



Frequently Asked Questions

Updated April 12, 2012

1. What does the Performance Evaluation Reform Act mean?

In 2010, Gov. Pat Quinn signed the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA), which requires all schools in Illinois to change how teachers' and principals' performance is measured.

2. How will it change how teachers are evaluated?

PERA requires districts to design and implement performance evaluation systems that assess teachers' and principals' professional skills as well as incorporate measures of student growth. District administrators must work with teachers' union representatives to develop evaluation systems that incorporate student growth. School districts and the state must ensure that these performance evaluation systems are valid and reliable and help teachers and principals to better improve student outcomes.

Teacher evaluation systems will provide clear descriptions of professional excellence so everyone understands what great teaching means. The evaluations will be based on standards of effective practice, with evaluators trained and pre-qualified to conduct observations, collect evidence, and provide helpful, timely feedback. The new evaluations will add objectivity to a practice that almost universally was subjective.

The biggest difference from current systems is that student achievement will become a significant factor in every evaluation. Districts and evaluators will need to select measures of student growth.

And beginning September 1, 2012, both teachers and administrators in all districts (even those that have not yet adopted new evaluation systems) must be rated using one of these four performance categories:

- Excellent
- Proficient
- Needs Improvement
- Unsatisfactory

Districts have two options for adopting a new system that incorporates student growth measures into teacher evaluations. A school district can develop its own system that meets minimum standards mandated by state rules; or it can choose to use all or portions of a state-designed optional model (see <http://www.isbe.net/peac/> for the state designed optional model for teacher evaluation).

3. How will it change how principals are evaluated?

Beginning in September 2012, all principals must be evaluated every year by trained and pre-qualified evaluators. Evaluations of principals will be required to incorporate student achievement growth as a significant factor, and the State Board of Education will have developed a model principal evaluation plan (http://www.isbe.net/peac/word/peac_prin_eval_model.pdf) that school districts may choose to use. Similar to teachers, principals will also be evaluated based on standards of effective practice that include clear descriptions of what excellent school leadership means.

4. What process is the state using to create this system?

A special advisory group, the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC), is charged with providing input from educators to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and monitoring PERA development and implementation. Among other responsibilities, they will make recommendations to ISBE in two major areas: rules for districts wanting to develop their own teacher and principal evaluation systems (see the draft rules at: <http://www.isbe.net/rules/proposed/pdfs/50wf.pdf>); and recommendations for a statewide model for principal evaluation and a default/optional model for teacher evaluation. The PEAC has more than 30 members, including teachers, administrators, and union leaders and other stakeholders.

5. How often will teachers and principals be evaluated?

Teachers with tenure will be evaluated every other year, though a tenured teacher rated “Needs Improvement” or “Unsatisfactory” in any one year will be evaluated the following year. Teachers without tenure will be evaluated every year. Principals will be evaluated every year.

| Evaluation Every Year | Evaluation Every Other Year |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-tenured teachers • Tenured teachers rated “Needs Improvement” or “Unsatisfactory” • Any teacher may be subject to an evaluation during a principal’s first year at a school • Principals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenured teachers rated “Proficient” or “Excellent” |

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6. Are teacher and principal evaluations protected from Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests?

Yes. Individual educators' evaluations will not be available to the public.

7. Will all teachers and principals be evaluated this way? When?

All teachers and principals in Illinois will eventually be evaluated using new evaluation systems, either those developed at the local level or a state model. Each district will phase in its new evaluation system between fall 2012 and fall 2016.

| New Evaluation Systems Change | Deadline |
|---|---------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Illinois school districts must adopt a written principal evaluation system that incorporates measures of student achievement growth • Evaluators must be trained and pre-qualified in order to conduct evaluations using a new system • All Illinois principals begin to be evaluated under a new system • At least 300 Chicago public schools must begin evaluating teachers using a new system that incorporates student growth measures • Any school receiving federal School Improvement Grants must begin evaluating teachers using a new system that incorporates student growth measures | Sept. 1, 2012 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All remaining Chicago public schools must evaluate teachers using a new system that incorporates student growth measures | Sept. 1, 2013 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A research-based study of the effectiveness school district evaluation systems will be completed | Sept. 1, 2014 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lowest-performing 20% of school districts must begin using new teacher evaluation systems that incorporate student growth measures | Sept. 1, 2015 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Illinois school districts must begin using new teacher evaluation systems that incorporate student growth measures | Sept. 1, 2016 |

