



For Immediate Release

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Unions and Management Organizations Release Guidance for Teacher Evaluations

Joint Statement from the Illinois Education Association, Illinois Federation of Teachers, Illinois Association of School Administrators, and the Illinois Principals Association on Guidance to Illinois Schools Districts on Managing Teacher Evaluation

Springfield, Illinois -- Illinois school districts will be working through the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for the foreseeable future. As a result, we deem it necessary to provide guidance to Illinois school districts on how to manage teacher evaluation during this time.

We recognize the complex work educators must do right now to ensure the physical, social emotional, and academic health and well-being of the students they serve. This work requires innovation and a reprioritization of what would be done were schools running normally. The Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) gives school districts the ability to design and implement a teacher evaluation plan that best fits the needs of the district. Until Illinois reaches Phase 5 of Governor Pritzker's Reopening plan, when all school districts may return to traditional in-person instruction, under PERA, districts should consider developing an alternative plan that will focus teacher evaluation on formative feedback and support rather than summative ratings.

When making the determination for how to best move forward with teacher evaluation for the 2020-2021 school year, each district's joint committee should consider:

- Current district performance evaluation plans are based on observing the interaction between students and teachers in classrooms with all children in attendance.
- It is likely that many (or all) districts, at some point in the year, may be required to deliver instruction remotely or in classroom environments that do not allow for the observation of student and teacher interaction with all students in attendance.



- Teachers are not primarily trained to provide remote instruction and qualified evaluators are not trained to evaluate remote instruction.
- Within our current reality, it may not be possible to complete required classroom teacher observations for the 2020-2021 school year.
- It may not be possible to collect sufficient valid and reliable data on which to base the classroom practice element of educator evaluation.

Each district’s joint committee, or where appropriate, the exclusive bargaining agent and district, should consider changes to the evaluation plan to:

- Provide tenured teachers with formative feedback for support and development and rely on the default option pursuant P.A. 101-643 in lieu of conducting a summative evaluation.
- Provide for non-tenured teacher summative evaluation ratings pursuant to P.A. 101-643 including the default option provided by law.

Additionally, the answers to the critical questions below may assist the district’s joint committee on how best to proceed within their own local context:

If a *tenured* teacher is not evaluated, what designation does the teacher receive?

Per P.A. 101-0643, during any time in which the Governor has declared a disaster due to a public health emergency and unless the school board and any exclusive bargaining representative have completed the performance rating for teachers or mutually agreed to an alternate performance rating, any teacher who has entered into contractual continued service, whose most recent evaluation was deemed "Excellent," and whose performance evaluation is not conducted when the evaluation is required to be conducted shall receive a teacher's performance rating deemed "Excellent". Absent a disaster due to a public health emergency declared by the Governor pursuant to Section 7 of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act, a tenured teacher who is not evaluated defaults to "Proficient."

If a *non-tenured* teacher is not evaluated what designation does the teacher receive?

Irrespective of whether the Governor has declared a disaster due to a public health emergency, a non-tenured teacher who is not evaluated defaults to a summative rating of "Proficient." Moreover, during any time in which the Governor has declared a disaster due to a public health emergency, P.A. 101-643 provides that a school board and any exclusive bargaining representative may agree to an alternative performance rating for non-tenured teachers, as long as the agreement is in writing.

Can the union and management agree on an alternative performance rating for tenured and non-tenured teachers who have not been evaluated because of a disaster due to a public health emergency?



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Pursuant to P.A. 101-0643, during anytime in which the Governor has declared a disaster due to a public health emergency, a school board and any exclusive bargaining representative may mutually agree to an alternate performance rating for teachers who have not been evaluated, as long as the agreement is in writing.

If the Governor withdraws the disaster declaration during the school year, how are evaluations affected?

Legally, not at all, except possibly for the default summative rating of tenured teachers who have not been evaluated as described in the first question above. However, joint committees should consider the time that is required to complete the necessary evaluations and how much of that time occurred during the disaster declaration. Further, the focus during a year of interrupted in-person attendance should be on the physical and mental well-being of all educators in the building and on supporting students, teachers, and the learning climate.

For the purpose of summative evaluation ratings, can formal and informal observations occur during periods of remote instruction?

Formal and informal observations are designed to occur during in-person instruction. It may be difficult to conduct formal and informal observations during remote instruction. The joint committee should consider these factors in determining the type of observations, if any, that will be conducted during remote instruction.

Do remediation plans for teachers who were rated “Unsatisfactory” continue at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year?

Per P.A. 101-0643 If the Governor has declared a disaster due to a public health emergency and in-person instruction is suspended, the timelines connected to the commencement and completion of any remediation plans are waived unless the parties mutually agree otherwise and the agreement is in writing. Any remediation plan that had been in place for more than 45 days prior to the suspension of in-person instruction shall resume when in-person instruction resumes and any remediation plan that had been in place for fewer than 45 days prior to the suspension of in-person instruction shall be discontinued and a new remediation period shall begin when in-person instruction resumes. The above requirements apply regardless of whether they are included in a school district’s teacher evaluation plan.

How should a district determine which teachers, if any, are evaluated during the 2020-21 school year?

All modifications to the evaluation process for 2020-21 should be made through the joint committee process taking into consideration the district’s needs.



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If an evaluation is modified or not performed for a probationary teacher, can that probationary teacher still be dismissed or non-renewed?

Yes. A modification to the evaluation process or a failure to evaluate will not limit a school board's right to non-renew or dismiss a probationary teacher pursuant to the School Code

We will continue to provide joint statements to the field as we are able and as this unique situation continues to evolve.

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The [Illinois Federation of Teachers](#) (IFT) represents 103,000 teachers and paraprofessionals in PreK-12 school districts throughout Illinois, faculty and staff at Illinois' community colleges and universities, public employees under every statewide elected constitutional officer, and retirees.

The 135,000 member [Illinois Education Association](#) (IEA-NEA) is the state's largest union. IEA represents Pre K-12 teachers outside the city of Chicago and education support staff, higher education faculty, retired education employees and students preparing to become teachers, statewide.

The Illinois Principals Associations serves over 5800 principals, assistant principals, deans, and other school leaders throughout the state of Illinois.

[IASA](#) is the state's premier advocacy organization for school administrators with nearly 2,000 members and a history of promoting excellence in education dating back to 1946.