

**Supporting Quality Teaching and  
Rewarding Effectiveness:**

***A Guide to Proposed  
Changes in Evaluation***

**Aldine Independent School District**

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# I. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF INVEST

## a. Project Background

The Aldine Independent School District (ISD) has developed a new teacher evaluation system that will be piloted in the 2012-2013 school year and rolled out district-wide in the 2013-2014 school year. The new evaluation system will include multiple measures of teacher effectiveness to allow for better differentiation of teacher practice, increased teacher effectiveness, and reduced teacher attrition rates.

After learning about Operation Public Education, an education reform project of the University of Pennsylvania, at a national conference, Aldine ISD invited Operation Public Education to present its comprehensive framework for school reform described in Theodore Hershberg and Claire Robertson-Kraft, eds., *A Grand Bargain for Education Reform: New Rewards and Supports for New Accountability* (Harvard Education Press: 2009). This presentation led to a proposal submitted to the Laura and John Arnold Foundation in January, 2011. From this larger, four-year proposal, funds were provided in August, 2011 for the first year to help Aldine ISD design and adopt a new teacher evaluation system based on multiple measures of performance.

## b. Vision, Mission, Goals of INVEST

With the Arnold Foundation grant, Aldine ISD aims to significantly improve the quality of its classroom instruction. Research makes clear that some teachers are dramatically more effective than others, and further, that these differences are among the most important schooling factors affecting student learning. Yet, despite this variation in teacher effectiveness, traditional evaluation systems demonstrate little or no connection between teacher evaluation results and student learning gains. Aldine ISD's experience is no exception; indeed, the former instrument, Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), rated 96% of Aldine teachers satisfactory. During the 2011-2012 school year, we began developing a new teacher evaluation system, INVEST, based on (1) Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching and (2) Student Growth Percentiles (SGP), designed to differentiate teacher performance and maximize teacher professional growth. These efforts build on Aldine's robust teacher recruitment process and training model for supporting our new student teachers.

*The INVEST project has three main goals.*

**Goal 1: Differentiating Instructional Practice** - *more accurately representing teacher performance levels.* The new evaluation system will better differentiate teachers' instructional performance through observation using the Framework for Teaching, as well as through the SGP data. Using these measures, administrators will place teachers in one of four categories (highly effective, effective, needs improvement, and ineffective). Where currently 96% of teachers are simply rated "satisfactory," this new system will lead to better dialogue and a more accurate picture of teacher performance across the district's schools.

**Goal 2: Teacher Effectiveness** - *increase the proportion of highly effective and effective teachers.* To raise the entire quality of the district’s teaching force, the new evaluation system will better differentiate the quality of teacher practice. In Year 1, we will set benchmarks based on the new evaluation system. Over the three-year period of the renewal grant, the goal will be to increase the proportion of highly effective and effective teachers significantly. Identifying teachers in need of improvement, providing targeted support, and dismissing those unable to improve the quality of their instruction, will accomplish this.

**Goal 3: Teacher Retention** - *reduce teacher attrition rates by half.* The system’s goal is to increase teacher satisfaction, and thus reduce the rate of teachers who leave Aldine ISD. As we build out the initiative, we will refine these retention goals to focus on teachers who are on track to being effective or highly effective.

In turn, these improvements in teacher effectiveness and retention will impact student performance on standardized tests, improve high school graduation rates, and support our mission to prepare students academically and socially to be critical thinkers, problems solvers, and responsible and productive citizens.

### **c. Review of Design Process and Work Groups**

The design work on the new teacher evaluation and development system, INVEST, began in partnership with Operation Public Education in September, 2011, supported by a one-year grant from the Arnold Foundation. The reform effort was inclusive, involving teachers, administrators and community members, and based on the comprehensive framework for school reform designed by OPE at the University of Pennsylvania.

#### ***Work Groups:*** The Design Process

The Framework for Teaching and SGP were introduced to district leaders in September and three “work groups” – Teacher Practices, Student Impact, and Other Staff – were established to work through many complex decisions required for the design of an evaluation system. Aldine ISD’s uniquely democratic process for teacher participation was used to identify participants for this reform. Each of Aldine ISD’s 75 schools elected five representatives, including two teachers, one para-professional, one parent, and one business community member. These constituted a Vertical Education Advisory Committee (VEAC). The representatives from all schools, in turn, elected a district-wide body, the District Education Advisory Committee (DEAC). The work groups were composed of VEAC and DEAC volunteers, plus educators recruited by senior administrators because of expertise in the subjects covered. Each group had between 30 and 60 people represented depending on purpose, and they each met five times.

**Teacher Practices:** The Teacher Practices work group set and accomplished the following goals and objectives:

- **Introduced the Danielson Framework** as one measure of this evaluation system and trained teachers and administrators to act as experts in their schools and use their knowledge to make policy decisions going forward.
- **Discussed the Processes, Protocols and Procedures** that will be necessary to successfully implement the new system.
- **Identified specific recommendations for each of the three tracks** (novice teachers, experienced teachers, and those in need of assistance) that drove the creation of final documents, forms and policies.

**Student Impact:** The Student Impact work group set and accomplished the following goals and objectives:

- **Generated Questions about the Student Growth Percentile (SGP) model** in order to create an initial FAQ, as well as to help qualify work group participants as local experts who can help explain the system to their peers.
- **Analyzed the standard error calculations** displayed in the “candle and wick charts,” so that work group members have a thorough understanding of how standard error is calculated, and how to use this data in discussions about student growth with peers.
- **Proposed policy recommendations** based on questions that were raised by teachers and administrators at the campus level. This group also gave input on other topics such as Peer Assistance and Review, Student Growth Objectives, and the Final INVEST Rating.

**Other Staff:** The Other Staff work group (composed of educators in non-core academic subjects such as art, music, and P.E., and in specialist positions such as nurses, librarians, counselors, and social workers) set and accomplished the following goals and objectives:

- **Introduced the Danielson Framework** as one measure of the new evaluation system and trained the group so they were able to make decisions about how to tailor this rubric to their own discipline.
- **Customized each of the specialist rubrics** to fit their job descriptions and accurately measure the impact of those within each programming area.
- **Discussed the Processes, Protocols and Procedures** that will be used to successfully implement the new system and set sample Student Growth Objectives for their respective disciplines.

#### d. System Overview

The design of a complex evaluation system that uses multiple performance measures will require considerable training and coordination over a two-year rollout period. To understand all its moving parts, this section sketches a broad overview of the system as a whole, with more detail provided in subsequent sections of the manual.

### ***i. Performance Measures***

The new teacher evaluation system consists of two measures: observation of teacher practices and student growth levels. For the observation portion, the district has adopted Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching. Originally developed in 1996, the Framework is used nationally to document and develop teacher practice. It consists of four broad domains – Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction and Professional Responsibilities – which are further divided into 22 components. A four-level performance rubric – Unsatisfactory, Basic, Proficient and Distinguished – is provided for all educators, including those in non-core academic subjects (e.g., art and music), as well as specialists (e.g., librarians and nurses). Research has demonstrated a positive correlation between administrator observation using the Danielson Framework and student progress, indicating that classroom observation ratings are valid measures of teaching practice.

To measure teacher performance through growth, the district has adopted the Aldine Growth Model, a version of Student Growth Percentiles based on multiple research based models. Students are compared to their academic peers: those who start the year with the same or similar test scores.

### ***ii. Final INVEST Rating and Timeline***

The “Final INVEST Rating” takes into account both performance measures to ensure a complete evaluation of teacher performance. Teachers will be rated *Highly Effective*, *Effective*, *Needs Improvement*, or *Ineffective* in both “teacher practices” (the Danielson Framework) and “student growth percentiles”. Combining measures produces an overall rating: to be Highly Effective, a teacher must be rated highly effective in both; to be Effective, a teacher must receive that rating in both. This new system ensures that both “instruction” (the teacher's inputs) and “learning” (the student's outputs) are considered in each teacher's evaluation.

### ***iii. Implementation Plan - Roll-out of the INVEST Pilot***

The national experience in school reform has repeatedly demonstrated the widely varied impact that different implementation approaches have had on results, even when the programs were similar in their design. For this reason, rather than roll INVEST out district-wide, the Aldine ISD has opted to pilot the new teacher evaluation system in 2012-2013 to a select group of schools to assess effectiveness and make modifications before fully implementing the system in the 2013-14 school year. Training both administrators and teachers will be essential for the success of the new teacher evaluation system. In partnership with Teachscape (for the Danielson Framework for Teaching) and the Learning Growth Network (for the Aldine Growth Model), Aldine ISD will implement cutting edge technology tools to support effective implementation. The new evaluation system, INVEST, will be introduced during the summer of 2012 and implemented during the 2012-2013 school year in pilot schools and the 2013-2014 school year district-wide.

#### *iv. Reforms to be Undertaken with Renewed Grant Support*

Three reforms are being proposed in the three-year renewal application to the Arnold Foundation, as well as other philanthropies. Having established a fair teacher evaluation system, our reform efforts over the next three years will focus on the incentives of performance: the development of both positive and negative consequences.