8. What is the timeline for the evaluator training?

Evaluation Training Timeline

- April 2 - Launch of web site for information, technical assistance and resources
- April 16 – Train-the-trainer registration begins (for districts developing own face to face training)
- Month of April - Pilot of Performance Evaluation Training (Teacher and Principal Evaluation)
- May 1 - Evaluator Prequalification Training Registration begins
- May 7 - Teacher Evaluator and Principal Evaluator Pre-Qualification Training begins
- June 1 - Additional training intensive support will be provided

- September 1-June 30, 2013 - Additional training and assessments available for new hires within districts who are responsible for evaluation of teachers or principals

9. Who should register for prequalification training?

Based on the PERA administrative rules, anyone who will evaluate teachers and/or principals and assistant principals, where applicable, starting September 1, 2012 must go through the pre-qualification training and pass the developed assessments. Each district superintendent will use ISBE’s ECS system to identify those evaluators who are required to be evaluators for 2012-13 school year. Pre-qualification training is available at no cost to designated individuals identified by superintendents who are required to evaluate teachers or principals in the 2012-2013 school year. Please check with your district prior to registration to ensure that you have been designated as an evaluator for the 2012-13 school year and for which training program you have been designated (i.e. either principal evaluation or teacher evaluation or both). Registration for your designated program will begin on May 1, 2012 through the ECS system at <https://sec1.isbe.net/ecs/>.

10. Can I participate in the Prequalification training and become a qualified evaluator even if I am not designated as an evaluator by my superintendent in ECS?

Yes. Individuals who are not designated in ECS by their superintendent as being required to participate in either the principal or teacher evaluation training program or both may also participate in a training program by registering and paying a non-refundable course fee of \$650.00 for each training program for which you wish to register. Registration will begin on May 1, 2012 through the Growth Through Learning website at www.growththroughlearning.org for those who desire this option.

11. I am a district superintendent. How do I designate evaluators in the ECS system?

Superintendents should login into ECS using their individual ECS login and password. Once in ECS, superintendents will identify those evaluators required to evaluate principals, assistant principals, where applicable or teachers. *Important:* Superintendents should have the following information about each evaluator ready before logging into ECS:

- Your own IEIN# in order to login into ECS
- List of your teacher and principal/assistant principal evaluators for the 2012-13 school year and which training programs they will need to participate in
- Correct spelling of each evaluator’s first and last name
- Each evaluator’s valid IEIN#

For more information and directions on how to use ECS to designate evaluators, please consult the Principal and Teacher Evaluation recorded webinar which will be available on the [PEAC website](#) as of April 12, 2012.

12. What happens if I do not complete the training or pass the assessments?

Based on the PERA administrative rules, beginning September 1, 2012, an evaluator shall not conduct a performance evaluation of a teacher, principal or assistant principal unless he or she has successfully completed the state or a district-developed prequalification training program and passed the state assessment.

13. What does the state prequalification training and assessment model look like?

The Illinois Performance Evaluation *Growth Through Learning* Partnership Group has received the contract from the State of Illinois to develop a pre-qualification training program and assessments for both professional practice and student growth. Registration begins on May 1st and training will be offered after May 7th, 2012 through online, self-paced training modules and online assessments. For more information, please visit the [Growth Through Learning](http://www.growththroughlearningillinois.org) website at www.growththroughlearningillinois.org.

14. How will the prequalification training be offered?

The training will be offered through online, self-paced training modules on our online learning platforms that can be taken at your convenience at home or office. Pre-qualification also requires that participants pass the assessments that will be offered at the end of each training module. Successful completion of each module assessment is a prerequisite in order to proceed to the next module.

15. Can districts do their own training on the state's prequalification training? What is the difference between state training and district training?

