

After two years of Gov. Jindal's "Bold Reform"

Where do teachers stand now?

In 2010, Act 54 was adopted to dramatically change the way teachers are evaluated. Those changes go into effect next school year. This year, lawmakers adopted Act 1, which requires virtually all personnel decisions to be based on the evaluation system created in Act 54. Here is a brief explanation of the way the two acts work together.

Act 54 created a two-tiered evaluation system, with half of a teacher's evaluation to be based on the academic growth of their students, and half on a subjective evaluation by administrators.

For about one-third of teachers, those in tested, graded subjects, the 50% based on growth will be determined by a controversial Value Added Model. That is an algorithm that predicts how much each child should progress in each grade, and then determines how much each teacher has contributed to the growth of students.

LFT has serious concerns about the validity of the VAM scores, the margin of error involved, the effects of "random error" on evaluations and the razor-thin line separating an "effective" and "ineffective" teacher.

For teachers in non-tested graded subjects, an objective evaluation is now being piloted. It will not be quantitative in the same way as the VAM, however. It appears that it will be a measurement of student growth based on observations by administrators.

The 50% of the evaluation for all teachers based on administrative observations is an instrument called COMPASS. Administrators are being trained in its use. The score will be the simple product of adding the total points of each of the competency areas and dividing by the number of items.

A teacher's final evaluation will be the product of the quantitative and qualitative evaluations, divided by two. Teachers will be evaluated as "Ineffective," which triggers corrective action, "Effective: Emerging," "Effective: Proficient," or "Highly Effective," which triggers rewards.

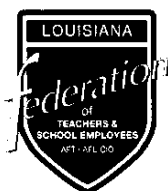
However, if a teacher is rated "ineffective" on either portion of the evaluation, the teacher will be judged "ineffective."

Teachers will be able to challenge the administrative observation if they disagree with it. There is no procedure to challenge the growth score created by the Value Added Model, however.

Act 1 of 2012 completes the radical overhaul of the teaching profession by coupling teacher salaries and due process rights to the evaluations created by Act 54. What does this mean?

- There will never be another across-the-board state pay raise. Local school boards will decide how much each teacher and school employee will earn, based on effectiveness as determined by evaluation results, content or license area, and experience.
- Earning an advanced degree will not guarantee a pay increase.
- A teacher who is rated "ineffective" twice will be terminated.
- A teacher is rated "ineffective" even once will be ineligible for pay raises, will lose tenure rights and will be considered an "at will" employee who can be fired with very little recourse. That's just wrong: The architect of Gov. Jindal's Value Added evaluation program said that a one-year snapshot of a teacher's evaluation is not an accurate reflection of the teacher's real ability.
- Teachers will have to be rated "highly effective" for five out of six years to earn tenure. Since only 10% of teachers will be rated "highly effective" in any year, very few teachers could ever earn tenure under this system.
- In dismissal proceedings, teachers have no right to a list of specific charges, may not appeal to the school board, and have only 60 days to lodge an appeal, instead of the current one-year limitation. Language requiring teachers to be found guilty of criminal acts before they can lose tenure is removed

For more in-depth information about these radical changes, visit the LFT Web site at <http://la.aft.org>.



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