- *Compensation.* The first of these will differentiate compensation based on performance. The new system will send a clear message about what is important to the organization. It will be far fairer than the single-salary schedule driven largely by longevity because rigorous observation and growth data from the new evaluation system will reveal different effectiveness levels among the district's teachers. The new system will be comprehensive, covering *all* educators and specialists, not simply those in tested subjects. It will provide incentives for educators both to maintain performance (through "base" pay and "variable" pay) and to improve performance over the course of their career (through a progression to higher base salary levels, often referred to as "career ladders").
- *Peer Assistance and Review (PAR).* The second will be a PAR process designed to meet several important needs. It will provide struggling teachers with the time and support they require to improve their instruction while maintaining the district's capacity to dismiss in a timely fashion those who are ill-equipped for classroom success. It might also share the decision for dismissal among a panel of teachers and administrators to ensure the fairness of the final judgment. The PAR process will assume the responsibility for managing the remediation process for struggling teachers and therefore reduce the increased work load for principals created by the new teacher evaluation system. These processes include conducting multiple observations annually, each involving pre- and post-observation conferences, as well as scoring teacher performance on the 22-component Danielson framework.
- *The Giffin Model.* The third reform involves the use of data from the new growth metric (see II.b) to identify the type of student (low-, average- or high-achieving) with whom teachers are most successful. To maximize learning outcomes, the district will explore the possibility of matching teacher strengths to appropriate student groupings, developing individual learning plans, and providing layered curricula with the goal of maximizing each student's academic growth. Homogenous groupings minimize the need to differentiate instruction and introduce considerable flexibility in class size because average- and high-achieving students can be taught in larger numbers. This may save money while providing smaller class sizes for struggling students. There is also the potential to reduce behavioral problems because students not "in sync" with their curriculum tend to "act out" either from frustration (when they are behind their curriculum) or boredom (when they are ahead of their curriculum). Finally, the fluidity of the groupings (e.g., students who are moving faster or slower than their group are moved to the appropriate classroom during the school year) makes clear this is not "tracking." The model will not be completely implemented until leadership ensures that all components are aligned with the goals of the district as a whole.

## II. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

### a. Teacher Practices: *The Framework for Teaching*

Of all the factors that contribute to student learning, the quality of teaching is the single most important. Research validates what most parents and other stakeholders already know: if they want to understand complex subject matter, or to find it interesting and engaging, there is no substitute for high-quality teaching. To assure this is found in every classroom requires a means to assess the performance of individual teachers. A school district committed to creating an environment where all students have access to high quality instruction must INVEST in the rigor, validity and reliability of its teacher evaluation system.

While the essential first purpose of a system of teacher evaluation is to ensure good teaching, a second and equally important purpose is to promote teacher learning. This is not because the quality of teaching, at least with the vast majority of teachers, is of poor quality and must be raised. It is because good teaching is so *hard* that it can always be improved. No matter how good a lesson, it can always be even better. All interactions between teachers and supervisors should work to improve the quality of teaching as a fundamental professional responsibility.

Systems that are transformational, scalable and sustainable go well beyond the evaluation tool itself to embrace its protocols and procedures. Successful systems capture evidence from all the important facets of a teacher's work and identify behaviors and activities known to promote learning: *self-assessment, reflection on practice and professional conversation*. Ultimately, a successful system results in self-directedness, in which the teacher assumes responsibility to pursue continuous improvement in instructional expertise. Good systems support that process through mentoring, professional development activities, and well-trained evaluators.

Aldine ISD has undertaken a year-long process to create an evaluation system. The new system not only meets the letter of the law for teacher evaluation in Texas, but contributes to the continued learning of teachers and their evaluators about what constitutes the best teaching practices: that which has the greatest effect on student learning. In Aldine ISD, the evaluation process is not a meaningless ritual, in which educators hasten to complete the process in the least possible time, with little regard for developing effective instruction. The new evaluation system establishes means for all teachers to secure the support they need at different stages of their career. The system extends well beyond legal compliance to provide new and established teachers with meaningful evaluations that produce personal growth and ensures that struggling teachers have evidence-based feedback to help improve their instruction. The system includes a protocol for confronting mediocre teaching and helps administrators develop the skill and the courage needed to respond to this problem with candor and support.

Charlotte Danielson's, *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* (2007), is a research-based, validated, and time-tested description of professional teaching practice. It is used across the U.S. and foreign countries as a foundation for conversations about teaching and as a basis for evaluation. Teachers from all content areas and grade levels embrace the Framework as a clear articulation of what they do every day.

### *i. Clear Performance Standards*

Despite its inherent complexity, a good definition of teaching must include clear performance standards. Granted, teaching requires highly sophisticated skills; there are many moving parts to any instructional interaction between teacher and students. Educational research offers educators reasonably clear findings as to the impact of different actions on student learning, and a coherent definition of teaching must be grounded in this research, particularly when it is used to make high-stakes decisions regarding teachers.

The Framework for Teaching provides one such example of a research-based definition of good teaching. It divides the complex work of teaching into four domains and 22 components (summarized below). Each component is further divided into anywhere from 2-5 smaller elements. Additionally, it describes *all* of teaching, not merely the interaction between teacher and students in the classroom. Classroom performance is generally considered to be at the heart of teaching. However, much of the important work of teaching, such as planning lessons, maintaining accurate records, communicating with families, and collaborating with colleagues, takes place “behind the scenes” of the classroom. Skill in these areas is essential to good practice; therefore, a definition of teaching, and the procedures to evaluate it, should recognize the entire scope of the work.

<p><b><i>Domain One: Planning and Preparation</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy</li> <li>b. Demonstrating knowledge of students</li> <li>c. Setting instructional outcomes</li> <li>d. Demonstrating knowledge of resources</li> <li>e. Designing coherent instruction</li> <li>f. Designing student assessments</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Domain Two: Classroom Environment</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Creating an environment of respect and rapport</li> <li>b. Establishing a culture for learning</li> <li>c. Managing classroom procedures</li> <li>d. Managing student behavior</li> <li>e. Organizing physical space</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Domain Four: Professional Responsibilities</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Reflecting on teaching</li> <li>b. Maintaining accurate records</li> <li>c. Communicating with families</li> <li>d. Participating in a professional community</li> <li>e. Growing and developing professionally</li> <li>f. Showing professionalism</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Domain Three: Instruction</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Communicating with students</li> <li>b. Using questioning and discussion techniques</li> <li>c. Engaging students in learning</li> <li>d. Using assessment in instruction</li> <li>e. Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness</li> </ul>

## *ii. Levels of Performance*

For some time, educators and policymakers, in recognition of the importance of clear standards of practice to guide both teacher preparation and evaluation, have promulgated lists of the qualities of good teaching. However, it's not sufficient to simply list out the components. For example, practitioners would agree that good teaching requires establishing an environment of respect and rapport. But this is not an act of teaching that can be evaluated as a dichotomous judgment — such an environment is not either present or absent. Instead, it is present *to some degree*. Performance in all aspects represents a continuum, from very poor to excellent.

Thus, in order to truly operationalize the components of good teaching, it's necessary to create levels of performance that describe, in language easily discerned by practitioners, how a classroom looks (what the students are doing, what the teacher is doing, the nature of the interactions, etc.) when the teacher is performing at each level of performance.

It should be noted that these are levels of performance of *teaching*, not of *teachers*. While performance is, to some degree, stable (it gradually improves with growing expertise), it is not absolutely the same from one day to the next. Thus, when one comments about a teacher's performance, it is grounded in evidence from a single lesson, or as an amalgam of a number of lessons. But it is teacher's *performance* that is being evaluated, not the teacher as a *person*.

The framework for teaching is organized into four levels: unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, and distinguished. See the appendix for examples of all levels of performance within each component.

## *iii. Introduction to Processes and Protocols*

In this model, the differentiated needs of the teachers vary for experienced teachers and beginning teachers.

- **Track 1:** Beginners need the support of mentors and administrators during their first several years while they increase their repertoire of effective classroom practices, and refine and develop their skills. The District benefits when they can make informed, evidence-based decisions about continuing to employ those teachers. Track 1 is the set of practices and procedures for that group of teachers.
- **Track 2:** For experienced teachers who are full members of the professional community, a comprehensive evaluation should be thorough, affirming that their practice continues to be effective, while providing the basis for high-level professional dialogue between the teacher and

evaluator. This track can also include opportunities for the teacher to engage in self-directed professional inquiry, when the teacher embraces the obligation for continuing improvement and professional learning.

- **Individual Support Plan (ISP) and Professional Growth Plan (PGP):** There are times, hopefully infrequent, when an experienced teacher’s performance drops below standard, and must be improved, primarily for the well-being of students, but also for the good of the teacher and the profession in general.

#### *iv. The Rationale for Teacher Tracks and Interventions*

**Purpose of Track 1:** To support the beginning teacher/practitioner in learning and achieving the performance standards of the profession and the District.

- To ensure that the Components of Professional Practice are understood, accepted, and demonstrated
- To provide support in implementing the Components
- To provide accountability for decisions to continue employment

**Purpose of Track 2:** To provide experienced teachers a structured, supportive, and collaborative environment for enhancing their on-going personal professional growth, ensuring that all staff continues to meet the standards for professional practice. Embedded in Track 2 are two presumptions: competence and continuous learning.