Districts may develop their own training program based on current state requirements using a qualified trainer through the state's performance evaluation train the trainer program. The trainer used by districts must be a qualified trainer who has successfully completed the state's Train-the-Trainer program, including prequalification as an evaluator, and participation in the ongoing Trainer Collaboration Network for state approved qualified trainers. Please note that while qualified trainers will have access to the course module objectives, online resources and knowledge of the state training program, trainers or districts may not adapt or use the content of the Growth Through Learning program in a district-developed program.

Evaluators who participate in district developed training must still take and pass the state developed assessments. If they do not pass an assessment, they will be required to take the state training module for that assessment before taking the assessment again. Please see Choose State Training or District-developed Training at www.growththroughlearningillinois.org under Resources and Research For Districts. A list of qualified trainers will be listed on the *Growth Through Learning* website starting on June 1, 2012.

16. Can I take the prequalification assessments without going through the prequalification training?

Based on the PERA administrative rules, each evaluator is required to participate in either the state online or district developed evaluator training. Those who participate in district developed training will be allowed to take the assessments alone, though those who go through the district training will also have access to the online training for review and support. For both the district and online training, participants have two opportunities to take and pass the assessments. If they do not pass the assessments by the second time, they will have to go through an intensive support/remediation program for modules related to the assessment that they were unable to pass before participating in the next training module and assessment.

17. What happens if I do not pass the prequalification assessments?

The intensive support/remediation program utilizes an escalating intervention model to provide additional tiers of intensive support for participants in each module for those who do not pass the pre-qualification online assessment after completing the training program. The intensive support program provides additional training materials, group support, and coaching for enhanced learning.

18. How long will it take to go through the prequalification training?

The evaluation pre-qualification courses will encompass the following:

- Teacher Evaluation = Approximately 32 hours of online, self-paced training
- Principal Evaluation = Approximately 15 hours of online, self-paced training

19. Can you describe the content of the certification assessments for qualification?

The content of the assessments is based on what is minimally required of evaluators to effectively evaluate a teacher or principal in order to comply with PERA 2010 and requirements pertaining to the evaluation of certified staff. This includes, but is not limited to, content around the required components, timelines and outcomes of the teacher and principal evaluation process under the rules as well as specific requirements for evaluating teachers and principals on professional practice and student growth, where applicable. Each module has clear objectives which will be posted on our website as of May 1, 2012 to aid evaluators in understanding the content of each training module and what is required for assessment.

20. How are the assessments for prequalification scored?

There will be online, validated assessments that will be required at the end of each training module or, alternatively, district-developed training. Each assessment will be scored pass/not pass. A passing score on each module assessment is required in order for the evaluator to proceed to the next training module and/or assessment. A passing score on each of the

assessments is required for prequalification. The passing score for each assessment will be established based on feedback from the *Growth Through Learning* Advisory Committee of subject matter experts from around the state. You can learn more about the advisory committee at www.growththroughlearningillinois.org

21. If I can take the assessments online at home or my office, what rules are there for the security of the online assessments?

Users will enter training through the ECS system portal to validate the user based on their IEIN number. Users also cannot use outside assistance of any kind during the assessment, accept assistance or assist anyone else in completing the assessment, allow anyone to take an assessment on their behalf, or take an assessment on another's behalf. This also means users are prohibited from electronically or otherwise copying, printing, distributing or sharing training or assessment content with others. There is an expectation in the Illinois School Code of the honesty and integrity of all individuals who take the assessments who are certificated or soon to be certificated in Illinois. When an individual is found to have violated a condition of testing with the intent of falsifying his or her identity or unfairly affecting his or her performance in the current or a future test administration, the violation shall be taken as evidence that the individual is not of good character as required by Section 21-1 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/21-1]. This means that violating any condition of testing would result in loss of qualification as an evaluator and/or educational certification in Illinois. Evaluators will be required to validate their identity and that they understand and comply with the rules for assessment security each time they take a training program or assessment.

