

Frequently Asked Questions related to the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) in District #108

How do students with IEPs factor into a general education teacher's score? Or do these students only factor into a special education teacher's score?

The short answer is that the students will likely be a factor in both teachers' ratings. PERA does not prescribe or mandate that a certain number of students be included in the development of a goal. It does encourage school districts and teachers to strive to incorporate as many students that the teacher instructs as possible when incorporating data and indicators of student growth into a teacher's evaluation.

In addressing this question, it is important to keep in mind the difference between attainment and growth. It is the PERA Joint Committee's belief that all students can demonstrate growth between two points in time. All students may not be able to attain a certain level.

I have concerns about the exemptions from student growth for some categories of staff members. Why are they exempt from including student growth into their evaluations?

Part 50 of the IL School Code excludes support personnel from the definition of "teacher" such that evaluations of school personnel (including, without limitation, school counselor, school psychologist, non-teaching school speech-language pathologists, school nurse, and school social worker) are not required at any time to incorporate student growth as a factor into their evaluation.

The District's PERA Joint Committee must honor this exclusion per law, yet does require those certified staff members who are "exempt" from the student growth component develop Professional Practice Goals with their evaluator during their evaluation cycles.

How will principals be deciding rigor? What if some expect rigor from the beginning?

The district's PERA Joint Committee recognizes how complex the inclusion of student growth into a single summative rating is. This is the reason why the Joint Committee made key decisions to minimize student growth's impact on a summative rating and to phase in the "rigor" of student growth goals over time. If you take a close look at the summative rating matrix which combines Professional Practice with Student Growth, you can see this fact illustrated. Provided that "Professional Practice" is rated no lower than "Proficient", it is nearly impossible to receive an overall summative rating any lower than "Proficient."

It is important to note that principals will be dedicating time at School Improvement Days to the development of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) and will be participating in training with Central Office to ensure that rigor is phased in over the course of the next several years. Keep in mind that PERA also requires a "mid-point check in" for all student growth goals. If it becomes apparent mid-way through the SLO process that students included in the growth goal are not on track to meet the end

targets, the targets can be reset/revised. It is the intent of the PERA Joint Committee to encourage meaningful dialogue between a teacher and his/her evaluator around the topic of student growth for individual students and/or groups of students and this is going to take time.

What do the asterisks mean on the matrix?

The PERA Joint Committee felt strongly that the current evaluation system in place has served the district well in assisting individuals in growing as professionals. However, the Committee also realized and appreciated the fact that it had to adopt changes to incorporate student growth per PERA law. The Committee decided on a creative way to minimize the impact of the new student growth requirement while continuing to honor a framework for evaluation that was developed by District representatives over the years.

**Within 10 calendar days of receiving a Summative Evaluation rating documenting a Professional Practice rating of Needs Improvement and a Student Growth rating of Excellent, a teacher may provide additional student growth data in support of a change in overall summative rating to the level of "Proficient." The data would be supplied to the Superintendent or designee for review. Results of this review and subsequent final rating will be forwarded to both the teacher and the evaluator.*

*** Within 10 calendar days of receiving a Summative Evaluation rating documenting a Professional Practice rating of Proficient and a Student Growth rating of Unsatisfactory, a teacher may provide additional student growth data in support of a change in overall summative rating to the level of "Proficient." The data would be supplied to the Superintendent or designee for review. Results of this review and subsequent final rating will be forwarded to both the teacher and the evaluator.*

How many students need to be identified for each SLO? Is there a minimum or maximum?

PERA does not mandate a certain number of students to be included in each SLO. It does however recommend that as many students as possible are included in the development of the SLO. PERA guidance from ISBE cautions that if the targeted group size is small, how one or two students perform will have a greater impact on the final SLO score than if the SLO had 20-25 students.
