

TEACHERS' VOICE



“ No single or predominant measure, instrument or assessment can provide a fair and accurate measure of the complexity of teaching and learning. – The AFT Guide for Developing Multiple Measures for Teacher Development and Evaluation ”

PROFESSIONAL
PROGRESSIVE
UNIONISM

Nov/Dec 2011



A Better Way...
THE UNION WAY



albuquerque teachers federation

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VOL 14 | NO 3

MEASURING WHAT WE VALUE



We should measure what we value, not the other way around. All too often in education, we value what is easy to measure, but overlook elements that are essential for effective practice. If we value outcomes for our students, such as the ability to understand essential concepts, work in groups, think critically, and solve problems, we must measure those abilities.

If we value those attributes in student learning, then we must—in fact, we are obligated to—value the same qualities in teaching. A teacher evaluation system that includes an over-reliance on standardized measures undervalues, to the point of ignoring, the exact outcomes we need for our students and must value in our teachers.

All too often, teachers and their unions are characterized as being against reform. We are not against reform; we are against slogan reform. Slogans like “prioritizing student academic gains” and “recruiting, recognizing, and retaining ‘rock star’ teachers,” translate into shallow reforms that result in an emphasis on superficial teaching and learning. More than just being a distraction, slogan reforms do harm to students.

In the last edition of the Teachers’Voice, I outlined the reasons why we are against Governor Martinez’s proposed reform of the teacher evaluation system. If the governor is successful with her proposed evaluation scheme, the worst outcomes of this ill-conceived, revamped teacher evaluation system will happen:

- Increasing reliance on inadequate measures of student learning.
- Creating incentives that focus on the wrong things.
- Entrenching an educational system that runs contrary to a focus on deep learning, which is the intent of the Common Core Standards and which NM has adopted.
- Maintaining a system that creates judgments based on scarce evidence and which never really gives teachers meaningful feedback.
- “Effective” teaching will be based on just teaching to a bad test.

Our mantra in this fight is “With Us, Not To Us”. We know our evaluation system needs reform. In fact, the only statement by Secretary-designate Skandera that I agree with is that our pass/fail evaluation system provides little or no feedback that a teacher can use to improve; nor does it correctly identify those who are struggling or ineffective. However, if this administration succeeds in its attempts to revamp our evaluation system without the experience and wisdom of the practitioners, teaching will not improve and student learning will not advance. This union—your union—has a better way. We know that evaluation serves multiple purposes, such as:

- Improving the overall quality of the teacher workforce by identifying and building upon individual and collective teacher strengths, and by improving instruction and other teacher practices to improve student learning.
- Identifying exemplary teachers.
- Identifying ineffective teachers and developing a system of support to remediate their skills.
- Ensuring fair and valid employment decisions.
- Confirming what teachers are doing well.

There is no evidence that teachers are motivated to improve if they are evaluated or compensated using test scores. There is ample evidence that the over-reliance on standardized tests has many unintended consequences, such as:

- Excessive test preparation and a narrow curriculum.
- An arbitrary and inordinate focus on students who are on the cusp of proficiency as measured by standardized tests—a focus that undercuts the right of all students to a well-rounded, content-rich curriculum that encourages them to develop critical thinking skills.

Creating a system that includes appropriate measures of student learning takes real thought and time to develop them and to learn how to implement them appropriately. When policymakers are unwilling to put in that time and effort, the impact on learning is disastrous.

When contrived and unproven reforms like “merit pay” are added to a flawed testing and evaluation system, the impact is worse. Let me set the record straight here. The *Albuquerque Journal* gave me “credit” for changing my stance on merit pay. They grossly misrepresented my work with APS. I have never changed my beliefs. I do not now think, nor have I ever thought, that standardized testing should be used in evaluation/compensation systems. What they should have given me credit for is working with APS leadership to ensure that the multiple measures they research and pilot in the School Improvement Grant (SIG) include measures that are valid and acceptable—not measures that we know are harmful.

