



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

July 28, 2014

Dr. Linda Lane  
Superintendent  
Pittsburgh Public Schools  
341 S. Bellefield Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3552

Dear Dr. Lane:

Pittsburgh Public Schools' alternative classroom teachers' evaluation tool is approved for implementation over the next three school years (2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17) based on a comprehensive review of Pittsburgh Public Schools' June 2, 2014 application and its July 11<sup>th</sup> responses to areas that were previously identified as "Not Met" or "Met pending assurance from district." Approval of your alternative evaluation also includes the following:

1. Pittsburgh Public Schools' rating scale<sup>1</sup> as presented below:

<b>Performance Level</b>	<b>Pittsburgh Public Schools Ranges</b>	<b>Pennsylvania's Ranges</b>
Distinguished	210-300	2.50-3.00
Proficient	150-209	1.50-2.49
Needs Improvement	140-149	0.50-1.49
Failing	0-139	0-0.49

2. the incorporation of a research-based student survey that correlates strongly with overall student achievement (Tripod Survey)<sup>2</sup> as part of the locally-developed Elective performance measure.

All components of your classroom teacher's alternative evaluation have been judged to meet regulatory requirements, as reflected in the table below.

<sup>1</sup> Copied from page 33 of the Pittsburgh Public Schools' Questions and Discussion about Teacher Evaluation in 2013-14 submitted on July 11, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) is used to calculate each teacher's overall effectiveness performance instead of favorability scores since it provides another piece of information that is not captured in a favorability score. A favorability score measures the degree to which students responded favorably to items on the survey, while the NCE score measures how a teacher's overall performance compares to the average teacher in his/her cohort.

**Components Required for a Locally-Developed Alternative Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Rating Tool**

<b>Required Component</b>	<b>July 2014 Findings</b>
<b>§19.1. Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Tool</b>	
<p>The rating tool shall be used to record the results of the data collection process associated with classroom teacher evaluations so that educators receive one of the following performance levels in each domain: Failing, Needs Improvement, Proficient, or Distinguished, as required by 22 Pa. Code, Chapter 19, §19.1 Classroom teacher effectiveness rating tool, and 24 P.S. 11-1123 (f)(1).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is not evident that the district's alternative classroom teacher rating tool complies with the regulatory requirements relating to the inclusion of four performance levels (distinguished, proficient, needs improvement, and failing) especially since different performance levels are used throughout the district's June 2, 2014 documentation and only a blank space is included in the district's Annual Rating Form.</li> </ul>	<p>Met, but the district will submit a random sampling of 2014-15 teacher evaluation rating forms (with personal information redacted) as evidence to demonstrate it is using performance levels required by 24 P.S. §1123</p>
<b>Required Component</b>	<b>July 2014 Findings</b>
<b>II. General Provisions (22 Pa. Code, Chapter 19)</b>	
<p>Professional employees shall be fully evaluated at least annually and temporary professional employees shall be fully evaluated at least twice annually (22 Pa. Code, Chapter 19, II. 3).</p>	<p>Met based on July 11, 2014 assurances</p>
<p>A 0 to 3 point scale is used to rate each of a teacher's four rating areas (i.e., Teacher Observation and Practice, Building Level, Teacher Specific, and Elective) (22 Pa. Code, Chapter 19, II. 4).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pittsburgh's alternative classroom teacher evaluation system is based on a 0-300 point scale and is not converted to a 0 to 3 point scale. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is not evident whether the district will utilize the previously submitted 0 to 3 point scale, especially since the district's June 2, 2014 documentation does not reference it.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Met based on July 11, 2014 explanation</p>

