



Superintendent Statement: Teacher Evaluation
Regular Board Meeting
January 27, 2016

First, I understand and have heard the concerns regarding this year's move to an enhanced evaluation system. I want to offer clarifying information.

I am pleased that we have had excellent conversations over recent days and weeks across the district - with teachers, principals, and with leaders from the AAEA, leaders who are here in this room tonight. I appreciate the opportunity to interact with each other in positive and productive ways, and thank all those who have taken the time to share their thoughts.

In AAPS, we are moving to an enhanced evaluation process during this 2015-16 school year - we will not take a step back - we will move forward together. We are using the full Danielson Evaluation framework. The Danielson Evaluation framework is familiar territory, as it is the model we have used for several years in AAPS, and one of the 4 models designated in the teacher evaluation legislation. Danielson was also recommended by the Michigan Council for Educator Effectiveness (MCEE), chaired by Dean Loewenberg Ball, School of Education, University of Michigan.

In an excellent article in the December, 2015 issue of the MEA Voice, MEA President Steven Cook says, *"While this legislation took a considerable amount of time to work its way through the Legislature following the Ball Commission report, it was worth the wait, as it represents a big step forward and a major improvement over the present haphazard process in evaluating teachers and administrators."*

So we are taking steps forward in AAPS. Beginning in 2015-16, all teachers will be evaluated every year, in all 4 domains of the tool. The four domains are: Planning & Preparation, Classroom Environment, Professional Responsibilities, and Instruction.

In order to continue productive transition work through this time of change we are convening a **Teacher Evaluation Advisory Group** to

clarify, support, and remove any obstacles to our successful implementation of the AAPS Teacher Evaluation. I am pleased to share that we have received applications from 46 teachers who have applied to serve the district on this team, and we thank all who have applied. We look forward to working with this team of teachers, principals, and content leaders, who will share their progress regularly.

Finally, in conversations with teachers this week, one area where it appeared that we could offer immediate clarification is to share further guidance on student growth measures. Following work with teachers, principals, and leaders, a clarifying document has been developed to ensure our understanding that multiple measures *can* be used to more fully illustrate the growth that students have made. That document is on our website and also has been delivered directly to all employees last Friday. I have already heard from several teachers this week that this step has been very helpful. Our principals and content leaders will be able to support with questions in this area.

In addition to the Evaluation Advisory Group and to the Evaluation Questions Help Line, we will continue to receive regular input and participate in ongoing discussion with teachers, members of our AAEEA problem-solving team as well as with our Principal group. In fact, our team had a productive session with the AAEEA problem-solving team on this past Tuesday evening, and I very much appreciate that excellent work.

We all know well, from experience, the challenges of individual and organizational change such as the current transition we are making to an enhanced evaluation system. The most important work we accomplish together during this transition will be to continue the quality conversations among our teachers, building and district leaders during the process of our daily work together. We will learn together, share our best ideas and lessons learned. I know that we will help each other, and continue to offer our very best ideas to this transition work in service to children.

As with the adjustment to any new system, it will take time to refine our processes, and for all stakeholders to understand and feel comfortable working with new requirements. We will do this work together over time; that is the way of successful organizational change processes.

I continue, every day in the district, to see and hear from our own teachers and building leaders, of excellent ideas as to how we will

make an improved evaluation process our 'own,' and how we will leverage this opportunity to set and achieve our shared goals of realizing excellence together.

We have excellent teachers in the AAPS; our constellation of talented and committed teachers is one of the essential AAPS advantages that we offer our 17,000 students. A quality teacher in every classroom is part of the 'promise we make' to our parents. The AAPS has served as a model district in the state, and we will continue to do be a model in our work. I am confident that when we are on the other side of this pivotal school year, we will be proud of the progress we have made together, and we will be glad to have accomplished solid work on behalf of our children, while also satisfying and embracing best practice in evaluation and the requirements of the new Michigan Teacher Evaluation System in the Ann Arbor Public Schools.

We don't have to look far in our state to realize how *very fortunate* we are in the Ann Arbor Public Schools. By working together over recent years, we have stabilized district finances, implemented new, successful programs, and increased district enrollment. Our children continue to achieve at high levels and our school district is one of distinction, both in Michigan and across the country. We continue to be a destination district for children, families, teachers and staff. As an AAPS team, we have successfully navigated change in the past, and together we will meet this challenge, also.

Someone has said, "We make the path by walking together." There is no doubt that this 2015-16 school year proves a defining moment for our organization. During times of change such as this, we each have a choice - to continue to work together, to leverage these opportunities to improve the work we do, or to allow the deterioration of our relationship and delay the progress of the important work we accomplish together. I know that in the AAPS, we will choose to continue to work together to achieve our shared success - we will walk this path together.

Thank you to our teachers, principals, and all our AAPS team, for the work you do every day to bring our highest and best effort to our classrooms on behalf of our children. I know we all remain committed to deliver the top-quality teaching and learning that our children and families expect and deserve and we will move forward together.

Thank you for this opportunity for clarification.