To those who think teachers’ unions are against reform, think again. We have been working long and hard at the national level and right here in New Mexico on better ways to evaluate teachers. Evaluation of the complex task of teaching will take well-thought-out, multiple measures. We know what those measures should be. Now is the time for us to stand together to educate the rest of those whose knowledge comes from slogan reform. Our request—our conviction—is “With Us, Not To Us”. We stand ready to be partners in real reform.

In Solidarity, *Ellen*

MULTIPLE MEASURES

This is what we have now—an inadequate teacher evaluation system with “drive by” evaluations where teachers are observed in an often meaningless and cursory way by principals, and virtually all teachers in our district meet competencies. Really.

This is what the current governor wants us to have in the future – an equally inadequate system, where teachers are arbitrarily ranked based on results from students’ multiple choice standardized test scores that have been subjected to opaque statistical procedures referred to as value-added methods (VAM).

What our union is proposing is to truly improve teacher evaluation by using multiple measures. In order to understand the absolute necessity of using multiple measures to evaluate teaching, you need to understand what VAM is and what it is not.

VALUE-ADDED METHODS (VAM) DON'T BE BAMBOOZLED

In the current national craze, identifying “highly effective” teachers using a “performance-based” system relies heavily on standardized test scores. Most educators and some policymakers know to avoid an over-reliance on a single measure, especially one that inadequately measures what students know and are able to do, and even less effectively identifies the impact of the teachers. As a result, many have turned to VAM.

The basic concept in VAM is that teachers should add “value”. No one disagrees! In its simplest form, VAM compares data at 2 points in time rather than at a single point in time—in theory this measures growth.

The word “theory” is the big clue. In practice, in order to measure growth and determine the impact of a teacher, mathematical formulas are applied to each student’s anticipated trajectory in an effort to adjust for out-of-school factors. There is no one VAM—each district and state has created their own formula. No need to read between the lines here. There is broad agreement among statisticians, psychometricians, and economists that even the most sophisticated Value-Added Measures are not reliable

or valid to use for teacher evaluation. Bottom line: Beware of any proposal relying on VAM.

We need to develop a system that identifies outstanding teachers, helps all teachers improve, and assures that teachers who should not remain in the classroom are identified and removed.

The AFT Guide for Developing Multiple Measures for Teacher Development and Evaluation

Our challenge is to create fair, rigorous and efficient teacher development and evaluation systems that not only define the standards of accomplished teaching and learning, but use multiple sources of data to measure them.

The AFT Guide for Developing Multiple Measures for Teacher Development and Evaluation

A MOVE TO MULTIPLE MEASURES

Because VAM are not yet sufficiently developed to measure the impact of a teacher, and because we have yet to develop excellent performance-based assessments that would truly measure student learning, many districts/states are working to create evaluation systems with multiple measures. Sound easy? Well, it’s not, nor should it be. Teaching is one complex endeavor, and measuring whether a teacher is effective with a classroom of 28 or so individual students in any given year is a complex task. That’s why it requires multiple measures, that is, assessing student learning and a teacher’s ability using more than one tool. What are those measures? Here’s what we think.

continued on page four...

SLOS: HOW SHOULD STUDENT LEARNING BE MEASURED WITHIN A TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM?

Good teaching is much more than a student test score, yet teacher evaluation cannot ignore the importance of student learning.

Under NCLB, successful educators are those who can produce test score gains—not learning gains. As teachers, we can embrace an evaluation system that takes into account the outcomes of our students' learning if the measurements are fair and instructionally-sensitive. Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) put the focus on the student and learning rather than the teacher and teaching methods.

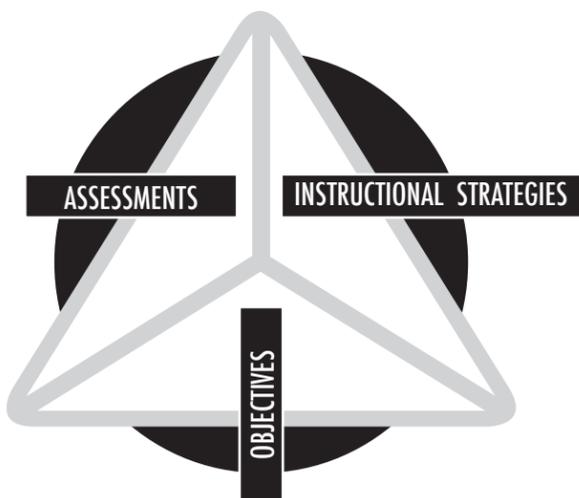
There is no evidence that tying teachers' evaluation to standardized test results improves practice, nor is there proof that it enhances learning. Using what we already know about effective practices would immediately and substantially improve student learning.

