

Office of Superintendent of Schools
Board of Education Meeting of April 14, 2011

Office of Human Resources
Ann Best, Chief Human Resources Officer

SUBJECT: **PROPOSED REVISIONS TO BOARD POLICY DNA(LOCAL),
PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL: EVALUATION OF TEACHERS—
FIRST READING**

Research has proven that teachers have the greatest impact on their students' success than any other school factor. Therefore, to ensure that every student is taught by an effective teacher, the Houston Independent School District (HISD) community has worked together to design a better appraisal system that will provide teachers with more feedback on their performance and better support to continuously improve their instruction in the classroom.

In surveys conducted in the spring of 2010, teachers and principals stated that the state-issued Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) and the locally adopted Modified Professional Development and Appraisal System (MPDAS) did not provide teachers with the necessary feedback or individualized development support. Subsequently, in August 2010, following extensive outreach and engagement with staff members and the broader HISD community, the Board of Education adopted a long-term Strategic Direction that includes five core initiatives for reaching the district's over-arching goals. One of these initiatives is an effective teacher in every classroom. This initiative is based upon four key strategies, two of which are centered upon building a useful appraisal process and providing teachers with the individualized professional development they need to be successful in the classroom.

Since the adoption of the Strategic Direction, HISD has been working with school-based Shared Decision-Making Committees (SDMCs), the District Advisory Committee (DAC), and working groups to design a new teacher appraisal and development system, in addition to conducting focus groups, a public comment period, and field testing of the new evaluation system with several school principals. This policy was also presented to instructional and administrative employee consultation groups. The Board of Education, in its quest to have an effective teacher in every classroom, recognizes that a new appraisal and development system for its teachers is necessary. Therefore, the administration is proposing that the Board of Education adopt a newly-designed system and amend DNA (LOCAL), the district's policy on how teachers are evaluated in HISD.

DNA (LOCAL) was reviewed to thoroughly reference elements that must be included in the appraisal process and performance criteria developed by the DAC and SMDCs. In compliance with Texas Education Code §21.351(a)(1) and (2), the proposed revisions to DNA (LOCAL) are based on observable, job-related behavior that include a teacher's implementation of discipline management procedures and the performance of a teacher's students.

To update the district's policy regarding the performance appraisal of teachers in compliance with Texas state law (TEC §21.351, §21.352, §21.353), the following revisions to DNA(LOCAL) are recommended:

New Sections: The following sections have been added to DNA(LOCAL).

- BACKGROUND INFORMATION
- LOCALLY DEVELOPED APPRAISAL SYSTEM
- APPRAISAL PROCESS
- CONFERENCES
- WALKTHROUGHS
- APPRAISERS
- CERTIFICATION
- APPRAISAL CALENDAR
- EMPLOYEE COPY
- APPRAISAL CRITERIA
- INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE
- PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS
- STUDENT PERFORMANCE
- SUMMATIVE PERFORMANCE RATING
- TIMING OF SUMMATIVE PERFORMANCE RATING
- INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
- PRESCRIPTIVE ASSISTANCE
- SECOND APPRAISER
- AMENDMENT PROCESS

Deleted Sections: The following sections have been deleted from DNA(LOCAL)

- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND APPRAISAL SYSTEM
- ASSISTANCE

Amended Sections: The following sections in DNA(LOCAL) have been amended.

- PREAMBLE: TRANSFORMATION OF TEACHER APPRAISALS: The entire section has been revised to reflect the district's strategic direction.
- OBSERVATIONS: This section was rewritten to more specifically reflect the proposed new teacher appraisal system.

The proposed changes are noted in the attached revised policy.

COST/FUNDING SOURCE(S): None.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS: None.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS/IMPACT: This agenda item supports HISD Goal 2: Improve Human Capital and is aligned with HISD Core Initiative 1: Effective Teacher in Every Classroom.

THIS ITEM REQUIRES CONSULTATION.

THIS ITEM MODIFIES BOARD POLICY.

