

TLE Report to the Oklahoma State Board of Education

Implementation Update

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6/27/2013

Introduction

The most current educational research has shown that having an effective teacher in the classroom is the one variable that has the greatest impact on student learning. The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) and the Oklahoma State Board of Education understand this fact and have committed to giving teachers and leaders the tools they need to become the most highly skilled educators possible. Part of this commitment has been demonstrated through the on-going development and implementation of the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Evaluation System (TLE), which was mandated through Senate Bill (SB) 2033 in 2010. Since that time strides have been made to change both the format and philosophy behind teacher evaluation in our state.

Implementation Timeline

On May 29, 2013, Governor Fallin signed SB 426 into law after Superintendent Barresi and state legislators requested a two-year delay of full implementation of the entire TLE system. Districts have been given guidance from the Executive Director of TLE and should continue to move forward with the implementation of all portions of the TLE system based on the timelines that are clearly outlined in SB 426. In short, the qualitative components will be fully implemented in 2013-2014 as discussed below, and the quantitative components will be fully implemented in 2015-2016. A copy of the district timelines is attached.

Qualitative Components

Throughout the 2012-2013 school year, districts piloted the qualitative evaluation frameworks for both teachers and leaders. Both the Marzano Causal Teacher Evaluation Model and the Tulsa Teacher and Leader Effectiveness frameworks were piloted for teachers while McREL and Marzano leader frameworks were introduced for principals. The Danielson evaluation framework for teachers

and the Reeve's framework for the evaluation of school leaders, although approved by the State Board of Education, were not piloted by any district during the 2012-2013 school year. They remain on the approved frameworks list and can be adopted by school districts in the future.

In-depth training on how to properly use the evaluation frameworks was provided by two entities last year. The Cooperative Council of School Administrators (CCOSA) trained principals and leaders on the Tulsa and McREL models while LearningSciences Inc. trained principals and leaders on the Marzano frameworks for both teachers and leaders. While training was funded through state funds last summer as a specific line item, districts will pay for the training of new administrators during the 2013-2014 school year using funds appropriated for professional development related to all state education reforms. A copy of the summer/fall 2013 training schedule along with the costs associated with the training of new evaluators is attached.

All qualitative evaluation frameworks must be implemented across the state in every school district during the 2013-2014 school year. The State will move from piloting these evaluation tools to fully implementing them in accordance with SB 426. The State Board of Education will continue to have the option of adopting additional evaluation frameworks that meet the State's criteria for viable evaluation tools.

District Feedback

To gain vital information as to how piloting the new evaluation frameworks impacted districts this year, a survey was sent to superintendents in February 2013. Superintendents were asked to gather information from their leaders and report back to the TLE office at the OSDE. Three hundred twenty-seven responses were received.

The primary objective of the survey was to find out whether or not the evaluation frameworks were helping school leaders provide actionable feedback to educators while distinguishing between ineffective, effective, and highly effective personnel. When asked to what extent the new evaluation frameworks provide actionable feedback to teachers, ninety-three percent (93%) of respondents answered from average to a tremendous extent. Similarly, ninety-one percent (91%) of participants indicated that the frameworks provide actionable feedback to leaders from average to a tremendous extent. Ninety-one percent (91%) of district leaders stated that the frameworks distinguish between the effectiveness of teachers from average to a tremendous extent while eighty-nine (89%) percent indicated the frameworks distinguish between the effectiveness of leaders on a continuum from average to a tremendous extent. Overall, responses as to the ability of the frameworks to provide actionable feedback and distinguish the effectiveness of educators were overwhelmingly positive.

Perhaps the most powerful indication as to the impact the evaluation frameworks are having on instructional practice can be found in the individual responses many leaders gave. When asked, “What positive changes have resulted from the implementation of the qualitative portion of TLE for both teachers and leaders in your district,” one assistant superintendent responded, “Never in my 35 years as an educator have we had this much discussion of effective instruction. We have a common language across buildings. Professional Learning Communities have purpose and direction as we support each other in learning the new instructional model. Professionalism across the district is on the up-swing.” Another district leader stated, “The district has a clear understanding of what an effective teacher is. Teachers are beginning to see that their evaluation is based on their effectiveness, not on subjective aspects as in the past. We are developing a common language, which is critical in a large urban district.” A leader of a smaller district indicated that they “are seeing an increase in meaningful conversations and conferencing with teachers. It has opened the lines of discussion for growth that was lacking in our previous evaluation instrument. The rubric lays out the

expectations of an effective teacher, and outlines for the teacher the expectations of their administrator. It gets administrators into classrooms more often.” The principal of a small rural school stated, “I believe the accountability factor has risen for both teachers and leaders due to the TLE. In providing explicit guidelines within the rubric has caused us to be more conscientious of our day to day practices.”

