

Recommendations for Strengthening Indiana's Teacher Evaluation System

Indiana State Board of Education – Strategic Planning
Committee Meeting

January 26, 2015

Agenda



Overview of our work to date

Current State of Evaluation in Indiana

Overview of Recommendations

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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.

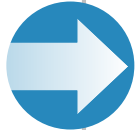
- First, we assessed the state's alignment to national best practices for teacher evaluation. We made initial recommendations based on this review of law and policy at the December 3, 2014 SBOE meeting.
- We gathered information about the local context and state of evaluation in Indiana through stakeholder 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.



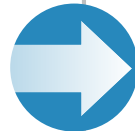
Our work has 3 phases:



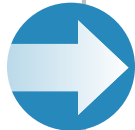
During Phase 2 of our work, we utilized stakeholder feedback to inform further research and analysis.



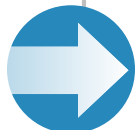
We surfaced areas for further investigation through focus group discussions, individual conversations as well as the recently conducted INTASS survey of over 2,000 educators.



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.



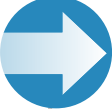
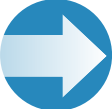



The purpose of these discussions was to explore some of the findings of the INTASS survey and identify areas where we should focus further research and analysis.



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, which would have allowed us to connect with between 60 and 96 individuals.
-  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. This is generally considered a successful participation rate for an engagement effort of this scale and timeline.
-  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.

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.

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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

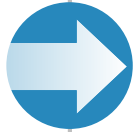
Encourage the
equitable
distribution of
effective teachers
across the state

Ensure students
have effective
teachers so that
student learning
will increase



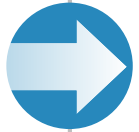
Because teaching is the most influential in-school factor affecting student performance, these goals for evaluation in Indiana are aligned with research and best practice.

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.

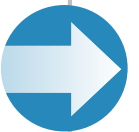


Indiana's **accomplishments** over the last two years are noteworthy and important.

- 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

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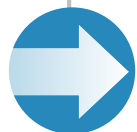


Overview of Recommendations

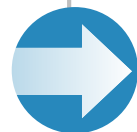
Recommendations

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.

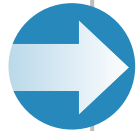


Changes to law or regulation create the enabling conditions necessary for Indiana to continue the hard but critical work of implementation, but they will not take the place of leadership support.

“Moving from a system that rates everyone as just fine to one that differentiates performance is daunting and requires a culture shift.”

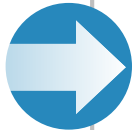
– National Council on Teacher Quality

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**

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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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 subcommittee to produce a plan that addresses 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Successful change management and implementation depend on having clear, frequent and thoughtful communication at all levels.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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

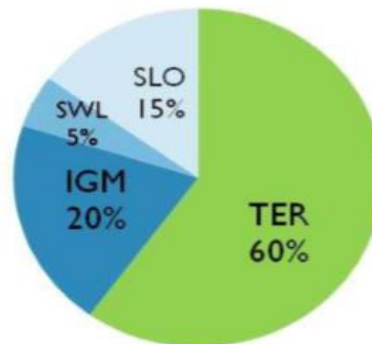
“Objective measures” is broadly defined and can be based on a variety of assessment tools – not just state assessments.

- 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



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)



Group 3 Teachers: Teachers who do not teach any classes with growth model data



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 not 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
<p>Build off current support structures to help corporations revise their local definitions and understand the implications of these changes (Implementation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
<p>Leverage IDOE expertise to support SBOE and corporations to understand assessment guidance (Implementation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishing a regular reporting cycle will ensure SBOE is informed on the status of implementation and can support IDOE with enforcement as needed

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

Recommendation	Context
Require SBOE to approve of changes to the model plan (Legislative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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
<p>Address the perceived impact of preventing compensation increases for teachers rated Improvement Necessary (Legislative)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current law is vague about the SBOE's enforcement powers.• To provide more specificity, we offer the following options:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.

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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.

Connect with us.



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