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**Recommendations of the
Maine Educator Effectiveness Council**

**May 2013
Addendum
to**

**The Interim Report to the
Joint Standing Committee
on Education and Cultural Affairs
Pursuant to Public Law 2011, chapter 635
(November 2012)**

May 13, 2013

Senator Rebecca Millett, Senate Chair
Representative Bruce MacDonald, House Chair
Joint Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs

Senator Millett, Representative MacDonald and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Maine Educator Effectiveness Council, we are submitting an Addendum to the November 2012 report we submitted to the committee pursuant to Public Law 2011, chapter 635. This Addendum presents an additional set of recommendations that has emerged since November 2012, as a result of the MEEC's ongoing work relating to implementation of Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth (PE/PG) systems under Title 20-A, chapter 508 of the Maine Revised Statutes.

While we still have work to do, what follows are additional recommendations organized by the duties as outlined in the statute. It is our hope that you take these into consideration as you review the Department of Education's proposed rule and any legislation related the development of Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth Systems.

Respectfully submitted

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MEEC Co-Chair

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What follows are recommendations reached by consensus of the members of the MEEC since November 1, 2012.

The single most critical factor for the success of the PE/PG system is the access by SAU's to a designated source of expertise and guidance in an evolving field.

The MEEC has come to understand the high degree of complexity involved in creating and maintaining a successful PE/PG system. As we have worked diligently to answer our charge, making recommendations in the best interests of our unique state, we have learned much from ongoing trials and errors in other states, and information is continuing to emerge as systems are implemented nationwide. In order to have a viable system in Maine, the MEEC recognizes the need for continuing its work as a permanent entity. Not only is there still work to be done in providing informed guidance in the design of the system, as indicated on page 5, but also, as systems are developed, piloted, and implemented, many questions, some unforeseen, will arise. The answers to these questions must rely upon the expertise of those who have studied and considered the various components of a PE/PG system, who understand the implications of the law itself, and who are abreast of current research.

Thus, the MEEC strongly recommends:

- Creation of a full-time educator effectiveness coordinator position within Maine DOE; and
- Continuation of the Educator Effectiveness Council with representation from the various stakeholder groups.

The coordinator will be responsible for making provisions for technical assistance and ongoing support to school administrative units in developing, piloting, and implementing PE/PG systems, including but not limited to: maintaining an online bank of approved PE/PG systems and system tools; facilitating training, and providing resources for use in developing, piloting, and implementing the components of a PE/PG system, such as providing frameworks for developing valid and reliable student learning and growth measures. In order to ensure that local SAU's are provided with informed, accurate guidance in the development of and maintenance of their systems, the Educator Effectiveness Council will serve as an advisory committee to the coordinator.

The following additional recommendations of the MEEC are organized by duties assigned to the Council by Public Law 2011, Chapter 635—An Act to Ensure Effective Teaching and School Leadership.

“The Maine Educator Effectiveness Council (MEEC) shall ...

D. Recommend the major components of an evaluation process, including but not limited to:”

D(1) Ongoing training to ensure that evaluators and teachers and principals have a full understanding of the evaluation system and its implementation;

- A. School Administrative Unit Steering Committee develops, designs, implements, reviews, and refines the initial and ongoing training for the locally developed Performance Evaluation/Professional Growth (PE/PG) system
- The training program should clearly indicate the goal and the purpose of the training
 - The training program should follow best practice guidelines regarding professional development and adult learning
 - The training program should also clarify whose responsibility it is to carry out the various components of the training
- B. The role of the Maine DOE should be to provide model training programs that are consistent with the overall protocol for training and with the guidelines described within these recommendations. The model training programs should be posted on a website
- C. SAUs are strongly urged to develop their local training program in collaboration with other SAUs. This has the benefit of:
- Potentially lowering costs of developing training programs
 - Potentially reducing training cost and time when teachers/principals change employment within the collaborative group
 - Increasing local and regional capacity to sustain the ongoing training programs
 - Supporting higher levels of inter-rater and system reliability
- D. As part of the ongoing training, each SAU must provide an initial overview of the PE/PG system
- This must include a description of the system and the expectations for educators affected
 - This initial orientation must be held annually, at the beginning of the school year and must be treated as a priority
 - A suggested amount of time for the orientation – as well as the other components of the training program – should be provided for SAUs
 - The following elements of the PE/PG system must be addressed during the overview:
 - ❖ The Standards of Professional Practice for teachers and principals in use in the SAU
 - ❖ The measures of student learning and growth in use in the SAU
 - ❖ The method the SAU will use to combine these two elements into an overall rating
 - ❖ A description of the four overall levels of performance along with the implications associated with each level
 - ❖ The relationship between the PE/PG system and professional development

- ❖ The role and composition of the SAU Steering Committee as delineated in proposed rule for implementing chapter 508

