TO: Members of the Indiana State Board of Education

FROM: Jessica Conlon, Project Director, Strategy, Systems and Policy, TNTP

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DATE: January 28, 2015

RE: Final Recommendations for Changes to Indiana's Evaluation System

Introduction

Four years ago, Indiana set out to establish a teacher evaluation system that would recognize excellent teaching, support educators to improve their practice, and encourage the equitable distribution of effective teachers across the state. The underlying philosophy of the system was – and remains – to ensure students have effective teachers so that student learning will increase.[1] The resulting system has been in effect for over two years and is a model for states and districts around the country.

We cannot overstate how much Indiana has accomplished over the last two years in regards to teacher evaluation policy and implementation. On the whole, Indiana's laws and policies continue to reflect best practice and a high standard for teacher evaluation. Additionally, there are already indicators that these policies are positively influencing how corporations and schools address teacher quality. As with any bold initiative, there have been obstacles to successful implementation and lessons learned over the last two years. Because of its commitment to a high-quality teacher evaluation system, Indiana's State Board of Education (SBOE or the Board) recently engaged TNTP to make recommendations for how it might strengthen its system to address these challenges.

TNTP has a long history of supporting Indiana's teacher quality initiatives. From 2010 to 2012, TNTP worked with the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE or the Department) to design and implement a multi-measure teacher evaluation system that develops, supports, and recognizes excellent teaching. The result of these efforts is the State's model evaluation system: RISE 2.0, which TNTP helped to pilot across three corporations. To add to this knowledge and experience with Indiana's model plan, over the last two months, we have immersed ourselves in learning about the current state of Indiana's evaluation system. We first closely examined the State's law, policies and practices related to teacher evaluation. Then, we conducted a targeted stakeholder engagement effort that was designed to build off the findings of the Indiana Teacher Appraisal and Support System (INTASS)[2] survey to further guide our research and analysis of the current state of evaluation.[3] We then used this local context to supplement our deep experience designing and implementing teacher evaluation systems and knowledge of best practices.

This memorandum represents the culmination of these efforts as well as our final recommendations for strengthening Indiana's laws, regulations, and implementation practices. It is our belief that should the Board adopt our recommendations, Indiana will not only be able to address the implementation challenges that have been identified, but it will be able to establish a clear vision for a best-in-class evaluation system that supports and recognizes educators and ultimately contributes to improved student outcomes.

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[1] Indiana ESEA Waiver Application at 262, retrieved from
http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/esea/indiana_amended_clean_copy_waiver_6-30-14.pdf.

[2] Indiana Teacher Appraisal and Support System survey results, retrieved from http://www.in.gov/sboe/files/2014-09-26_INTASS_PPT.pdf.

[3] See Appendix A for TNTP Focus Group Findings Report.

Background & Context

As mentioned above, Indiana's evaluation policies were designed to meet a variety of human capital goals, including:

- Recognizing excellent teaching
- Providing high-quality and actionable feedback to educators
- Supporting educators to improve their practice
- Enabling school leaders to have actionable data about their teaching staff
- Ensuring all Indiana schools have an equitable distribution of high-performing teachers.[4]

More recently, in its Strategic Plan, the Board identified one of its strategic priorities is to recruit, develop and retain excellent teachers.[5]

The emphasis on evaluation as a way to achieve these human capital goals is aligned with best practices.[6] Because teaching is the most influential in-school factor affecting student performance, being able to recruit, develop and retain great teachers will help to improve student outcomes.[7] It is impossible to meet these goals without first being able to provide accurate evaluations to every teacher.

Current State of Evaluation in Indiana

The current state of Indiana's evaluation system reveals two recommended areas of focus. First, the ratings distributions over the last two years suggest that there are opportunities at the state and corporation level to improve completeness and accuracy of teachers' ratings. Second, current policies and practices at the state level are creating obstacles to successful implementation. These implementation challenges may be the cause of at least some of the accuracy and completeness issues with the State's results.

Inaccurate or Incomplete Ratings
In order to achieve the goals of recognizing excellent teaching, supporting the continuous improvement of its teachers, and ensuring every student has an effective teacher, Indiana must first be able to provide accurate evaluations to every teacher. Without an accurate assessment of teacher performance, school and corporation leaders can neither reward teacher excellence nor support a teacher's development.[8]

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[4] Indiana ESEA Waiver Application at 262, retrieved from
http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/esea/indiana_amended_clean_copy_waiver_6-30-14.pdf.

[5] Indiana State Board of Education Strategic Plan at 15, retrieved from http://www.in.gov/sboe/files/2014-07-03_INSBOE_Strategic_Plan_Version_07.01.2014.pdf.

[6] David Keeling, Jennifer Mulhern, Susan Sexton & Daniel Weisberg, TNTP, *The Widget Effect: Our National Failure to Acknowledge and Act on Differences in Teacher Effectiveness.* (2009); TNTP, *Teacher Evaluation 2.0.* (2010).

[7] Eric A. Hanushek, John F. Kain & Steven G. Rivkin, *Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement*,73(2) ECONOMETRICA 417, 443-51 (2005) (identifying teacher quality as having a greater impact on student learning than other in school factors, including teacher experience and class size).

[8] David Keeling, Jennifer Mulhern, Susan Sexton & Daniel Weisberg, TNTP, *The Widget Effect: Our National Failure to Acknowledge and Act on Differences in Teacher Effectiveness.* (2009).

During the first two years of the new evaluation policies, Indiana has reported that nearly 90 percent of teachers were rated Effective or Highly Effective, and less than half of one percent of teachers across the state were rated Ineffective.[9] This is true even in schools that earned an "F" rating.[10]

In stakeholder discussions, some corporation leaders explained that the low percentage of teachers rated in the bottom two categories is a result of removing these teachers from the classroom over the last two years. Ensuring students are taught by effective teachers is difficult work, and administrators taking actions to ensure their schools and corporations are filled with high-quality talent should be recognized and supported. However, school and student performance do not correlate with these rates of effective teaching. For instance, schools earn an "F" grade at eight times the rate that teachers earn an Ineffective rating.[11] Additionally, nearly a quarter of all schools that received "D" or "F" grades reported no teachers being rated Improvement Necessary or Ineffective.[12]

Likewise, overall student performance does not reflect the reported levels of teacher quality. For example, last year 74 percent of students passed the ISTEP+ exam, which is up one percent from the prior year.[13] While any amount of student growth should be celebrated, these levels of growth and achievement are inconsistent with the reported level of teacher quality.

Additionally, there is a high rate of teachers that have received no evaluation rating at all. Undoubtedly, there are valid reasons why some teachers may not receive a summative rating, but the very large number of teachers (over 3,000) who do not fall into one of these categories is troubling.[14] Particularly concerning is the high rate of first and second year teachers (more than ten percent) who have not received summative ratings. Teachers early in their practice – perhaps more than any other group of teachers – deserve regular feedback on their performance, and a summative evaluation should be the culmination to the feedback they receive throughout the year.[15] Likewise, the rate of teachers in "F" schools who did not receive summative ratings is very high (over 13 percent). Teachers in poor performing schools require at least as much support as teachers in high-performing schools because of the complex circumstances that often exist in these communities. Receiving regular feedback on performance creates an opportunity for school leaders to provide support to teachers in these schools.

From our experience implementing teacher evaluation systems across the country, we have observed that addressing these questions of accuracy and completeness are ultimately a question of culture around teacher evaluation. As the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) explains: "Moving from a system that rates everyone as just fine to one that differentiates performance is daunting and requires a culture shift."[16] Looking at the data, it appears there has

[9] Indiana Department of Education analysis of evaluation results, retrieved from http://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/EducatorRating.aspx?type=state.

[10] Indiana Department of Education report to the State Board of Education on 2013-14 evaluation results, retrieved from http://www.in.gov/sboe/files/ER_Data_Presentation_to_SBOE_-_v._12.30.14.pdf.

[11] Indiana Department of Education report to the State Board of Education on 2013-14 evaluation results, retrieved from http://www.in.gov/sboe/files/ER_Data_Presentation_to_SBOE_-_v._12.30.14.pdf.

[12] Indiana Department of Education 2013-14 evaluation results, retrieved from http://www.doe.in.gov/evaluations.

[13] Indiana Department of Education analysis of evaluation results, retrieved from http://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/EducatorRating.aspx?type=state.

[14] Indiana Department of Education report to the State Board of Education on 2013-14 evaluation results, retrieved from http://www.in.gov/sboe/files/ER_Data_Presentation_to_SBOE_-_v._12.30.14.pdf.

[15] Ana Menezes & Adam Maier, TNTP, *Fast Start: Training Better Teachers Fast, with Focus, Practice and Feedback.* (2014).

[16] National Council on Teacher Quality, *State of the States 2013: Connect the Dots: Using Evaluations of Teacher Effectiveness to Inform Policy and Practice.* (2014).

not yet been the necessary culture shift around assessing teacher quality – one that values teacher evaluation as a tool to achieve the support and recognition teachers deserve as well as to inform human capital decisions at the school, corporation and state levels. This shift in culture starts at the top and is ultimately achieved through diligent, high-quality guidance and support.

Inadequate or inconsistent implementation across corporations
Very often issues with accuracy and completeness in evaluation ratings are a byproduct of the implementation challenges that have been reported. We suspect that may be true for Indiana. For example, according to the INTASS survey results, teachers reported a lack of confidence in their evaluators' ability to use the observation rubric, assess teacher performance, provide actionable feedback, and interpret student performance results to inform instruction.[17] Many of these perceptions could be improved through improved evaluator and teacher training, which is a critical element of successful implementation. These sentiments were echoed in our conversations with educators who reported more favorable perceptions of their evaluation plan once they received full training.[18] We also heard from school and corporation administrators that they did not always feel equipped to support their evaluators and teachers through training and that they lack the necessary resources and guidance to develop and implement their evaluation plans.[19]

This feedback from stakeholders is consistent with our examination of State policies and practices as well as review of implementation of plans across corporations. For example, a favored feature of the State's evaluation law is that it provides for a high level of local control. However, the variation in plan design and implementation practices often means that increased oversight by the state agency is necessary. Unfortunately, Indiana law does not reflect this need for checks and balances, which means that it is left up to the IDOE and SBOE to determine the appropriate level of support. Based on its own review, as documented in the State's ESEA waiver, the IDOE recognizes the need to increase its capacity to monitor and support corporation's implementation of their evaluation plans.[20] Increased support from the State will actually empower corporations to retain their autonomy over many evaluation plan design and implementation decisions because there will be increased confidence that all plans possess a consistent level of rigor and comparability.

Ultimately, we recognize that "no evaluation system can be perfect—in teaching or in any other profession."[21] However, it is possible to achieve systems that yield accurate, actionable results that teachers and evaluators believe are fair. Doing this requires states to prioritize implementation in order to achieve better systems than those of the past.

Building off early successes
Despite the challenges identified above, we cannot emphasize enough the great work Indiana has already accomplished. By and large, the State's laws and policies continue to be among the strongest in the country.

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[17] Indiana Teacher Appraisal and Support System survey results, retrieved from http://www.in.gov/sboe/files/2014-09-26_INTASS_PPT.pdf.

[18] See Appendix A at 4.

[19] See Appendix A at 3-4.

[20] Indiana ESEA Waiver Application at 274-75, retrieved from http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/esea/indiana_amended_clean_copy_waiver_6-30-14.pdf.

[21] TNTP, *Teacher Evaluation 2.0* at 2. (2010).

Additionally, there are successes to report about the status of implementation. First, the vast majority of corporations have adopted evaluation plans that meet the requirements of state law.[22] That in and of itself is a feat to be celebrated. Second, the majority of educators understood that the old system of evaluation was not working and needed to be reformed.[23] Although not all educators feel the current system is an improvement, most of the stakeholders with whom we spoke reported that the new evaluation policies have provided educators and administrators with a common language for discussing teacher quality.[24] This common language is the first critical step to shifting the culture around teacher evaluation, and it lays the necessary groundwork for resolving some of the implementation challenges the State is facing.

Because of the momentum Indiana has around teacher evaluation, the State is well-positioned to build off its early successes and refine its evaluation system so that it can continue to lead the nation in teacher quality initiatives.

Approach to Recommendations

The remainder of this memorandum outlines our recommendations. They are organized by topic, and we identify within each topic whether our recommendations should be achieved through legislation, regulation or other implementation efforts.[25]

Although the legal framework undergirding Indiana's evaluation system is sound and largely consistent with best practices, there a few statutory and regulatory provisions that should be revisited and revised. These changes will create the enabling conditions for Indiana to continue the hard but critical work of implementation.

To that end, it is important to acknowledge that many of the obstacles Indiana is facing cannot or should not be resolved through legislation or rulemaking. Achieving reliable and accurate ratings for all teachers can only be achieved through a focus on high-quality implementation. Many of our recommendations are grounded in this need for improved implementation as opposed to new rules or laws because, at the end of the day, nothing can take the place of strong leadership and support during a time of change.

Recommendations

Vision-Setting and Change Management Leadership

Indiana has been a trailblazer in its approach to teacher evaluation, but the real work is in implementing the new policies and practices in a way that actually shifts the culture and conversations around teacher quality. Indiana has made strides in changing the conversation around evaluation, as some stakeholders report that the new system has equipped the State's educators with a common language for teacher quality. However, there are indications that additional clarification and support is needed – particularly in setting the tone and purpose of evaluation in Indiana.

In light of that, our first set of recommendations highlight the continued need for leadership during this time of immense change. Therefore, we offer four implementation recommendations in this area to ensure the State has

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[22] Indiana ESEA Waiver Application at 287, retrieved from
http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/esea/indiana_amended_clean_copy_waiver_6-30-14.pdf.

[23] Indiana Teacher Appraisal and Support System survey results, retrieved from http://www.in.gov/sboe/files/2014-09-26_INTASS_PPT.pdf.

[24] See Appendix A at 3.

[25] See Appendix B for a summary and categorization of our recommendations.

established thsue necessary vision and aligned structures to support implementation of newly adopted policies and practices.

