inspiring some of the most disadvantaged children in the state.

As the second largest school district in Ohio where too many children have found little hope for the future, the CMSD teachers, along with parental support, *are* the best hope.

5 Rules for Doing Teacher Evaluation Right

OBEYING THE RULES OF PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

1. Start with a defensible definition of good teaching that is studied, and understood, by all stakeholders.
2. Differentiate the processes of evaluation for novices, experienced teachers and teachers at risk.
3. Let evidence, not opinion, anchor the process.
4. Conduct evaluations in such a way that they produce teacher learning.
5. Transparency: Involve ALL STAKEHOLDERS in making decisions about improving existing evaluative practices.