

# NEWS



Pittsburgh  
Public Schools



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**For Immediate Release**

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## **State Grants Approval of District Teacher Growth and Evaluation System**

PITTSBURGH July 29, 2014 - Superintendent Linda S. Lane announced today that the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) granted the District three-year approval of its teacher growth and evaluation system, affirming Pittsburgh Public Schools' (PPS) approach to teacher evaluation. This approval provides the stability the District needs to continue its efforts to provide teachers information about their practice and ensure that all students experience the high-quality instruction they deserve.

"Five years ago, in collaboration with the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers, we set out to build a system to provide better feedback to teachers about their practice," said Superintendent Linda Lane. "This approval marks a significant milestone on that journey. We can now move beyond design and focus on using our evaluation and growth system to give our teachers feedback and support, which in turn benefits our students."

In the past, teacher evaluation rated virtually all teachers as if they were the same and provided little feedback to teachers to help them advance their practice. As a result of Act 82 of 2012 improvements to teacher evaluation are now taking place statewide. PPS's evaluation and growth system is unique from others in the state in that it considers student voice, increases the weight given to teachers' contributions to student growth, and establishes a higher overall standard of performance, aligned to the District's goals for student achievement.

"Pennsylvania's new educator evaluation system is designed to ensure that high-quality, effective teachers are in the classroom and are being supported through professional development as they work toward increasing student achievement. The educator evaluation law preserves a school district's flexibility to implement its own system that is equal to or more rigorous than the law requires," said Acting Secretary of Education Carolyn Dumesq. "As Pittsburgh's new evaluation system is implemented, the department will be monitoring the results to ensure it's achieving the desired outcomes."

### **Positive Shift in Teacher Performance on 2013-14 Educator Effectiveness Reports**

The District previously received a one-year approval for the system, developed locally through extensive collaboration with teachers and union leaders over the past five years. The evaluation and growth system is already supporting improved performance District-wide.

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On June 12, District teachers received their first ratings under Act 82 based on the results of their 2013-14 Educator Effectiveness Reports after receiving no-stakes-attached preview reports last August. The end-of-year teacher ratings identified measurable growth in teacher performance with more than 96 percent of teachers demonstrating effective performance during the 2013-14 school year. This is up from 85 percent identified by the no-stakes attached preview reports last year. Furthermore, during 2013-14, 23 percent of teachers performed at the highest level - *Distinguished*.

“We are encouraged by this positive shift in performance. We know that with better feedback and support, more teachers across the District can meet our high standard of performance,” said Lane. We know that to improve outcomes for our students, we must first improve instruction through quality feedback which supports professional growth.”

This school year, the District will also introduce new growth and evaluation systems for principals and non-teaching professionals, as required by Act 82. In addition, while the evaluation of central office staff is not required under Act 82, the District will expand a system initially used during the 2013-14 school year for the Superintendent’s Cabinet.

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