Recommendations

<u>Implementation</u>

Set a Vision and Theory of Action for evaluation
Although the SBOE and the IDOE have laid out the intended purpose of evaluation in the ESEA waiver and the Board's strategic plan, these goals have not fully penetrated to the classroom level. For example, in focus group discussions, some participants struggled to answer what the primary purpose of the State's evaluation system is. Those who did respond overwhelmingly identified the primary purpose of evaluation as supporting teacher development.[26] Supporting teacher development is a goal of the evaluation system, but Indiana has articulated other goals as well. Similarly, at the January 7th SBOE meeting, there was a discussion regarding the varying goals of evaluation, all of which were valid and achievable through a well-implemented system. However, the conversation revealed that there is not a commonly understood set of goals for the State's system or a clear theory of action for achieving them.

Without a universally held purpose, it will be next to impossible for Indiana to make adjustments to its current system in a coherent way. In addition to creating a sense of coherence, a clear articulation of the purpose and priorities for evaluation will help preserve the state's preference for local control. It may seem counter-intuitive, but if corporations have a clear and shared understanding of what evaluation is intended to accomplish, they can align their plans to these expectations and limit the level of State involvement.

To address this gap, we recommend the Board members agree to a statement of purpose and theory of action for evaluation as well as a set of guiding principles for supporting implementation in Indiana. It may be appropriate for the Board to revise its Strategic Plan to include the purpose, theory of action and guiding principles in Goal 2: Maximize the Potential of Human Talent. Then, using this vision for evaluation, the Board and IDOE can align all future actions regarding evaluation to their shared understanding of and goals for evaluation.

Provide leadership for change management and implementation of newly adopted policies and practices
With a clear vision articulated for the State's evaluation system, the Board will be equipped to provide the leadership necessary to navigate Indiana through changes to the evaluation system and ultimately to initiate the culture shift needed around evaluating teacher performance.

We recommend the Board call for an implementation plan to be developed to address any forthcoming changes. An implementation plan should include change management best practices, such as:

- Development of clear communications materials to explain forthcoming changes
- Identifying sponsors at all levels of the education system to lead the implementation efforts
- Establishing communication structures to support a dialogue about the new policies and practices
- Collaborative monitoring structures for the SBOE and IDOE to ensure implementation is progressing in alignment with the purpose, theory of action and guiding principles and to identify when or where adjustments are needed.

The Board may wish to establish a project team under the Strategic Planning Committee that will produce a plan to address the change management and implementation priorities. One option is to charge the Stakeholder Design Committee that will be convened as part of TNTP's engagement to design this plan.

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[26] See Appendix A at 3.

Ensure there are clear, frequent and high-quality communications and resources to support implementation
As indicated above, some of the most critical components of successful change management and implementation depend on having clear, frequent and thoughtful communication at all levels. To that end, we recommend consideration of the following actions to improve the State's communication related to evaluation.

- **Communication amongst State leaders:** To ensure the State's education leaders are fully informed about the progress and quality of implementation, the SBOE should identify the subjects on which it would like reports from the IDOE as well as the frequency of those reports. Establishing a regular reporting cycle for implementation updates allows the State's leaders to prioritize discussion of implementation at its meetings and to respond and adjust to challenges in a timely way. This approach also affords a level of predictability to the IDOE so that the Department can adequately prepare for the requested information.

- **Communication from the State to school corporations and schools:**
  - Meeting with Constituents: Constituent meetings provide an opportunity for the Board Members to take the lead on shifting the culture and conversation around evaluation and to address questions or concerns directly. The Board members will be able to align on messaging using the purpose statement, theory of action and guiding principles they will have adopted. Additionally, the Board members can use these constituent meetings to introduce the implementation plan they will have called to be adopted.
  - Review of IDOE Communications Content and Processes: The IDOE already provides updates about teacher evaluation on its website and offers a variety of resources there as well.[27] However, based on stakeholder feedback, it is unclear whether corporations and schools are aware of their existence or if they are completely addressing the needs of corporations and schools.[28] To ascertain whether the resources and communications are effectively meeting the needs of the end-users, we recommend having a group of administrators and teachers conduct a review of both the content and process for disseminating resources and information related to evaluation. Based on their feedback, the IDOE will be able to align any new communications and resources to the group's recommendations and adjust the current content and processes for sharing information, if necessary.

Allocate resources and personnel at the state level to ensure implementation aligns with the State's vision and theory of action
Another opportunity to lead the State in establishing a vision and pursuing a clear theory of action for evaluation is to reassess how the State allocates its resources and personnel to support educator evaluation. Allocation of resources – especially personnel – is an indication of an organization's priorities. Additionally, the commitment of time, talent and resources necessary to support effective implementation is frequently underestimated. States who are considered leaders in educator evaluation have teams of a dozen or more in their Departments of Education specifically dedicated to educator evaluation and often with specialties in data analysis, training and support, or performance-based compensation.[29]

To adequately prioritize implementation, we recommend the IDOE reallocates its personnel to ensure it can meet the demands of high-quality implementation. This recommendation is aligned with the IDOE's stated goal in the ESEA

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[27] Indiana Department of Education houses most of its evaluation resources on its webpage: http://www.doe.in.gov/evaluations.

[28] See Appendix A at 4 and 6.

[29] Colorado Department of Education outlines its structure here: http://www.cde.state.co.us/offices/educatoreffectivenessunit; D.C. Public Schools outlines its structure here: http://dcps.dc.gov/DCPS/Files/downloads/ABOUT%20DCPS/SY1314%20Office%20Descriptions%20Jan%202014[1].pdf.

waiver to increase capacity to support school corporations and schools with implementation.[30] We believe increasing the level of resources and staff dedicated to educator evaluation will not only alleviate the burden on current IDOE staff to support with the recommended changes to the State's policies and practices, but it will also send a message that State leaders acknowledge the importance and hard work associated with implementation.

Summary
The above recommendations are critical to ensuring the State has the necessary leadership to ensure all stakeholders are moving in the same direction on evaluation. Without a common understanding of evaluation's purpose, a plan for managing the necessary changes, appropriate communications structures and the resources and personnel dedicated to support implementation, Indiana will make little progress in overcoming its current implementation challenges and shifting the culture around teacher evaluation. Additionally, a clear articulation of the purpose and priorities for evaluation will help preserve the state's preference for local control. If corporations have a clear and shared understanding of what evaluation is intended to accomplish, they can align their plans' design and implementation accordingly.

Increased Focus on High-Quality Training

Training for evaluators and teachers is universally regarded as critical to the success of any evaluation system. As the Center on Great Teachers & Leaders has said, "[h]igh-quality training is a crucial investment in establishing and maintaining implementation fidelity as well as building educators' trust in the new process."[31] Additionally, training addresses several of the issues Indiana is experiencing, including issues with accurate ratings for all teachers, teachers' perceptions of the system, and a lack of a shared understanding of the purpose and priorities of teacher evaluation.

While Indiana has taken steps to ensure evaluators are trained, there are opportunities for the State to improve its support of evaluators and teachers. Below we specifically outline our recommended improvements first for evaluators and then for teachers.

Administrator & Evaluator Training
Increased emphasis on evaluator training will go a long way to improving some of the most concerning issues with Indiana's current state of evaluation. First, to address the possible issues with accurate ratings, high-quality training should mitigate variability among evaluators so that a rating of Effective means essentially the same thing from school to school.[32] Because at least half of every teacher's evaluation rating is based on teacher practice, it is critical that evaluators are especially well-trained in observation and normed on what effective teaching looks like. More than giving administrators the skills to assess instruction, training can also help evaluators develop the will to deliver honest feedback, have difficult conversations with low-performing teachers, and learn how to use and interpret the objective measures used in a teacher's evaluation.[33]

Second, evaluator training is an ideal vehicle for building a shared understanding for the purpose and priorities of evaluation in Indiana. Reinforcing the SBOE's vision and guiding principles in these trainings could positively affect the perception of evaluation in Indiana and encourage evaluators to re-prioritize it. For example, one superintendent

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[30] Indiana ESEA Waiver Application at 274-75, retrieved from http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/esea/indiana_amended_clean_copy_waiver_6-30-14.pdf.

[31] Center on Great Teachers & Leaders, *High Fidelity: Investing in Evaluation Training*. (2013), retrieved from http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/docs/GTL_AskTeam_HighFidelity.pdf.

[32] Matthew Graham, Anthony Milanowski & Jackson Miller, Center for Educator Compensation Reform, *Measuring and Promoting Inter-Rater Agreement of Teacher and Principal Performance Ratings*, (2012), retrieved from http://cecr.ed.gov/pdfs/Inter_Rater.pdf.

[33] National Council on Teacher Quality, *State of the States 2013: Connect the Dots: Using Evaluations of Teacher Effectiveness to Inform Policy and Practice*. (2014).

shared that because of the laser focus on training evaluators in the early days of implementation, they are experiencing largely positive feedback on the system.[34]

Finally, an increased emphasis on training for evaluators can actually improve teacher perception of the evaluation system. A majority of teachers lack confidence in their evaluator's ability to use their corporation's observation rubric, assess teacher quality, provide useful feedback or interpret student performance data to inform instruction.[35] By supporting corporations to ensure their evaluators possess all these skills, the State may see teachers' beliefs about evaluation improve.

The following recommendations suggest areas where Indiana can strengthen its current training policies and practices.

Recommendations
Regulatory Recommendations:

First, anticipating that corporations may need to amend their evaluation plans in the coming year to align with the Board or the General Assembly's actions, we recommend the SBOE issues regulations to require evaluators to be retrained whenever substantive changes are made to a corporation's evaluation plan. Although current statute requires the SBOE and IDOE to ensure ongoing training is available for evaluators and educators, without requiring school corporations to provide retraining to evaluators when changes are made there is no guarantee evaluators will be properly equipped to implement the changes. Additionally, the retraining provides the corporation an opportunity to recalibrate expectations for teacher evaluation that align with the SBOE's vision and theory of action. Finally, the retraining offers corporations a chance to monitor evaluator performance to ensure the effects of the initial trainings continue.[36]

The SBOE has the authority to make these rule changes under IC § 20-28-11.5-5; IC § 20-28-11.5-8 (a)(1)(D) and IC § 20-28-11.5-8(a)(3).

Implementation Recommendations:

In addition to the regulatory change above, we recommend the following implementation actions to support corporations in their evaluator training.

- **Offer "plan agnostic" training for evaluators or trainers of evaluators:** To ensure that all corporations have the opportunity to engage on best practices for evaluating teachers we recommend providing a training based on best practices that can be applied to all evaluation plans. Regardless of the plan a corporation uses, all evaluators must possess certain skills and behaviors in order to be equipped to accurately assess teacher quality. Training on these universal skills will help evaluators become comfortable with the components of evaluations with which many evaluators struggle, like delivering honest and actionable feedback and understanding student growth to inform instruction. Additionally, because all plans must include Individual Growth Model (IGM) scores for the applicable teachers, a training specifically on this measure should be offered. This approach has been used by other states that allow for some flexibility or control at the local level.[37]

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[34] See Appendix A at 4.

[35] Indiana Teacher Appraisal and Support System survey results, retrieved from http://www.in.gov/sboe/files/2014-09-26_INTASS_PPT.pdf.

[36] Matthew Graham, Anthony Milanowski & Jackson Miller, Center for Educator Compensation Reform, *Measuring and Promoting Inter-Rater Agreement of Teacher and Principal Performance Ratings*, (2012), retrieved from http://cecr.ed.gov/pdfs/Inter_Rater.pdf.

[37] The Ohio Department of Education offers training for all evaluators despite the ability for districts use locally-created evaluation models: http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Teaching/Educator-Evaluation-System/Teacher-Evaluation-Training. The New Jersey

These trainings can be offered centrally by the IDOE or they can be provided through Educational Service Centers (ESCs). However, the IDOE should develop the training content and train ESCs on it. This will ensure that the content aligns with the State's vision and theory of action for evaluation, that all ESCs are equally equipped to train the evaluators in their regions, and that the trainings are of a consistent level of quality across ESCs.

The IDOE provides free or low-cost resources for training evaluators on its website, which it should continue to do. However, we recommend taking this commitment to supporting evaluator training one step further by ensuring that all school corporations have an in-person opportunity to learn about best practices that align with the State's vision for teacher evaluation.

- **Leverage ESCs to provide high-quality training to school corporations**. ESCs are uniquely positioned to train evaluators because they have the ability to tailor trainings to the needs of the corporations they serve. ESCs have already been largely responsible for training school corporations on the State's model plan – RISE 2.0. However, stakeholder feedback revealed that the quality of training by ESCs has been inconsistent.[38] So, the first step to leveraging these resources is to recalibrate the ESC trainers to ensure they are equipped to explain the model plan – and potentially other best practices common to all evaluation plans – to school corporations' evaluators.

  We suggest that the IDOE support the ESCs in three ways. First, ESC trainers should be retrained on the model plan – including any changes that might be made. Additionally, we suggest the IDOE train ESC trainers on the "plan agnostic" training we recommend above so they can turnkey these best practices into trainings for school corporations that use locally-created or modified RISE plans. Finally, we recommend facilitating the best practices among ESCs. In one stakeholder discussion, IDOE shared that some ESCs provide more extensive evaluation trainings.[39] The quality of these additional services should be assessed, and if effective, the IDOE should facilitate the sharing of practices such as these among ESCs so that all school corporations can benefit.

- **Highlight the mutually reinforcing nature of evaluator evaluation and teacher evaluation**. In addition to the recommendations above, we suggest reinforcing the expectation that school leaders be evaluated on their ability to assess teacher quality accurately. Research shows that one of the most effective tools for increasing and maintaining the accuracy of evaluators' assessment of teacher performance is to hold evaluators accountable for the accuracy of their ratings.[40] The RISE model incorporates this expectation into the rubric on which evaluators are themselves assessed, and we believe the same expectation should be universally set for all school administrators.[41]

Department of Education offers trainings for evaluators and trainers of evaluators on a variety of topics, including the use of SGP: http://www.nj.gov/education/AchieveNJ/resources/events.shtml.

[38] See Appendix A at 6.

[39] See Appendix A at 6.

[40] Matthew Graham, Anthony Milanowski & Jackson Miller, Center for Educator Compensation Reform, *Measuring and Promoting Inter-Rater Agreement of Teacher and Principal Performance Ratings*, (2012), retrieved from http://cecr.ed.gov/pdfs/Inter_Rater.pdf.

