HISD’s Teacher Appraisal and Development System

System Overview

Fall 2011
In 2010, HISD launched its Strategic Direction, which is composed of five core initiatives. The first ensures that there is an effective teacher in every classroom.
HISD has prioritized ensuring that there is an effective teacher in every classroom because students will succeed when they have great teachers.

“Having a top-quartile teacher rather than a bottom-quartile teacher four years in a row would be enough to close the black-white test score gap.”

(Gordon, Kane and Staiger, 2006)

“Having a high-quality teacher throughout elementary school can substantially offset or even eliminate the disadvantage of low socio-economic background.”

(Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain, 2002)

“A very good teacher as opposed to a very bad one can make as much as a full year’s difference in learning growth for students. Indeed, the effect of increases in teacher quality swamps the impact of any other educational investment, such as reductions in class size.”

(Goldhaber, 2009)

"The results of this study well document that the most important factor affecting student learning is the teacher. In addition, the results show wide variation in effectiveness among teachers. The immediate and clear implication of this finding is that seemingly more can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than by any other single factor.”

(Wright, Horn and Sanders, 1997)
Research has shown that effective teachers are critically important to student learning.

Dallas students who start 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade at about the same level of math achievement…

…may finish 5\textsuperscript{th} grade math at dramatically different levels depending on the quality of their teachers.

Note: Calculating the effects of 3 teachers requires 4 years of test data; hence starting with scores in 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade and ending in 5\textsuperscript{th}.

Effective Teachers Initiative Vision: An effective teacher in every classroom, delivering high-quality instruction to all students.

Four Key Strategies

1. Smart recruitment
2. Useful appraisals
3. Individualized teacher support
4. New career pathways

Effective Instruction In All Classrooms

Improved Student Learning Outcomes
A better teacher appraisal system is a critical first step, because the previous system, PDAS, did not meet the needs of our educators.

Results: 2010 Survey of 6,279 HISD Teachers and 144 HISD Principals

- 44% of teachers say that PDAS allows appraisers to accurately assess teachers’ instructional performance.
- 28% of principals say that PDAS/MPDAS allows them to accurately assess teachers’ instructional performance.
- 43% of teachers say that the PDAS process helps them improve their instructional performance.

*The response rate for teachers surveyed was 55%, and the response rate for principals surveyed was 56%.

Source: Surveys of HISD teachers and principals.
Teachers, principals, and other stakeholders led a six-month effort to design a new teacher appraisal and development system.

- **School-based Shared Decision-Making Committees (SDMCs)**
  - Submitted recommendations on appraisal criteria and process; More than 250 SDMCs participated in the design process.

- **Working Groups (Teachers, Principals, Parents, HISD Staff)**
  - Built rubrics and other tools needed to implement the new system.

- **District Advisory Committee (DAC)**
  - Developed final proposal for appraisal process and criteria based on recommendations from SDMCs and Working Groups.

- **HISD Community and Stakeholders**
  - Provided input on SDMC, DAC, and working group recommendations throughout the design process.
Collaboration and transparency were top priorities in the design process. HISD actively sought feedback from the entire community.

Community Engagement during the Design Process

- HISD posted all materials from the design process on a dedicated website that has logged more than 14,000 unique visits.
- HISD sent biweekly email updates on the process to all teachers and principals.
- HISD read, logged and responded to 1,100 questions and comments received by email and via the website.
- HISD held three public meetings to gather feedback on the draft proposal.
- 2,655 teachers and 282 appraisers completed an online survey on the draft proposal.
- 40 teachers and 18 principals participated in focus groups to help shape specific aspects of the draft proposal.

In all, the final proposal represents input from...

- 2600+ Teachers
- 500+ Parents
- 500+ School administrators
- 500+ Additional community members
The collaborative design process resulted in a new system that is good for students, teachers, and taxpayers.

Benefits of the New Appraisal and Development System

For students

The new system helps ensure that all students learn from effective teachers every day—which will significantly raise student achievement.

The new system gives teachers the regular, accurate feedback they deserve as professionals, and connects them with individualized support that helps them do their best work in the classroom.

For teachers

The new system helps HISD identify and hold onto its best teachers and raise the quality of all teaching—which is more important than ever at a time when HISD is going to have to do more with fewer resources.

For taxpayers
The new system paints a complete picture of each teacher’s performance, based on multiple measures in three performance criteria.