District leaders were also asked to respond to this question, “What challenges are you facing as you implement the qualitative portion of TLE for both teachers and leaders?” Educators answered that while the evaluation frameworks are resulting in a greater focus on professional growth and development for both teachers and leaders, they do have concerns regarding the amount of time the TLE evaluation system takes to implement with fidelity. Principals must continue to rearrange their daily schedules to reflect the priority of being an instructional leader rather than a manager. While this is easily said, the reality of the day-to-day responsibilities a school leader faces is tremendous. Survey results clearly show that administrators are having difficulty implementing the qualitative portion with fidelity because so much more time must be spent on teacher observations, feedback, and evaluations. Leaders will certainly need continued training as to how they can meet the requirements of the TLE system without ignoring the other key components of their positions. Other than time being a challenge, some leaders did respond that funding is an issue as the responsibility now falls to the district to pay for TLE training.

Since SB 426 has been signed into law, districts will no longer have to complete evaluations of probationary teachers by the formerly established November and February deadlines. Instead, administrators will be required to provide feedback to probationary teachers at least once in the fall and once in the spring. Furthermore, Governor Fallin signed SB 207 into law calling for the evaluation of highly effective and superiorly ranked teachers on a bi-annual basis rather than yearly.

To address funding concerns, the State Board of Education approved funding for districts to provide professional development related to the State's education reform initiatives. This funding will assist districts in implementing many reforms including some of the costs associated with TLE training.

For the majority of school districts, however, the pilot year of the qualitative portion of TLE was successful in the leaders' eyes. Many instructional leaders have reported to the OSDE that changes that are occurring through the new evaluation frameworks are some of the most significant and meaningful advances in the profession that they have seen in years. Leaders are grateful for the two-year delay for the implementation of the quantitative components of the TLE so they can continue to focus on the qualitative framework implementation, which is already proving to be valuable professional growth tool.

Teacher Feedback

In May of 2013, the TLE office asked teachers to respond to a ten-question survey regarding the impact that the new evaluation frameworks have had on instructional practice. Almost 5,500 teachers have responded to date. Once again, the goal of the survey was to solicit responses as to how the evaluation frameworks are changing educational practice within our schools on a day-to-day basis.

Teachers were asked, "To what extent has the new evaluation framework (Marzano/Tulsa) contributed to improved professional dialogue in your building?" Sixty-one percent (61%) of the teachers who responded to the survey indicated that the new framework adopted by their district has improved professional dialogue somewhat to a great deal. Throughout the 2013-2014 school year, leaders must continue to foster professional dialogue through Professional Learning Communities or team meetings. The evaluation instrument should lead educators onward in their quest for collaboration, research-based instructional strategies, effective classroom management techniques,

and intervention/enrichment driven by data. Feedback from the evaluation frameworks should lead to dynamic and meaningful professional conversations that are facilitated by instructional leaders in every school.

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of educators responded that the new evaluation framework has provided actionable feedback from an average amount to a tremendous extent. One teacher responded, “I believe the framework has provided a great deal of additional accountability for teachers in our schools. The feedback component is wonderful. I am appreciative of the constructive criticism provided.” Multiple educators indicated that the framework has opened the lines of communication between administrators and teachers.

When asked, “On a scale of 1-5, how informed do you feel as a result of the TLE training your administrators have provided to you this year,” eighty-six percent (86%) of respondents marked that they felt informed to extremely informed. It is imperative that teachers understand how they are being evaluated, not only by the qualitative framework(s), but also through the entire TLE system as it is implemented systematically throughout the next two years. More importantly, teachers must view the entire evaluation system as a roadmap for professional growth. As OSDE leaders and district administrators continue to train teachers on the TLE frameworks and evaluation system, focus should be that the TLE’s purpose is to highlight areas of strength, expose areas of weakness, and create a professional growth blueprint that will lead teachers to meaningful and relevant growth opportunities. The goal is to strengthen them as professional educators who will, in turn, cause students to succeed academically and emotionally. It is imperative that the evaluation instrument be used to inform instruction and that teachers view it as essential to their ability to provide the most rigorous and meaningful education to their students as possible.