[41] Domain 1.1.2 of Principal Rubric, retrieved from http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/evaluations/rise-handbook-principals.pdf.

Teacher Training

Feedback from educators indicates that more deliberate training on the evaluation plan used in their corporations may improve their perception of the evaluation plan. According to the INTASS survey results, only 14 percent of teachers surveyed believe their corporation's evaluation plan positively affects teaching and learning.[42] This may be due – in part – to a lack of understanding of the system itself.[43] For instance, one teacher reported that during the first year that the evaluation plan was implemented, the teacher did not receive training on the plan and did not feel positively about the evaluation plan. However, during the second year of implementation, this teacher was trained as an evaluator. Once the teacher understood the system better, the teacher's perception of the plan improved dramatically.[44]

In our experience, it is critical that teachers understand and trust the evaluation system on which they are being evaluated. Providing formal training on the evaluation system ensures teachers are receiving accurate information about how their performance will be assessed, which will help build their understanding and trust. As NCTQ explained: "The grapevine is a bad way for teachers to find out what's going on, and states and corporations should never assume that teachers are getting good information about the evaluation system." In that vein, below are several steps Indiana can take to improve the training teachers receive.

Recommendations

Legislative Recommendations:

There is no explicit requirement in statute or regulation that teachers be trained on their corporation's evaluation plan. IC § 20-28-11.5-8(a)(3) requires that training and information is *available* for evaluators and "certificated employees" on the model plan, but there is no mandated training for teachers on the model plan or any evaluation plan. Simply because teacher training is not required does not mean that no teachers receive training on their corporation's evaluation plan. However, if even one corporation or school fails to explain the evaluation plan to the individuals most affected by it, that is too many.

Therefore, our first recommendation is to amend IC § 20-28-11.5 to require all teachers be trained on their corporation's plan. Like the evaluator training, we also recommend that the SBOE set standards for teacher training. IC § 20-28-11.5-8 (a)(1)(D) could be amended to require the SBOE to set standards for both evaluator and teacher training. Our recommendations for the standards to be included in regulation are addressed below.

Requiring corporations to train their teachers allows corporations to retain control over the process and – to a large degree – the content of trainings. Therefore, if school corporations are already providing training to teachers on the evaluation plan, then this provision would change little – if anything – for them. However, for those teachers in a corporation that does not provide evaluation training, this provision could address the anxiety and lack of clarity that they currently experience.[45]

Regulatory Recommendations:

If action on the above recommendation is taken and evaluation training is required for teachers, then we recommend the SBOE set standards for the content of the trainings as it has for evaluator training. The standards can be framed broadly to allow local corporations to retain a degree of control over content; however, they should ensure that

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[42] Indiana Teacher Appraisal and Support System survey results, retrieved from http://www.in.gov/sboe/files/2014-09-26_INTASS_PPT.pdf.

[43] See Appendix A at 3 and 6.

[44] See Appendix A at 6.

[45] See Appendix A at 3.

across the State teachers are receiving a consistent level of training. Some content standards to consider requiring are:

- Explanation of all a plan's components
- Overview of the evaluation process
- Explanation of the Individual Growth Model
- Explanation of how all objective measures of student performance will be used the school corporation's plan

We recommend including these standards in 511 IAC §10-6-3 where the evaluator training standards are already outlined.

Implementation Recommendations:

The IDOE already provides several resources on its website that are aligned with the standards suggested above and could be adapted for a teacher training. We recommend the IDOE identify which could be most useful to corporations in training teachers and promote them accordingly.

It may also be worthwhile for the IDOE to provide a training on the model plan for teachers or to support ESCs in offering trainings. Not only will this training option help corporations that are in the early stages of implementation, but these IDOE sponsored trainings provide an additional opportunity for the IDOE to engage and support teachers.

Summary

Training on evaluation procedures, policies and best practices is so critical that if Indiana made no other changes to its policies and practices except these training recommendations, we believe Indiana would see both the perception and the results of Indiana's evaluation system improve. Because at least half of a teacher's evaluation rating is based on evaluator assessment of professional practice, it is essential that all evaluators receive high-quality training on their corporation's plan as well as on the best practices and critical skills of evaluation. Training will help ensure that evaluators are normed on what effective teaching looks like, which will increase the reliability and comparability of evaluation ratings across the state. Additionally, ensuring teachers are trained on their evaluation plan may improve their comfort-level with evaluation and their trust in their evaluator's assessment of their performance.

Objective Measures of Student Performance

As most educators have long known, teaching is both art and science – making it "too complex for any single measure of performance to capture it accurately."[46] Research and best practice indicate that teacher evaluation systems should include multiple measures, including at a minimum observations by highly-trained evaluators and objective measures of teacher impact on student performance.[47] Both of these measures contribute to painting an accurate picture of teacher quality.

In Indiana, "objective measures" is broadly defined and can be based on a variety of assessment tools – not just state assessments. Corporations may use student portfolios, end of course exams, locally-created or teacher-created assessments as objective measures of student performance. This is important to note because much of the opposition to the use of objective measures is based on the unfounded belief that the component is limited to student performance on state assessments.

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[46] The MET Project, *Ensuring Fair and Reliable Measures of Effective Teaching*. (2013).

[47] The MET Project, *Working with Teachers to Develop Fair and Reliable Measures of Effective Teaching*. (2010); TNTP, *Teacher Evaluation 2.0*. (2010); National Council on Teacher Quality, *State of the States 2013: Connect the Dots: Using Evaluations of Teacher Effectiveness to Inform Policy and Practice*. (2014).

Stakeholder perception and best practice indicate that there are opportunities for the State to strengthen its support of corporations in the use of objective measures.

Ensure corporations all utilize comparable levels of objective measures of student performance
Indiana educators overwhelmingly believe that student growth can be accurately measured and that teacher effectiveness affects student achievement.[48] Despite these beliefs, there are mixed feelings about the use of student growth and achievement data in teacher evaluations.[49] Because of the disconnect in stakeholder opinion as well as the variation in the use of student performance in corporations' plans across the state, we recommend providing a clear definition of how student performance should be used to inform assessment of teacher effectiveness.

Indiana's law requires "[o]bjective measures of student achievement and growth to significantly inform" a teacher's evaluation. However, neither statute nor regulation explicitly defines "significantly inform." It is our understanding that this language was intentionally left open to interpretation out of respect for the State's general preference to drive policy and decision-making to the local level wherever possible. Along those lines, in stakeholder discussions we heard educators express a preference for determining the weight of student performance data at the local level. [50]

However, leaving this component exclusively to local decision-makers is creating inconsistency. In some cases this unfettered autonomy has led to corporations' under-emphasizing objective measures in a way that contradicts the original intent of the language "significantly inform" and undermines the integrity of the evaluation system.[51] These inconsistencies create two issues.

First, because there are dramatic differences in how objective measures are weighted, corporations do not have comparable evaluation systems. This lack of comparability makes it difficult for the State to consider teacher performance as a basis for other statewide policies. For example, if a rating of Effective means something different from corporation to corporation, then it will be challenging for the State to use teacher performance to make decisions about policies like teacher licensure and preparation.

Second, because some corporations weigh objective measures so slightly, these corporations lack a point of reference for and a balance to more subjective components of the evaluation system. Essentially, these corporations are undermining the complexity of teaching by assessing teacher performance with only one measure – observation. Likewise, they are not appropriately accounting for what is arguably a teacher's primary responsibility – to contribute to student learning.

From our evaluation design and implementation work in states like Louisiana, New Jersey, New York and Tennessee among others, we have observed firsthand how the role of objective measures drive reliable and accurate evaluation results.[52] However, objective measures are only impactful if they are weighted appropriately – neither too low nor too great.[53]

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[48] Indiana Teacher Appraisal and Support System survey results, retrieved from http://www.in.gov/sboe/files/2014-09-26_INTASS_PPT.pdf.

[49] Indiana Teacher Appraisal and Support System survey results, retrieved from http://www.in.gov/sboe/files/2014-09-26_INTASS_PPT.pdf.

[50] See Appendix A at 3 and 5.

[51] Stand for Children, *Teacher Evaluation in Indiana: A Review of Public Law 90 and Its Implementation.* (2014).

[52] La. Rev. Stat. § 3902(B)(5); N.J.A.C. § 6A:10-4.1(c)(1); N.Y. Ed. Code § 3012-c(2)(a); Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-302(d)(2).

[53] The MET Project, *Ensuring Fair and Reliable Measures of Effective Teaching*. (2013).

Recommendations
Regulatory Recommendations:

To ensure all plans have a consistent level of rigor and reliability, we recommend defining significantly inform in regulation. The definition of "significantly inform" should include minimum and maximum percentages of the summative evaluation rating that must be based on student achievement and growth.

Research shows that weighting objective measures between 33-50 percent can accurately and consistently predict teachers' impact on student assessment gains year over year.[54] This range is appropriate for those teachers who receive IGM scores, but it may not be appropriate for all teachers. The vast majority of Indiana teachers do not teach a grade or subject with a state assessment. Therefore, they lack a piece of data that teachers who receive IGM scores receive. To account for the variation in student data available, we recommend requiring two ranges based on a teacher's role and the assessments that are available.

- Objective measures should account for 33-50 percent of teacher evaluation ratings for teachers who receive IGM scores (Note: assessments other than the state assessment can and should be used to create this composite weight)
- Objective measures should account for 25-40 percent of teacher evaluation ratings for teachers who do not receive IGM scores.

These ranges are representative of a teacher's substantial impact on student learning without oversimplifying the role teachers play in their students' lives. Additionally, these ranges are aligned with the State's model plan, which is based in research and best practice and is representative of the State's intended definition of significantly inform at the time of the law and the plan's adoption.[55] To that end, a majority of Indiana corporations already have adopted plans that weight objective measures within these ranges, and the IDOE is actively counseling corporations that do not have plans that meet these criteria to elevate their consideration of objective measures to these levels.[56] Thus, this policy change is aligned with what most corporations are already doing or moving towards. Finally, this approach will allow corporations to retain a level of control over how the various objective measures are weighted within this and other parameters set out in 511 IAC § 10-6-4(b) and in the way that makes the most sense for their educators and students.

One caveat to this recommendation is the fact that Indiana is transitioning to a new state assessment this year that will be aligned to the State's new standards. One of the critiques of the implementation efforts to date has been the pace and amount of change.[57] Therefore, to avoid instituting too many changes all at once and to ensure the State successfully transitions to a new assessment, we recommend delaying the effective date of the above definition until Indiana has one year of baseline data using the new assessment.

The SBOE has the authority to define this language under IC § 20-28-11.5-8(a)(1)(B) which explicitly directs the SBOE to define "the measures to be used to determine student academic achievement and growth under section 4(c)(2)." In the alternative, if this is insufficient authority to define "significantly inform" in regulation, then we recommend amending IC § 20-28-11.5-8 to direct the SBOE to define significantly inform.

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[54] The MET Project, *Ensuring Fair and Reliable Measures of Effective Teaching*. (2013).

[55] Indiana Department of Education, RISE Handbook, retrieved from http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/evaluations/rise-handbook-2-0-final.pdf.

[56] Indiana Department of Education, Response to TNTP's Initial Recommendations.

[57] See Appendix A at 4 and 6.

Implementation Recommendations:

To ensure corporations are equipped to revise their plans to conform to these regulatory changes, we suggest that the IDOE build off current support structures – like resources provided online, on-site monitoring, and in-person training sessions – to help corporations revise their local definitions and understand the implications of these changes. Additionally, we recommend a review of this definition become an explicit focus of the IDOE's monitoring protocol, as outlined in the ESEA waiver.

Ensure an appropriate level of rigor in the definitions of "negative impact"
A unique strength of Indiana's evaluation law is that it contains a provision that prohibits teachers who have a negative impact on student growth and achievement from being rated Effective or Highly Effective.[58] The Board is empowered to define "negative impact." In regulation, negative impact is defined as when students achieve a "below acceptable" or "unacceptable" rate of growth.[59] Guidance for the acceptable rates of growth are set by the IDOE each year.

The IDOE's current guidance states that a teacher negatively affects student growth on state assessments if:

- A teacher's average student performance on the ISTEP+ drops by at least 15 points, **and**
- A teacher's median student growth percentile is below 15 points.[60]

As explained in a report last year, "students in Indiana averaged scale score increases of 10-15 points per year, but a teacher whose students did not grow at all over an entire year would be safe under this definition. Students would have to significantly regress…in order to meet the standard for "negative impact" on student learning."[61]

For non-tested grades and subjects, the IDOE allows corporations to define "negative impact" within certain parameters, including a requirement that local definitions be based on objective measures of student achievement and growth. However, some corporations actually define negative impact in much less concrete – and even circular – terms. In some cases the local definitions probably do not meet the requirements of either the law or the IDOE's guidance. For instance, some corporations define negative impact to mean any teacher who is rated Ineffective.[62]

Recommendations
Regulatory Recommendations:

The definition of "negative impact" is especially pertinent because it provides an additional check on the accuracy of teacher ratings, which would in turn affect the ratings distribution. In other words, if the definition were more rigorous, then in all likelihood Indiana would have seen more than 2.11 percent of teachers rated Improvement Necessary or Ineffective last year.

Therefore, we recommend revising 511 IAC § 10-6-2 (b) to require SBOE approval of how the IDOE defines acceptable rates of growth and achievement as well as the guidance it issues to support corporations in defining negative impact for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects. This review and approval by the SBOE is consistent with the statute

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[58] IC § 20-28-11.5-4(c)(6).

[59] 511 IAC § 10-6-2(b).

[60] Indiana Department of Education, Evaluation Guidance: Negative Impact on Student Learning, retrieved from http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/evaluations/updated-negative-impact-guidance.pdf.

[61] Stand for Children, *Teacher Evaluation in Indiana: A Review of Public Law 90 and Its Implementation.* (2014).

[62] Indiana Department of Education, 2012-13 Locally Developed Evaluation Plans: http://www.doe.in.gov/evaluations/evaluation-plans.

which calls on the SBOE to define "negative impact." It will also ensure the guidance and cut scores for "acceptable growth" are in alignment with the Board's vision for teacher evaluation.