- To ensure that the Components of Professional Practice continue to be understood, accepted, and demonstrated
- To maintain the ongoing goal of continuous student learning
- To focus on school improvement initiatives
- To provide accountability for attaining district goals
- To provide feedback on professional issues
- To ensure the ongoing professional dialogue between teacher and evaluator

**Purpose of Individual Support Plan - *Focused Assistance*:** To provide teachers whose performance at any point does not meet the expected criteria of the four Domains of Teaching, or who have failed to make adequate progress toward identified goals, or who have failed to make adequate progress toward overall proficiency, or who have failed to demonstrate improvement in professional practice, structure, formal assistance, and guidance towards meeting standards for professional practice

- To enable a teacher to seek assistance in areas needing improvement
- To give the evaluator a protocol for giving the teacher a “heads up,” about a deficiency in performance, and co-create an action plan

- To provide a structured process for a teacher who may benefit from additional support
- To address issues that are deemed by the supervisor and teacher to be short term, that can be improved through intensive focus and commitment

**Purpose of Professional Growth Plan - *Intensive Assistance*:** To provide more structured support and assistance to teachers who are not meeting the standards of professional practice within their Individual Support Plan, have not exhibited change in classroom practice, and that have a pattern of inadequate performance that is evident and serious (this may be identified by an “ineffective” rating).

- To provide a protocol for the District to construct an improvement plan, which clearly articulates (evidence-based) the sub-par performance, sets timelines, specific improvement requirements, and success criteria
- To articulate the consequences and disciplinary actions that would occur if the performance is not adequately improved
- To offer a good-faith effort by the District to enable a teacher to strengthen deficient aspects of practice

**v. *Policy, Protocols and Procedures for Tracks 1a, 1b and 2***

**Track Placement:** Teachers will begin initial placement in Track 1 or Track 2.

- Track 1a: New teachers with no previous experience will all be placed in Track 1a.
- Track 1b: Teachers who are in their second or third year of teaching will be placed in Track 1b.
- Track 2: Teachers who have more than 3 years of experience, and have an overall rating of highly effective or effective overall will be placed in Track 2.

**Goal Setting/Action Plan Conference:**

- All Tracks: The goal setting conference is conducted with the appraiser, and the Conference is required within the first six weeks of instruction. Within the first 3 weeks of school, administrators will present a district power point outlining the collaborative goal setting process. By the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> three weeks of instruction, goals must be completed by the teacher. By the end of the first 6 weeks, action plans must be submitted. (Refer to Appendix - INV1)
- Track 1a and 1b: For teachers in Track 1, the mentor, or buddy, may participate in the conference.

**Support Structure:**

- All: All teachers will have professional development opportunities available on-line at the campus level and at the district level. If a formal appraisal or walk-through rating indicates a need for professional growth beyond other levels of support provided, teachers will begin the ISP process. (See ISP)

- Track 1a: For all teachers in Track 1a, there will be a structured mentorship program outlined by the district. Teachers in this track will only be referred to ISP if there is support needed beyond that which the mentor can provide.
- Track 1b: At the administrator's discretion, a "buddy" may be assigned to a teacher in Track 1b if they feel this will be beneficial for continued professional growth. If this buddy system is not sufficient in supporting a teacher's professional growth, they may be referred to the ISP process.

### **Walk-Throughs:**

- All: Walk-throughs will be unannounced, and a minimum of 15 minutes of observation will be required. Written feedback will be provided to the teacher within 10 working days of a walk through. A post-conference may be requested by the teacher or administrator, and walk throughs can be conducted during any instructional day. The district appraisal calendar will be followed. The nature of walk-throughs should be discussed in the goal setting conference at the beginning of the year.
- Track 1a: For teachers in Track 1a, a minimum of 3 walk-throughs are required each semester, and six or more walk-throughs will be completed throughout the year. Three of these walk-throughs must be conducted prior to the formal observation.
- Track 1b: For teachers in Track 1b, a minimum of 2 walk-throughs are required each semester and four or more walk-throughs will be completed throughout the year. Two of these walk-throughs must be conducted prior to the formal observation.
- Track 2: For teachers in Track 2, a minimum of 3 walk-throughs are required. Two of these must be during the first semester and 1 during the second semester. If performance from any of the walk-throughs in the first semester result in an ISP, then a formal observation must occur in the first semester.

### **Formal Observations:**

- All: Formal observations will be conducted during the appraisal calendar. A 5 workday window will be communicated to the teacher before any formal observation and a scheduled pre-conference is required. (Refer to Appendix - INV 2) The observation must include a minimum of 45 minutes of observed instruction, and feedback must be provided to the teacher within 10 working days of the observation. A scheduled post-conference is required to communicate the feedback in person. (Refer to Appendix - INV 3)
- Track 1a: The formal observation must be conducted during the first semester for all teachers in Track 1a. This observation should come after 3 walk-throughs have already been conducted. If a teacher's performance results in an ISP, a second formal observation is required to take place in the second semester of the school year. For the second formal observation a 10 work day window will be provided.
- Track 1b: One formal observation will be conducted at any time during the year for teachers in Track 1b, however, like those in Track 1a, if a teacher's performance results in an ISP, a second formal observation is required. For the second formal observation a 10 work day window will be provided.
- Track 2: one formal observation will be conducted during the year. There is no required additional observation if the result of the observation is to place the teacher in an ISP.

### **Second Appraisal Requests:**

- All: If a teacher disagrees with the written observation summary, he/she may request a second appraisal in writing within 10 work days after receiving the first formal observation feedback. For the purpose of second appraisal requests, each campus will be paired with another pre-determined campus. (Refer to Appendix - INV9) The first appraisal will count as 60% of the domain ratings. The second appraisal will count as 40% of the domain ratings.

### **Pre-Conference:**

- All: For all formal observations a pre-conference is required. (Refer to Appendix - INV2) The pre-conference will be held at least 5 working days before the formal observation. Teachers will be given advanced notice prior to the conference.

### **Post-Conference:**

- All – Formal Observations: Post-observation feedback will be provided to all teachers within 10 working days of the formal observation. The teacher reflection and post-observation must be completed and submitted to the appraiser with 2 working days of the formal observation. (Refer to Appendix - INV4) A draft copy of the formal observation will be given to a teacher one day prior to the post-observation conference at the very latest.
- All - Walk-Throughs: For teachers in Track 1a, post-conferences are required, for all others they are optional. For those not in Track 1a, the teacher or appraiser may request a post conference after any walk-through. Observations demonstrating unsatisfactory performance in any component will require a post-conference within 5 work days.

### **Artifacts:**

- All – Post-Conferences (Formal Observations): During the post-conference of a formal observation, specific artifacts will be collaboratively identified by the teacher and the appraiser.
- All - Summative Conferences: For the summative conference, required artifacts are identified by domain in artifact form (Refer to Appendix - INV10). Optional artifacts may be considered at the discretion of the appraiser.

### **Summative Conference:**

- All - End of Year (Part A): The summative score on the Framework for Teaching is cumulative and considers all observations and artifacts (Refer to Appendix - INV10) A draft of the summative score will be given to the teacher at least 5 workdays before the end of year conference. The final summative rating for Part A will be disseminated no later than 15 workdays before the last day of instruction.
- All - Semester I of Following Year (Part B): The final rating will be completed no later than the first three weeks of instruction of the following school year. If there are new teachers to the campus, the current appraiser will complete Part B.

***vi. Policy, Protocols and Procedures for an Individual Support Plan and Professional Growth Plan***

**Triggers:**

- ISP - Domain I-V documentation: An ISP may be developed at any time if an appraiser has documentation of an event or a pattern of teacher practice that could potentially produce an evaluation rating of basic or unsatisfactory in Domains I-V.
- ISP - Formal documentation: An ISP will be developed if two or more domains result in the basic level of performance category. If an unsatisfactory rating is present in one or more domains, an ISP will be developed.
- ISP - Additional considerations: An ISP plan may be extended to the next academic school year. Teachers currently on a Teacher in Need of Assistance program (TINA) will continue using the PDAS evaluation system for the first year of the campus implementation of INVEST.
- PGP: A PGP will be developed if 80% of the ISP expected outcomes are not successfully met.

**Duration:**

- ISP: The ISP will be implemented for a minimum of 4-6 weeks. The evaluator has an option to extend the plan an additional 4 weeks if 80% of the expected outcomes are met.
- PGP: The PGP will be implemented for 4-6 weeks.

**Support System:**

- ISP: A minimum of three walk-throughs will be conducted during implementation. Post-conferences will be required. Assistance from internal and/or external staff may be included. If an ISP is developed for a novice teacher, a second formal observation is required. The second formal observation will be unannounced. A post-conference will be required. Novice teachers will participate in the district's structured mentor program.
- PGP: A minimum of four walk-throughs will be conducted during implementation. Post-conferences will be required. Assistance from internal and/or external staff may be included.