E. Evaluator Training

- Evaluators must be trained in, and have a comprehensive understanding of, the Standards of Professional Practice selected by the SAU
- Evaluators must demonstrate competence in the following activities:
 - ❖ Conducting a pre-observation conference
 - ❖ Observing the professional practices of teachers and/or principals
 - ❖ Conducting a post-observation conference
 - ❖ Developing and guiding professional growth plans
 - ❖ Completing the necessary steps in an evidence-based manner, without bias
- Evaluators must have adequate time to practice and become familiar with the model during their training
- Evaluator training must include opportunities to work with peers (e.g., observe other educators)
- Evaluators must be trained in assessing evidence of performance not directly observed in classroom observations or direct observations of principals and in incorporating that evidence into the summative evaluation
- Evaluators must meet an identified minimum threshold of inter-rater reliability during their initial training
- Evaluators must also maintain an identified minimum threshold of inter-rater reliability as part of ongoing training

- F. The SAU training program must ensure that evaluators new to the SAU meet the same minimum requirements prior to evaluating educators in their new district

D (2) Methods of gathering evidence for the evaluation, which may include observation by supervisors and peers, self-reflection, student or parent surveys, analysis of artifacts and evidence portfolios;

According to the statute, methods must be developed in the first two categories listed below (Standards of Professional Practice and Measures of Student Learning and Growth). The third category – other measures – is a local option and not currently required under the statute. What follows is a list of potential sources and methods of gathering evidence for each of these three categories. The list is not intended to be exclusive. Sufficient evidence must be gathered (for example, three years of running data) as determined by the local steering committee.

A. Regarding evaluation of professional practice standards:

- Observations
 - ❖ multiple observations
 - ❖ multiple observers

- ❖ length of observation cycle may vary
- Artifacts (for example):
 - ❖ Samples of student work with accompanying criteria
 - ❖ Educator work, accomplishments (e.g., portfolios, digital portfolios, video, lesson plans/units, transcripts, CEUs, awards, etc.)
 - ❖ Log or journal (reflection)
 - ❖ Evidence of communications with parents, students, colleagues, and community (e.g., emails, phone records, letters, website, other electronic media, etc.)
- Formal self-assessment using the same standards of professional practice in place in the district
- Pre-/post-conference between observer and the educator observed
- Peer observation with pre-/post-conference

B. Regarding student learning and growth

The following are acceptable measures of student learning and growth; these measures must meet the criteria for reliability and validity established in recommendations of the initial report (Section IV, Part B, Subsection A):

- Statewide standardized tests
- Commercially available tests
- District or school developed assessments

C. Other evidence-based methods/sources

Other evidence-based methods/sources as identified by the local Steering Committee may be used to gather additional measures of educator effectiveness.

D(3) Methods of providing feedback to teachers and principals for formative evaluation purposes;

The following are methods by which teachers and principals can receive feedback for formative evaluation purposes:

- Supervisor or Peer Observation report
- Post-observation conference
- Sharing of comments/notes following (unscheduled) "walk throughs"
- Sharing of comments/notes following (unscheduled) "drop-ins" (for principals, when superintendent comes to staff meetings, etc.)

- Self-reflection and/or feedback from colleagues, following viewing of videotaped classroom instruction
- Analysis of student and/or parent survey results
- Analysis of staff survey results (for principals)
- Feedback from Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) / Critical Friends Groups (CFGs) and other collaborative, collegial, groups
- Collaborative (educator and evaluator/supervisor) setting and review of professional goals

D (4) Weighting of measures used in evaluating teachers and principals, which must provide that student learning and growth indicators inform a significant portion of the effectiveness rating;

The council does not deem it appropriate at this time to recommend a single method of combining measures to be used by all SAU's. Our study and discussion of the models referenced in our November report for weighting the factors of a summative rating has revealed complexities, implications, and consequences, which need to be carefully considered by local Steering Committees. In order to ensure that the manner in which each local Steering Committee determines the method of combining measures is thoughtful and informed, the MEEC recommends that the DOE provide comprehensive training and resources concerning the referenced models as well as others that may emerge. The training and resources that will be provided by the coordinator must include, for the various models, full descriptions, benefits and limitations, and comparative illustrations of data configurations.

Work Remaining; Next Steps

The Council began discussion of other significant elements of the PE/PG system, but had not reached consensus on those elements at the time of this report. Those elements include:

- The definition of teacher and principal – these terms, which determine who is covered by the law, are not defined in the law.
 - The Council early in discussions had endorsed a broad definition of each (including, e.g., educational specialists and other non-classroom teachers), but expressed the need to reexamine the decision as their work continued;
- Names and descriptions for the required 4 summative effectiveness rating categories; and
- The meaning and implications of the term “significant factor” as it relates to the use of student learning and growth measures in PE/PG systems.

Among the issues remaining for the Council to address are the following:

- The connection between evaluation system and professional growth opportunities;
- Employment consequences of the ratings; and
- General implementation requirements including peer review components, and steering committees to monitor, review and revise systems during implementation.