



Your Virtual **PERA Coach**

Issue Number 9 - August 2016



A publication created by the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council and the Illinois State Board of Education to guide you in implementing the *Performance Evaluation Reform Act*.

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Dear Illinois Educator,

Welcome to the 2016-17 school year and the first year of full PERA implementation for most of our school districts. We are pleased to continue to publish *Your Virtual PERA Coach* and look forward to sending you four issues this year (August, October, January and March). We hope you will find these newsletters informative and useful as you navigate your way through the first year of full PERA implementation.

We want to help you plan for the start of a PERA-focused school year so the August issue of the Virtual PERA Coach offers some suggestions and reminders about things that can be done on the first day/week of teacher attendance. We also know that one of the challenges evaluators face with implementing a performance evaluation system is determining how to schedule all the observations and conferences amidst all the other job requirements. Therefore, a topic of this issue is on time management. We share tips from experienced evaluators and also provide a sample evaluation schedule so you can see how everything fits into the school year.

As PEAC members, we continue to work with you for continuous improvement and to make education in Illinois the best for our students and staff. Here's to a safe 2016-17 school year filled with learning.



STARTING THE YEAR

Opening Comments

If you are in your first year of PERA implementation, you will most likely want to start the school year out by incorporating comments about implementing the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) into your welcome back remarks.

Our early implementers tell us the most effective presentations about their performance evaluation systems were those that were co-planned by the PERA Joint Committee and not just by a Superintendent or other administrator. The best roll-out/implementation practices are team efforts - with Labor/ Management working together. The more the process is co-owned - the better.

Following are some suggestions for PERA-related topics you might want to include and embellish upon at your opening session:

- Introduction of the members of the PERA Joint Committee and thank you for their work
- Statement about the evaluation system development being a collaborative process between administration, teachers, and teacher union/association
- Reminder of the end goal of the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) - to improve instruction and student learning

- Comment about how the evaluation process has changed from being focused on compliance to continuous improvement/growth
- Words regarding how performance evaluation ratings will now be based on a combination of professional practice and multiple measures of student growth
- Review the evaluation calendar and highlight key elements of the process
- Remarks about the process being fluid, continuously monitored and/or revised based on feedback and future work of the district's PERA Joint Committee

Reminder - Start of the Year Requirements Per Part 50 of the Administrative Rules

As you schedule meetings and written communications for the beginning of the year, remember the following requirement:

At the start of the school term (i.e., the first day students are required to be in attendance), the school district shall provide a written notice (either electronic or paper) that a performance evaluation will be conducted in that school term **to each teacher affected** or, if the affected teacher is hired after the start of the school term, then no later than 30 days after the contract is executed. The written notice shall include:

- 1) a copy of the rubric to be used to rate the teacher against identified standards and goals and other tools to be used to determine a performance evaluation rating;
- 2) a summary of the manner in which measures of student growth and professional practice to be used in the evaluation relate to the performance evaluation ratings of "excellent", "proficient", "needs improvement", and "unsatisfactory" as set forth in Sections 24A-5(e) and 34-85c of the School Code; and
- 3) a summary of the district's procedures related to the provision of professional development in the event a teacher receives a "needs improvement" or remediation in the event a teacher receives an "unsatisfactory" rating to include evaluation tools to be used during the remediation period.



THE JOURNEY TO PERA IMPLEMENTATION

A Teacher's Perspective

Read Kristen Adam's words about her experiences preparing for full PERA Implementation as a teacher/union president in LaSalle Peru Township High School District #120.

In my experience and in talking to districts around me, districts seem to have made the changes, and have become more comfortable with the professional practice side of PERA.

In my own district, I believe that the changes and continued improvements we have made to the professional practice evaluation tool have not only been effective, but have also helped teachers, including myself, to be even more reflective about practice and has fostered a model based on continuous improvement.

The growth part of the evaluation tool is different, and more difficult. This will be the first year of full implementation in my, and many other districts across the state. There is considerable apprehension about how this is going to roll out. I am optimistic that this process will work similarly to the professional practice process. Our PERA Joint Committee is approaching this as a learning experience. We know that we will make mistakes. We know we will have to make adjustments as we figure out what we did not know when we put our plan together. We know that our goal is student achievement and that if we work together we will achieve that goal.

Our district approach for the last six years (since PERA passage in January, 2010) has been to look at this as a process. We did our research, we attended professional development, and we produced a working tool, that we evaluated at the end of each school year, through committee as well as faculty and administration surveys. We gave each iteration of the tool two years of implementation before making significant changes on the professional practice piece, in order to make sure that all faculty were evaluated using the same tool. We intend to follow the same process as we roll out the growth piece. We plan to evaluate the growth plan at the end of each school year as a joint committee and through faculty and administrative surveys and make adjustments as needed. Again, we are viewing this as a process, not as an end product.



PERA Implementation - How do we find time for all of the required observations and conferences?

Being in the classroom and observing teaching/learning is essential for evaluating professional practice. However, it can be difficult for evaluators to find time to do the required observations, prepare for and meet for all of the pre/post and student conferences.

Following are some suggestions used by experienced evaluators that might help you manage the requirements of your performance evaluation system.

Scheduling - Schedule dates/times for observations, and pre- and post-observation conferences at one time. Get these dates/times written into the evaluator/teacher's calendars.

If possible, have the administrative assistant/secretary schedule the evaluator's observations and conferences into open times and add them to the evaluator's calendar.

Use a Google calendar or other shared calendar program for teachers to sign up for times. Or, put a calendar of upcoming open times for formal observations on the office counter/staff bulletin board and have teachers sign up for open times.