Using SLOs, teachers must determine how the student can best demonstrate his or her abilities, whether through a group or individual exercise, in-class or take-home test, or another method. SLOs require teachers to have done the thinking up front about the skills and understandings students need to exhibit. SLOs also allow students to participate as active, independent learners. Students are clearly told what they should be able to do, so they can assess their own progress and concentrate on their weaker skills. Using SLOs, teachers and students are better able to see how the learning activities relate and build upon each other.

SLOs can make teacher assessment of student performance and student self-assessment easier. Since learning objectives state a performance goal, teachers can more easily develop a method for assessing that performance.

- Student learning should include evidence of growth in knowledge and skills, based on multiple measures.
- One measure of student learning, currently used in the Pro-Comp System in Denver and Austin's REACH program, is called Student Learning Objectives (SLOs).
- ProComp-Denver: Student growth objectives are set by teachers and specialists in collaboration with their principals and supervisors. Compensation for meeting student growth objectives is one way for teachers to build career earnings. Under Pro-Comp, teachers set two annual objectives. Teachers who meet their two objectives receive a 1% Index Salary Increase. Teachers who meet one objective will receive a 1% Index Bonus. Teachers who do not meet either objective will receive no increase.

- AISD (Austin) REACH: Student Learning Objectives are targets of student growth that teachers set at the start of the school year and strive to achieve by the end of the semester or school year. These targets are based on a thorough review of available data reflecting students' baseline skills and are set and approved after collaboration and consultation with colleagues and administrators. In the AISD Strategic Compensation Pilot, teachers set and assess two student learning objectives and receive financial incentives for meeting one or both of these goals at the end of the school year.
- SLOs are annual targets for growth that a teacher sets at the beginning of the year and strives to attain by the end of the year (or at the end of a semester, if appropriate).
- SLOs are based on a student needs assessment and aligned to the school's standards and curricula.
- Classroom-based assessments, including those that are program-specific, are more instructionally sensitive, thus creating a more direct link between the progress of the student and the ability of the teacher.
- SLOs must be (1) based on outcomes, not activities, (2) rigorous, and (3) measurable.
- SLOs are a way to incorporate an individual teacher's contribution to student learning into an evaluation system, and are:
 - Teacher-created
 - Student-specific
 - Instructionally-sensitive
- SLOs can apply to all content area teachers as well as support personnel.
- SLOs are applicable and appropriate for Special Education teachers and relate directly to IEP goals.
- SLOs combine objectives, assessment and instructional strategies



A test's instructional sensitivity represents the degree to which students' performances on that test accurately reflect the quality of the instruction that was provided specifically to promote students' mastery of whatever is being assessed. In other words, an instructionally sensitive test would be capable of distinguishing between strong and weak instruction by allowing us to validly conclude that a set of students' high test scores are meaningfully, but not exclusively, attributable to effective instruction.

"Instructional Insensitivity of Tests: Accountability's Dire Drawback"
 – W. James Popham Phi Delta Kappan,
 October 2007

There are multiple pathways along which learning objectives promote student learning, and thus a strong case is to be made for objectives on the basis of learning research.