- RECOMMENDED:
1. That the Board of Education adopt the appraisal process and criteria developed by the district and campus-level committees, as presented to the Board.
 2. That the Board of Education accept the proposed revisions to Board Policy DNA(LOCAL), *Performance Appraisal: Evaluation of Teachers*, on first reading.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL
EVALUATION OF TEACHERS

DNA
(LOCAL)

PREAMBLE:
TRANSFORMATION
OF TEACHER
APPRAISALS

In an effort to transform education for student success, we, the HISD Board of Education, are tying value-added data to the teacher appraisal system. We believe the overall student achievement level must be improved so that after each school year, every student makes, at a minimum, one year of instructional growth. This information will assist individual teachers and school leaders in determining the professional needs of a teacher to improve instructional practices for improved student growth.

Research has reinforced the significant influence teachers have on student achievement. Specifically, research shows that a significant percent of the variance in student academic progress levels is attributed to the classroom teacher (Ballou, D., Sanders, W., and Wright, P. "Controlling for Student Background in Value-Added Assessment of Teachers." *Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics*, Spring 2004, Vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 37-65). Furthermore, in a comprehensive study on teacher impact, data indicate that students who start third grade at about the same level of mathematics achievement finish fifth grade mathematics at dramatically different levels depending on the quality of their teachers. (Haycock, Kati. "Good Teaching Matters... A Lot." *Education Trust*. Thinking K-16, Vol. 3 Issue 2: 1998).

PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AND
APPRAISAL SYSTEM

The district's primary goal is to improve student achievement, and the district believes its greatest strength in reaching this goal is its human capital. Since the single most important exchange within the district is that which occurs between teachers and students every day, it is our collective vision to ensure that every student is taught by an effective teacher, every day. To continuously improve and strengthen the district's teacher workforce over time, the district has undertaken an effort to transform its performance evaluation system of teachers to ensure that each teacher receives the feedback and support to improve teaching and student learning. Change is essential if we are to make our children's education our very highest priority. By building a new teacher appraisal and development system, the district will be able to identify and set clear expectations for teacher performance, differentiate teacher performance and professional development and other supports, and recognize and reward our most effective teachers. Implementing a high-quality teacher appraisal and development system will serve as a catalyst for the district becoming the best school district in the country.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL
EVALUATION OF TEACHERS

DNA
(LOCAL)

We, alone, cannot affect school transformation; and we, alone, cannot simply demand it. It must include and involve everyone at all levels of the organization and the community. To design the new teacher appraisal and development system, the district community has been involved, starting with every school's Shared Decision Making Committees (SDMCs) and the District Advisory Committee (DAC), along with thousands of teachers and other community members. Together, the community has worked to identify a new path forward to drive continuous improvement in teacher performance and most importantly, to ensure improved learning outcomes for every student in the district.

BACKGROUND
INFORMATION

Through surveys conducted in spring, 2010, teachers and principals predominately stated that the state-issued Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) and the locally adopted Modified Professional Development and Appraisal System (MPDAS) are the assessment programs for teachers. did not provide teachers with the feedback or individualized development support needed to improve student achievement and do their best work in the classroom. In response to these findings and as part of the district's Strategic Direction adopted by the Board of Education in August, 2010, HISD launched the Effective Teachers Initiative designed to ensure that there is an effective teacher in every classroom. This initiative is based upon four key strategies, two of which are centered upon building a useful appraisal system and providing teachers with the individualized professional development they need to be successful in the classroom.

The District's appraisal system for campus educators shall incorporate value-added data for consideration in the overall appraisal rating, effective beginning with the 2010-11 school year.

Research has proven that teachers have the greatest impact on their students' success than any other school factor. Therefore, to ensure that every student is taught by an effective teacher, the HISD community has worked together to design a better appraisal system that will provide teachers with more feedback on their performance and better support to continuously improve their instruction in the classroom.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL
EVALUATION OF TEACHERS

DNA
(LOCAL)

LOCALLY
DEVELOPED
APPRAISAL
SYSTEM

Teachers shall be appraised annually in accordance with the locally developed appraisal system written in compliance with Texas state law (TEC §21.351, §21.352, §21.353).