**Plan Development:**

- ISP and PGP: The ISP and PGP must be developed collaboratively between the teacher and appraiser. (Refer to Appendix - INV5) The structure must include the following elements: start and end dates, plan goals, targeted domains, a timeline, intervention activities, expected outcomes, indicators of progress, a reflection, and results of plan.

**Artifacts:**

- ISP and PGP: Artifacts will be specified during the development of the plans. Artifacts will be used to monitor progress and to measure teacher goal attainment.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- ISP and PGP: The appraiser and teacher must identify expected outcomes to improve: (1) Teacher actions specific to individual practice and/or (2) Impact on student growth. The plan must include a timeline for each intervention activity.

**Results:**

- ISP: Return to Track 1 or Track 2 if all expected outcomes of the plan are successfully completed and a sustained change in practice is observed. If results conclude that less than 80% of the expected outcomes have been met, move to PGP.
- PGP: Return to Track 1 or Track 2 if all expected outcomes of the plan are successfully completed and a sustained change in practice is observed. The development of a new plan is required if any of the expected outcomes or intervention activities of the existing plan are not successfully met. Based on performance, a recommendation for non-extension or non-renewal of contract may occur. Even if a recommendation for a non-renewal or non-extension of contract is made, the plan must continue as an extension or a new plan must be developed.

**vii. *Other Staff Specialized Framework for Teaching Rubrics***  
*(See pg. 3 for definition of Other Staff Work Group)*

In creating a rubric to be used for all educators in the district, it became clear early on that there would need to be a group of educators and specialists convened to ensure that the observation tool actually represented the proper standards for their practice. While the Danielson group has created many specialized rubrics for positions such as nursing, counseling, etc... in order to ensure that all groups felt comfortable with the tool, it was necessary to allow these groups to bring the rubrics back to their peers, in order to review and customize them where necessary.

The result is a number of rubrics that will be used for other staff. These rubrics are built on the same constructs and principles as the standard *Framework for Teaching* rubric, but have been modified for specific positions. Each rubric still has four domains, and many still have 22 components, they simply have changed descriptors or components where necessary. For example, in the case of specialists who work primarily outside of the classroom, the domain called “classroom environment,” has been changed to “the environment.” All specialized rubrics can be viewed in the Appendix. The following areas can be found there.

1. Academic Assessment & Data Specialists
2. Assessment Specialists & Campus LSSP
3. Career and Technology
4. Counselors / Social Workers / Special Education Counselors / Behavior Specialists
5. Information Literacy Specialists
6. Nurses
7. Occupational Therapists / Physical Therapists / Orientation & Mobility / Adaptive PE
8. Physical Education
9. Performing Arts
10. Pregnancy Related Services
11. Speech Pathologists

12. Technology Specialists

13. Visual Arts

While these groups have different rubrics, it is expected that they will follow the same observation timelines and protocols as employees in Track 1, Track 2, ISP and PGP, making adjustments and necessary arrangements with appraisers around “classroom observation” when necessary for those who work in alternative environments.

## **b. Student Growth**

### *i. The Aldine Growth Model Overview*

The primary purpose of using student learning growth as one part of a teacher’s evaluation is to help teachers become more effective in their work. It will allow Aldine ISD to measure students’ academic progress, improve instruction and services to students, identify teachers not making progress, and ensure that every child has access to an effective teacher.

Below is a brief description of how student learning growth will be used as one of multiple measures in the Aldine ISD’s new teacher evaluation system, INVEST. For additional information see Aldine’s Growth Model FAQ found in the Appendix and view training videos that have been made available at <http://youtu.be/msxpq1c3N1g> and <http://youtu.be/JJew7yurq4U>.

### **What is Aldine’s growth model?**

Aldine’s growth model provides a method of measuring individual students’ learning progress on assessments from one year to the next. The model compares the change in each student’s achievement score to all other students in Aldine who had similar achievement scores in previous years. TAKS/STAAR will be used in grades 4-9 (and where available in high school subjects), and Stanford/Aprena will be used in grades K-3.

Student, teacher and school growth scores are calculated using a statistical model called quantile regression. Growth is reported as a percentile from 1 to 99 with higher percentiles indicating greater growth. The 50<sup>th</sup> growth percentile represents effective progress. (Refer to Aldine’s statistical model in the Appendix)

### **What do growth reports show that TAKS/STAAR and AYP reports don’t?**

- Growth reports show the academic progress students make in relation to their academic peers (students with a similar test results).

- TAKS/STAAR show the achievement level of students at the end of each school year (e.g., the percent of students who *Did Not Meet Standard*, *Met Standard* or achieved *Commended Performance*).
- Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) shows the increase or decrease in the percent of students that reached proficiency. It compares grade-level cohorts (e.g., this year's 4<sup>th</sup> graders to last year's 4<sup>th</sup> graders), not individual student's growth.

**For which grades and subjects will Aldine report growth?** Aldine intends to report growth for students in grades K to 11 in all subjects with consecutive years of testing. In 2011-2012, Aldine will report growth for reading and mathematics in grades 1 through 9 and will pilot reporting growth for high school End of Course assessments.

**Why is Aldine using TAKS/STAAR & Stanford/Aprenda to measure student growth?** The TAKS, STAAR, and Stanford/Aprenda are (1) administered securely and (2) standardized, meaning they are the same for all students in a given grade level.

**How will student growth be used to determine a teacher's effectiveness rating?** The following three-step process describes how student growth will be used to determine a teacher's effectiveness rating.

- **Step 1:** Each Spring, teachers will verify their individual students through an e-portal process to ensure that all information linking teachers to students is accurate. (see Verification Processes and Protocols section)
- **Step 2:** Statisticians at *The Learning Growth Network* will calculate and report the median growth percentile for each teacher's classroom. Confidence intervals are employed to ensure estimates are as accurate as possible.
- **Step 3:** Aldine ISD will integrate the teachers' median growth percentile score into an overall INVEST rating consisting of classroom practice and student growth. If the teacher is responsible for multiple subjects, the median growth percentile score for all subjects will be calculated.

**Does a teacher need to have a minimum number of students for a growth score to be calculated?** Yes. *The Learning Growth Network* will calculate growth scores for teachers with eight or more students. For termination decisions, at least two years of growth data are required.

**Will students who entered (or left) a teachers' classroom be included in the overall evaluation score?** Students will only be included in a teacher's score if they are on the teacher's classroom roster on the As-of Date and Confirmation Date. (See Verification Processes and Protocols)

**What data will be made available to teachers and when?** Growth reports will be made available to teachers and administrators via a secure Web site (<http://thevaanetwork.com>) eight weeks after Aldine delivers the student and teacher data files to *The Learning Growth Network* (e.g., typically summer or early fall).

**What do the Aldine Growth Model reports look like?** Below we show examples of: student, teacher, and school growth reports. For explanations of how to interpret these data displays see: <http://youtu.be/msxpq1c3N1g> and <http://youtu.be/JJcw7yurq4U>

## Attributed Student Verification Policy and Procedures

### Overview

Student growth is an indicator that will be used as part of the **INVEST** program. Student performance data is pulled at specific times from teacher rosters and used to determine which students are attributed to each teacher. Because the results from the growth of students attributed to each teacher will be used to make high-stakes decisions, it is important to have the teachers be a part of the data verification process.

**Definitions:** The following terms will be used throughout this document.

- 1) **As-of Date.** The as-of date is a date approximately 30 days into each semester that will be used to determine if a student is attributed to a teacher. Students must be enrolled in the course prior to the as-of date if the student is to be attributed to the teacher. Students who enroll after the as-of date will not be attributed to the teacher.
- 2) **Verification Date.** The verification date is the date Aldine ISD will use to generate the lists of students that will be attributed to a teacher. The verification date has been aligned with assessment dates. Students must be enrolled in the class on the verification date to be attributed to a teacher. Students who withdraw prior to the verification date will not be attributed to the teacher.
- 3) **Attributed students.** Students attributed to a teacher must be enrolled prior to the as-of date and continue to be enrolled in the class on the verification date.

The following will be used for as-of dates:

### Semester courses

- **Fall Semester.** The first Friday of October (Approximately 30 instructional days from the start of the semester).
- **Spring Semester.** The first Friday of February (Approximately 30 instructional days from the start of the semester).

Full year courses

- **Full Year.** The first Friday of October (Approximately 30 instructional days from the start of the semester).

The following will be used for verification dates:

Semester courses

- **Fall Semester.** The first Friday of December.
- **Spring Semester.** The first Friday of April.