Three Major Criteria

**Student Performance:** Teacher’s impact on student learning

**Instructional Practice:** Teacher’s skills and knowledge that help promote student learning

**Professional Expectations:** Teacher’s efforts to meet objective, measurable standards of professionalism

Teachers will be evaluated based on multiple measures in each category. The scores in the three categories will combine into an overall rating of: Ineffective, Needs Improvement, Effective, or Highly Effective.
Instructional Practice

What is Instructional Practice?

• Instructional Practice reflects the teacher’s skills and knowledge that help promote student learning.

Where will appraisers look to assess teachers’ Instructional Practice?

Potential areas include, but are not limited to:

• Classroom observations
• Planning documents
• Daily interactions with the teacher
• Reviews of certain documents (e.g., lesson plans, classroom management plans, grade books, portfolio of student work, etc).
Professional Expectations

What are Professional Expectations?
• Professional Expectations reflect a teacher’s efforts to meet objective, measurable standards of professionalism.

Where can appraisers look to assess teachers’ professionalism?

Potential areas include, but are not limited to:
• Classroom observations
• Planning documents
• Daily interactions with the teacher
• Reviews of certain documents (e.g., parent communication logs, sign-in sheets for PLCs, agendas and minutes from team meetings, teacher attendance records, etc.).
Instructional Practice Criteria

The Instructional Practice rubric reflects the standards skills and knowledge that help drive student learning in the classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Practice Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>PL-1  Develops student learning goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>PL-2  Collects, tracks, and uses student data to drive instruction</td>
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<td>PL-3  Designs effective lesson plans, units, and assessments</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Instruction</strong></td>
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<td>I-1   Facilitates organized, student-centered, objective-driven lessons</td>
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<td>I-2   Checks for student understanding and responds to student misunderstanding</td>
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<td>I-3   Differentiates instruction for student needs by employing a variety of instructional strategies</td>
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<td>I-4   Engages students in work that develops higher-level thinking skills</td>
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<td>I-5   Maximizes instructional time</td>
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<td>I-6   Communicates content and concepts to students</td>
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<td>I-7   Promotes high academic expectations for students</td>
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<td>I-8   Students actively participating in lesson activities</td>
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<td>I-9   Sets and implements discipline management procedures</td>
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<td>I-10  Builds a positive and respectful classroom environment</td>
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Criteria Category in Focus: Student Performance

Student Performance

What is Student Performance?
• Student Performance reflects a teacher’s measurable impact on student learning.

What are the five measures of student performance?
• Value-added Growth (e.g., EVAAS)
• Comparative Growth
• Students’ progress on End-of-Course (EOC)/End-of-Year Assessments (EOY)
• Students’ progress using EOC/EOY Performance Tasks and Work Products
• Students’ attainment on appraiser-approved or district-wide EOC/EOY assessment
The new system was also designed to give all teachers the regular feedback and individualized support they deserve as professionals.

**Focus on Feedback and Development**

- **Three teacher/appraiser conferences each year** provide teachers with comprehensive feedback on their performance.
- Appraisers conduct at least 2 classroom observations and at least 2 walkthroughs throughout the year, each followed by in-person/written feedback.
- Teachers work with appraisers to create an *individualized development plan* that identifies specific areas for professional growth and targeted learning activities to address them.
- **Appraisers are held accountable** for helping teachers meet their professional goals.

**Appraisal and Development Cycle**

- **Conferences**
  - Formal meetings with appraiser to discuss performance, set goals, create and update development plan

- **Individualized Development**
  - Learning activities informed by development plan

- **Self-Reflection**
  - Reflect on performance, student progress, and professional goals

- **Ongoing Feedback**
  - Observations and walkthroughs followed by formal and informal feedback on teaching

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Focus on Feedback and Development

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Appraisal and Development Timeline

**Sept: Beginning-of-Year Conference**
- Discuss prior year’s outcomes
- Set student learning measures and professional goals
- Create an individualized development plan

**Dec – Jan: Mid-Year Conference**
- Comprehensive feedback on performance, to date
- Adjust goals and update development plan as necessary

**Apr – May: End-of-Year Conference**
- Comprehensive feedback on performance, to date
- Final performance rating, to date
- Set preliminary goals for next year

**Between Conferences:**
- Continuous Feedback and Individualized Development
  - Multiple required classroom observations (unannounced) of varying lengths, followed by formal feedback
  - Individualized professional development activities based on the development plan
  - Ongoing, informal feedback based on additional observations and review of student data
  - Self-reflection
Under the new system, each teacher will have one individual responsible for his/her appraisal and development.

**Appraiser Role and Responsibilities:**

- Individuals currently permitted to appraise in HISD
- Conducts all required observations and conferences
- Provides written and verbal feedback
- Responsible for ensuring access to development opportunities
- Reviews all available sources of evidence to determine a summative rating for each teacher

- All appraisers must be trained and receive certification by HISD prior to implementing the new system.