Implementation Recommendations:

To support corporations to make the necessary revisions to their plans to conform to these regulatory changes, we again suggest that the IDOE build off current support structures. Additionally, because it appears there are some corporations that may be out of step with the IDOE's current guidance, we recommend a review of this definition become an explicit focus of the IDOE's monitoring protocol, as outlined in the ESEA waiver.

Leverage IDOE expertise to support SBOE and corporations to understand assessment guidance
Indiana statute requires locally created assessments to be included as objective measures of student performance for all teachers.[63] Locally created assessments can be a valuable tool, but it can be challenging for corporations to design valid, reliable and comparable assessments. Through our focus group discussions, we heard that corporations and schools appreciate the ability to create their own assessments, tailored to their schools' and students' needs.[64] Ensuring that corporations and schools have the resources and skills necessary to develop valid and reliable local assessments empowers them to continue to use these measures to supplement state assessments, where appropriate.

To address the importance and challenge of creating assessments, we offer the following implementation recommendations.

Recommendations
Our recommendations in this area are intended to capitalize on the IDOE's expertise in this area and to support both corporations and Board members in their respective duties.

- **Support corporations to create valid, reliable and comparable assessments:** We recommend the IDOE ensure that assessment guidance for creating local assessments is clearly and prominently provided to corporations. It may be worthwhile for the IDOE to provide training to corporations and schools on how to create high-quality assessments. Again, this type of a training could be delivered through ESCs if those entities are in the best position to tailor training to local considerations. Additionally, the IDOE should facilitate school and corporation collaboration on best practices. Stakeholders reported that a cohort of corporations have collaborated on creating assessments for use in SLOs.[65] This type of collaboration should be encouraged and expanded.

- **Ensure the SBOE is informed about assessment guidance:** Because of the prominence of locally developed and procured assessments in all evaluation plans, the SBOE should be familiar with the assessment guidance. To support the SBOE with understanding the policy implications of assessment guidance, we recommend the IDOE provide an initial report to the Board on current assessment guidance, including model assessments recommended by the IDOE, instructions for creating or procuring assessments, and recommendations on how local assessments should be used by schools. Thereafter, the IDOE could provide semi-regular reports when changes or additions to assessment guidance are made.

Summary
Teaching is too complex to rely solely on one measure of performance to assess a teacher's skills and impact. Objective measures of student performance help to create a more complete picture of a teacher's practice. These additional data points provide a balance to skilled evaluators' assessment of a teacher's performance. Establishing

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[63] IC § 20-28-11.5-4(c)(2).

[64] See Appendix A at 5

[65] See Appendix A at 4-5.

clear definitions of "significantly inform" and "negative impact" will ensure that there is a level of reliability and comparability across all corporation's evaluations. The recommended definitions are framed to balance the need for consistency with the preference for local control.

The recommended definition for "significantly inform" ensures that corporations can retain control over the assessment tools and how much to weigh the measures within certain boundaries. This recommendation also accounts for the fact that the State is in the midst of transitioning to a new assessment, and therefore any definition should not go into effect until one year of baseline data exists.

Our recommendation for defining "negative impact" maintains the State's current approach to have the SBOE and IDOE define the term. At the same time, it will ensure that the State is adopting a sufficiently rigorous definition and in turn supporting corporations to define the locally created provisions with equal rigor.

Finally, our recommendations to support both the SBOE and corporations to understand the IDOE's assessment guidance and resources empowers local corporations to utilize locally-created assessments that are valid and reliable, while ensuring that the Board understands the implications of assessment guidance on the State's policies.

Educator Engagement

Teacher involvement is essential to the design process. It ensures that teachers' perspectives – as the ultimate stakeholders – are represented in the system and that teachers feel invested in the system's success. Teacher engagement at the design stage is a best practice that TNTP prioritizes whenever we partner with a state or district to design a new evaluation system.

Indiana law attempts to encourage teacher involvement by requiring 75 percent of voting teachers to approve of a corporation's modified or locally-created plan.[66] However, this provision falls short of meaningfully engaging teachers in two ways. First, this section appears to require a vote only if the IDOE requests to review the corporation's plan. Therefore, teacher approval can be avoided if the IDOE does not request to review the plan. Second, a vote of approval does not itself ensure teachers were involved in the design process – especially when the vote is required only when the IDOE requests review of the corporation's plan.

These shortcomings are reflected in teachers' feedback on their evaluation plans. According to the INTASS survey results, only 14 percent of teachers believe their corporation's plan has a positive impact on teaching and learning. And, only 33 percent believe their corporations' evaluation plans are aligned to professional development. If teachers were more involved in the design process, teacher satisfaction with evaluations could improve.[67] Anecdotally, in stakeholder discussions, educators in corporations that prioritized teacher and community involvement in the design stage reported they have higher levels of satisfaction in their schools and corporations.[68]

To address these concerns, we recommend the changes below.

Recommendations
Legislative Recommendations

To ensure teachers are meaningfully engaged in the design process, IC § 20-28-11.5-8(c) should be revised to require corporations that do not adopt one of the pre-approved plans to employ structures and processes that involve

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[66] IC § 20-28-11.5-8(c)

[67] Indiana Teacher Appraisal and Support System survey results, retrieved from http://www.in.gov/sboe/files/2014-09-26_INTASS_PPT.pdf.

[68] See Appendix A at 5.

teachers in the design of locally-created or modified plans. This teacher engagement process should also be used whenever a corporation seeks to make changes to its plan. The teacher engagement process should replace the 75 percent approval requirement, as that has not proved to be an effective way of incorporating teacher input at the design stage.

<u>Implementation Recommendations</u>

As with other State mandated criteria, we recommend the IDOE provide guidance on how to comply with this provision. Guidance should include best practices for involving teachers in the design process as well as highlighting model engagement efforts and corporations that excel at engaging teachers at the design stage. As part of its review and approval of the modified or locally-created plans and on-site monitoring, the IDOE should also review the corporation's teacher engagement processes and structures to confirm that they were thorough and equitable.

Summary

Involving teachers in the design of their corporation's evaluation plan ensures that the teacher voice is represented throughout the evaluation process. This level of teacher engagement can build teachers' trust in their corporation's plan and may ultimately improve their perception of the evaluation system overall.

Monitoring Plans for Consistency

One of the features of Indiana's evaluation policies is the level of local control that corporations have to determine the evaluation plan that best fits their needs. However, a high-level of local control can lead to a lot of variability in the quality and comparability of evaluation plans across the state. A best practice for states that value local control is to institute oversight and support structures that balance the benefits of flexibility and autonomy for corporations with the need to ensure a consistent standard of rigor.[69]

Through the structures and processes outlined the ESEA waiver, Indiana has taken steps in this direction. The IDOE has detailed a "robust multi-layered" protocol for monitoring plan adoption and implementation.[70] The articulated strategy involves three layers of monitoring:

1. Review all newly adopted (September 2014) evaluation plans for statutory compliance
2. Conduct on-site monitoring of Focus and Priority Schools (schools that have recently been rated D or F)
3. Conduct on-site monitoring for corporations that have reported high percentages teachers that have not been evaluated and are not already monitored as Focus and Priority Schools.

Under this monitoring regimen, the IDOE estimates that about 76 corporations would receive annual monitoring, and all corporations would be monitored once every four years.

By and large, these are sound monitoring protocols, but there are opportunities to strengthen them. Additionally, to ensure the commitments made in the waiver are aligned with the Board's vision for teacher evaluation and persist beyond the short-term goals of the waiver, these monitoring protocols should be vetted by both the SBOE and IDOE and codified as appropriate. Recommendations to this effect are outlined below.

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[69] National Council on Teacher Quality, *State of the States 2013: Connect the Dots: Using Evaluations of Teacher Effectiveness to Inform Policy and Practice.* (2014).

[70] Indiana ESEA Waiver Application at 274-75, retrieved from http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/esea/indiana_amended_clean_copy_waiver_6-30-14.pdf.

Recommendations
<u>Legislative Recommendations</u>

The current language of IC § 20-28-11.5-8(c) states that the IDOE "*may* request" to review a corporation's modified or locally-developed plan. In addition, IC § 20-28-11.5-8(d) requires all corporations to submit their plans to the IDOE, but no review or approval is explicitly required except to qualify for certain grants. Additionally, Indiana law is silent on monitoring whether corporations are implementing their plans with fidelity. There are two areas where Indiana law can be strengthened to support the IDOE with ensuring corporations are in compliance with state law.

- **Require corporations to submit locally created or modified plans in advance of their adoption.** The current policy allows corporations to remain passively non-compliant and places the burden of seeking out non-compliance on the IDOE. Additionally, because review of plans is optional, this policy creates a situation in which not all corporations are held to the same standard of review. As a result, the current policy does not place the IDOE in a position to successfully ensure all corporations have adopted plans consistent with state law.

  Instead, IC § 20-28-11.5-8(c) should be amended to require corporations to proactively seek approval for any plan that is not pre-approved, which appropriately distributes the burden of ensuring compliance among the IDOE and the corporations themselves. A similar review process could be used when corporations contemplate substantive changes to modified or locally-created plans. Finally, the SBOE should be notified on a regular basis as requested by the SBOE of any noncompliance so that it can support the IDOE with the enforcement of any corrective action.

- **Require regular monitoring and reporting of corporations' plan implementation.** The review and approval process suggested above ensures that corporations *adopt* plans that meet the state's requirements. However, adopting an approved plan does not necessarily guarantee that all the plan's elements have been executed. To ensure the IDOE's motoring protocols persist, IC § 20-28-11.5-8 should be amended to provide for regular monitoring of corporations' plan implementation. We recommend specifying how frequently each corporation should expect a review. An annual review is overly burdensome, but the IDOE's current rate of once every four years leaves many corporations vulnerable to noncompliance that goes unnoticed for too long. We recommend a biannual cycle so that all corporations' implementation progress is reviewed every other year.

  For a subset of schools and corporations, the IDOE is currently providing annual monitoring, which we strongly recommend. The Department is prioritizing review of schools and corporations that have been rated "D" or "F" and have a high percentage of teachers who were not evaluated. These may be the appropriate focus areas, but we recommend requiring the SBOE to approve of the subset of schools that receive annual monitoring. This will allow the SBOE and IDOE to align the monitoring priorities to the State's goals for evaluation.

Per the ESEA waiver, these recommendations are consistent with current practice. However, codifying them in statute ensures they carry the force of law and will endure after the goals of the waiver application have been achieved.

<u>Implementation Recommendations</u>

There are also ways to improve the State's oversight practices without making changes to state law and build off current structures.

- **Support corporation administrators to leverage best practices when designing evaluation plans:** Many corporation administrators reported that they have felt underprepared to design their own plan or to make

modifications to the State's model system.[71] In some cases, this led them to go through unnecessary iterations in the design stage. They expressed an interest in having access to more explicit guidance and examples of modifications. Because many of these resources may already be available on the IDOE's website, we recommend the IDOE consider facilitating connections amongst superintendents to support them in sharing best practices and spreading effective innovations. This will also help ensure that corporations are adopting plans that have been approved by the IDOE.

- **Institute a regular reporting cycle on the progress of implementation:** To ensure the SBOE is well-informed on the status of implementation and can support the IDOE with enforcement as needed, we also recommend the IDOE report on implementation progress regularly. The details of the report content and frequency should be considered as part of the communications structures recommendations above. We recommend that reports should be given at least annually and highlight areas of progress as well as instances of noncompliance. These structures will ensure corporations are adhering to their articulated plans and that the IDOE is supported in its oversight and enforcement duties.

Summary

Because Indiana corporations are afforded a high level of autonomy in the creation and implementation of their evaluation plans, the State's role in monitoring and providing support becomes that much more critical. The monitoring regimen that the IDOE has outlined in the ESEA waiver establishes clear oversight practices. There are a few areas where the practices can be strengthened, like increasing the frequency of auditing corporations' plans to once every two years instead of once every four years. On the whole, our recommendations are intended to ensure these practices are aligned to the State's goals and that they persist beyond the ESEA waiver.

Revisions to the State's Model Plan

Continuous improvement is as vital to the evaluation of teaching as it is to the teaching practice itself. Although the design of RISE 2.0 is based in research and reflective of best practices, the benefit of experience and changing circumstances may necessitate revisions to the State's model plan. Below are recommendations regarding the process for making revisions as well as content to consider revising.

Recommendations

Legislative Recommendations

Successful implementation often requires balancing the need for consistency with the need to adapt to changing or unforeseen conditions. To ensure Indiana can strike this balance with the implementation of its model plan, it may be helpful to implement a review and approval process before substantive changes are made to the model plan.

Although IC § 20-28-11.5-2 intends for the SBOE and IDOE to work together to create a model plan, the SBOE's role in making subsequent changes to the model plan is unclear. Because the model plan exemplifies the State's interpretation of best practices and should represent the highest standard of evaluation practice and policy, we recommend amending this provision so that the SBOE must approve of substantive changes to the model plan before revisions are introduced to corporations. The phrase "substantive changes" should be defined to include any alterations to the types of measures used, the weights of those measures, and content revisions to the Teacher Effectiveness Rubric (excluding minor grammatical edits). Review and approval structures like this will ensure the model plan remains consistent with the original intent and high standards with which it was designed.

Implementation Recommendations

Based on our review and stakeholder feedback, we recommend considering revisions to the Teacher Effectiveness Rubric (TER). The TER is a tool evaluators use to assess teacher practice. It is based on research and best practice and

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[71] See Appendix A at 4 and 6.

has been in use since it was piloted in 2011. Since that time, two things have happened that necessitate some revisions to the rubric. First, it is has been adopted by a majority of corporations whose regular use of the tool has revealed there are areas where the TER can be refined. Specifically, stakeholders mentioned that there is too much overlap between Domains 1 and 3, which both examine teacher "inputs" like planning and collaboration with peers and are often assessed using the same evidence.[72] Second, Indiana has recently adopted new state standards which are not reflected in the current TER.

Therefore, we recommend revising the TER to streamline and eliminate redundancies and to ensure it is aligned with the new state standards. Because these would be substantive changes to the model system, we recommend they be approved by the SBOE.