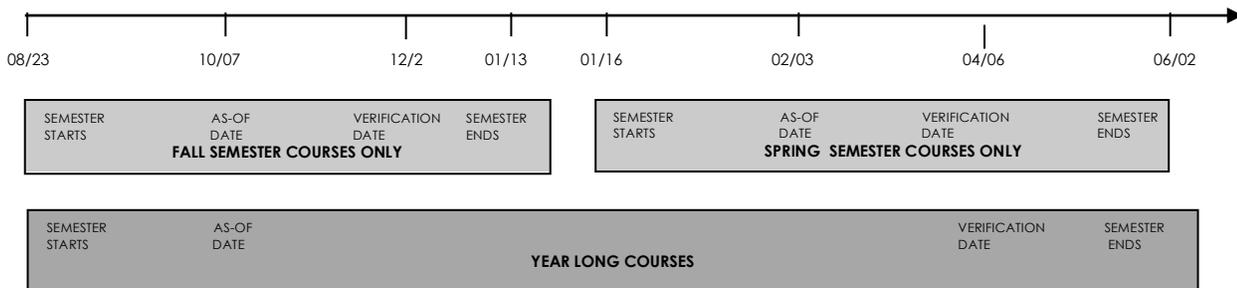
Full year courses

- **Full Year.** The first Friday of April.
- 

**Reasoning**

The verification dates were selected because they: a) fall on a consistent date that is independent of when school begins; b) allow a period of time for balancing of schedules and student schedule changes; and c) ensure the teacher has an appropriate amount of time (60 days for single semester classes, 120 days for year long classes) to impact student growth (66% of the semester).

**VERIFICATION PROCESS TIMELINE (SAMPLE)**



### *Verification Process*

Each teacher with attributed students will be provided with an opportunity to verify the accuracy of the data pulled. The process will be automated and attributed students verification will take place through an e-portal process. Teachers will be notified via mass e-mails prior to the start date of the validation cycle. (see sample)

On the verification date, student enrollment data will be pulled from SMS and loaded into the e-portal for each teacher who has attributed students.

Each teacher will be presented with the names of every student that meets the criteria for being attributed (enrolled on the as-of and verification date). The names will be sorted alphabetically by class title, not period or section. A teacher with multiple sections of the same class will receive all students on a single listing. Teachers will have 5 days beginning on the Monday following the verification date to verify the accuracy of the attributable students.

Once a teacher enters the e-portal and opens the listing of attributed students, they will have an opportunity to select '**verified**' or '**verified with concerns**'. If a teacher believes the data is accurate, they select 'verified'. If the teacher believes there are inconsistencies in the data or a student should/should not be included in the attributed list, they select 'verified with concerns'. When 'verified with concerns' is selected, the teacher has the ability to document their concerns in a secondary window. Listing the concerns will not stop the process from continuing. The concerns will be automatically sent to the principal of the school. It will be the responsibility of the principal to determine if the listed concerns are valid and require a change in the file. A list of valid concerns is listed below.

- Student was not enrolled in the course (student would have to be coded wrong for an entire semester in SMS);
- Students was enrolled in the course and meets as-of-date expectation but did not pull;
- Student enrolled after the as-of date (should be removed automatically when the initial file is created); or
- Student withdrew from school between the as-of date and the validation date for a period of **20 days** for a semester course or **40 days** for a year long course (teacher must provide documentation of withdrawal and reenrollment).

Throughout the verification process, the principal will have the ability to see which teachers on their campus have verified their data. Teachers who do not verify their data within the five (5) day period allotted will be loaded as verified. At the conclusion of the five day verification cycle, any needed changes identified by the teacher and confirmed by the principal will be made in the raw data file. Changes will be tracked and monitored.

### ***Valid Concerns***

Teachers who believe a student should not be attributed to them may submit the student's I.D., name, and concern to the principal at time of verification. If all of the student's information is not provided, the concern will not be reviewed. Concerns that will be evaluated for potential change from the attributed list include:

- Student was not enrolled in the course (student would have to be coded wrong for an entire semester in SMS);
- Students was enrolled in the course and meets as-of-date expectation but did not pull;
- Student enrolled after the as-of date (should be removed automatically when the initial file is created); or
- Student withdrew from school between the as-of date and the validation date for a period of **20 days** for a semester course or **40 days** for a year long course (teacher must provide documentation of withdrawal and reenrollment).

### **STUDENT'S ATTRIBUTED E-PORTAL VERIFICATION SAMPLE**

Navigation
INVEST Class Verification

Please select a teacher:

Swinney, Lois

CREAT WRITING		
Lastname:	Firstname:	Course Title
1.	Jordi	CREAT WRITING
2.	Raymond	CREAT WRITING
3.	Wilson	CREAT WRITING
4.	Hector	CREAT WRITING

ENGLISH 2 REG AB		
Lastname:	Firstname:	Course Title
1.	Selina	ENGLISH 2 REG AB
2.	Juanita	ENGLISH 2 REG AB
3.	Alexis Antonio	ENGLISH 2 REG AB
4.	Pedro	ENGLISH 2 REG AB
5.	DeStinee	ENGLISH 2 REG AB
6.	Ana	ENGLISH 2 REG AB
7.	Santiago	ENGLISH 2 REG AB

Addition of enrollment dates is in progress.

## *ii. Student Growth for Other Staff: Student Growth Objectives*

As the district moves to incorporate Student Growth into teacher evaluation it is impossible to move forward without considering how we will evaluate those educators who are outside of tested subjects, and those who work with students primarily outside of the classroom. These educators also have an enormous impact on student growth and learning, unfortunately though, there are not currently standardized assessments in place to measure that impact in the same way that we measure those within the core content areas. The Aldine Growth Model can only be applied to teachers in content areas that have standardized assessment. In Aldine ISD, this group currently includes all educators in core subjects K-12. That said, in moving towards a focus on student growth as an integral part of teacher quality, it is important to include all educators in the conversation of student growth, and ultimately the associated rewards and consequences.

In order to accomplish this, **Aldine ISD will be piloting an initiative using “student growth objectives (SGO’s)” to measure the impact of all those educators outside the content areas mentioned.** A Student Growth Objective is a long-term (typically one semester or one school year) academic goal that teachers and administrators set for groups of students. It must be specific and measurable, based on available prior student learning data, and aligned to state standards, as well as any school and district priorities. Student Growth Objectives should represent the most important learning during an interval of instruction or service and may be based on progress, mastery or a combination of the two. The student growth objectives will be developed in professional groups that include the teacher, district curriculum staff, and the campus principal. Final approval will be granted by the principal/evaluator.

At this point in time, teachers and specialists in both the Other Staff work group, and the Student Impact group, have been trained how to set student growth objectives using frameworks and examples from the Denver Public School District; where they have been using SGO’s since 2005. These educators have also begun to set exemplar objectives, which will serve as a guide for those who work in similar areas. The goal is for all teachers and staff members that are outside of the STAAR tested subjects to use resources and exemplar objectives to pilot this system in 2012-2013, each setting 2-5 student growth objectives, fully implementing all procedures necessary, but with no consequences. Teachers in PreK – 3 will use the SAT 10 assessment where available, and teachers at the high school level will use STAAR end of course tests where it is possible for them to be used with student growth percentiles, otherwise these teachers should work with their principals to set student growth objectives. See the following pages for more details on Student Growth Objectives (See section IV.b for training, and Appendix - SGO Template).

## WHAT IS AN OBJECTIVE?

*The following details relate to guidelines for objective setting.* Teachers including those in elective areas, specials, and professional staff will write objectives focused on the expected growth of their students in areas identified in collaboration with their principal. Each of the phrases below has special bearing on how faculty members collaborate with evaluators to set their objectives:

- Job-based
- Measurable
- Focused on growth in student learning
- Based on learning content and teaching strategies

**Job-Based Objectives:** A job-based objective reflects the type of work the faculty member performs with their students. In other words, the objectives of third grade teachers are to reflect the work they do with students in their classroom; the objectives of the music teacher are to be based on the work they do with their students; and the objectives of specialists, like school nurses, are based on the work they do with students they serve in their capacity as a specialist.

**Measurable Objectives:** A measurable objective predicts quantifiable growth in student learning. It is important that teachers and principals reach consensus.

**Objectives based on Growth in Student Learning:** By focusing on student growth, objectives help teachers pay attention to how much students learn under their instruction, which means that teacher objectives are set using baseline data and written with the expectation that student learning will be measured against baseline data. Only those topics that clearly state a teacher’s expectations for student learning growth are to be included in objective setting. A teacher’s professional growth objectives are not to be included.

**Objectives based on Learning Content and Teaching Strategies:** Objectives do more than establish a measurable “finish line.” They also help frame learning content, the instructional priorities for the year, and teaching strategies—the significant practical steps a faculty member must take to meet objectives. The objective, therefore, becomes a means for faculty members and principals to discuss the most basic of all educational questions: “What are students going to learn this year, and how will they be taught?”

### **Procedures and Timelines for Setting Teacher Objectives**

Teacher objective setting is a collaborative activity between evaluators and teachers and experts in the particular areas at the district level. It creates an opportunity for teachers and their evaluators to have an ongoing conversation about student expectations throughout the year. Also, collaboration creates a level of uniformity and consistency among campuses for each unique area.

Experience and research show that the objective-setting process has the greatest impact on student learning when teachers and evaluators use it to think through the classroom practices that are having a positive impact on student growth. Initially, the conversation creates focus. Throughout the year, it leads to reflection on student academic progress and classroom practice. At the end of the year or semester, it provides an opportunity for teachers and their evaluators to sum up how well students have done.