- HISD is currently designing a new appraisal system for school leaders (appraisers) that will align to this new system for teachers.
Appraisers use a simple lookup table to combine scores in the three categories into a single overall rating.

Determining Summative Ratings

- Teachers earn **one of four summative ratings**: Ineffective, Needs Improvement, Effective or Highly Effective.
- The proposed system uses a lookup table instead of a one-size-fits-all formula to determine summative ratings.
- The lookup table makes the system more transparent and accessible than using percentage weights, since teachers can easily see what their rating would be based on a particular combination of scores in the three criteria categories.
The appraisal and development system will be phased in to give schools the time to implement this system well, so that it becomes a valuable tool for teachers and appraisers.

### 2011-on

- Conferences, Walkthroughs, Observations
- Comprehensive feedback and formative ratings on Instructional Practice and Professional Expectations
- Summative appraisal rating including Instructional Practice and Professional Expectations
- Job-embedded, individualized professional development

### 2011-2012

- Student progress and outcomes discussed in conferences
- Student performance activities are refined with teachers and principals
- Narrative, evaluative feedback on Student Performance impacts the summative appraisal rating.

### 2012-on

- Student Performance measures included in teacher’s summative appraisal ratings
Professional Development has been restructured to provide teachers with individualized support and development.

CAMPUS-BASED RESOURCES

Development plans will address teachers’ individual strengths and areas for growth.

Appraisers are accountable for helping teachers improve and grow professionally.

Teacher development specialists (TDSs) coach and connect teachers with valuable, subject-specific, job-embedded development opportunities.

PD CENTRAL SUPPORT

- Small design team focused on designing teacher development aligned to high priority, district-wide initiatives.
- Development of online, user-centered learning tools to enhance connectivity of teachers to resources and to each other.
- New Teacher Support – ABRAZO, mentoring
- Teacher Leader pilots
The Role of Teacher Development Specialists (TDSs)

TDSs are experienced educators who partner with teachers to support their continuous growth and development through observation and feedback, coaching, and connections with relevant learning experiences.

How Teacher Development Specialists will support teachers:

- **Coach and connect** teachers to a variety of learning opportunities that support their continuous development
- **Observe** and provide teachers with formative feedback aligned with the Instructional Practice rubric
- **Support** teachers to ensure application of new knowledge and skills and impact on student learning
HISD has laid the groundwork in planning for successful, district-wide implementation of the new system.

Training and Support
✓ Intensive summer training and credentialing of over 800 appraisers
✓ Regular, structured support for appraisers throughout the school year
✓ Standardized protocols and forms
✓ Professional Development office reorganization, including creation of the Teacher Development Specialist role
✓ Trainings for nearly 11,000 teachers conducted by principals prior to the beginning of the school year

Continuous Improvement of the System
✓ Ongoing feedback from key stakeholders for system improvements
  • Continued outreach to SDMCs and DAC for feedback
  • Continued use of e-mail updates and dedicated website to collect teachers’ and appraisers’ questions and feedback on the new system
  • Teacher and principal surveys

Integrated Data and Technology Platform
✓ New performance management tools integrated into PeopleSoft
✓ Electronic data collection for monitoring and analysis
In response to feedback from teachers and administrators, HISD has created supplemental rubric guidance for several key subjects.

For several subjects, supplemental guidance documents were developed by engaging teachers, administrators, and central curriculum department staff in each key area.

- Early Childhood
- Special Education
- Physical Education
- English Language Learners
- Visual Art
- Music
- Dance
- Theater

The Instructional Practice criteria and rubrics are intended to apply to teachers in all grades and subjects, and these documents are neither a separate rubric for certain teachers, nor a comprehensive guide for good instructional practice. These documents only seek to present more context for administrators to consider and are the beginning of a more comprehensive set of efforts to develop teaching and learning in specific subjects based on the Instructional Practice criteria.
Putting an effective teacher in every HISD classroom requires a comprehensive set of reforms—no single strategy can make it happen.

Four Key Strategies

- **Smart recruitment**: Strengthen recruitment and staffing policies and practices to attract top talent.
- **Useful appraisals**: Establish a rigorous and fair teacher appraisal system to inform key decisions.
- **Individualized teacher support**: Provide effective individualized support and professional development for teachers.
- **New career pathways**: Offer career pathways and differentiated compensation to retain and leverage the most effective teachers.
For more information, visit www.HISDeffectiveteachers.org.