In stakeholder discussions, educators and administrators reported some frustration with the number of observations required by the RISE 2.0 plan and some of the requirements with the Student Learning Objective (SLO) process. However, we do not recommend changes to these components of the plan at this time for two reasons. First, the requirements reflect current best practices in these areas. Second, because corporations are able to adjust, adapt or abandon any part of the RISE 2.0 model for their use, corporations are free to make changes these provisions in the ways that best fit the needs of their schools and educators.

Summary
After almost four years of use, the TER would benefit from some updates to address any redundancies in the domains and to ensure it is aligned with Indiana's new standards. We believe these revisions can support both teachers and evaluators in their use of the rubric.

Compensation Models

The compensation structure outlined in IC § 20-28-9-1.5 is intended to reward and recognize teachers in a way that is commensurate with their performance. While the statute reflects strong policy and a best practice that TNTP whole-heartedly endorses, there are areas where the law can be strengthened to support quality implementation.[73] Those recommendations are outlined below.

Recommendations
Legislative Recommendations

There are several aspects of Indiana's compensation law that can be strengthened to support corporations with implementation of both evaluation plans and awarding performance-based salary increases.

- **Address the perceived negative impact of preventing salary increases for teachers rated Improvement Necessary:** IC § 20-28-9-1.5 ensures that teachers are compensated in a way that reflects their performance. One component of the law prevents teachers who are rated Improvement Necessary from receiving salary increases. Through stakeholder discussions, it was mentioned that this provision may have contributed to the skewed ratings distribution the State has reported.[74] Some stakeholders speculated that preventing salary

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[72] See Appendix A at 5.

[73] TNTP, *Shortchanged: The Hidden Costs of Lockstep Teacher Pay.* (2014).

[74] Indiana Department of Education analysis of evaluation results, retrieved from http://compass.doe.in.gov/dashboard/EducatorRating.aspx?type=state.

increases deters evaluators from giving teachers in need of development an honest assessment for fear of discouraging them by impacting their compensation.[75]

There is no way to verify whether or to what extent this provision has impacted evaluation ratings. However, should the State wish to address the perception that the compensation law has negatively affected evaluation ratings, we propose adopting the following policy changes:

- Allow teachers to be rated Improvement Necessary two years in a row or Improvement Necessary followed by Ineffective before a salary increase is withheld.
- Include a provision that allows teachers rated Improvement Necessary to apply for a waiver from the condition that they not be given a salary increase. The waiver can be granted if the teacher demonstrates extraordinary circumstances impacted his or her ability to perform at a level worthy of an Effective rating. The SBOE would be authorized to issue rules establishing the process and standards for reviewing and granting waivers.

Adopting these changes will maintain the original intent of the law – to recognize and reward the State's best teachers – while also allowing developing teachers to receive both the accurate feedback on performance they need to improve and a salary increase. This approach ensures teachers who do not improve are not rewarded for poor performance year after year.

We want to be clear that this change on its own will not significantly alter the ratings distribution most corporations have seen. Lopsided ratings distributions occur even in states and districts that do not tie performance to compensation. Additionally, most policy options simply change when or how the issue manifests. For instance, if a teacher does not improve in two years, then eventually there will need to be an evaluator who provides an honest and rigorous evaluation rating even when there are compensation implications. In our experience, the best way to alter ratings distributions is to provide extensive training and support for evaluators so they feel confident in their ability to assess teacher quality and empowered to make difficult judgments.

Finally, because any policy change to IC § 20-28-9-1.5 will have financial implications for corporations, we recommend the SBOE consult with corporations to determine whether any policy change would put them in an untenable financial position.

- **Clarify the IDOE and SBOE's authority to enforce compliance with compensation model requirements.** IC § 20-28-9-1.5 provides for the IDOE and SBOE to work together to ensure corporations are in compliance with the state's compensation requirements. However, the statutory requirements of their shared oversight are vague and could benefit from additional guidance from the General Assembly.

    Indiana law empowers the IDOE to verify that corporations have adopted compensation models that meet the criteria set out in state law. In collaboration with the SBOE, the IDOE has instituted a review process that supports corporations in their interpretation of and adherence to state law.[76] As part of this oversight framework, the IDOE notifies corporations in writing of any non-compliance so they may correct the deficit. Additionally, the IDOE reports instances of non-compliance to the SBOE annually.

    At that point, the SBOE has the authority to take "appropriate action to ensure compliance" with state law. However, there is no guidance that further clarifies the IDOE and SBOE's roles in ensuring corporations'

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[75] See Appendix A at 6.

[76] Indiana Department of Education, Compensation Systems: http://www.doe.in.gov/effectiveness/compensation-systems.

compensation models meet the requirements of state law. Below are some policies for consideration that may better support the SBOE in its enforcement responsibilities:

- o If a corporation's noncompliance affected the salary increase of any Effective or Highly Effective teachers, the SBOE can call for the corporation provide backpay to these teachers for the amount they would have earned had the compensation been compliant with state law.
- o If a corporation fails to correct any areas of noncompliance by the start of the next school year, the corporation will be considered willfully noncompliant and will be required to pay a monetary penalty. In the Board's discretion, the penalty can be used to supplement teacher salaries for Effective and Highly Effective teachers in that corporation.

- **Allocate more funding for grants used to support performance-based compensation.** During stakeholder discussions, several individuals mentioned that the size of the salary increases were not sufficient.[77] Additionally, it has been noted that some corporations use only the School Performance Awards to fund salary increases – meaning the corporation has not otherwise budgeted for salary increases – be they performance-based or across the board cost of living adjustments.

  We believe that eventually corporations should be responsible for the sustainability of the performance-based compensation model they adopt. However, we also understand the compensation law is relatively new and for some corporations operating under old CBAs, they have not yet had the opportunity to implement it. Therefore, we recommend that the State allocate more funding for the School Performance Awards for the next two years – or until the next budget cycle. The increased funding for salary increases will ensure that the compensation law will continue to gain support from educators during these early years of implementation. In the meantime, we recommend that the IDOE and SBOE work with corporations to support their transition to a self-sustaining compensation model that provide significant rewards to high-performing teachers.

Implementation Recommendations

As outlined above, the IDOE regularly monitors corporations' compensation plans to ensure they meet the State's requirements. When a corporation is found to be out of compliance, the IDOE issues a memorandum describing the deficits in the corporation's plan and reportedly works with the corporation to correct the issue. This oversight protocol appears to be sufficient and fair to corporations who are out of compliance.

The IDOE also proactively supports corporations in designing compensation models. The IDOE provides an overview of the requirements on its website, a checklist for designing a compensation model as well as a model plan. We recommend the IDOE build off these practices and consider the following:

- **Support corporations by identifying exemplary models:** The IDOE currently posts all compensation models on its website, per a statutory requirement.[78] However, it notes that not all models are compliant with state law. To support corporations that are seeking examples of high-quality compensation models, the IDOE should, at a minimum, identify which models are not in compliance and therefore should not be copied or adapted. Ideally, the IDOE will also indicate which models it considers exemplary and highlight the strengths of those models so other corporations can emulate or adapt those characteristics.

- **Support corporations to plan for sustainable compensation models:** Because of the complex nature of planning for teacher compensation, some corporations may require additional assistance in designing and implementing their compensation models – particularly if they are to become self-sustaining. Therefore, we recommend that the IDOE facilitate collaboration among corporations that may be facing similar challenges. These similarly situated corporations may be able to work together to solve for a common problem of

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[77] See Appendix A at 6.

[78] Indiana Department of Education, Local Compensation Models: http://www.doe.in.gov/effectiveness/local-compensation-models.

practice. Additionally, they may be able to collaborate with external partners who can provide expert guidance to solve for their common challenges.

Summary

As we noted above, Indiana's compensation policies reward and recognize teachers in a way that is commensurate with their performance and are consistent with best practices. However, there are a few areas where the law can be strengthened to support quality implementation.

Our first recommendation acknowledges that evaluators may be reluctant to rate teachers Improvement Necessary because of the compensation consequences tied to the rating. Requiring teachers to receive a rating of Improvement Necessary two years in a row before they experience any compensation consequences and allowing for a waiver provision in certain circumstances may alleviate the concern that the current provision is too rigid and deters honest assessments of teachers' performance. However, as we noted above, these revisions to the current law will not rectify the skewed ratings distribution Indiana has experienced over the last two years. The best remedy for skewed ratings is an increased emphasis on evaluator training.

In addition to adjusting how compensation consequences are tied to evaluation ratings, we also recommend that the General Assembly clarify the SBOE's authority to ensure corporations have adopted and are implementing plans in accordance with state law. The current enforcement provision is too vague to provide the Board with sufficient guidance and cover for the actions it may take.

To ensure corporations are able to provide meaningful rewards to their best teachers, we recommend increasing the funding allotted to School Performance Awards for the next biennium. The increased funding for salary increases will allow corporations to recognize its high-performing teachers appropriately, which in these early years of implementation is critical to gaining support for the policy. However, it is equally as critical that corporations can sustain their compensation models in the long-term. So, in next two years, the IDOE and SBOE should work with corporations to develop financial models that support their compensation plans.

Finally, we recommend the IDOE build off its current monitoring and support practices to ensure corporations have access to high-quality examples of compensation models. For those corporations in need of specialized assistance, we recommend the IDOE facilitate collaboration among similarly-situated corporations so that they can leverage their best practices and work with external experts to solve for common problems of practice.

Conclusion

Over the last two months, we have conducted a close examination of the current state of Indiana's evaluation policies and practices and built off past stakeholder feedback with a targeted stakeholder engagement effort. These data points in conjunction with other research, best practices and our experience designing and implementing evaluation systems across the country informed the recommendations we set out above. These recommendations recognize Indiana's history as a leader in teacher evaluation and seek to capitalize on the strength of its current policies and practices. Additionally, we sought to honor the State's preference for local control while balancing the need for consistency and comparability across evaluation plans. We believe that resulting recommendations, if adopted, will empower Indiana to address the implementation challenges that have been identified and meet its commitments to educators.

We deeply appreciate the opportunity to work with the Board to strengthen what is already exemplary evaluation system. We look forward to the opportunity to discuss these recommendations with the Strategic Planning Committee on January 26, 2015 and then with the full Board on February 4, 2015.

Indiana Evaluation Focus Group Report

January 28, 2015

Summary of Project

TNTP held a series of focus groups in December 2014 and January 2015 with various stakeholders represented in the state of Indiana, including teachers, principals, superintendents, other system-level administrators, external stakeholders, and Department of Education staff. The goals of the focus groups were to engage with stakeholders in order to gather high-level information about the current state of evaluation systems in Indiana and to identify areas where we should focus further research and analysis. The information gathered from the focus groups along with the information from various sources will collectively be used to inform a set of recommendations for changes to Indiana's Evaluation System.

Topics covered in the focus groups included:

1. The current state of Indiana evaluation systems
2. The confidence level of various stakeholders in the system and its components
3. The strengths of the system over the past two years
4. Where there are room for improvements moving forward

Engagement Strategy

In late Spring/early Fall 2014, the Center on Education and Lifelong Learning (CELL) conducted an extensive survey across the state to gauge educators' perceptions and beliefs about the State's evaluation policies and practice. This survey gathered information on various topics and revealed some key gaps in the perception and beliefs of individual stakeholder groups. In total, the survey sampled 2,427 teachers, 374 principals, and 218 superintendents.[1] TNTP felt that it would be important to follow up with targeted stakeholders, and engage with them through focus groups and individual conversations, where appropriate. This approach allowed us to build off of the State's previous stakeholder engagement efforts, including CELL's survey, and delve deeper into stakeholder beliefs and experiences in ways that are possible only through in-person discussions.

In order move forward with the work, TNTP reached out to the authors of the survey, Dr. Hardy Murphy and Dr. Cassandra Cole, to better understand methodology and survey results. Once we had an opportunity to discuss the survey findings, TNTP proceeded to develop targeted focus group questions to further understand stakeholders' experiences regarding the state evaluation systems.

Gathering input from a variety of stakeholders is essential to identifying both the pain points and possible solutions to implementation challenges. Therefore, we have worked closely with the State Board of Education (SBOE) staff to identify key stakeholders. It was our goal for the following types of stakeholders to have the opportunity to share their experiences, perspectives and expertise:

- Teachers
- Principals
- Superintendents or other System-level Administrators
- Department of Education Staff who specialize in teacher evaluation
- External Partners with expertise in teacher evaluation

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[1] Indiana Teacher Appraisal and Support System survey results, retrieved from http://www.in.gov/sboe/files/2014-09-26_INTASS_PPT.pdf.

Additionally, to ensure we connected with the maximum number of teachers, principals and superintendents possible in our short timeframe, we coordinated with the following groups:

- Indiana Association of Public Schools Superintendents
- Indiana Association of School Principals
- Teacher Ambassadors

Our goal was to hold six to eight focus groups of 10-12 participants each in the months of December 2014 and January 2015. That would have allowed us to connect with between 60 and 96 individuals. In total, we reached out to 115 individuals either directly or with the help of key personnel within each of the associations. Our hope was to be able to use the groups' regular meetings to host focus group discussions when possible. Leveraging these regular meetings provided two advantages. First, we were able to reach a significant number of educators who are already engaged in education policy through their membership to these associations. Second, we would be able to tailor the discussion topics in these forums to the participants' particular interests, expertise and experiences. Because of the importance of teacher input, we strove to connect with as many Teacher Ambassadors as possible as they already work closely with the State Board of Education and are highly engaged in policy at the state level. Nearly half of the stakeholders invited for this effort were teachers. In addition, multiple sessions and opportunities were offered for teachers to share their perspectives and experiences.

Focus Groups

Formal focus group discussions began on December 17, 2014 and concluded on January 20, 2015. In total, TNTP offered eight scheduled focus groups at various locations, days, and times. Each session was scheduled for one and a half hours. Six sessions were attended with a total of 34 participants. In addition, in order to accommodate scheduling conflicts, TNTP conducted six individual conversations. The total number of participants engaged directly through this process was 40 individuals, which is between 42 and 67 percent of our target goal and is generally considered a successful participation rate for an engagement effort of this scale and timeline. Regrettably, participation was lowest amongst teachers despite our efforts to provide flexible scheduling and alternative opportunities for input. This could be due to a number of factors including the challenges in scheduling during December/January holiday schedule, lead time, or transportation and logistical concerns.

Below is a summary of the outreach effort made including the total number of participants engaged during this process and a summary of the sessions held with attendance.

