



Conferencing Guide for Superintendents

Establishing Focus and Priorities for Teacher Development and Evaluation (TDE) Initiatives

This resource is intended to assist superintendents with facilitating conversations with their school leaders around district priorities, initiatives, and expectations regarding their teacher development and evaluation (TDE) initiatives. This guide outlines five key topics that are specific to TDE and are key elements for early stages of implementation. These topics are informed by lessons learned from Minnesota pilot districts as well as experiences in other states. This resource provides suggested framing questions that district or charter leaders can use in conversations with school leaders.

Topic 1—Vision for TDE

It is important to ensure that all stakeholders in this process recognize that the purpose of the TDE initiatives is according to statute¹, “to develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success.” Summative evaluators, peer reviewers and teachers are learning new ways to work. Not only is significant training needed at the start of evaluation work, ongoing support is needed if evaluation processes are to be implemented successfully.

- Do we understand our roles, responsibilities, and expectations in the TDE plan?
- What changes in practice do we expect for teachers and principals?
- How can we ensure that the vision of teacher development and improved student learning and success is communicated to all stakeholders (School board, teachers, staff, community, etc)?
- How can school leaders keep the vision as a focal point? How can we ensure the details (“Am I completing this individual growth and development plan correctly?”) do not distract from the big picture (“How can I grow professionally this year?”)?

Topic 2—Support for School Leaders

School leaders/principals play a significant role in teacher development and evaluation, so support for them is paramount. As instructional leaders, they are responsible for facilitating the evaluation process, gathering and interpreting evidence of teacher performance, connecting this work to other initiatives, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. In many cases, this

¹ Minnesota Statutes § 122A.40, Subd 8 and 122A.41, Subd 5

Updated 7/18/14

work will redefine the role of the school leader or principal. The school system/district leadership must recognize and support this role for principals.

- What concerns do principals have?
- How will the district office support school leaders as they implement the TDE system?
- What duties can be shifted or shared with other personnel so that school leaders can focus on teachers' instructional practices?
- How often should we discuss this work throughout the year?

Topic 3—Connecting Initiatives

Districts should align teacher development and evaluation to other district initiatives. Pilot districts found success when teacher development and evaluation activities were aligned to current as well as new initiatives. Successful pilot districts aligned activities—such as peer review and student learning goals—with teachers' professional learning communities (PLCs) by embedding these activities into expectations for PLCs and team meetings. Teachers reported that the goal-setting process was clear and straightforward when aligned with the district and school building goals. District priorities were reflected in classroom observations and teachers' individual growth plans.

- How will we use the TDE activities (classroom observations, goal setting, growth plans) to support teachers as well as other initiatives?
- What other initiatives connect to TDE? How will principals use TDE to support other initiatives so that they do not feel like separate work?
- How can TDE inform professional development at a district and school levels?
- How does a principal's leadership of TDE activities connect to a principal's evaluation?

Topic 4—Assessing Implementation

The local model we implement this year will be continually improved and revised so that it meets our expected outcomes. In statute, those outcomes are “to develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success.”

- What is the principal's role in collecting data about the TDE system? What is the district's role?
- How will we track completion rates and timeliness of TDE activities throughout the school year?
- What will principals look for at the school level to see if these activities are making a difference?

Updated 7/18/14

Topic 5—Technical and Adaptive Leadership

School leaders must know and clearly communicate the specific elements of the local model (i.e., the components, activities, definitions, roles). Any new initiative will present—particularly in early stages of implementation—questions or dilemmas to address as well as areas needing further clarification. When technical solutions are insufficient, school leaders use adaptive leadership strategies to adapt and thrive in challenging environments

- How will we track and respond to FAQs about our plan?
- How will a positive culture be established for TDE to align with our vision?