multiple pathways

1. Clearly articulated learning objectives help students to differentiate among types of knowledge.
2. Articulating learning objectives helps to ensure that students are practicing the "right" skills – that is, those things that you want them to learn. Research has shown that learning and performance are best fostered when students engage in practice that (a) focuses on a specific goal or criterion for performance (again, learning objectives/outcomes), (b) targets an appropriate level of challenge relative to students' current performance, and (c) is of sufficient quantity and frequency to meet the performance criteria.
3. Articulating learning objectives helps to ensure that your course balances independence with guidance in a way that is appropriate for students' level. As instructors, we want our students to become independent, self-directing learners. However, getting there is a developmental process, beginning with the acquisition of basic content knowledge and disciplinary skills, and evolving to encompass greater creativity, risk-taking, and autonomy.
4. Clearly articulated learning objectives will help our students to learn new material in such a way that they can flexibly and appropriately use it in a variety of contexts, both in the short term and down the road. Cognitive scientists call this "transfer," and it is one of the key markers of deep learning.
5. Articulating learning objectives helps students build metacognitive skills. Metacognition refers to "the process of reflecting on and directing one's own thinking." To become self-directed learners, students must learn to: (a) assess the demands of the task (in other words, the learning objectives/outcomes); (b) evaluate their own knowledge and skills; (c) plan their approach; (d) monitor their progress (which they can only do if they understand the type of knowledge they are expected to gain); and (e) adjust their strategies as needed.

Excerpts from: *The Educational Value of Course-level Learning Objectives/Outcomes*
 Eberly Center on Teaching Excellence, Carnegie-Mellon University

NOVEMBER EVENTS	11/10	ATF Movie Night: Inconvenient Truth About "Waiting For Superman" (screening and discussion)	5:00 PM	No RSVP required
	11/17	Transforming Local Collaboration	4:30 - 6:30 PM	Members: No cost Non-members: \$25 Melody Fill, LISW, School SW
	11/30	Cookies, Cocoa and Cards! Refreshments & writing holiday cards to our lawmakers	4:30-6:30 PM	Just drop in!
CALL 262-2657 TO REGISTER *Events held at ATF office @ 530 Jefferson Street NE (unless otherwise noted.)				

Observations and feedback based on professional standards and administered by trained evaluators are successfully used in schools that are part of the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) and in cities like Denver, Colorado and Rochester, New York, along with a variety of measures of how teachers contribute to student learning. These standards-based evaluations of teaching practice not only provide more useful evidence about teaching practice, but also help teachers to improve their practice and effectiveness.

In the TAP system of “instructionally-focused accountability,” for example, each teacher is evaluated 4-6 times a year by master teachers or principals who are trained and certified evaluators using a system that examines designing and planning instruction, the learning environment, classroom instruction and the teachers’ broader responsibilities. The indicators of good teaching are practices that have been found to be associated with desired student outcomes.

“Effective Teaching as a Civil Right: How Building Instructional Capacity Can Help Close the Achievement Gap”
Linda Darling-Hammond, *Voices in Urban Education*, Fall 2011, Annenberg Institute for School Reform

Teachers would have a framework, or rubric, for creating rigorous SLOs. In the APS School Improvement Grant (SIG) pilot, we are recommending starting with the work of Charlotte Danielson as outlined in her book, *Framework for Teaching*. Her well-respected and often-used work in the domains of teaching includes a section on Selecting Instructional Goals. She includes the following four elements:

- Value: Goals represent high expectations for students; and reflect important learning and conceptual understanding, curriculum standards, and frameworks.
- Clarity: Goals are clearly stated in terms of student learning and permit sound assessment.
- Suitability for Diverse Students: Goals reflect needs of all students in a class.

- Balance: Goals represent opportunities for different types of learning—for example, thinking as well as knowledge—and coordination or integration within or across disciplines.

Using SLOs to measure student learning will ensure that we are measuring what we value—deep learning and conceptual understanding. In addition, teacher collaboration becomes more meaningful and directly tied to classroom work as they co-create and debate SLOs that will be appropriate, rigorous, and are directly connected to their instruction.

Teachers create student-learning objectives and assess student progress toward these goals as a normal part of their instructional program. SLOs would formalize this practice, deepen it, and attach it to a teacher’s evaluation, making their ability to assess learning an integral part of how they are assessed as teachers.

The rubric below is an example of how SLOs can be assessed for appropriateness and rigor as they are created by teachers and reviewed by administrators.