APPRAISAL
PROCESS

Teachers shall participate in the appraisal process on an annual basis.

CONFERENCES

Teachers shall engage in at least three comprehensive conferences with their respective appraiser throughout the course of the school year, with one each to be held near the beginning, middle, and end of the school year.

OBSERVATIONS

PDAS observations shall be unscheduled. Teachers shall receive at least two unannounced classroom observations, of at least 30 minutes in length, conducted by their appraiser, throughout the school year. Appraisers shall not give advance notice of the date or time of an observation. Each classroom observation shall be followed by a post-conference within 10 instructional days, where during which the appraiser shall provide the employee with specific written and verbal feedback.

If a teacher requests a second observation, the observation will be unscheduled. Second appraisers shall not give advance notice of the date or time of an observation.

When a second appraisal is made, the appraisers' domain scores shall be averaged and shall constitute the teacher's domain rating scores for the appraisal period.

ASSISTANCE

When there are concerns about an employee's performance, the employee may be provided suggestions for improvement in the form of a growth plan; when an employee receives unfavorable ratings, however, the employee shall be provided such a growth plan. Growth plans for teachers shall be written according to the guidelines for the PDAS.

WALK-THROUGHS

Each teacher shall receive at least ~~two~~three unannounced walk-throughs, of at least 10 minutes in length, conducted by his or her appraiser. Each walk-through shall be followed by written feedback within 10 instructional days. In-person conversations may also be conducted at the request of either the appraiser or teacher.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL
EVALUATION OF TEACHERS

DNA
(LOCAL)

APPRAISERS

~~Each~~ All teachers shall be assigned an appraiser. Appraisers shall be school-based administrators or other individuals who have undergone the requisite appraiser training and certification provided by the district. ~~As necessary and as determined appropriate because of specific building circumstances, other in-school or district administrators or other individuals who have gone through the requisite appraiser training may also fulfill this role, following guidelines for who can appraise teachers as set forth by the district.~~

CERTIFICATION

Before conducting appraisals, an appraiser shall be certified by completing the uniform appraiser training provided by the district. Certified appraisers shall be approved by the Board annually. Periodic re-certification and training shall be required.

APPRAISAL
CALENDAR

The district shall establish a calendar for teacher appraisals. The appraisal period for each teacher shall include all of the days of the teacher's contract.

EMPLOYEE COPY

All teachers shall receive a copy of their annual written appraisal.

APPRAISAL
CRITERIA

Teachers shall be appraised on the following three performance criteria: (1) instructional practice; (2) professional expectations and; (3) student performance.

INSTRUCTIONAL
PRACTICE

1. Appraisers shall assess the extent to which a teacher meets a set of expectations for instructional planning and delivery.

PROFESSIONAL
EXPECTATIONS

2. Appraisers shall assess whether a teacher meets a set of expectations for professionalism.

STUDENT
PERFORMANCE

3. Appraisers shall assess a teacher's effectiveness using student performance measures. These measures shall include student achievement levels and/or student growth over time. Each teacher shall have at least two measures of student learning included in his/ or her appraisal.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL
EVALUATION OF TEACHERS

DNA
(LOCAL)

SUMMATIVE
PERFORMANCE
RATING

Every teacher shall receive a final performance rating in each of the three performance criteria using multiple sources of evidence. Performance ratings shall be based on a four-point scale. Individual performance ratings for each of the three performance criteria will be combined to produce a summative rating.

TIMING OF
SUMMATIVE
PERFORMANCE
RATING

Every teacher shall receive a summative performance rating only after the teacher's individual ratings for each of the three performance criteria are available.

INDIVIDUAL
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
PLAN

Every teacher shall have an individual professional development plan that sets a path for professional growth. The development plan shall be developed collaboratively with the teacher and his/or her appraiser near the beginning of the school year and revisited as necessary throughout the year.

PRESCRIPTIVE
ASSISTANCE

When there are concerns about a teacher's performance, a plan shall be developed. Areas for improvement shall be identified by the appraiser, and specific developmental activities shall be monitored by the appraiser and/or the principal within the teacher's plan.

