

TO: Higher Education Committee

FROM: Joseph P. Frey

SUBJECT: Professional Assessment System for Educational Leaders

DATE: January 26, 2010

STRATEGIC GOAL: Goals 1, 2 and 3

AUTHORIZATION(S):

## SUMMARY

### Issue for Discussion

To update the Committee on the design elements and components of a performance evaluation system for school principals proposed by members of the Leadership Evaluation/Assessment Working Group and General Advisory Group from the Wallace Foundation Grant: Building a Cohesive Leadership System in New York State and to discuss avenues for collecting feedback from the field and other steps deemed necessary as part of the process leading to adoption by the Board of Regents.

### Reason(s) for Consideration

#### Review of Policy

#### Proposed Handling

This item will come before the Higher Education Committee at its February 2010 meeting for discussion and to seek approval from the Committee to collect feedback from the community statewide.

### Background Information

The Board of Regents, in conjunction with our state and national partners, was awarded a \$3 million Wallace Foundation Grant in 2008 to develop and implement a Cohesive Leadership System in New York State built upon research-based leadership standards with a focus on transformation of collegiate school preparation programs, establishment of leadership academies to serve principals statewide, and the creation of a school leader performance evaluation system. To guide the development of New York State's Cohesive Leadership System, the General Advisory Group was formed consisting of Department staff working in collaboration with representatives from the following grant partner organizations:

- Collegiate Association for Developing Educational Administrators
- Leadership for Educational Achievement Foundation, Inc.
- Metropolitan Council for Educational Administration Programs
- New York City Department of Education
- New York City Leadership Academy
- New York State Council of School Superintendents
- New York State Federation of School Administrators
- New York State School Boards Association
- School Administrators Association of New York State

- Education Counsel

This group has met monthly over the past 18 months to provide advice and direction in the development of New York State's Cohesive Leadership System. They have also assisted in providing information as requested by The Wallace Foundation for various status and other reports. Dr. Joseph Murphy from Vanderbilt University, recognized nationally as an expert on the design and construction of performance evaluations for school leaders, has served as consultant to the General Advisory Group. Dr. Murphy has worked with several states in developing performance evaluations for principals and has conducted research nationally on the topic. Department of Education officials from Delaware and Ohio made presentations to the General Advisory Group outlining the performance evaluation systems recently implemented in their home states. They shared their experiences, reflecting on both the process and the product, offering us their "lessons learned" along the way. Models from the other two states (Iowa and New Mexico) heavily involved in implementing new statewide evaluation systems were reviewed, analyzed and discussed by the General Advisory Group. Commercially developed models were also studied along with relevant research findings. Based upon the importance and enormity of the task as well as the need to involve both school and district level leaders in the conversation, a decision was reached by the General Advisory Group to create a School Leader Evaluation and Assessment Working Group to identify research-based design elements and components for a new school leader performance and evaluation system designed to increase the impact of school leaders on improving student achievement. This group included members of the General Advisory Group as well as principals selected by their state organizations (School Administrators Association of New York State, and New York State Federation of School Administrators) and superintendents selected by the New York State Council of School Superintendents. This group has met over the past 15 months and reached consensus on a set of "Guiding Principles" for a new Professional Assessment System for Educational Leaders (attached). This new system also identifies and defines five required components:

- Performance Goals: The selection of goals should take into consideration all aspects of a comprehensive school environment and provide a focus linked to established school and district plans designed to increase learning and achievement for all students.
- Student Performance: Student performance should be emphasized as a priority.
- Feedback from Multiple Sources: Feedback from stakeholders in the educational process provides valuable information related to school improvement initiatives.
- Professional Growth: Professional growth of the educational leader as demonstrated through actions and outcomes that impact student learning and achievement is an important objective of the educational leader evaluation/assessment process.
- Personalized Professional Focus: By targeting a single ISLLC Standard and concentrating on one or more of its related functions, the educational leader will develop and demonstrate a level of expertise.

Once the Professional Assessment System for Educational Leaders was agreed upon by the School Leader Evaluation and Assessment Working Group, it was taken to the General Advisory Group for approval. The attached draft has been approved by the General Advisory Group for consideration by the Regents. Overall, the process generated several draft versions and a depth of discussion that has been productive and professional. The current draft of the Professional Assessment System for Educational Leaders is brought to the Regents with the understanding that it will be administered locally, linked to State-provided professional development, and required through State regulations with the approval of the Board of Regents.

Recommendation

After being presented to the Board of Regents for conceptual approval, members of the General Advisory Group and the School Leader Evaluation and Assessment Working Group have expressed strong interest in having the current draft of the Professional Assessment System for Educational Leaders presented for feedback to members of the educational community statewide. Ideas on how to collect constructive feedback from the educational community as an integral part of the approval process have been discussed. A combination of regional "in person" focus groups combined with electronic surveys and/or Webinars were discussed as ways to ensure that all interested parties have the opportunity to participate. Thus we are seeking approval from the Regents to take this next step in the process.