When teachers and evaluators collaborate to set objectives, the process is based on a reasonable and routine procedure. Evaluators are to make every effort to ensure that it is uniform for all faculty members, and through professional conversation with faculty members, focused on educational expectations for the upcoming year. *The objectives setting procedure has several steps. (This is an example of what the process might look like in the Aldine ISD.)*

1. **Collect Baseline Data.** In the *first six weeks* of school, faculty members collect and analyze baseline student data and, when they are available and relevant, review student assessment histories.
2. **Staff members write an initial draft of their 2 to 5 objectives.** *By the end of the first quarter*, faculty members draft their objectives. Faculty members and evaluators are to use the Checklist for Setting Objectives (Refer to Appendix – Checklist for Developing Objectives) for guidance when setting their objectives.
3. **Reach consensus on the objectives.** *By the end of the first quarter*, faculty members meet with their evaluator and district level expert to discuss and finalize their draft objectives. Principals/evaluators must indicate when consensus has been reached on a faculty member's objectives.
4. **Check progress toward meeting the objective(s).** *At least once during the year*, faculty members and evaluators are to meet to discuss mid-term progress toward meeting the objective(s). In the course of this midpoint conversation, they may reach consensus to adjust the objective(s). Adjustments must be made based on student achievement data.
5. **Assess whether the objective(s) have been met.** *At the end of the year*, faculty members and evaluators must meet to ascertain whether the teacher's objectives have been met. Faculty members are responsible for providing student achievement data that demonstrate the status of their objectives. The final objective-setting meeting and the final evaluation meeting may be combined.

### III. FINAL INVEST RATING

One key feature of the INVEST system is its use of multiple measures, drawn from both a teacher's observation scores and student growth scores, to produce a final rating. This final rating is indispensable for more accurately differentiating instructional practice, increasing teacher effectiveness and improving teacher retention.

While this is a key element, it is also a complicated one, given several uncertainties facing the school district. First, since the 2011-2012 school year is the initial year with the new STAAR test in Texas, it is currently unclear when scores from the those tests will be made available by the state, which means we don't know when the results can be used to calculate teacher ratings based on student growth. In the subsequent years, results will be expected by the end of the academic year.

A second complexity concerns the Danielson Framework and the decisions that need to be made for combining the individual components and domains into an overall rating. Although many states and school districts around the country use the Danielson Framework, there is no direct evidence to indicate the precise combination of scores to identify the practices of an effective teacher. While evidence exists about how often teachers actually receive different scores, even the Danielson group has not committed to a prescription of how these scores should be combined to define overall levels of performance.

In January and February, work group members were asked to review how different districts across the nation were dealing with this challenge. Aldine ISD leadership considered their advice and recommendations by Operation Public Education consultants to arrive at a final recommendation for how the INVEST rating system would be used in the pilot. The model will be evaluated throughout the pilot year, taking into account the complexities mentioned, to ensure that it appropriately differentiates among distinct levels of teacher performance.

The “**Final INVEST Rating**” will be divided into two parts:

- (1) **Teacher Practice (Framework for Teaching Score):** In the spring, administrators will combine scores on components, and then domains, to give each teacher a rating of *Highly Effective, Effective, Needs Improvement, or Ineffective* on the Danielson Framework for Teaching.
- (2) **Student Growth (Aldine Growth Model Score):** Prior to the last instructional day of the academic year, teachers will take their student growth score, which will also fall into one of the same four categories, and combine it with the observation score for a final INVEST rating.

### a. Combining Danielson Measures for a Final Rating

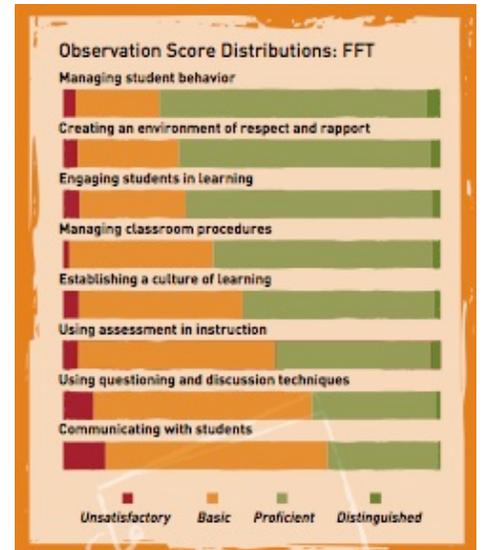
On each component, administrators will use the evidence they have gathered through their observations, conferences and artifact collection to give the teacher a score of 1- 4(1 being unsatisfactory and 4 being distinguished –see the Appendix for the complete Danielson Framework and the description of practice at each performance level). Once teachers have received scores on the individual components, they are averaged to provide an overall rating. The overall rating will be rounded to the nearest tenth.

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation		Domain 2: Classroom Environment	
3	1a. Demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy	3	2a. Creating an environment of respect and rapport
3	1b. Demonstrating knowledge of students	3	2b. Establishing a culture for learning
3	1c. Setting instructional outcomes	3	2c. Managing classroom procedures
3	1d. Demonstrating knowledge of resources	3	2d. Managing student behavior
3	1e. Designing coherent instruction	3	2e. Organizing physical space
3	1f. Designing student assessments		
3.00		<b>Proficient</b>	3.00
			<b>Proficient</b>
Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities		Domain 3: Instruction	
3	4a. Reflection on Teaching	3	3a. Communicating with students
3	4b. Maintaining accurate records	2	3b. Using questioning and discussion techniques
2	4c. Communicating with families	2	3c. Engaging students in learning
2	4d. Participating in a professional community	4	3d. Using assessment in instruction
3	4e. Growing and developing professionally	4	3e. Demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness
3	4f. Showing professionalism		
2.67		<b>Basic</b>	3.00
			<b>Proficient</b>

Once averaged, each domain score will then fall into an overall proficiency range; cutoffs for these different ranges are found in the top row immediately below (gray shading):

Domain	Distinguished 4.00- 3.50	Proficient 3.49 - 2.80	Basic 2.79 - 2.20	Unsatisfactory 2.19 - 1	Score
Domain 1 Planning and Preparation		X			3.00
Domain 2 Classroom Environment		X			3.00
Domain 3 Instruction		X			3.00
Domain 4 Professional Responsibilities			X		2.67

The ranges, or “cutoff scores” for each domain, were set based on what work group members, district leadership and consultants believed was a fair combination of component ratings. Research from the MET Project on the Danielson Framework (see adjacent chart) documents that a score of distinguished (dark green) or unsatisfactory (red) *on all components* is quite rare. To ensure that deserving teachers could earn the highest rating, the cutoff score was set at 3.5, making it possible to be distinguished even though teachers did not receive this rating in each domain. For example, in Domains II and III, teachers distinguished in three out of five components, and proficient in the other two can be rated distinguished for the domain as a whole. Similarly, to be considered proficient in each domain, teachers must score equal to or greater than a 2.8. This allows teachers to score proficient on four and basic in one of the five components and be considered proficient overall.

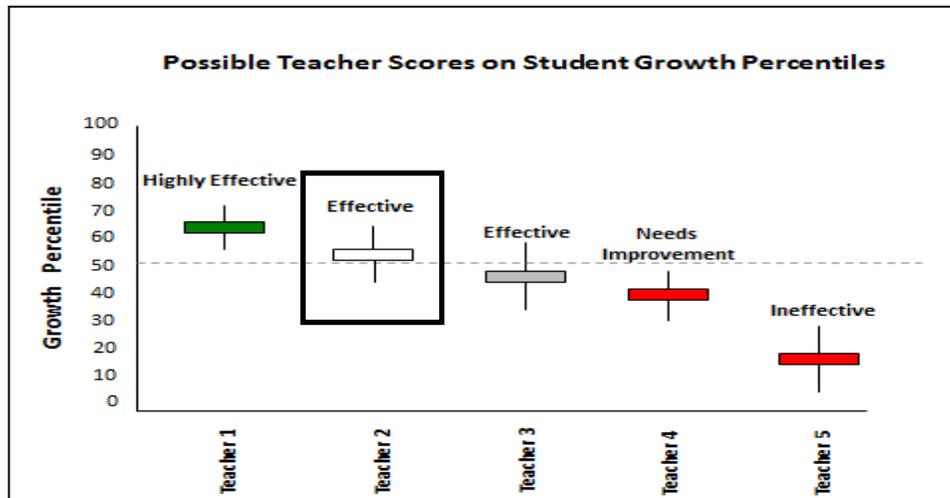


This image shows the breakdown of scores in 8 of the components in Domains 2 and 3 during the MET Study

Once scores are established at the domain level, teachers can be assigned an overall rating using a very simple set of rules. Domains II and III – Classroom Environment and Instruction – are most important; they are considered to be the “power domains” because they are most directly connected to student learning results and are the focus of the instructional videos created by Teachscape (see Part IV, Section b) for evaluation and training. These rules are described in each of the performance level rating boxes below:

Performance Level	Rating
<p><b>Highly Effective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results exhibit distinguished performance in Domains II and III.</li> <li>Domains I and IV must demonstrate a proficient or distinguished rating.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Effective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results exhibit proficient performance in Domains II and III.</li> <li>Domains I and IV may reveal a basic rating in only one of the two domains.</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>
<p><b>Needs Improvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results exhibit more than one performance level of basic in any domain.</li> <li>Domains II or III are basic levels of performance.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Ineffective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results exhibit unsatisfactory performance in any domain.</li> <li>Three or more domains are basic levels of performance.</li> </ul>	

## b. Using Student Growth Percentile for a Final Rating



Once the district receives its testing data, Dr. John Schacter will compile reports for every eligible teacher, which assigns an overall student growth percentile. Within each of these ratings, teachers and administrators will be able to look at individual student growth and achievement scores and analyze how their final growth percentile was calculated.

