

# North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

## **Preface: A Statement of State Policy on Principal Evaluation**

It is the constitutional and statutory responsibility of the State Superintendent and the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) to supervise elementary and secondary education students attending North Dakota schools (15.1-02-04). These duties include supervision of the establishment and maintenance of schools, and the advancement of statewide efforts to improve education for all students statewide.

It is the responsibility of the State of North Dakota, to ensure all students are provided high-quality instruction based on challenging state content standards. This instruction must be provided by highly qualified teachers who are supervised by effective principals.

### *A Focus on Principal Effectiveness*

The State of North Dakota ensures that every teacher is highly qualified through the state's teacher licensure provisions. State administrative rules require teachers to be supervised by qualified principals. The state and local school districts place broad supervisory, leadership, and management responsibilities with principals to ensure the proper administration of their appointed schools. North Dakota Century Code (15.1-15) specifies that every public school district shall conduct an appropriate evaluation for each public school principal. Principal performance evaluations provide for the continual improvement of a principal's overall performance and may be used to inform personnel decisions.

It has been practice among North Dakota public schools to administer locally defined principal performance evaluation efforts. This practice has produced a wide variety of principal performance evaluations, which include various reference standards, recording metrics, and narrative formats. The variety of evaluation models has not allowed for a common means of uniformly recording or compiling principal evaluation results in terms of common professional standards or performance levels.

To support the state development of more uniform standards and guidelines for improving local principal performance evaluations the NDDPI established the State ESEA Reauthorization Planning Committee, which consisted of approximately twenty-five separate stakeholder organizations.

The State ESEA Reauthorization Planning Committee formed a separate Subcommittee, titled the Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support System Subcommittee (TPESS Subcommittee), to develop more uniform principal performance evaluation guidelines. The TPESS Subcommittee's membership consisted of six teachers, six administrators, and four at-large members, including two legislators, a representative from the ND LEAD Center for Educational Leadership, and a higher education representative. The TPESS Subcommittee examined research on principal evaluations, reviewed methods in other states and was provided technical assistance from McREL.

The TPESS Subcommittee conducted its study and drafted work from October 2011 through July 2012. These principal performance evaluation guidelines were forwarded to the State ESEA Reauthorization Planning Committee, which reviewed, and amended them before recommending that the Superintendent of Public Instruction adopt them.

In March 2013, North Dakota withdrew its ESEA waiver application, however DPI, NDCEL, NDSBA, and NDEA recommitted their efforts to support continued TPESS.

In the fall of 2013, DPI reconvened the original TPESS Subcommittee, shifted the evaluation focus from teachers to principals, made the committee a full advisory committee, and renamed it the PTESS committee to designate the shift in focus of their work. Over the course of the 2013-14 school year, the PTESS committee worked to revise the original guideline documents created in 2012 for the now defunct waiver process. This revision of the document shifted the focus from a federally driven mandate

to a state led effort driven by North Dakota education stakeholders and focusing on the best interests of North Dakota students and schools. This revision process has led us to where we are today with evaluation guideline documents that the PTESS committee members and DPI believe will greatly enhance professional education practices in North Dakota. The creation and release of these guidelines, along with the subsequent list of approved, aligned evaluation models will undoubtedly improve the quality of teachers and principals in North Dakota.

NDDPI has also worked to align the new state evaluation system with the statewide accreditation process with AdvancED. The department will have the ability to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the new evaluation process through ND state assurances within the AdvancED ASSIST tool and the external evaluation process used for accreditation. The connection of the new evaluation system to the accreditation of all public schools in North Dakota helps to form a uniform system of accountability statewide and helps to ensure the effectiveness all schools.

#### *Our Commitment to our Shared Profession*

North Dakotans understand that effective principals are important to students' growth and achievement. As a state, we believe that we must build the capacity of our principals as a way to improve instruction and student achievement. A reliable principal evaluation system across our state will foster continuous improvement among all principals. These guidelines will help local school districts improve the quality, uniformity and reliability of their local principal evaluations.

I wish to extend my personal gratitude to the members of the TPESS Subcommittee and the State ESEA Reauthorization Planning Committee for their diligence, dedication, and professional attention to the study of research-based practice and policy in the development of these guidelines. I now ask that each public school district, administrator, and principal take these guidelines to heart with the commitment to improve our profession and our individual efforts to raise the quality of education across our state.

Kirsten Baesler  
State Superintendent