ELEMENT	UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
VALUE	Goals are not valuable and represent low expectations or no conceptual understanding for students. Goals do not reflect important learning.	Goals are moderately valuable in either their expectations or conceptual understanding for students and in importance of learning.	Goals are valuable in their level of expectations, conceptual understanding, and importance of learning.	Not only are the goals valuable, but the teacher can also clearly articulate how goals establish high expectations and relate to curriculum frameworks and standards.
CLARITY	Goals are either not clear or are stated as student activities. Goals do not permit viable methods of assessment.	Goals are only moderately clear or include a combination of goals and activities. Some goals do not permit viable methods of assessment.	Most of the goals are clear but may include a few activities. Most permit viable methods of assessment.	All the goals are clear, written in the form of student learning, and permit viable methods of assessment.
SUITABILITY FOR DIVERSE STUDENTS	Goals are not suitable for the class.	Most of the goals are suitable for most students in the class.	All the goals are suitable for most students in the class.	Goals take into account the varying learning needs of individual students or groups.
BALANCE	Goals reflect only one type of learning and one discipline or strand.	Goals reflect several types of learning but no effort at coordination or integration.	Goals reflect several different types of learning and opportunities for integration.	Goals reflect student initiative in establishing important learning.



Student learning objectives are among the more heavily-studied options for measuring teacher impact on learning. Studies have shown a correlation between teachers’ crafting of rigorous learning objectives—pioneered as part of Denver’s ProComp system—and higher performance by their students.

“They’re a very precise process, intended to evoke critical and evidence-based thought about a teacher’s students and lead to objectives for student growth,” said William J. Slotnik, the executive director of the Community Training and Assistance Center, which helped in the development of ProComp and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg pay plan. “It’s trying to bring a higher level of science to a practice—goal-setting—that’s existed in districts for a long time.”

Rhode Island, which is adopting student learning objectives as part of its teacher evaluation system, will be among the first states to use them formally for teacher accountability.

“Wanted: Ways to Measure Most Teachers”
– Stephen Sawchuk
Education Week, February 2, 2011

MULTIPLE MEASURES CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE.



CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS WITH SUBSTANCE

MORE PEOPLE

Principals are essential, yet not sufficient, in assessing teacher competence. It is time for New Mexico to diversify our system by requiring that observations, an essential part of a teacher evaluation system, include instructionally-focused accountability. This can be achieved by ensuring that teachers are observed in classroom instruction several times a year by multiple trained observers, including principals and master teachers. Evaluators would be trained and certified. A system would be in place to monitor the reliability and consistency of evaluations.

Certified Evaluators:

- Must be able to accurately assess teacher practice
- Must be able to communicate
- Could help teachers establish their PDPs

BETTER OBSERVATION TOOLS

In the APS SIG pilot, an observation tool has been developed that will provide a more comprehensive and useable picture of teachers' ability. By combining Charlotte Danielson's 4 Framework for Teaching domains with the 9 NM Teachers Competencies, we have a developed rubric—or a set of clear expectations for what effective teaching looks like along a continuum of growth.

For example: In Danielson's Framework Domain 1(Planning and Preparation) - Element 1 is Knowledge of Content. This corresponds directly with New Mexico Competency 1 (The teacher accurately demonstrates knowledge of the content area and approved curriculum) indicators C and D.

MORE DIFFERENTIATION

When a teacher is evaluated, he or she will be given a performance rating based on the indicators in each domain using rubrics for several dimensions of instructional quality.

The four domains are:

- designing and planning instruction
- classroom learning environment
- instruction
- teaching responsibilities

All domains are scored during classroom observation, except the "teaching responsibilities" domain standards, which are assessed at the end of the year.

Each domain has several elements (we currently call those indicators) and for each element under the domain a teacher is rated based on a 4-category system:

- Unsatisfactory
- Basic
- Proficient
- Distinguished

FREQUENCY

Teachers should have a summative evaluation every three years, with formative evaluations taking place yearly. The evaluation team would observe teachers during their summative years, the principal only during the formative years. By establishing this system, there will be the time necessary to make the evaluation process meaningful and teachers will be able to address and develop their teaching practices in areas in which they may be weak, preferably gaining in teaching skill before the summative evaluation.