### Highly Effective

- Results must include a green “candle.” (Candle refers to the horizontal bar in the above graphic.)
- This will happen when they have a growth score above the 50 percentile, and their standard error does not stretch below the 50 percentile line.

### Effective

- Results must include a white or gray “candle.”
- This will happen when an educator has a growth score closely above or below the 50 percentile, but that has a “wick” (standard error) which crosses the 50 percentile threshold. (Wick refers to the vertical black line above and below each candle in the above graphic.)

### Needs Improvement

- Results include a red “candle” that is above the 35 percentile line.
- In this case the teacher’s candle will be red, because the “wick” (standard error) does not reach the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile; however, their raw score indicates a proximity to effectiveness that might be changed with some targeted improvement.

### Ineffective

- Results include a red “candle” that is below the 35 percentile line.

Domain 5 Student Growth Percentile		<b>X</b>			<b>56</b>
	Highly Effective	Effective	Needs Improvement	Ineffective	Score

### c. Combining Measures for a Final INVEST Rating

A final INVEST Rating can be assigned when scores are available for both a teacher’s practice (spring) and their student growth (fall). The district is taking an approach, which simplifies this process by simply naming conditions that have to be met in order to reach an overall rating. The rating system is transparent, making it straightforward to see where they are rated and what area of their work content (teacher practice or student growth) requires improvement.

		Part 1: Teacher Practices			
		Highly Effective	Effective	Needs Improvement	Ineffective
Part 2: Student Growth	Highly Effective	HE	E	NI	NI
	Effective	E	E	NI	I
	Needs Improvement	NI	NI	NI	I
	Ineffective	NI	I	I	I

Using a “conditions-met” approach, teachers scoring lower in one of the two categories – having not satisfied both conditions – will receive the lower of the two ratings. For example, if a teacher gets a score of effective in Part I, but a score of needs improvement in Part 2, that teacher will receive a Final INVEST Rating indicating that they need improvement. In other words, to be effective overall a teacher must score effective in both categories. The exceptions to this rule may be when a teacher receives a highly effective rating in one category and an ineffective rating in the other; in these instances, the final rating will default to needs improvement.

### d. Use of the Final INVEST Rating in the Pilot Year

Given the uncertainties that have been acknowledged regarding the reporting of data, the district plans to be very deliberate in its implementation of the INVEST rating system. In the pilot year, all teachers will be held accountable to their score on the teacher practices condition. This means they will be expected to meet the conditions in order to be considered an effective or highly effective teacher. Their student growth score will be reported in the first 6 weeks of the next school year (preferably during the goal setting conference) and will not be used for consequence in the pilot year. Teachers and administrators in the pilot schools should use their growth score data for diagnostic purposes, but a teacher’s Final INVEST Rating during the pilot year will be based solely on their teacher practice score.

### e. Access and Permissions for Viewing INVEST Ratings

The INVEST rating data will be accessible only to leadership of the Aldine ISD. Teachers will have access to their own personal data, and Principals will have access to the final INVEST rating data of only those teachers in their school buildings. District Cabinet members, and Program Directors will have access to all data for the entire school district, but this final rating data will not be shared with the general public or outside entities.

## IV. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: Roll-Out of the INVEST Pilot

### a. Pilot Overview

Piloting the initiative will allow for the following benefits:

- ***Incorporation of stakeholder feedback to improve the system.*** Any decisions that have not been completely fleshed out during the design phase can be finalized in the pilot year. During the pilot, teacher and administrator feedback will be gathered on an ongoing basis such that it can be meaningfully incorporated into the final design of the system.
- ***Assessment of technical assistance needs.*** A pilot will make the early implementation phase much more manageable, by helping the district better understand the kind of technical assistance that will be necessary to build capacity to implement the system with both quality and integrity district-wide.
- ***Rigorous and useful research study.*** The pilot will also allow for a comprehensive research study to explore the impact of the new evaluation system and the effect of a range of contributing factors on the outcome of the pilot.

Aldine ISD has worked closely with the University of Pennsylvania to design the rollout and evaluation of the pilot. This section will provide more information on the selection of pilot schools, the strategy for training administrators and teachers in those pilot schools, as well as plans for a comprehensive research study to analyze the implementation process and impact of the effort.

#### ***Selection of Pilot Schools***

In Spring 2012, Aldine ISD strategically selected 31 schools, 40% of the district's 75 schools, to participate in the Year 1 pilot. The goal was to ensure that the selected schools were as representative of the District schools as possible to learn how the initiative would work in a variety of settings. To accomplish this goal, district leadership strategically selected schools that varied along a number of dimensions – i.e., level (elementary, middle, high), student performance level (on both achievement and growth measures), demographics (percent LEP, percent economically disadvantaged).

Analyses confirmed that there were no significant differences between pilot and non-pilot schools on any of the above indicators, suggesting that the pilot schools are fairly representative of the district as a whole. The following schools will be participating in the pilot:

- ***PK Schools*** – Reece, Keeble, Jones
- ***Elementary Schools*** – Dunn, Oleson, Bussey, Stephens, Harris, Spence, Magrill, Odom, Orange Grove, Black, Bethune, Gray
- ***Intermediate Schools*** – Rayford, Stehlik, Escamilla, Houston, Hill, Parker
- ***Middle Schools*** – Stovall, Grantham, Aldine, Hambrick
- ***9<sup>th</sup> Grade Schools*** – MacArthur, Nimitz, Aldine Ninth
- ***Senior High Schools*** – Hall, Davis, Carver

### ***Pilot Components***

All schools will continue to use the district’s existing evaluation system for official personnel decisions (i.e., non-renewal decisions), but piloting schools will use the new evaluation system on a pilot basis. The new evaluation system implemented in the pilot schools will differ from non-pilot schools in the following key ways:

1. ***Use of the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching.*** Teacher practices will be measured using the Framework for Teaching instructional frameworks linked to observation protocols and procedures, as opposed to the traditional PDAS system.
2. ***Receive scores/training on the Aldine Growth Model.*** Though student growth will not be used for official personnel decisions (i.e., termination) as part of the evaluation system during the pilot year, teachers in the pilot schools will still receive a composite performance level (e.g., highly effective, effective, needs improvement, ineffective) that incorporates both student growth and instructional practice.
3. ***More Structured Conversations and Goal Setting.*** Teachers in pilot schools will set goals at the beginning of the year and be evaluated annually according to the procedures outlined in the Teacher Practices section. Each observation will also be accompanied by a pre- and post-conference where teachers will have an opportunity to discuss results and next steps.
4. ***Technological supports for development.*** To support professional growth, teachers and administrators will receive access to the professional development resources provided by Teachscape. The following resources are aligned to the Framework For Teaching and discussed in more detail in the subsequent section:
  - *The Framework for Teaching Proficiency System*, an online certification system for administrators
  - *The Framework for Teaching Effectiveness Series*, a series of online training modules for teachers, which will provide teachers with more support for improving practice
  - *Teachscape Reflect Live*, a complete evaluation management system
  - *Lucy Panoramic Camera Kit*, which will enable educators to easily capture 360-degree panoramic videos, will be piloted in three schools: Stehlik, Davis, Grantham, Aldine Ninth, Harris
5. ***Teachers in Pilot Schools will receive new types of support.*** Novice teachers will receive additional observation and struggling teachers will be put on professional growth plans. (See teacher practices section)

These elements will occur in the context of school-wide implementation of the system. By implementing the system school-wide, the goal is to increase opportunities for teacher collaboration and thus, increase motivation and support to implement new reforms.

### **b. Training**

Training both administrators and teachers will be essential for the success of the new teacher evaluation system. In partnership with Teachscape (for the Danielson Framework for Teaching) and the Learning Growth Network (for the Aldine Growth Model), Aldine ISD will implement cutting edge technology tools to support effective implementation. Training will take place in three phrases.

### *July Training*

All administrators have already received three days of general training on the Framework for Teaching and two days of training on the Aldine Growth Model. During the month of July, Aldine ISD will expand on these efforts by training administrators in the pilot schools on the implementation of the new evaluation system. This training will cover the following objectives:

- *Administrator Certification on The Framework for Teaching.* All pilot administrators will be certified on the Danielson Framework through Teachscape's *The Framework for Teaching Proficiency System*. This system will enable Aldine ISD to promote high-quality observations by implementing rigorous training for all observers. It includes 12 online training modules, integrated into a single easy-to-use system. Each part of the Proficiency System includes master-scored videos at all levels of performance. This new certification system has very high pass rates and unprecedentedly high levels of inter-rater reliability (exceeding 90%).
- *Training on New Evaluation Platform, Reflect Live.* Teachscape *Reflect Live* is a complete evaluation management system that combines live observation and video-based observation into one seamless platform. Aldine ISD evaluators will learn how to: (1) schedule and conduct classroom observations and conversations; (2) combine results from live observations with video observations; and (3) support the entire workflow process of teacher evaluation. Central office administrators will be trained to monitor the progress of the evaluation process across all schools so that professional development efforts can be targeted to meet teachers' needs.