Create and maintain a spreadsheet of all of the teachers who will be evaluated with the number of district-required observations in order to keep track of them and to space them out throughout the year. Click [here](#) for an editable example of a spreadsheet one principal created as shown below.

Example of a chart used by an evaluator to keep track of observations and conferences

2016-17	Self Eval.	Obs 1 Pre obs post	Obs 2 Pre obs post	Obs 3 Pre obs post	Informal Observations	Mid-Review	Sum	PGP Dev	PGP Rev
Teacher 1 (Tenured Year 1)									
Teacher 2 (Tenured Year 1)									
Teacher 3 (Tenured Year 1)									
Teacher 4 (Non-tenured Year 1)									
Teacher 5 (Non-tenured Year 4)									
Teacher 6 (Tenured Year 1)									
Teacher 7 (Non-tenured Year 4)									
Teacher 8 (Non-tenured Year 3)									
Teacher 9 (Tenured Year 2)									
Teacher 10 (Tenured Year 2)									
Teacher 11 (Tenured Year 1)									
Teacher 12 (Tenured Year 2)									
Teacher 13 (Tenured Year 2)									
Teacher 14 (Tenured Year 1)									
Teacher 15 (Tenured Year 1)									
Teacher 16 (Tenured Year 2)									
Teacher 17 (Non-tenured Year 4)									
Teacher 18 (Tenured Year 2)									

Year 1: Professional Growth Plan Year: 1 observation, informal observations, PGP (Professional Growth Plan) conversations
Year 2: Summative Year: Self-reflection, min.-1 observation, min. 4 informals, Mid-year data review, summative rating, PGP Development

Create and save wording for a recurring email to send out to all of the teachers in a particular group (e.g. Tenured or Non-tenured teachers) who will be evaluated that year when the evaluator is ready to begin the next set of formal observations, hold mid-point review conferences, etc. This email can let the teachers know to sign up for a meeting/observation. Evaluators can paste the saved text into the commonly sent email to save time.

Stick to the schedule:

Evaluators should make every effort to stick to the schedule. Rescheduling -an observation may require another pre-observation conference to discuss the lesson plan for the day. When evaluators don't show up for scheduled observations or repeatedly need to reschedule them, teachers can become frustrated which can damage the collaborative, trusting environment which it needs to thrive.

Put observations in the "Urgent and Important" Category as shown below in the Covey Time Management Grid. Read more about the grid [here](#).

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crises • Pressing problems • Deadline-driven projects, meetings, reports <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">I</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation • Prevention • Planning • Relationship building • Re-creation • Values clarification <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">II</p>
Not Important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needless interruptions • Unnecessary reports • Unimportant meetings, phone calls, mail, email • Other people's minor issues <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">III</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trivia, busywork • Irrelevant phone calls, mail, email • Time-wasters • "Escape" activities • Excessive TV, Internet, relaxation <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">IV</p>

Use All Qualified Evaluators

Determine who is (or can become) a pre-qualified evaluator in the district. With the support of the PERA Joint Committee, divide up the observations and evaluations of teachers between other administrators (i.e. Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum Director, Director of Special Education, Department Chairperson, Teacher Leader, etc.).

During Observations

Use a district-created or purchased observation template. Some templates have three columns; time, evidence/notes, framework component. Include common information on the template such as the components of the instructional framework used, a key for abbreviations used (see below), etc.

Use abbreviations in the notes instead of writing or typing out words used often (i.e. S = student, Ss = students, T = teacher)

Use keyboard text shortcuts (e.g. on Apple computers under System preferences/Keyboard/ or commercial application programs such as textexpander) for words typed most often in observations. Programs such as these allow the user to type a few letters which then are replaced with whole words or phrases.



What does a PERA implementation year look like?

The days are filled with opportunities to observe teaching practice, for collaborative conversations between teachers and evaluators, for rich discussions about student growth and professional growth for educators, and for coaching/summative feedback to improve instruction.

Be sure to know your district's required dates (e.g. when summative conferences must be completed for Non-tenured and Tenured teachers) as agreed upon by the PERA Joint Committee and/or as written in the teacher contract. Schedule observations and conferences accordingly, leaving enough time between them for teachers to reflect, process and implement desired changes.

Click [here](#) to see an example of what one district's timeline looks like for the year.

Additional Website Links and Resources

[Illinois State Board of Education's PERA webpage](#) This site contains information and links to resources about the Performance Evaluation Reform Act.

[Performance Evaluation Advisory Council's \(PEAC\) webpage](#) This site contains links to guidance documents and resources to help teachers, administrators, PERA Joint Committees, and School Boards implement the Performance Evaluation Reform Act.

[PEAC District Evaluation Data Guidance Document](#) This document was referenced in the May 2016 issue of the

Virtual PERA Coach and is now published on the PEAC webpage. It describes data collection and analysis to be carried out at the district level and identifies information that districts must report to ISBE.

Previous PERA Coach Issues

Click the following links to view previous issues of Your Virtual PERA Coach

[May 2016 Issue](#) - how to use evaluation data and sustainability

[April 2016 Issue](#) - getting ready for implementation and preparing an on-going communications plan

[March 2016 Issue](#) - spotlight on two district's journey to PERA implementation

[February 2016 Issue](#) - focus on optional weightings and determining Summative Ratings

[January 2016 Issue](#) - continued focus on assessing student growth and student learning objectives

[December 2015 Issue](#) - focus on assessing student growth

[November 2015 Issue](#) - focus on developing a communication plan and evaluating teacher practice

[October 2015 Issue](#) - focus on getting started and the work of the PERA joint committee



Questions and Sharing

Do you have questions, topic suggestions, experiences or documents you would like to share? Use this [link](#) to submit them for consideration for future issues

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