At any time, a teacher who is unsatisfactory in any given element or indicator would be given time and support to improve. A teacher who is unsatisfactory in a domain would be placed in a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program. Once in PAR, the teacher is given intensive support, is able to improve or is dismissed from the profession.



STUDENT OUTCOMES

The increased awareness of how much teaching matters, along with widespread concerns about the severe limitations of using standardized testing as a way to measure teaching, has led to new approaches that connect student growth to teacher performance. One proven strategy that's gaining attention is to include, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) in teacher evaluation systems. A number of school districts and states are adopting or considering SLOs for tested and non-tested subjects.

The creation of SLOs support the teacher to think critically about their teaching objectives and how they can be reliably measured to indicate student growth. SLOs are designed to both strengthen teaching and improve student learning. When implementing SLOs, teachers and administrators engage in a collaborative process that helps teachers analyze their own practice and adjust instructional strategies to better meet student needs.

Student Learning Objectives are described in more depth in this edition of the Teachers'Voice.



COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

The EPSS is currently a PED requirement for every school. By including this component as one of the multiple measures in an evaluation system, the EPSS moves from the shelf and into the hands of teachers, making the goals more meaningful and establishing the EPSS as an essential component of a school staffs' collaborative efforts.

This measure addresses collaboration recognizing that, in a comprehensive system, teacher development and evaluation must foster collective responsibility and accountability to the school's goals as outlined by the EPSS as well as the individual teacher. Indeed, collaborative teams of educators working to improve teaching and learning are doing some of the most effective reform. Collaboration can also be measured for individual educators through the school responsibilities they choose to take on.



STUDENT FEEDBACK

Based on the research of Ron Ferguson at Harvard, many states and districts are including student feedback as one of the measures in a comprehensive teacher evaluation system. Surveys have been developed and refined over ten years with more than 400,000 students completing surveys across more than 50 districts. Dr. Ferguson's work on student surveys is also included in the APS SIG pilot.

The Tripod refers to the three points of: content knowledge, pedagogical skill and relationship-building skills. The student surveys measure multiple domains of teaching practice and student engagement. Data-collection instruments and procedures are tailored for grades K-2, 3-5 and 6-12.

The questions are crafted carefully to get at each point of the tripod while skillfully avoiding questions that might lead to popularity contents. Questions like; "My teacher explains difficult things clearly," or "Our class stays busy and does not waste time" are examples of the questions that are asked of students.

There are many ways that student perspectives can be used to provide useful information about patterns of teaching effectiveness, ideally in combination with other measures. Dr. Ferguson asserts the importance of multiple measures multiple times.

Based on the project's work, Ferguson is convinced that, "Student perceptions of classroom practice can help in predicting learning outcomes and should be taken seriously by policy makers and educators."

Tripod surveys provide reliable, detailed and validated insights on teaching and learning in any classroom, including classrooms not tested with standardized exams.

SO THERE YOU HAVE IT...

our recommendations based on current research, best practices and avoiding the pitfalls embedded in systems that have leaped to quick fixes and have serious unintended consequences.

IT'S CRITICAL WE GET THIS RIGHT.

With multiple measures, we can link teacher evaluation, compensation and student outcomes together in a fair, reliable system that will change public education for the better.