Categories	Contacted	Total Participation	Participation Rate
Teachers	55	3	5.5%
Principals	14	10	71.4%
Superintendent or Administrator	29	17	58.6%
Department of Education Leadership and Staff	6	6	100.0%
External Stakeholders	11	4	36.4%
TOTAL	**115**	**40**	**34.8%**

	Session Title	Participants
1	Evansville Focus Group	4
2	Indiana External Stakeholders (Indianapolis - Session 1)	5
3	Indiana External Stakeholders (Indianapolis - Session 2)	3
4	Indiana Association of Public Schools Superintendents Focus Group	11
5	Teacher Focus Group	2
6	Indiana Association of School Principals Focus Group	9
	Other participants (individual contributions/comments)	6
	Total	40

Summary of Findings

What follows is a brief summary of the relevant findings from information gathered during focus group discussions.

Major Themes
Qualitative data analysis revealed seven overarching themes across the focus group sessions and conversations.

Theme 1: Communications
In all focus groups, there was discussion surrounding the role of RISE or other evaluation models. Across the board, participants felt that there was no clear objective of the evaluation system, nor was there clear alignment with what the system actually achieves. While many participants felt that as a whole, things have been going well, there was a general consensus that there are opportunities for further refinement and improvements to various components. Many participants reported a number of negative experiences with how the system was presented to educators in the state. These individuals noted they felt mistrusted, disrespected, or dismissed by the system. In more than one focus group, the phrase, "this was a system that was done to teachers" was noted.

Further, participants clearly expressed a need and desire for consistent, quality and targeted information at the state level for various stakeholders, specifically information for school leaders and teachers. This was particularly important to many participants especially where it concerned upcoming changes, modifications, or other elements which would require time to manage and communicate at the local level.

Theme 2: Evolution of Evaluations
Across many focus groups, when asked to describe the current state of evaluations, there was a common theme of the system as an evolving or transitioning system. Most participants expressed that the first few years of implementation were the most challenging and created anxiety among many individuals, but as corporations and schools have progressed further along in the process, there was marked improvement in implementation. Participants who come from corporations newer to the process often discussed how they have benefited from the trial and errors made from other corporations who have been undergoing and making changes to the model for some time. Many participants from various corporations discussed how they have benefited from trainings as well as collaboration within the local community among teachers, principals, administrators and community members and externally with other corporations. Participants noted that as implementation continues, there is a desire to be able to share best practices among the educator community.

Theme 3: Flexibility at the Local Level
In all focus groups, participants expressed the desire for local control. Participants noted how important it was for educators within a particular corporation to be able to modify or create a plan that meets their specific needs. This includes the ability to determine the right process, which tools to use (rubrics), what kind of objective measures should be used, and the weights these objective measures should hold in determining a teacher's overall rating. Many participants currently achieve this through a systematic process of trial and modification. Many participants noted that their corporation used RISE as a base plan and developed a committee of stakeholders to review and modify the plan based on local needs before implementing it for year one. The committee would continually monitor the strengths and weaknesses during this first implementation year before making additional edits and adjustments to further improve the system for subsequent year. While this process has fared well, there was an express concern over the time and resources required to develop a deep understanding of the system, conduct research or gather resources necessary to make changes to the process, make the necessary change, and roll out for adoption.

Theme 4: Improved Feedback and Consistent/Common Language for Teacher Quality
In most focus groups, participants noted that over the past few years, as corporations implemented RISE (RISE Modified) or other evaluation plans, one of the greatest improvements has been the conversations between educators across the teaching community, but especially between teachers and their evaluators regarding teacher quality. Many participants cited the RISE Teacher Effectiveness Rubric (TER), or variants of the TER, as a critical element to this positive change. Participants noted that the TER was a valuable tool in helping create a common, intentional language for discussing teacher quality and it enabled teachers and evaluators alike to discuss clear expectations regarding what good teaching looks like. This includes a baseline around what is most important and valuable, and

what is not. Most agreed that this tool was better than previous tools they have used in the past, in part because it was structured and was utilized statewide.

However, there were a number of individuals who expressed that while the structure of the TER was helpful, it was also an area of concern in that it was too rigid and/or too detailed and complex. Many felt that they lacked proper training on the TER or that additional time for training and adoption was necessary.

Theme 5: Need for Consistent Levels of Trainings for Various Stakeholders, Particularly Teachers
In all focus groups, participants expressed the need to have access to additional trainings and support for practitioners, especially for teachers earlier on in the process. Some training topics includes an overview of the evaluation model (or system) used by the corporation, training on the specific observation that would be used and training on what effective teaching looks like as it pertains to the rubric. A number of participants recommended cross-training teachers on evaluation methodologies so that there is a deeper understanding of how they will be evaluated in the classroom.

For principals, evaluators and other administrators, it was recommended that there be more consistent trainings across corporations. Some participants expressed their concerns based on personal experience of the varying availability, frequency and/or quality or training and resources across corporations. A number of participants were familiar with individuals who were part of the RISE Pilot noted that pilot corporations benefited from the extensive training provided during the pilot phase and recommended that similar training should be provided for all corporations.

Theme 6: Need for Resources
The need for additional resources was a point that was discussed in all focus groups. This includes time, monetary resources, and human capital needs. At the systems level, participants felt that there was a lack of resources readily available in order to make informed decisions. For instance, one participant noted that their corporation wanted to modify the TER, however, they did not have access to tools, experts, or samples and therefore opted not to modify it. Another echoed a similar sentiment about modifying the RISE model plan. Many participants who did make changes and modified the plan noted that their corporation made concerted efforts to research their own tools and created their own trainings and resources, but that they would have liked more access to materials. This includes communication materials that can be shared with corporations, schools, teachers, and the community.

Almost all participants agreed that the time it takes to adopt a new evaluation model is extensive. Many expressed concern that there was not enough time allocated to train educators and transition into their corporation's plan. A number of participants noted that they have begun to collaborate with other corporations in order to share resources and develop tools such as assessments for use in the Student Learning Objectives process. Often these cohorts and collaborations were self-created/self-directed by corporations that have experienced lack of access to resources.

Lastly, while almost every participant expressed that the conversations around teacher quality has improved, there is agreement that in many corporations and schools, there is simply not enough time for evaluators to provide the consistent feedback to teachers on a regular basis. Some participants noted that the formal observations and feedback opportunities was a good start to supporting teachers improve their practice, but they expressed a desire for more informal touch points in order to provide/receive the professional development support.

Theme 7: Change Management
Across many focus groups, participants discussed frustrations and difficulties regarding the pace and amount of changes corporations, schools, and teachers have had to sustain in such a short period of time. In addition, there was great concern of more changes to come. Some participants noted that they would like to be able to see a "pause" or slower, more methodical roll out of the system, including a "buffer" or "test-year" for new elements.

Other Targeted Discussion Topics:
Confidence level of various stakeholders in the system and its components
- Teacher Effectiveness Rubrics (TER)

- o Many stakeholders felt that the Teacher Effectiveness Rubrics have been a useful tool in helping set clear expectations on what good teaching looks like.
- o Participants noted that the tool, used in conjunction with other elements of an evaluation plan, helps set a common language for discussing teacher quality within a school community as well as with other corporations.
  - One participant noted that the involvement of the community has resulted in a more positive perception of the evaluation process
- o Rubrics have helped evaluators and teachers identify areas of need and support.
- o While most thought the rubrics have been helpful, most people agreed that it was very lengthy and took a lot of time to properly train and adopt to the rubrics.
  - A number of participants specifically noted overlaps in coverage of some of the domains and suggested a simplification of the rubric (domains 1 and 3 which both examine teacher "inputs" like planning and collaboration with peers, which are often assessed using the same evidence – like the quality of unit plans).
- o A number of individuals from various sessions noted that they would like to see iterations of the rubrics available on the State's resource website. (It was noted that there is "no access to old rubrics".)
- Student Learning Objectives (SLO)
  - o Most participants did not feel that the SLO model was useful in practice.
    - Some individuals thought that the SLO model was designed to be a "one-size-fits-all" model, but that there are not enough resources to be able to modify and tailor to each teacher in a meaningful way.
    - Some individuals cited the model as being too lengthy or cumbersome to be able to implement fully during a school year.
    - One individual described it as "busy work."
  - o Many of these individuals did not feel that the model was a fair model nor did they feel there a good or consistent mechanism in place to ensuring quality measures for student growth.
    - Some thought that teachers who had ISTEP or End of Course Assessments (ECAs) were disadvantaged since they did not have prior access to the assessments while educators who used other measures, including self-created assessments may have "easier" assessments.
  - o A number of participants noted that they did not feel the model was set up to help teachers improve in their practice.
- Assessments/Objective Data
  - o Upcoming changes in assessments over the next few years was an area of concern for many participants.
  - o In a number of sessions, many individuals expressed the desire to see a "pause" on the evaluations in order to determine how best to incorporate new assessments into the process.
  - o Many participants expressed concern regarding the availability and access to reliable assessments.
  - o Many participants appreciated the flexibility be able to create their own assessment.
    - However, a number of participants noted their concern regarding the ability of teachers to create fair and valid assessments.
  - o Participants noted that the current system focuses too much on formative, not summative, assessments, which limits the ongoing support and development that educators desire throughout the year.
- Use of Data
  - o While most participants agreed that data should be used, in part, to inform evaluations, most participants noted a concern about the current use of data in the system.
    - The primary concern heard was the timing of the release of the data. Infrequent and late access to data was a concern expressed each time the topic was covered.
    - Reliability of data across grades and subjects was another concern expressed. Many participants felt that the system was not fair between teachers with students who take ISTEP or had access to ECAs vs. teachers without those assessments.

- Observation and Feedback
  - The TER has helped by creating a common language for evaluators and teachers to discuss teacher quality.
  - Quality of observation and feedback is dependent on the evaluator.
  - The RISE Model does not drive at professional development – there is limited time, training, and resources for evaluators to provide the targeted professional development growth desired by educators.
- Trainings
  - Principal (Evaluator) and Administrator Trainings
    - Some participants agreed that corporations received the same level of baseline training from their corporation's resource center and felt that the principal and administrator has been sufficient during these initial years.
    - Many participants felt that there should be additional trainings on how to have meaningful feedback conversations in order to support educator growth and development.
    - Depending on the resources available, some corporations provided more in-depth trainings to their staff.
      - There was an expressed desire to be able to have access to more in-depth training materials (that can be modified or tailored to the specific needs of the corporations).
    - Depending on the plan used or the Education Service Center (ESC) the corporation belonged to, some corporations had access to more training materials than others.
  - Teacher Trainings
    - Many participants did not feel that there was sufficient training for teachers to fully understand how they were going to be evaluated when the system rolled out.
    - Some participants indicated that they felt teachers should receive evaluator trainings to best understand the model and system used in their corporations. One teacher specifically noted that they felt much more positively about the system when they were trained as an evaluator.
- Compensation
  - There is a lot of consensus among stakeholders that the current compensation incentives do not help motivate teachers. Many felt that this may be due, in part, to lack of monetary resources.
  - There was agreement among some individuals that by linking compensation to evaluations, the system is dis-incentivizing collaboration.
  - Many felt that the current compensation model is one key factor that is deterring individuals from entering the profession.
    - A number of participants noted that during the first few years of entering the profession, many teachers are developing and refining skills in the classroom. During this time, teachers are unlikely to receive the ratings necessary to earn an increase.
    - Others noted that not having a steady increase over time may deter individuals who are looking for a stable/steady earning potential.
- Overall Rollout Strategy
  - Most participants felt that while progress is being made, they wanted more time to train and/or iron out the process at the local level.
  - Most participants expressed concerns regarding upcoming changes and how it may disrupt progress made to date.

Strengths of the system over the past two years
- In all focus groups, participants felt that the flexibility and autonomy at the local corporation level was a key strength.
- This flexibility allows corporations to create a system that best meets their individual needs.
- Most participants felt that the trainings for principals and administrators has been an area of strength.

Where there are room for improvements moving forward
- Resources
  - Most participants felt that there was a need for access to more resources. Some wanted some sort of "resource/knowledge-hub" or "toolbox" where they can get access to information regarding the following topics:
    - Research based information on various components of the model
    - Guidebooks and examples (access to other's modified plans, rubrics, SLO models, roll-out plans/timelines)
    - Training materials that can be adapted by the local level for principals, evaluators, teachers, and teacher leaders
    - Professional development support/teacher improvement plan support tools
      - Materials to help guide discussion/action plan on what happens after an evaluation. How can a principal use the information to support their teachers in improving their own practice? How to work on developing benchmarks, goals, outcomes for teachers as part of a teacher improvement plan.
- Communications
  - Many participants felt that communication and engagement needs to improve, especially with and for teachers and the local community.
  - Many expressed the desire to have more opportunities for participation in the design, development and feedback process.

Conclusion

Through these targeted focus group discussions, we sought input from a variety of highly-engaged stakeholders to further understand the current state of evaluations in Indiana and ultimately help us further focus our research and analysis. The discussion, in conjunction with other research and analysis, informed recommendations for changes in the Indiana's Evaluation System.

The findings discussed in this report highlight the complex and dynamic role of key stakeholders in the ongoing evolution of evaluations in the state. The themes highlighted summarize a range of positive as well as negative experiences within the current system. These themes speak to the accomplishments and hard work from all stakeholders over the past two years in building a system that meets the goals of supporting Indiana educators and recognizing excellent teaching.

Appendix A: Topics & Sample Questions

Introduction (5-10 minutes)

- Introductions: Please tell the group your name, your role, how long you have been in your current role and the evaluation plan your corporation uses or the plan you are most familiar with.
- In one word or a short phrase - Can you describe how things are going with teacher evaluation in Indiana or more specifically your school or school corporation?
  - *What gives you confidence with teacher evaluation (word or phrase)?*
  - *What is your greatest concern with teacher evaluation (word or phrase)?*
- What is your hope for teacher evaluations in Indiana?
- What do you know about the program now that you wished you'd known over the past two years?