22. Will this training be offered in time for districts to comply with state requirements?

Yes. To meet the statutory requirements and timelines of the PERA act, registration will be available for the training by May 1, 2012 allowing them to become qualified evaluators by September 1, 2012. All evaluator trainings will be available after September 1st but to meet the statutory requirements and timelines of the PERA 2010, all evaluators must be trained and pass the prequalification assessment before conducting evaluations after September 1st, 2012.

23. When will the prequalification training and assessments for student growth be available?

For principal evaluators, student growth is incorporated into the training modules and assessments that will begin on May 7, 2012. For teacher evaluators, a separate student growth module will be available for those districts required to incorporate student growth into their teacher evaluation systems in the 2012-13 school year. Check with your district if you are unsure as to whether you need to complete this module by September 1, 2012.

24. How is "student growth" defined?

According to the administrative rules for PERA (<http://www.isbe.net/rules/proposed/pdfs/50wf.pdf>), student growth is defined as "a

demonstrable change in a student's or group of students' knowledge or skills, as evidenced by gain and/or attainment on two or more assessments, between two or more points in time". The training will incorporate the state requirements for student growth.

25. If I evaluate both teachers and principals/assistant principals, do I need to participate in both training programs?

Yes. You must register, complete and pass the assessments for both training programs if you have the responsibility for the evaluation of both teachers and principals and/or assistant principals. Please check with your district to ensure that your district has designated you as an evaluator required to complete both training programs

26. What will the Train the Trainer Program look like?

The Train-the-Trainer Program is designed to qualify the highest quality trainers with robust support, feedback, and resources to ensure fidelity with implementation. Trainers will be drawn from Regional Offices of Education, universities, districts, and professional organizations and must meet the selection criteria to be a trainer. All trainers must, register, complete, and pass the Train-the-Trainer training modules and assessments and meet all requirements for prequalification as evaluator. Registration for the Train-the-Trainer program will begin on April 16, 2012.

Potential trainers will need to pay a non-refundable course fee of \$1000 to participate in either the principal evaluation or the teacher evaluation Train-the-Trainer program. Trainers who desire to be qualified as trainers for both programs will need pay the course fee for each program for which they wish to register.

27. How do I locate a qualified trainer to provide training in my district or region?

A database of qualified trainers for teacher and principal evaluation will be made available for districts on the *Growth Through Learning* website (www.growththroughlearningillinois.org).

28. How will this program ensure the quality of trainers?

Trainers will undergo a rigorous qualification process, including on-going support and networking with sources for trainers. The program will also track trainer outcomes to ensure consistency with implementation.

29. Will continuous support be offered?

Teacher evaluators will have access to a one-year subscription on the Teachscape system for observation practice. Teacher and principal evaluators will have access to an on-line library of resources and course materials. Resources in the on-line library courses will be offered through an interactive, online, retraining platform that can be accessed from office or home 24 hours a day, seven days a way to support 'just in time', flexible, and on-going professional learning and

application of the training modules. The focus of the curricula will be enhanced to build additional skills in key areas, such as:

- Student growth models and analysis of multiple measures of student growth based on new assessments adopted by the state and in use within districts
- Continuous quality improvement models
- Enhanced tools for gathering data and artifacts
- Providing formative and summative feedback/coaching skills
- Professional development planning

In addition, the curricula will include new assessments developed around the Common Core Standards, the learning climate survey, and the new Illinois School Report Card metrics.

30. Will there be a retraining program offered so that I can refresh my evaluation skills at any point?

Per the PERA administrative rules, all evaluators are required to complete retraining within five years. For those districts that are implementing teacher evaluation for student growth after 2015, evaluators are required complete training in both professional practice and student growth.

31. Who will ensure that the training program and assessments are high quality?

A advisory committee will be formed that will be charged with reviewing the training modules developed by the CEC Partnership Group before rolling out the training as well as to help facilitate greater success with implementation. The advisory committee will be made up of representatives from the field including teachers, principals, superintendents, regional superintendents, higher education and education organizations.

32. Will the training and assessment be available to higher education faculty who are responsible for education programs for pre-service teachers and administrators?

Yes. We are developing a schedule to include higher education faculty in the training and assessments. We will be posting the information in a future update of FAQ and on our website at www.growththroughlearningillinois.org.

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