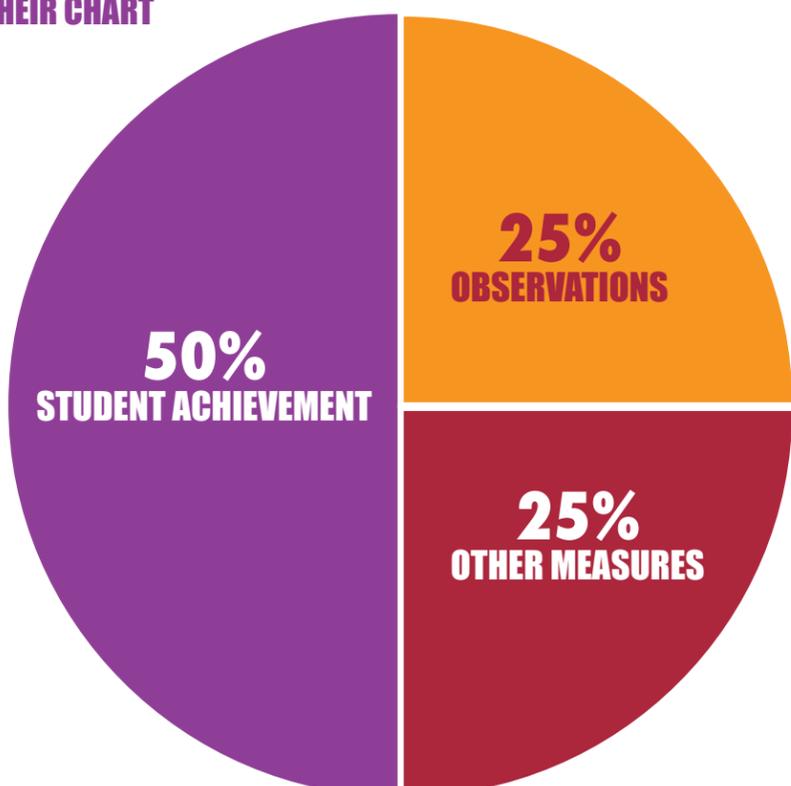
A teacher's effectiveness in the classroom must be determined using multiple measures. These measures should include observations by trained evaluators who have knowledge about teaching, the subject matter, and the context. They could also include student and parental feedback and portfolios of student work. And the evaluations should include the academic growth their students make over the course of a year. Growth should be determined based on fair and objective assessments, but should not be based on the results of one test given a single day. States and districts should consider using results from district-developed assessments or portfolios of student work throughout the year graded against a consistent rubric.

Secretary Arne Duncan
A Conversation with CEC Members, 2011

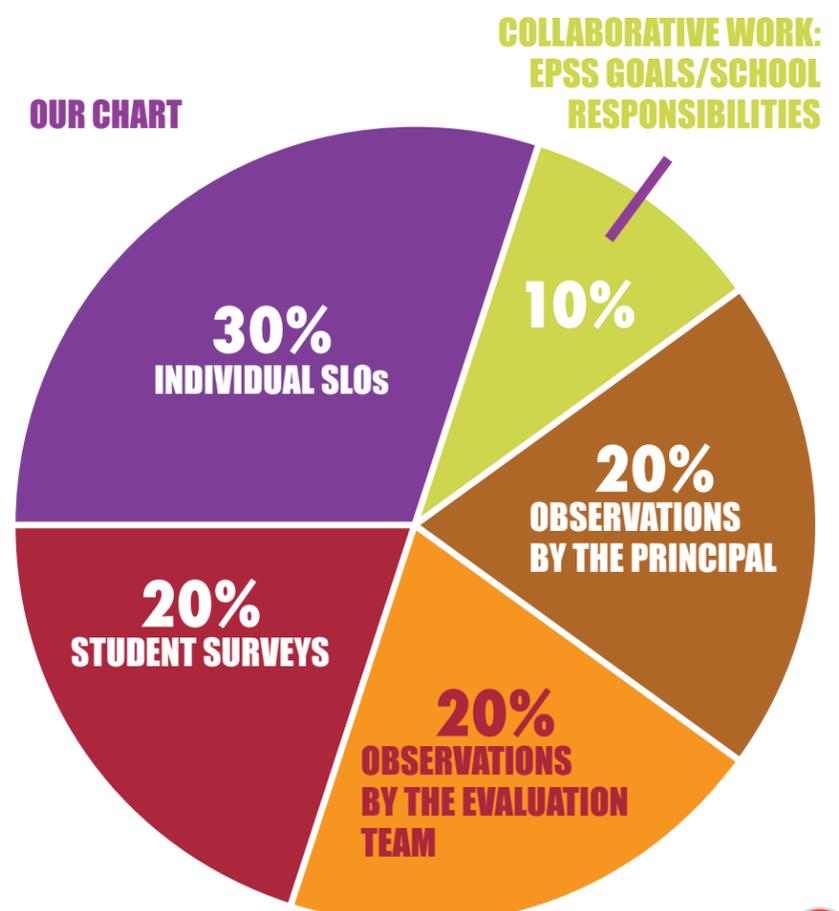
COMPARISON: TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS VS. ATF PLAN