Because the TLE is designed to lead teachers to better practice, additional focus must be placed on helping educators understand the connection between the evaluation tool and the day-to-day instructional strategies that are used by educators throughout our state. Teachers were asked, “To what extent has the new evaluation framework changed your teaching practices?” Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the teachers who responded indicated that their teaching practice had changed somewhat to a great deal due to the new evaluation tools. While more than half of the teachers surveyed indicated the TLE has changed instructional practice, clearly more work needs to be done in this area. Fundamentally, results from observations and evaluations must guide instructional practice while honing teachers’ skill sets.

While the majority of responses from teachers are positive in nature, five percent (5%) of respondents did express concerns. Many of these teachers said they were given no feedback throughout the year, the new framework was not implemented with fidelity, that principals did not train them properly, and that the new evaluation framework created fear and pressure rather than productivity. Administrators must implement the TLE evaluation system with integrity and purpose. Where teachers are not being evaluated correctly, the State Department of Education shall seek ways to better train administrators and district leaders. The OSDE is developing plans regarding how to best monitor the implementation of the TLE system as we move from piloting the qualitative component to full implementation.

The TLE office expects continued growth during the full implementation year of the qualitative frameworks. If teachers do not believe the new evaluation tools lead to professional growth, changes in instructional practice, or increased professional dialogue, the investment in the TLE evaluation system will not accomplish its intended purpose: to build educator capacity for improving student learning. The OSDE must continue to focus on building instructional leaders who are able to use the

results of teacher evaluations to improve practice and guide teachers to meaningful professional growth opportunities.

Recommended Professional Development/Training Focus for 2013-2014

- Time management for school leaders – the art of delegating with a focus on instructional leadership
- Pointing educators to meaningful professional growth opportunities
- Increasing capacity of teachers/leaders
- Leading professional discourse for teachers/leaders
- Developing peer mentors
- Connecting Oklahoma Academic Standards to Teacher and Leader Effectiveness

Quantitative Components: Other Academic Measures

A list of approved Other Academic Measures and district policy requirements were adopted in December 2012 by the State Board of Education. Other Academic Measures comprise fifteen percent (15%) of a teacher or leader's final evaluation score. According to SB 426, districts will pilot this portion of the quantitative component of TLE during the 2013-2014 school year. Districts may pilot at one site or throughout the entire district. Preliminary data will be reported back to the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

Quantitative Components: Roster Verification

Roster Verification was piloted voluntarily by districts throughout the state this year. Linking students to their teachers appropriately is a critical step in the State's ability to calculate accurate, reliable, and meaningful value added reports for both teachers and administrators. While the Roster Verification process is valuable, it is rather time-consuming for data coordinators and other district personnel who work closely with student data entry. It is imperative that districts who did not pilot Roster Verification be pro-active by working with the OSDE to ensure data is correctly uploaded and complete before the spring of 2014. All training materials are available online on the Oklahoma State Department of Education Web site allowing districts to train teachers and staff at any point this year.

Business rules and guidance for Roster Verification need to be adopted by the State Board of Education in the near future. The State's value added analysis vendor and OSDE staff will work closely with the TLE Commission and State Board of Education to adopt rules that create consistency across the state.

Quantitative Components: Value Added Measures

The Teacher and Leader Effectiveness evaluation system will include student growth data as thirty-five percent (35%) of a teacher or leader's total evaluation in the year 2015-2016. The State Department of Education submitted a Request for Proposals through the Office of Management and Enterprise Services Central Purchasing Division. A contract is expected to be awarded shortly. The value added analysis vendor will work alongside key stakeholders, OSDE staff members, the TLE Commission, and the Oklahoma State Board of Education to make business decisions regarding the value added model which will be used as part of the TLE evaluation system to demonstrate student growth and teacher/leader effectiveness.

The State will have the ability to run value added growth analysis and reports for teachers and leaders on a pilot basis. This will make it possible for the State Board to monitor growth calculations, make any necessary changes, and adjust the system to best meet the needs of the State before full implementation. Also, piloting this portion of TLE will allow educators to receive intensive training from the value added vendor and OSDE staff. Teachers and leaders, therefore, will be given the essential tools in understanding how to use value added reports to inform and change instruction before the growth calculations are used as part of evaluations.