Impact of the Relationship between OTES and OPES on Teacher and Principal Evaluations

IMPORTANCE
Investigation in a sample of LEAs revealed that there is a relationship between the Ohio Principal and Teacher Evaluation Systems (OPES and OTES) that influences implementation and the adoption of student growth measures. OTES and OPES were designed to be research based, transparent, fair and adaptable to the specific contexts of Ohio’s districts. In Ohio, teacher and principal evaluation ratings comprise of 50% student growth measures and 50% performance on a standards-based rubric. Decisions related to implementation were based on LEA views of which system (OPES or OTES) to implement first, because all LEAS viewed parallel implementation as too challenging and time consuming. No LEAs, regardless of which system they implemented first, made decisions about student growth measures prior to the end of the 2012-13 school year because measures and weights for teachers were to be determined first.

BACKGROUND
OTES and OPES were collaboratively developed by practicing educators, higher education faculty, and representatives from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). In 2010, Ohio’s Race to the Top (RttT) application was funded. It included the phasing in of revised teacher and principal evaluation systems. Ohio RttT districts were required to use the OTES and OPES, but non-RttT districts were permitted to propose alternative, comparable evaluation systems provided the systems complied with Ohio law requiring that 50% of the evaluation be based on student performance data. However, districts are not required to include the student growth metrics in teacher or principal evaluation systems until 2013-14.

In the midst of data collection for this study, the Ohio legislature passed HB555 which changed the required percentages of value-added measures to reflect a teacher’s course schedule and required approved vendor assessment growth measures be included when used by a district. This study investigates three key areas:

1) The processes and metrics defining student performance that districts adopted for use in teacher and principal evaluation systems.

2) The relationship between OTES and OPES (or ODE approved locally equivalent evaluation systems) regarding implementation sequencing, planning, feedback and student performance metrics.

3) The preparation and experiences of teachers and principals evaluated with OTES and OPES.

RESEARCH DESIGN
A constructivist model involving guided interviews with LEA superintendents, teacher and principals was implemented along with document analysis. Phone interviews with
superintendents enabled identification of implementation LEAs where site visits with focus groups of teachers and administrators provided more details regarding their processes and experiences using the evaluation systems.

**DATA**

Purposeful sampling was used to identify twelve LEAs for participation. Eight districts were selected to ensure statewide representation regarding RttT regions and to be representative of size, socio-economic levels (typology) and state report card ratings. The other four included two non-RttT districts and two RttT districts participating in funded grant work related to Student Learning Objectives (SLOs). In each district interviews were conducted with the superintendent. In the seven implementing districts, principals and teachers were interviewed as appropriate. The research team requested and are awaiting redacted copies of the completed forms used in each evaluation.

**PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

Interview responses provided rich data regarding the training, implementation and perceptions of the models. Evaluator, principal and classroom teacher voices provided a breadth of feedback from multiple perspectives including their perceptions of usefulness for improving schools and student learning. Common themes among all districts were identified to include:

**Positive Responses to Evaluation Systems.** Consensus that the new evaluation systems were appropriately grounded in standards, provided for positive conversations between teachers and principals, and principals and administrators, and included student performance measured in multiple ways* (*HB555 shifted the responses to a more negative view on this dimension).

**Lack of Training and Preparation.** LEAs reported a general lack of training and preparation for the new system, especially for OPES. Many districts were scheduled to complete OTES training during the 2012-13 school year; but length of training presented scheduling issues.

**Issues with Student Growth Measures.** All preferred multiple measures of growth be included in the 50% component of evaluation; a general lack of trust in the validity of growth measures, especially since they reflect the previous year's work with students; fairness concerns regarding student growth measures, particularly between SLOs and value-added measures; a general lack of assessment literacy; and ODE final rating table limits final rating when SGM is low.

**Feelings of Stress.** A general feeling of being overwhelmed by the number of initiatives occurring simultaneously; time demands of evaluation interfere with daily work of administrators; concerns that the evaluation system documentation requirements take time away from teaching, lesson preparation, student interactions and access to principals; a growing sense that the evaluation system resulted in more competition and less collaboration among peers.

The pending document analysis will provide information about which forms were used, their completeness and the types of information included in the evaluations.

**Suggested Citation**