Required Component	July 2014 Findings
<b>II. General Provisions (22 Pa. Code, Chapter 19)</b>	
<p>The alternative rating tool provides an overall performance rating of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory (22 Pa. Code, Chapter 19, II. 16).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is not evident that the district's alternative classroom teacher rating tool complies with the statutory and regulatory requirements relating to the final rating of "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" since only a blank space appears on the Annual Rating Form.</li> </ul>	<p>Met based on July 11, 2014 explanation and sample completed evaluation form</p>
<b>Required Component</b>	
<b>III. Standards of Use for Teacher Observation and Practice</b>	
<p>The ratings of failing, needs improvement, proficient, and distinguished are given numeric values on a 0 to 3 point scale similar to Table D: Domain Rating Assignment—3 Point Scale (22 Pa. Code, Chapter 19, III (d)).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is not evident the district rates and scores the four teacher observation and practice domains using "Failing, Needs Improvement, Proficient and Distinguished" based on a zero-to-three point scale as required by 22 Pa. Code, Chapter 19, III (d).</li> </ul>	<p>Met based on July 11, 2014 explanation</p>
<b>Required Component</b>	
<b>IV. Standards of Use for Multiple Measures of Student Performance</b>	
<p><u>Building-level measures</u> must be greater than 0% (24 P.S. 11-1123 establishes 15%).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district percentage factor for this multiple measure is 5%;</li> <li>The district uses its School VAM.</li> </ul>	<p>Met based on July 11, 2014 explanation</p>
<p><u>Teacher-specific measures</u> generated using data that estimate a teacher's contribution to student learning and contribute at least 15% to the overall performance rating (24 P.S. 11-1123).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district incorporates Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) or its Teacher VAM in this multiple measure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Even though the district's June 2, 2014 documentation indicates it will use SLOs in this multiple measure, its Educator Effectiveness Report is not consistent with its statements; instead the report references Component 3f.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Met based on July 11, 2014 explanation</p>

Required Component	July 2014 Findings
<b>IV. Standards of Use for Multiple Measures of Student Performance</b>	
<p>Locally-developed "elective" measures of student achievement must be greater than 0% (24 P.S. 11-1123 establishes 20%).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tripod Student Survey results remain in the district's alternative teacher evaluation system for this multiple measure despite written notification that student surveys <i>are not a measure of student performance</i>; previously PDE recommended the district incorporate the results of the Tripod Student Surveys into the district's "teacher observation and practice" component of its alternative teacher evaluation rating form.</li> </ul>	<p>Met based on the incorporation of a research based student survey that correlates strongly with overall student achievement (Tripod Survey) as part of the locally-developed elective performance measure.</p>

After completing its teacher evaluations each year for the next three years, the district will submit data and evidence to demonstrate Pittsburgh's alternative classroom teacher evaluation meets or exceeds the measures of effectiveness established under 24 P.S. §1123. Examples of data and evidence the Department will review include, but are not limited to, the following:

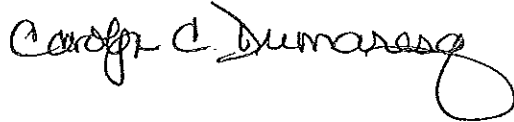
- Trends in city-wide student achievement as reflected on PSSA and Keystone proficiency scores both at the district and school level.
- Comparison of Pittsburgh's school building measures that make up its school building VAMs compared to individual School Performance Profiles.
- Annual distribution of the number and percentage of teachers for each of the performance ratings levels (distinguished, proficient, needs improvement and failing) and overall performance numbers and percentages (satisfactory and unsatisfactory) both at the district and school level.

A full review will be made at the end of the 2017-18 school year prior to reconsidering PDE approval of the Pittsburgh alternative system.

As a reminder, any changes the district makes to its Department-approved alternative Annual Rating Form and its alternative classroom teacher evaluation system (i.e., rating scale, Tripod survey, changes made to RISE, etc.) must be resubmitted for review and action.

Thank you for your continued cooperation as we implement Pennsylvania's new educator effectiveness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn C. Dumaresq". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping flourish at the end of the name.

Carolyn C. Dumaresq, Ed.D.  
Acting Secretary of Education