SECOND
APPRAISER

Teachers may request a second appraiser to review his/ or her final Instructional Practice, Professional Expectations, and/or Student Performance ~~scores~~ ratings by submitting a request, in writing, within ten days of receipt of the final ~~scores~~ ratings for performance criteria. Teachers may also request a second appraisal at the time of the mid-year conference, based upon his/ or her formative Instructional Practice and Professional Expectations ~~scores~~ ratings, yet they can only request a second appraisal for a specific performance criteria once throughout a school year.

A second appraisal for instructional practice will require that the second appraiser conduct one unannounced classroom observation along with a review of all documentation and data collected to inform the original rating.

A second appraisal for professional expectations and student performance will require a document review of all related materials to assess the teacher in those areas.

The second appraiser will be appointed by the Superintendent or his/ or her designee. Teachers may request that the second ap-

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL
EVALUATION OF TEACHERS

DNA
(LOCAL)

praiser have content knowledge specific to the area being taught and assignments will be made based upon the availability of qualified personnel~~best use of district resources available.~~

DISPUTE
RESOLUTION

If a teacher feels that a procedure of the appraisal system has been misapplied to him or her, or if a teacher wishes to dispute the content of the assessment or the ratings given, the teacher may access the DISPUTE RESOLUTION process at DGBA (LOCAL).

PROBATIONARY
TEACHERS

Written evaluations and other evaluative information need not be considered prior to a decision to terminate a probationary contract at the end of the contract term. [See DFAB(LEGAL)].]

EMPLOYMENT
DECISIONS

When relevant to decisions regarding term contracts, written evaluations of a teacher's performance, as documented to date, and any other information the administration deems appropriate, shall be considered in decisions affecting contract status.

AMENDMENT
PROCESS

The district may present suggested improvements to the appraisal process and criteria to SDMCs and the DAC for review on an annual basis. The SDMCs shall provide feedback on the proposed improvements for DAC review and consideration. The district administration will present the recommended amendments to the Board.



Strategic Direction

HOUSTON
INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Building a Better Teacher Appraisal and Development System:

A Collaborative, Transparent Design Process

Collaboration and transparency were top priorities in designing the new system. Teachers, principals, and other key stakeholders led the design effort, and HISD actively sought feedback from the entire community throughout the process. The final proposal reflects input from **more than 2,600 teachers, 500 school administrators, 500 parents, and 600 community members** – unprecedented numbers for such a major initiative.

Design Process (September 2010 through March 2011)

- **More than 250 school-based Shared Decision Making Committees (SDMCs)** developed four rounds of recommendations on the criteria and process for the new system. SDMCs include more than 1,100 teachers, 500 parents, 500 school administrators, and 700 community members.
- **Working groups composed of teachers, school administrators, parents, and HISD staff members** met weekly to develop the rubrics and other tools that are part of the proposal.
- The **District Advisory Committee** met regularly to shape these recommendations into the final proposal.
- In February, HISD released a draft proposal for the new system and **gathered feedback from thousands of community members**, which SDMCs incorporated into their final round of recommendations.

Community Engagement

- HISD posted all materials from the design process on a **dedicated Web site** (www.hisdeffectiveteachers.org) that has **logged more than 14,000 unique visits**.

- HISD sent **biweekly email updates on the process to all HISD teachers and principals.**
- HISD **read, logged, and responded to 1,100 questions and comments** on the proposal submitted by e-mail and via a comment form on the Web site.
- HISD held **three public meetings** to gather feedback on the draft proposal.
- **2,655 teachers and 282 appraisers completed an online survey** on the draft proposal.
- **40 teachers and 18 principals participated in focus groups** to help shape specific aspects of the proposal. Participants signed up online and were selected on a first-come, first-served basis.
- The Instructional Practice Rubric was field tested in several schools to assess how well it applies to the instructional setting.

Learn more: www.HISDeffectiveteachers.org; Contact: effectiveteachers@houstonisd.org