

## **Social Equality Educators POLICY BRIEF:**

### **How does the new teacher evaluation system in WA State and Seattle work?**

#### **What's the Issue**

Teacher evaluation has undergone an intensive transformation in WA state and in Seattle and these new changes are still just beginning to be understood. The Social Equality Educators (SEE) know that teachers need to be well-informed about the evaluation process to ensure our evaluations are sustainable, fair, and collegially empowering.

From the CBA Article XI, A, 4: "The SPS and SEA agree that a meaningful and effective evaluation process is based on the principles of mutual respect, shared accountability, and continuous improvement. The SPS and SEA agree that these principles will be advanced by an evaluation system that is conducted in a manner that fosters open and candid communication, that recognizes all factors that affect performance, and by a mutual agreement to assist all employees to meet or exceed performance expectations."

Despite our contract containing this promising language, SEE knows that many teachers find the current evaluation system to be confusing, overwhelmingly time-consuming, and not functional at this point in equitably highlighting our successes and empowering us to improve. A first step at empowering us is to educate us about the evaluation system itself, rather than keeping the process in a 'black box,' to which only evaluators have a key. SEE believes that a functional evaluation system should empower people in the process of developing their professional practice: If evaluation is something being "done to you" its effectiveness will be severely limited.

For the **2013-14 SPS Classroom Teacher Evaluation Process Summary** see [link](#).

#### **Let's be Honest about Common Problems with Evaluation**

It is important that district leaders, evaluators, and teachers are honest and fully aware of the research<sup>1</sup> that reveals how evaluation systems commonly go awry, including:

- 1) creating unmanageable systems, with too much paperwork for both teachers and evaluators, and too little time to process and discuss decisions that impact instruction
- 2) using tools that are not reliable measures of teacher effectiveness
- 3) reinforcing isolation and competitiveness rather than facilitating joint work among teachers

1. [Getting Teacher Evaluation Right: What Really Matters for Effectiveness and Improvement](#) by Linda Darling-Hammond (Apr 26, 2013)

## **Seattle Student Growth Rating**

In Seattle, we are embarking into unknown territory with new Smarter Balanced assessments in 2014–'15. District officials predict a significant drop in student performance with the transition to these new tests, but the new Seattle Student Growth Rating<sup>2</sup> means that teachers of tested subjects will nonetheless be accountable to show growth on the tests, regardless of the fact that the assessment is completely different than previous tests. To this critique, the district leadership says that we will be normed to one another, so it will be impossible for all of us to have “low student growth.” However, using a normed scale creates “winners” and “losers” even if we are all supporting student growth. SEE knows this competitive structure undermines the collaborative relationships that are required to help all students achieve in schools. . We all need to succeed just as all of our students need to succeed. We deserve better evaluations that make that possible.

For a comparison, see [Student growth impact ratings: State vs. Seattle's](http://wp.me/p42B4L-8Olink) (<http://wp.me/p42B4L-8Olink>)

## **How do I choose Assessments to Measure Growth on State Student Growth Impact Rating?**

Washington state TPEP (Teacher Principal Evaluation Project) was developed with sound research in mind regarding assessment tools. Because there is not one assessment that will fit all teachers' subjects uniformly, the state cannot dictate which test teachers use to show growth. The most valid and instructionally-informative assessments are those determined by teachers themselves. All other districts in the state of WA use only teacher-determined and evaluator-approved assessments to measure student growth, because it makes sense.

TPEP developers even warn us to “avoid letting the assessment tools drive the goals. Set the goals first and then determine the ways to measure them.” Additionally, “Instruction, learning, and assessment cycles should be part of regular, routine classroom practices. Campbell’s law reminds us that we should not let test scores become the goal of the teaching process. When that happens, they both lose their value as indicators of educational status and distort the educational process in undesirable ways. We should also always, when appropriate, involve students in the goal-setting process to take ownership of their learning.”

(See TPEP training module <http://tpep-wa.org/> for more information on assessment tools)

## **WA Teacher's Final Summative Evaluation Rating**

The summative evaluation rating is written in WA law to be the culmination of a comprehensive process of self-assessment, goal-setting, plan implementation, dialogue, and reflection that unfolds over months. If time is not dedicated to review and reflect collaboratively with each of these elements multiple times over the course of the year, the comprehensive analysis that is vital to the process of effective and authentic evaluation will be compromised. See <http://tpep-wa.org/> for more info. The district-determined student growth rating does not impact state summative performance rating. **2. See,**

## **What Happened to Danielson Rubrics?**

2013 WA state law required the use of eight state criteria instead of four domains, but the 8 criteria are not intuitively-designed or accessible to inform our practice. Therefore, state TPEP developers recommend we “live in the Danielson framework,” meaning we reflect on our teaching using the framework and at the end of the year transfer our evidence into the 8 state criteria. See Danielson rubrics certificated classroom teachers are being evaluated upon here: <http://tpep-wa.org/the-model/framework-and-rubrics/instructional-frameworks/danielson-framework/>

## **How Do We Give Feedback? PG&E joint SEA/SPS Working Group**

There is a PG&E joint SEA/SPS work group that monitors the evaluation process and rollout of the new system, and it needs to be more actively informed. If you have questions or concerns about how the evaluations are going in your building, it is important for SEA to know because we have a joint responsibility in our contract to address these issues. SEA knows that there needs to be better communication and more systemic supports for everyone, including better knowledge of the evaluation process, networks of supports for teachers to share and collaborate on effective teaching practices with one another, and more support for those who feel their evaluation may not be fair or reflective of their teaching practice. Contact Marian Wagner [mawagner@seattleschools.org](mailto:mawagner@seattleschools.org) if you have questions/comments about the evaluation process with which you would like the PG&E work group to engage.

(LINKED, not in brief)

**Student growth impact ratings: State vs. Seattle's**

Some Seattle classroom teachers have two student growth ratings with which they are rated. Here are some key differences:

State student growth impact rating	Seattle school district student growth rating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Required state law, after passage of 5895 in 2013, with some components up to locals to decide</li><li>• Applies to every classroom teacher who teaches their own group of students on a regular basis</li><li>• For those on comprehensive evaluations, the student growth impact rating is determined by combining ratings from 5 student growth rubrics</li><li>• For those on focused evaluations, there is no official student growth impact rating given but the student growth rubric that is associated with the focused goal is used to factor in final summative score. If “1” is given on any row of the rubric, it triggers a student growth inquiry.</li></ul> <p>For more information on state student growth rubrics/ratings, see: <a href="http://tpep-wa.org/student-growth-overview/">http://tpep-wa.org/student-growth-overview/</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not state law, but agreed to in Seattle's 2010 CBA</li><li>• Only applies to about 15% of certificated teachers for whom there are two contiguous years of state tests in their content area (Grades 4, 5, math and LA 6–10)</li><li>• 2 year rolling average of only state test constitutes the growth; MAP is no longer used</li><li>• Teachers are normed to one another (on a curve), but sample size is statistically very low (only Seattle's ~525 tested-subject teachers)</li><li>• Determined in the Fall, when state test data is available</li><li>• Does not impact State Summative Performance Rating</li><li>• If low student growth, no automatic punitive movement to comprehensive. Rather, teacher must participate in a student growth reflective inquiry process. To support the teacher's reflective process, the evaluator must choose 1 or more of the menu of choices listed in CBA under Article XI, Section E, 1i.</li></ul> <p>For more information on Seattle student growth rating, see CBA, Article XI, Section E. You can access the contract here <a href="http://www.seattlewea.org/">http://www.seattlewea.org/</a></p>