Teacher / School Leader Trainings

- What was your experience with training for the new teacher evaluation system?
  - Who provided you with your training?
- Which trainings were most useful to your role? Which trainings were not useful to your role?
  - In what ways were the trainings useful or not useful? *Be sure to identify the training.*
  - Are there particular techniques, tools and resources that you have found to be particularly effective in helping teachers with implementing components of the evaluation system?
- Are there components of the evaluation plan or processes that you would have liked more training on?
- Are there particular techniques, tools, and resources that you have found to be particularly effective in helping you understand and navigate the various components of the evaluation system?
- What additional trainings would you recommend for 2015-16?
- Are there professional development opportunities you are aware of to help improve your understanding and use of the evaluation system?
- What's the best way to communicate resources or opportunities to you?
- In general, do you feel your preparation for being a teacher and the state's licensure requirements prepared you for the expectations established in the state's evaluation system?

[EXTERNAL PARTNERS]

- What was your experience or familiarity with trainings for new teacher evaluation systems or processes?
- Based on your experience, were the trainings provided in the state consistent with best practices in the field?
  - In what ways can the trainings be improved?
- Based on your experience, are there any gaps you observed in the trainings provided (to principals, evaluators, and teachers)?

Teacher Evaluation Process

Practice/Student Growth

- What is your role in implementation of the new evaluation system in your corporation?
  - Can you describe the experience with how the plan has been implemented in your corporation?
- How has corporation plan impacted the instructional practice of your teachers (classroom teaching and learning)?
  - Have you seen an impact on student growth?
  - What are some of the most helpful components of the evaluation?
  - Which one need improvement? How should they be improved?
- In your experience, what has been the most effective way to identify teacher impact on student learning?

     ○   How should these objective measures be used to determine a teacher's evaluation? What is the appropriate weight?

[EXTERNAL PARTNERS]

- In your experience, what has been the most effective way to identify teachers' impact on student learning?

Rubrics

- For those of you who are familiar with the RISE plan, what are the strengths of the Teacher Effectiveness Rubric?
  - Is it easy to use?
  - How can it be improved to help drive teacher practice and student growth?
- For those who use a different plan, what are the pros and cons of the observation rubric used in your corporation?

Student Learning Objectives

- For those of you whose plans have an SLO component, what are the strengths of the Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) process?
  - Is the process streamlined and easy to understand?
  - Is the SLOs process valuable or does it help you improve your own teaching practice?
  - Are there adequate assessment coverage or guidance for objective measures of student learning?
  - Do you have access to quality assessments?
  - How can the SLO process be improved to further support teaching practice?

Assessments/Objective Measures

- What types of objectives measures are useful in gauging teachers' impact on student learning?
  - Are there adequate assessment coverage or guidance for objective measures of student learning?
  - Do you have access to quality assessments?
- What role should objective measures play in the overall evaluation rating?
- Do you feel that you have received sufficient communication from the state regarding the measures of student learning?
  - How can the state improve communications to ensure you have the information on measures of student learning?
- Do you have any concerns with the assessment changes this year?

Administrator Support – Observation & Feedback

- How do principals/evaluators use the evaluation tools to provide feedback to teachers after observation?
  - What steps do you take to follow up with your principal/evaluator or teachers after an observation?
  - How would you rate quality of feedback?
- In your opinion, do teachers have a clear understanding of what they are being observed on? Rubrics? Data points?
  - What evidence/sources of data do your teachers use?
- Are there specific instances where you have received helpful feedback? What made these instances successful?
- What happened in the instances where you did not receive helpful feedback?
- As an evaluator, do you feel well prepared and/or equipped to provide feedback to teachers and/or help them understand how rubrics and data points are being used?
- Did the trainings help you and your evaluators better understand how to identifying teacher quality?

- What resources and/or training would you recommend for school leaders in order to best prepare them for consistent observations/feedback?
- Does the current system build in enough opportunities for you to have performance discussions with your teachers?
- School leaders and evaluators can clearly communicate assessment results and information regarding the evaluation process and help teachers develop measureable and achievable student learning goals. Agree or disagree.
  When have you seen this? Why do you were successful (or not) in their communications?

[EXTERNAL PARTNERS]

- What is the appropriate use of evaluation?
- To your knowledge does the system capture these best practices seen in the field?

Compensation
- What's your understanding of your corporation's compensation model or the state's compensation model requirements?
- How has the compensation model impacted teacher performance, evaluator feedback and school culture?
- In your experience, what are the benefits and disadvantages of using performance ratings to inform compensation decisions?
  - In what ways can the system be improved?
  - In what should evaluation ratings be used to determine compensation?

Communications

  - In what ways do you receive information on evaluation guidance?
    - As a corporation/school leader, do you feel the information is sufficient?
    - As a teacher do you feel the information is sufficient?
    - Is the information helpful?
    - What can be improved?

What can the State do to make sure you have the tools and resources necessary to meet the goal of supporting your colleagues and students?

Program Improvements

- Show of hands – who is working with, or have had experience with a locally-created or modified plan?
- What role do teachers currently play in the design of locally-created/modified plans?
  - Is this the right role?
  - Should teachers be more or less involved?

[EXTERNAL PARTNERS]

- What should the role of the State be in teacher evaluation process?
  - What level of engagement or role should the state play in reviewing and ensuring of consistency across all plan and implemented?
  - What is the role of the state in reviewing and approval locally-created or modified plans and all plan implementation?

Conclusion

- If there was one thing that you can do immediately to improve teacher evaluations in Indiana, what would that one thing be?
- Are there any additional thoughts or questions you have about the state's evaluation system?

Recommendations for Strengthening Indiana's Teacher Evaluation System

Indiana State Board of Education

February 4, 2015

Agenda

Overview of our work to date

Current State of Evaluation in Indiana

Overview of Recommendations

Recommendations

Next Steps

Building off our knowledge and experience with evaluation in Indiana, over the last 2 months we immersed ourselves in learning about the current state of Indiana's evaluation system.

➢ First, we assessed the state's alignment to national best practices for teacher evaluation. We made initial recommendations based on this review of law and policy at the December 3, 2014 SBOE meeting.

➢ We gathered information about the local context and state of evaluation in Indiana through stakeholder input that included targeted focus group discussions, individual conversations and an examination of the INTASS survey results. This feedback guided our further research and analysis.

➢ We used this local context to supplement our deep experience designing and implementing teacher evaluation systems and knowledge of best practices. Our recommendations are the culmination of these efforts.

Our work has 3 phases:

Policy Review	Research, Engagement & Analysis	Recommendations & Improvements
Nov - Dec	Dec - Jan	Feb - Mar

During Phase 2 of our work, we utilized stakeholder feedback to inform further research and analysis.

We surfaced areas for further investigation through focus group discussions, individual conversations as well as the recently conducted INTASS survey of over 2,000 educators.

Over about 5 weeks in December 2014 and January 2015, TNTP conducted a series of focus groups and individual conversations where appropriate with a variety of stakeholders about the current state of evaluation in Indiana.

The purpose of these discussions was to explore some of the findings of the INTASS survey and identify areas where we should focus further research and analysis.

To enable productive conversations, we sought to connect with highly-engaged stakeholders in a variety of roles across the state, including:

- Teachers
- Principals
- Superintendents or other System-level Administrators

- Department of Education Staff who specialize in teacher evaluation
- External Partners with expertise in teacher evaluation

In our stakeholder discussions, we spoke with highly-engaged educators and external partners from across the state.

➡️ We planned to conduct 6-8 focus groups of 10-12 individuals each.

➡️ We reached out to 115 individuals across the state in a variety of roles. Nearly half of these individuals were teachers.

➡️ We held 6 focus groups and several individual discussions to accommodate special circumstances. 40 people participated in these discussions, which is between 42 and 67% of our target goal.

➡️ We spoke with educators from 21 corporations of all sizes and regions:
- Urban: 4 (19%)
- Suburban: 7 (33%)
- Rural: 10 (48%)

➡️ 75% of participants were educators. Participation was high among principals, superintendents and DOE staff, but it was low among teachers.

We are continuing to reach out to teachers and will provide an update on our teacher engagement at the Feb. 4th Board meeting.

The stakeholder feedback surfaced areas to probe with further research and analysis.

We deepened our understanding of the current state of evaluation in Indiana in the following ways:

➢ Consultation with local experts on Indiana's evaluation system

➢ Research into how other "exemplary" states are approaching evaluation after a few years of implementation

➢ Review of the State's authoritative documents on evaluation policy and practice, including its ESEA waiver, the Board's Strategic Plan, and other reports on evaluation results and implementation

➢ Review of the State's current implementation practices and structures, including IDOE resources and monitoring protocols

Our research, engagement and analysis all contributed to our final recommendations.

Agenda

Overview of our work to date

▶ Current State of Evaluation in Indiana

Overview of Recommendations

Recommendations

Next Steps

Four years ago, Indiana set out to establish an ambitious system to assess teacher quality, grounded in best practices and research.

Goals for Indiana's Evaluation System

| Recognize excellent teaching | Support educators to improve their practice | Encourage the equitable distribution of effective teachers across the state | Ensure students have effective teachers so that student learning will increase |

Because teaching is the most influential in-school factor affecting student performance, these goals for evaluation in Indiana are aligned with research and best practice.

Indiana should be celebrated for what it has accomplished on teacher evaluation already. However, we appreciate its desire to grow and strengthen its evaluation policies and practices.

Indiana's accomplishments over the last two years are noteworthy and important.
- The laws and policies continue to reflect best practice and a high standard for teacher evaluation
- There are indications that policies are positively influencing how corporations and schools address teacher quality

As with any bold initiative, there have been obstacles to successful implementation and lessons learned over the last two years.

Indiana is well-positioned to build off its early successes and refine its evaluation system so that it can continue to lead the nation in teacher quality initiatives.

Our review of the current state of evaluation in Indiana reveals two recommended areas of focus.

Area of Focus #1: Accurate Evaluations for All Teachers

➢ To achieve its stated goals for evaluation, Indiana must first be able to provide accurate evaluations to every teacher.

➢ The ratings distributions suggest there are opportunities to improve the completeness and accuracy of teachers' ratings.
  - Nearly 90% of teachers were rated Effective or Highly Effective
  - Less than 0.5% of teachers across the state were rated Ineffective
  - More than 10% of first and second year teachers received no evaluation ratings last year
  - Over 13% of teachers in schools that earned a grade of "F" were not evaluated

Very often issues with accuracy and completeness in evaluation ratings are a byproduct of the implementation challenges that have been reported.

Area of Focus #2: Refocus on High-Quality Implementation

➢ Accurate and reliable evaluation ratings are a result of diligent and high-quality implementation.

➢ Stakeholder feedback indicates that many of the issues Indiana is facing could be addressed through strengthened implementation practices.
  - Teacher perceptions could be improved by providing training
  - Administrators asked for more support with plan design and implementation

➢ Our examination of State policies and practices reinforced this need for improved implementation.
  - The level of local control in Indiana's system can lead to excessive variation in plan design and implementation practices
  - Increased guidance and support from the State will improve consistency across plans and ultimately reduce the State's involvement

Agenda

Overview of our work to date

Current State of Evaluation in Indiana

▶ **Overview of Recommendations**

Recommendations

Next Steps

To achieve a culture that values teacher evaluation as a tool to provide the support and recognition teachers deserve, Indiana must shift the culture around assessing teacher quality.

This shift in culture starts at the top and is ultimately achieved through diligent, high-quality guidance and support.

Changes to law or regulation create the enabling conditions necessary for Indiana to continue the hard but critical work of implementation, but they will not take the place of leadership support.

"Moving from a system that rates everyone as just fine to one that differentiates performance is daunting and requires a culture shift."
– National Council on Teacher Quality

Our recommendations are intended to support Indiana achieve a culture around evaluation that is aligned with its stated goals.

The recommendations that follow include ways to strengthen the State's evaluation system through legislation, regulation, or implementation strategies.

- We emphasize the importance of coordinated and high-quality implementation
- Where we have called for changes to law or regulation, the intention is to enable improved implementation practices

Recommendations are based on the following information:

- Local context we gained through research and stakeholder engagement
- National best practices
- Our deep experience supporting states and districts to design and implement evaluation systems.

We have categorized our recommendations by the following topics:

➢ Establish a vision for Indiana's evaluation system and provide change management leadership

➢ Increase the focus on high-quality training for both evaluators and teachers

➢ Address lack of clarity, consistency and rigor in the use of objective measures of student performance

➢ Ensure educators are engaged in the process of designing locally-created and modified evaluation plans

➢ Enhance current practices of monitoring and supporting corporations to design and implement consistent and comparable evaluation plans

➢ Make revisions to the State's model plan – RISE 2.0

➢ Strengthening the current policies and practices for performance-based compensation

Agenda

Overview of our work to date

Current State of Evaluation in Indiana

Overview of Recommendations

▶ **Recommendations**

Next Steps

Establish a vision for Indiana's evaluation system and provide change management leadership

Recommendation	Context
Set a vision and theory of action for teacher evaluation **(Implementation)**	• Despite articulating the intended purpose of evaluation in the ESEA waiver and the SBOE's Strategic Plan, these goals have not fully penetrated to the classroom level. • Without a universally held purpose, Indiana will not be able to make adjustments to its current system in a coherent way. • SBOE may consider revising its Strategic Plan to include the purpose, theory of action and guiding principles.
Develop a change management and implementation plan to address forthcoming changes **(Implementation)**	• With a clear vision for the evaluation system, the Board will be able to lead the State through changes to the evaluation system and to initiate the culture shift needed. • The Board may wish to establish a project team under the Strategic Planning Committee that will produce a plan to address the change management and implementation priorities.

Establish a vision for Indiana's evaluation system and provide change management leadership

Recommendation	Context

Ensure there are high-quality communications and resources to support implementation
 (Implementation)
	• Successful change management and implementation depend on having clear, frequent and thoughtful communication at all levels.
	     • Develop clear expectations for receiving reports on evaluation implementation
	     • Hold constituent meeting to address concerns and introduce the SBOE's vision
	     • Review IDOE communications content and processes

Allocate resources and personnel to ensure implementation aligns with the State's vision **(Implementation)**	• Allocation of resources – especially personnel – is an indication of an organization's priorities. • To adequately prioritize implementation, we recommend IDOE reallocates its personnel to ensure it can meet the demands of high-quality implementation.