Attachment

### Professional Assessment System for Educational Leaders

- Background and Purpose:

The New York State Education Department has embarked upon a comprehensive plan seeking to develop a Cohesive Leadership System (CLS) by focusing on key leverage points that will prepare and support educational leaders throughout their careers:

- Improving pre-service leadership programs
- Providing high quality professional development for practicing school leaders
- Creating an educational leader performance evaluation system
- Basing the above on the ISLLC Standards (2008)\* thus strengthening the cohesiveness of the system

A working group of principals, superintendents and district-level leaders were asked to address the third element of the CLS and design an educational leader performance evaluation system for recommendation to the department. NYSED staff assisted in this process, along with an expert consultant\*\* and the project director for the NYSED/Wallace Foundation Grant: Developing a Cohesive Leadership System in New York State. At the outset of the group's work, a number of Guiding Principles were identified upon which the performance evaluation will be constructed. In addition to these principles, a number of important concepts and ideas were discussed and agreed upon.

The first concept discussed by participants dealt with a strong interest in assuring that the professional assessment system would inform, and be informed by, the other elements of the CLS. Thus, the system serves, in part, as a tool to identify where and how pre-service leadership preparation programs and professional development initiatives can be improved. There was also a strong belief that the assessment system should be a team building enterprise whereby the evaluator and educational leader being evaluated form a strong bond focused on important work centered on student learning. Additionally, the concept of collective efficacy, where all partners in the equation for student success commit to school and personal growth and understand that extraordinary results can be achieved only when belief in one another is embraced, should be advanced as the result of the evaluation process. This would come, in part, by assuring that "lessons learned" are regularly and openly shared. Lastly, while ISLLC Standards are the prevailing framework, attention to state and local improvement initiatives must be accommodated as well.

- Guiding principles:

The Foundation Should . . .

- be based on state and national standards (ISLLC: 2008)
- be based on research, best practice, and experiential learning
- focus on the advancement of learning
- include indicators of student, teacher, and leader growth
- be evidence-based

The System Should . . .

- be applicable to all levels of leadership
- be flexible
- be based on multiple measures
- be sensitive to the diversity and the context of the school and district
- be clear and explicit
- be fair and reasonable

The Process Should . . .

- be a shared responsibility between the supervisor and the leader being evaluated
- include formative and summative assessments
- promote collaboration, ongoing communication, timely feedback, and trust between the supervisor and the leader being evaluated

The Outcomes Should . . .

- lead to professional growth and development of the leader being evaluated
- promote learning for all students
- be confidential
- Components:

Educational leaders will be evaluated on five components: Goals; Student Performance; Feedback from Multiple Sources; Professional Growth; and Personalized Professional Focus. A description of each component is provided in the chart below.

Components	Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance Goals</li> </ul>	<p>The selection of goals should take into consideration all aspects of a comprehensive school environment and provide a focus linked to established school and District plans designed to increase learning and achievement for all students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals should result from collaborative dialogue between the educational leader and his/her supervisor.</li> <li>• Goals should be manageable in number.</li> <li>• Goals should be specific and measurable.</li> <li>• Goals should be prioritized to ensure they address substantive issues identified through a thorough analysis of data.</li> <li>• Actions related to goals should be identified and implemented</li> </ul>

based on a thorough understanding and application of relevant research.

- Goals should identify targeted growth areas linked to the ISLLC Standards.

- Student Performance

Student performance should be emphasized as a priority.

- Evidence of data analysis should be demonstrated.
- Evidence of student growth/achievement should be derived from multiple indicators.
- Evidence of actions taken to address needs identified via data analysis should be demonstrated.
- Evidence of impact of actions taken on student growth/achievement should be demonstrated.
- Evidence of student growth/achievement should be based on evidence which answers the following questions:
  - What is the level of achievement?
  - What is the growth in achievement?
  - What is the equity in achievement?
- Student achievement should be supported by actions tied to ISLLC Standards.

- Feedback from Multiple Sources

Feedback from stakeholders in the educational process provides valuable information related to school improvement initiatives.

- Feedback should be related to ISLLC Standards.
- Determining what feedback should be collected as well as how, and from whom (which stakeholders) should be based upon discussion between the educational leader and supervisor.
- Methods for collecting feedback should be designed to guide the school/district improvement process.
- Feedback should be used to develop relevant professional development and other support for the educational leader aligned with ISLLC Standards.

- Professional Growth

Professional growth of the educational leader as demonstrated through actions and outcomes that impact student learning and achievement is an important objective of the educational leader evaluation/assessment process.

- Supervisors should provide specific and timely feedback through regularly scheduled meetings and ongoing communication.
- Evidence of the impact of professional growth efforts should be demonstrated
- The educational leader should engage in personal and collegial

reflective practice that promotes professional growth.

- The educational leader's professional development and support should be differentiated based on need.
- Professional development for the educational leader should be identified through collaborative discussion with his/her supervisor.
- Professional growth should be tied to ISLLC Standards and built upon New York State's Professional Development Standards.

- Personalized Professional Focus

By targeting a single ISLLC Standard and concentrating on one or more of its related functions, the educational leader will develop and demonstrate a level of expertise.

- The targeted ISLLC Standard and its related functions should be selected by the educational leader and shared with his/her supervisor.
- The educational leader and his/her supervisor will determine how acquisition of knowledge and skills will be demonstrated.
- The educational leader should provide evidence demonstrating acquisition, enhancement and application of skills/expertise to his/her supervisor.

\* Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium) 2008 as adopted by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration on December 12, 2007.

\*\* Joseph Murphy, Frank W. Mayborn Chair, Vanderbilt University