

Changes to and Effects upon Improvement Plans Effective January 1, 2016

Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right. ~ Oprah Winfrey

Resulting from changes made to the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) framework by the Ohio State Board of Education (OSBOE), the electronic Teacher Principal Evaluation System (eTPES) will no longer indicate improvement plans are required based upon below expected growth ratings (SGMs) within summative evaluation ratings. Starting January 1, 2015, only summative ratings of 'ineffective' will indicate mandated improvement plans within eTPES.

Current, improvement plans, which were implemented based upon below expected student growth measures within the 2014-2015 summative evaluation ratings, were based on one or more of the following:

- Student Learning Objectives from SY 2014-2015 – *category B and/or C teachers.*
- Vendor Assessments from SY 2014-2015 – *exclusively category B and potentially A2 teachers.*
- Results from the State Assessments administered in spring of 2014 – *exclusively A1, A2 teachers.* This included AIR/PARCC SS, S, High School End of Course (EOC) pilots, 3-8 Math and ELA OAs (consisting of content representing Ohio's previous academic standards and Common Core).*
- Shared Attribution – a designated Value Added resulting from the Spring 2014 State Assessments data *potentially district wide, all category of teachers.*

The indication within eTPES that these current improvement plans are required **will not change**. This is based upon the following Department of Education policy and Ohio law:

- The plans were based upon the OTES framework in existence at the conclusion of the 2014-2015 evaluation cycle, which allowed for SGM triggered improvement plans. This is evidenced by pages 12 and 13 within the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) document entitled Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) Training Workbook, published in April of 2012:

...a Professional Growth Plan or an Improvement Plan is based on Student Growth Measures as designated on the Summative Evaluation Matrix and/or performance on the standards as noted in the teacher performance rubric...

And, on page 13:

...Improvement Plans are developed for a teacher by the evaluator in response to ineffective ratings in performance and/or student growth.

*In the spring of 2014, the academic standards included only ELA and Math.

Furthermore, as evident in law:

- The data used to trigger said plans for A1 and/or A2 teachers is not included within Safe Harbor Law – HB 74 (August 2015), which only includes: *...data from state assessments in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017.*
- Safe Harbor from HB 362 (September 2014) specifically reinforced legislative expectations for student growth measures, ORC 3319.111: *...so long as the teacher's student academic growth measure, for the most recent school year for which data is available, is average or higher,[at or above expected] as determined by the department of education.*

However, three critical points should be considered regarding improvement plans triggered in this manner:

1. Said plans should be created and supported in adherence to the state Professional Development Standards, http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Teaching/Educator-Equity/Ohio-s-Educator-Standards/Finalstandards-professional-development_FINAL-1.pdf.aspx, which were approved by the OSBOE (April 2015) and stem from HB 2. OEA has tools and training to ensure members, if necessary, receive a quality safety net in the form of improvement plans.
2. eTPES will require different reporting levels regarding the plan. OEA reiterates its recommendation that locals demand and bargain Option 3/“Option C” to ensure the least amount of information is uploaded into eTPES. (On the OEA Intranet, see EPRMA Documents/Sample Teacher Evaluation Language/Draft Teacher Samp Lang 3-25-14, lines 1440-1460.)
3. CBAs in effect with applicable language regarding improvement and professional development plans, their triggers and *consequences* should be carefully reviewed as they relate to legislatively mandated deadlines such as ORC 3319.111(A), the school district’s board adopted policy per ORC 3319.111(F), and for districts who have completed three complete cycles of evaluation (ORC 3319.58).

Moving forward, districts may determine additional triggers and consequences of improvement plans; however, these decisions are subject to bargaining which is directly stated in the November 2015 updates to the OTES framework.

While significant federal decisions seem poised to be a light at the end of the tunnel, it is important to ensure quality professional development within any plans are provided to members through bargaining. If states are provided absolute or better control of evaluation through ESEA’s reauthorization, **it will be critical for all teachers to loudly voice** to legislators, the Department of Education, State Board of Education and Ohio voters the damage caused by mandates which do not ensure equitable opportunities for our children.