Increase the focus on high-quality training for both evaluators and teachers

| Evaluator Training	
Recommendation	**Context**
Require corporations to retrain evaluators whenever substantive changes are made to their evaluation plans. (Regulatory)	• Retraining will ensure evaluators have the skills necessary for accurately assessing teacher quality. • It provides an opportunity to build a shared understanding of the purpose of evaluation. • It may increase teacher perception of evaluators' ability.
Offer "plan agnostic" training for evaluators and trainers of evaluators (Implementation)	• All evaluators must possess certain skills in order to accurately assess teacher quality - regardless of a corporation's plan. • Training provides another opportunity to ensure evaluators are aligned with the State's vision for evaluation.
Leverage ESCs to provide high-quality training to school corporations (Implementation)	• ESCs are uniquely positioned to train evaluators. • According to stakeholder feedback, the quality of training by ESCs has been inconsistent. • IDOE should first ensure ESCs are thoroughly trained on best practices and changes to the evaluation system.
Highlight the mutually reinforcing nature of evaluator evaluation and teacher evaluation (Implementation)	• One of the most effective tools for increasing and maintaining the accuracy of evaluators is to hold them accountable for the accuracy of their ratings. • The RISE model incorporates this expectation into the evaluator rubric; the same expectation should be universally set for all school administrators.

Increase the focus on high-quality training for both evaluators and teachers

Teacher Training	
Recommendation	**Context**
Require corporations to train teachers on their evaluation plans (Legislative)	• There is no explicit requirement in statute or regulation that teachers be trained on their corporation's evaluation plan. • Feedback from teachers indicates that more deliberate training on the evaluation plan may improve their perception of the plan.
Establish standards for teacher training on evaluation plans (Regulatory)	• SBOE should set standards for the content of the trainings as it has for evaluator training • Standards can be broadly framed so corporations retain a degree of control over content; however, they should ensure that teachers are receiving a consistent level of training.
Ensure there are adequate resources to support corporations train teachers (Implementation)	• IDOE should identify and promote resources for conducting teacher training on evaluation plans. • IDOE and ESCs should consider offering a "plan agnostic" training for trainers of teachers that includes best practices and resources.

Address lack of clarity, consistency and rigor in the use of objective measures of student performance

"Objective measures" is broadly defined and can be based on a variety of assessment tools – not just state assessments.

➤ Corporations may use student portfolios, end of course exams, locally-created or teacher-created assessments as objective measures of student performance.

➤ As an example, **RISE 2.0** uses multiple types of objective measures: IGM scores, SLOs, and school-wide performance.

Group 1: Teachers who have individual growth model data for at least half of classes taught

SLO 10%
SWL 5%
IGM 35%
TER 50%

Group 2: Teachers who have individual growth model data for fewer than half of classes taught (but at least one class with growth model data)

SLO 15%
SWL 5%
IGM 20%
TER 60%
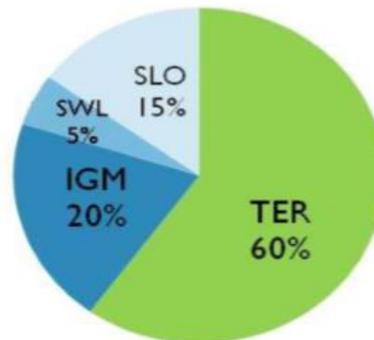
Group 3 Teachers: Teachers who do not teach any classes with growth model data
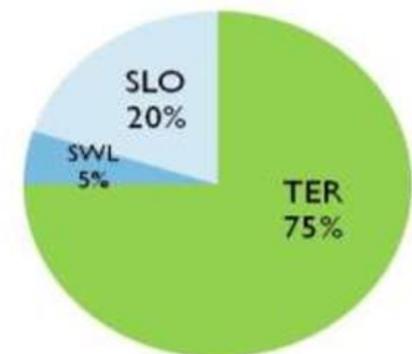
SLO 20%
SWL 5%
TER 75%

Address lack of clarity, consistency and rigor in the use of objective measures of student performance

Recommendation	Context

Define "significantly inform" so that all corporations use comparable levels of objective measures of student performance
 (Regulatory)
	• The wide variation across corporations in their use of objective measures has created 2 issues:
	    1. Lack of comparability across plans
	    2. Over-reliance on more subjective measures in some plans
	 • We suggest the following definition:
	    • **For teachers who receive IGM scores:** Objective measures account for 33-50% of teacher evaluation ratings
	    • **For teachers who do <u>not</u> receive IGM scores:** Objective measures account for 25-40% of teacher evaluation ratings
	    • The **effective date** of this definition should be after Indiana has 1 year of baseline data from the new assessment

Require SBOE approval of the definition of "negative impact" and the related guidance the IDOE issues **(Regulatory)**	• SBOE is empowered to define "negative impact." In regulation, negative impact is defined as when students achieve a "below acceptable" or "unacceptable" rate of growth. Guidance for the acceptable rates of growth are set by the IDOE each year. • The definition of "negative impact" is especially pertinent because it provides an additional check on the accuracy of teacher ratings.

Address lack of clarity, consistency and rigor in the use of objective measures of student performance

Recommendation	Context
Build off current support structures to help corporations revise their local definitions and understand the implications of these changes **(Implementation)**	• To support corporations needing to revise their plans, IDOE should provide resources online and consider providing in-person training sessions • A review of the new definitions should become a focus of IDOE's on-site monitoring protocol, as outlined in the ESEA waiver.
Leverage IDOE expertise to support SBOE and corporations to understand assessment guidance **(Implementation)**	• Stakeholders reported that they appreciate the ability to create their own assessments, but felt it was challenging to develop valid, reliable assessments. • IDOE should ensure that assessment guidance is clearly and prominently provided to corporations. This may include training corporations and schools on how to create high-quality assessments. • IDOE should support SBOE to understand the role that assessments play in evaluation policy and practice by providing regular updates on its guidance.

Ensure teachers are engaged in the process of designing locally created and modified evaluation plans

Recommendation	Context
Require districts that wish to use a locally-created or modified plan to engage teachers in the design process **(Legislative)**	• Teacher engagement is critical to the success of an evaluation plan. • The current requirement of a vote of approval falls short of meaningful engagement. • Instead, the law should require teachers to be involved in the design process.
Provide guidance to districts on how to create an implement an appropriate teacher engagement process **(Implementation)**	• IDOE should provide guidance on best practices for involving teachers in the design process. • As part of its review and approval of the modified or locally-created plans and on-site monitoring, IDOE should also review the corporation's teacher engagement processes and structures to confirm that they were thorough and equitable.

Enhance current practices of monitoring and supporting corporations to design and implement consistent and comparable evaluation plans

Recommendation	Context
Require corporations to submit locally-created or modified plans to IDOE for approval **(Legislative)**	• Current law places the onus on the IDOE to identify noncompliance. • Corporations should proactively seek approval from IDOE.

Require regular monitoring and reporting of corporations' plan implementation
 (Legislative)
	• There is no requirement in law that the State ensure corporations are implementing their plans with fidelity.
	 • Legislation should build off IDOE's monitoring protocols – as outlined in the ESEA waiver. Two ways to strengthen IDOE's practices are:
	   • Require the SBOE to approve of the subset of schools that receive annual monitoring
	   • Ensure all corporations implementation progress is reviewed at least every other year.

Support corporation administrators to leverage best practices when designing evaluation plans **(Implementation)**	• Despite the resources available on IDOE's website, administrators report feeling underprepared to design or modify an evaluation plan. • We recommend IDOE facilitate connections among superintendents to support them in sharing best practices.
Institute a regular reporting cycle on the progress of implementation **(Implementation)**	• Establishing a regular reporting cycle will ensure SBOE is informed on the status of implementation and can support IDOE with enforcement

Address issues with making revisions to the State's model plan

Recommendation	Context
Require SBOE to approve of changes to the model plan **(Legislative)**	• Current law is unclear about SBOE's role in making changes to the model plan. • Because the model plan exemplifies the State's interpretation of best practices and should represent the highest standard of evaluation practice and policy, we recommend requiring SBOE to approve of substantive changes to the model plan.
Streamline the Teacher Effectiveness Rubric (TER) and align it to the new state standards **(Implementation)**	• Since the adoption of the TER, Indiana has adopted new standards that should be reflected in the evaluation rubric. • Stakeholders report redundancies in the rubric, particularly in Domains 1 and 3, that should be eliminated.

Strengthen the current policies and practices for performance-based compensation

Recommendation	Context

Address the perceived impact of preventing compensation increases for teachers rated Improvement Necessary
 (Legislative)
	• Some stakeholders speculated that preventing salary increases deters evaluators from giving teachers in need of development an honest assessment.
	• We propose the following policy changes:
	    • Allow teachers to be rated "IN" two years in a row or "IN" followed by "IE" before a salary increase is withheld.
	    • Include a provision that allows teachers rated "IN" to apply for a waiver from the condition that they not be given a salary increase. The waiver can be granted if the teacher demonstrates extraordinary circumstances impacted his/her ability to perform at an "Effective" level. SBOE would issue rules establishing the process and standards for reviewing and granting waivers.

Strengthen the current policies and practices for performance-based compensation

Recommendation	Context
Allocate more funding for grants used to support performance compensation **(Legislative)**	• Stakeholders reported that the size of the salary increases are not sufficient. • Some corporations do not budget for salary increases outside of the School Performance Awards. • We recommend that the State allocate more funding for the School Performance Awards for the next two years while corporations work towards self-sustaining compensation models

Clarify the IDOE and SBOE's authority to enforce compliance with compensation model requirements
 (Legislative)
	• Current law is vague about the SBOE's enforcement powers.
	 • To provide more specificity, we offer the following options:
	     • If a corporation's noncompliance affected the salary increase of any Effective or Highly Effective teachers, SBOE can call for the corporation provide backpay to these teachers
	     • If a corporation fails to correct any areas of noncompliance by the start of the next school year, the corporation can be required to pay a monetary penalty. In SBOE's discretion, the penalty can be used to supplement teacher salaries for Effective and Highly Effective teachers in that corporation.

Strengthen the current policies and practices for performance-based compensation

Recommendation	Context
Support corporations by identifying exemplary compensation models when they are published on IDOE's website **(Implementation)**	• IDOE posts all compensation models on its website, but it notes that not all models are compliant with state law. • To support corporations that are seeking exemplars, IDOE should, at a minimum, identify which models are not in compliance. • IDOE should also indicate which models it considers exemplary and highlight the strengths of those models.
Support corporations to plan for sustainable compensation models **(Implementation)**	• To support corporations plan for sustainable compensation models, IDOE should facilitate collaboration among corporations. • Similarly situated corporations may be able to work together to solve for a common problem of practice. • They may also be able to collaborate with external partners who can provide expert guidance where needed.

Agenda

Overview of our work to date

Current state of evaluation

Overview of recommendations

Recommendations

▶ **Next Steps**

Next Steps: Stakeholder Design Committee

- ➢ Should the Board adopt our recommendations, TNTP will convene and facilitate a small Stakeholder Design Committee.

- ➢ We will work closely with Board staff to identify and invite stakeholders to join the Committee.

- ➢ At the Board's direction, the Stakeholder Design Committee will begin to execute on the changes that are adopted.

- ➢ We will provide regular updates to the Board on the progress of the Stakeholder Design Committee between now and when our engagement ends on March 31st.

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Summary of TNTP's Recommendations for Improving Teacher Evaluation in Indiana

Topic	Legislative	Regulatory	Implementation
Vision-setting & Change Management Leadership	N/A	N/A	Set a vision and theory of action for teacher evaluation (pg. 6)
			Provide leadership for change management and implementation of newly adopted policies and practices (pg. 6)
			Ensure there a clear, frequent and high-quality communications and resources to support implementation at all levels of the State's education system (pg. 7)
			Allocate resources and personnel at the state level to ensure implementation aligns with the State's vision and theory of action (pg. 7)
Increased Focus on High-Quality Training	N/A	**Administrator & Evaluator Training:** Require additional training whenever a corporation makes substantive changes to its evaluation plan (pg. 8)	**Evaluator Training:** Offer "plan agnostic" training for evaluators for trainers of evaluators (pg. 9) Leverage ESCs to provide high-quality training to school corporations (pg. 10) Highlight the mutually reinforcing nature of evaluator evaluation and teacher evaluation (pg. 10)
	Teacher Training: Require corporations to provide training to teachers on their corporation's evaluation plan (pg. 11) Require SBOE to establish standards for teacher training (pg. 11)	**Teacher Training:** SBOE establishes standards for teacher training on evaluation plans (pg. 11)	**Teacher Training:** Support districts by identifying and promoting resources for conducting teacher training on evaluation plans (pg. 12) Offer a "plan agnostic" training for trainers of teachers that includes best practices and resources (pg. 12)

Objective Measures of Student Performance	N/A	Ensure corporations utilize comparable levels of objective measures of student performance by defining "significantly inform" (pg. 14)	Build off current support structures to help districts that must make design adjustments to comply with new definitions (pg. 15 and 16)
		Ensure an appropriate level of rigor in the definition of "negative impact" (pg. 15)	Leverage IDOE expertise to support SBOE and corporations to understand assessment guidance (pg. 16)
Educator Engagement	Require districts that wish to use a locally-created or modified plan to engage teachers in the design process (pg. 17)	N/A	Provide guidance to districts on how to create an implement an appropriate teacher engagement process (pg. 18)
Monitoring Plans for Consistency	Require corporations to submit locally-created or modified plans to IDOE for approval (pg. 19)	N/A	Support corporation administrators to leverage best practices when designing evaluation plans (pg. 19)
	Require regular monitoring and reporting of corporations' plan implementation (pg. 19)		Institute a regular reporting cycle on the progress of implementation (pg. 20)
Revisions to the State's Model Plan	Require SBOE to approve of changes to the model plan (pg. 20)	N/A	Streamline the TER and align it to the new state standards (pg. 20)
Compensation Models	Address the perceived impact of preventing compensation increases for teachers rated Improvement Necessary (pg. 21)	N/A	Support corporations by identifying exemplary compensation models when they are published on the IDOE website (pg. 23)
	Clarify the IDOE and SBOE's authority to enforce compliance with compensation model requirements (pg. 22)		Support corporations to plan for sustainable compensation models (pg. 23)
	Allocate more funding for grants used to support performance compensation (pg. 22)		