### *August Training*

Pilot administrators will train their teachers on the new evaluation system at the beginning of the school year, during the first few weeks of school. This training will cover the following objectives.

- *Training on the Framework for Teaching.* During the initial Orientation for participants, teachers will receive a half-day introduction to the observation process and to the Framework for Teaching. In the days that follow, they will then be provided with access to *The Framework for Teaching Effectiveness Series*, a self-guided, online training that features master-scored benchmark videos that provide formative feedback through interactive exercises. The Series' eleven online learning modules help educators apply the Framework to their own practice. This introduction will set the stage for a dialogue about teaching effectiveness that will continue as the school year progresses.
- *Training on New Evaluation Platform, Reflect Live.* Teachers will also be trained on the Teachscape *Reflect Live* evaluation management system described above.
- *Training Videos on the Aldine Growth Model.* The following training videos on the Aldine Growth Model will be available for teachers: <http://youtu.be/msxpqlc3N1g> and <http://youtu.be/JJcw7yurq4U>.

MONTH	TOPIC	PARTICIPANTS	PRESENTER	DAYS	DATE/S
JUNE	Danielson Framework	Assistant Principals	Lynn Sawyer	3 Days	June 4-6
	Framework for Proficiency System (12 Modules)	Pilot School Principals (31)	Area Superintendents	1 hour	June 4
JULY	Reflect Live	25 Trainers •Area Sups •Pilot School Principals	Teachscape Representative	1/2 Day (4 groups of 25)	July 10, July 11
	Framework for Proficiency System (Modules 1-6)	Pilot School Principals			July 8-14
	Framework for Proficiency System (Modules 7-12)	Pilot School Principals			July 15-21
	Reflect Live	Principals	Area Superintendents	½ Day	TBD
	Rater Certification (Teachscape)	Pilot School Principals			Target Date: July 24
	<b>Teacher Training</b> •Framework for teacher Effectiveness Series (11 Modules) •Reflect Live •Aldine Student Growth Model •Student Growth Objectives	Principals	• Selina Chapa •Work Group Leaders	1 Day	July 19
AUGUST	Framework for Proficiency System (Modules 1-6)	Pilot School Asst. Principals			TBD
	Framework for Proficiency System (Modules 7-12)	Pilot School Asst. Principals			TBD
	•Aldine Student Growth Model •Student Growth Objectives	Assistant Principals	• Selina Chapa •Work Group Leaders	½ Day	August 2 7:00-10:30
	Rater Certification (Teachscape)	Pilot School Asst. Principals		Target Date: August ____	
	•Framework •Student Growth Objectives	Other Staff	Work Group Leaders	1 Day	TBD
	<b>TRAINING</b> •Teaching Effectiveness Series – Modules 1, 2 & 3 •Reflect Live •Aldine Student Growth Model (videos) •Student Growth Objectives	Teachers	Campus Principals	1 Day	BOY Staff Development Day
SEPTEMBER	Teaching Effectiveness Series – Modules 4, 5 & 6	Teachers	Campus Principals		As determined by campus principal
	Conference Trainings	Pilot School Principals	TBD	1 ½ Hours	TBD
OCTOBER	Teaching Effectiveness Series – Modules 7, 8 & 9	Teachers	Campus Principals		As determined by campus principal
NOVEMBER	Teaching Effectiveness Series – Modules 10 & 11	Teachers	Campus Principals		As determined by campus principal

*Ongoing*

Results for the 2011-2012 school year will be available for the Aldine Growth Model in Fall 2012. After pilot teachers receive their data, they will also be provided with access to a series of online training modules to ensure they are able to interpret the results and use the information to drive their instruction.

### **c. Comprehensive Research Evaluation**

*Goals*

The comprehensive research study of INVEST is designed to examine the implementation and impacts of the new teacher evaluation system. The following are key outcomes of interest:

*Implementation Outcomes*

- Teacher and administrator perceptions of the new evaluation process
- Teacher motivation and satisfaction
- Differentiation of teacher performance

*Impact Outcomes*

- Retention of effective and highly effective teachers
- Teacher effectiveness, as measured by the Aldine Growth Model
- Student learning, as measured by the Aldine Growth Model

The new evaluation system, INVEST, will be introduced during the summer of 2012 and implemented during the 2012-2013 school year in pilot schools and the 2013-2014 school year district-wide. Study data will be collected on the implementation and impact of the pilot from the summer of 2012 until the fall of 2013. Results will be shared on an interim basis with the district leadership (Fall 2012, Spring 2013, and Fall 2013). The final results of the pilot evaluation will be published in spring of 2014.

*Research Evaluation Questions*

The study has five research questions, which explore the experience of implementing the new evaluation system and assess whether the evaluation system has an impact on desired outcomes.

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the new evaluation system? Do participants:
  - a. Value the new measures?
  - b. Consider the measures to be accurate representations of teaching performance?
  - c. Believe the system results in changes in teaching behavior?
2. What impact does the system have on intermediate variables that reflect teacher responses to the system?
  - a. Teacher variables – e.g., teacher self-efficacy, commitment?
  - b. School-wide variables – e.g., level of trust, collaboration?
3. How does the new teacher evaluation system affect the differentiation of teaching practice?
  - a. What percentage of teachers fall into various performance levels?
  - b. How does this differentiation vary across types of schools/teachers?
4. What impact does the new system have on key outcomes of interest?

- a. Retention of highly effective and effective teachers?
  - b. Teacher effectiveness, as measured by the Aldine Growth Model?
  - c. Student growth, as measured by the Aldine Growth Model?
5. What factors affect the implementation and impact of the teacher evaluation system?
- a. Teacher characteristics – e.g., experience, effectiveness, personality characteristics?
  - b. School-wide characteristics – e.g., school performance, school level, and principal leadership?

### ***Data Collection***

The proposed data collection is summarized in the following exhibit.

<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Summer/ Fall 2012</b>	<b>Spring 2013</b>	<b>Summer/ Fall 2013</b>
	<b>Pilot Schools</b>			
Teacher survey	Teachers in both pilot and non-pilot schools will be surveyed.	X		X
Administrator survey	Administrators in both pilot and non-pilot schools will be surveyed	X		X
Focus groups	Teachers and administrators (in pilot schools only) will participate in focus groups and interviews	X	X	
District interviews	10-15		X	
Student records	Student achievement and demographic data for all students	X		X
Employee records	Administrative data for all teachers and principals	X		X
Performance evaluation system results	Evaluation system data for all teachers and principals		X	

## *Measures*

### *Teacher and administrator surveys*

Teachers and administrators will provide critical information on the roll-out of implementation efforts and perceptions of impact. Separate surveys will be designed and administered to teachers and administrators. Both surveys, however, will include: (1) questions related to the implementation of the new evaluation system and its components (given to educators in the 31 pilot schools); (2) questions that are more generally related to instructional practices and the quality of evaluation and support systems, (given to a subset of teachers and administrators in both pilot and non-pilot schools); and (3) demographic and background information (given to a subset of teachers and administrators in both pilot and non-pilot schools).

### *Teacher and administrator focus groups/ interviews*

Focus groups and interviews will be used to supplement the information gathered through teacher and administrator surveys. They will be designed to gather information on teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the new evaluation system. Specifically the focus group will ask: (1) questions related to the value teachers and administrators place on the new measures and whether they believe the measures are accurate representations of teaching performance; (2) questions related to the perceived impact the new system is having on teacher motivation, behavior, and performance; and (3) factors affecting implementation of the new system.

### *District interviews*

Interviews with district leadership will have multiple purposes. One purpose will be to collect more information on the goals and design process undergirding the new evaluation system. Another purpose will be to document district leaders' experiences implementing the new evaluation system, by identifying which aspects were challenging and how the district addressed those challenges, as well as documenting which factors affected the success of the implementation roll-out.

### *Student and Employee Records, Performance Evaluation System Results*

The research study will determine the impact that the new evaluation system had on a variety of indicators, as well as how these indicators influenced the implementation process: (1) levels of student achievement and growth; (2) teacher and administrator demographic information, including experience, mobility, and retention; and (3) ratings provided by the performance evaluation system. These data will be extracted from student and employee databases, as well as from the results of the new performance evaluation system.

***Conclusion***

This pilot will provide Aldine ISD with invaluable information about the successes and challenges associated with early implementation of the INVEST system, so that strategic changes can be made before district-wide roll-out in 2013-2014. It will also have important implications for school districts, universities, and states that are working to design and develop evaluation systems that rely on classroom observations to differentiate performance and improve instruction. Results from the research study will be disseminated broadly so that Aldine ISD can become a leader in effort to reform teacher evaluation nationwide.