COMPONENT	TASK FORCE	ATF
TEACHER "EFFECTIVENESS"	5 levels, based on student achievement (test scores), observations and other measures	4 Levels based on multiple measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Learning Objectives • Collaborative work • Observations by the Principal • Observations by the Evaluation Team • Student Surveys
STUDENT LEARNING	50% of an evaluation, measured by test scores – SBA scores for those grades/subjects giving SBA; school letter grade for others until assessments are identified, developed and approved for non-tested grades/subjects (within 2 years)	30% on Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) - annual learning objectives that can be developed by any teacher for any subject in any grade, individualized to meet students' needs
COMPENSATION	Beginning 2013-14, merit pay based on effectiveness ratings, consisting of value-added contributions calculated by PED, observations and other measures	Teacher-weighted formula, additional compensation for experience, education, responsibilities, student outcomes (evidenced by SLOs), and achieving school EPSS goals
OBSERVATIONS	25% observations – at least 4 per year, minimum of 2 by principal. Others may be done by outside PED-approved evaluators, or other colleagues (formative)	20% - Observations by the Principal-every year for formative evaluations 20% - Observations by the Evaluation Team-every three years during summative evaluations
OTHER MULTIPLE MEASURES	25% locally selected, PED-approved measures - e.g. portfolios of teacher and/or student work; parent and/or student surveys; and other research-based measures, INCLUDING basing up to 10% on school letter grade.	10% - Collaborative work 20% - Student Surveys
COLLECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY	NONE-focus on competition	School-wide EPSS, with compensation for whole school meeting EPSS goals
SHORTAGE AREAS	Incentives to teach in critical shortage subject areas, geographic areas and other hard-to-staff areas	Completing and funding the 3-Tiered compensation system address shortage areas. Competitive salaries have been proven to address shortages
DUE PROCESS	Given to teachers after obtaining Level 2 license and receiving effective evaluations	Provided to teachers after 2 successful years of teaching and upon signing their third contract- as per state law
3-TIERED SYSTEM & PDD	Evaluate in 2011-12 to minimize administrative costs & determine effectiveness Incorporate "effectiveness" into licensure => tie test scores to licensure Restructure pay to create smaller jumps, more frequent opportunities to advance (?) and free up resources for merit pay	Advancement through PDD process (*perhaps revise PDD to include demonstration of ability to develop SLOs and evaluate student progress) Adequately fund and expand the 3-Tiered System to include a teacher-weighted formula, and incorporate SLOs and school-wide goals
FUNDING	Funding for merit pay for a few	Adequately fund education— Funding for programs and salaries that start but not end with the 3-Tiered minimums

THEIR CHART



OUR CHART



ISSUES

Proposed Retirement Changes... Again

You received a flyer about the ERB's proposed changes, based on funding goals of 80% by 2030 and 95% by 2040. The ERB adopted six potential plan design changes that accomplish these goals. All of them make changes either to retirement eligibility rules for active vested employees or reduce benefits for active or retired members.

Your union does not support putting additional burdens on employees who have already absorbed some of the employer's share of contributions over several years, and yet have not seen a raise in over 3 years.

Visit the ERB Website (www.nmerb.org), where you can view the proposals and give your input via an interactive survey, or you can download a print version to submit. The deadline to submit your input is Wednesday, November 16 at 5 pm. The ERB will make a final recommendation on Monday, November 21 at a special meeting scheduled for 9:00 am at APS City Center.

ADVOCACY

SLP Caseload Grievance

This summer, the union and district agreed upon a formula for determining what constitutes a 1.0 contract for SLPs. In October, the union had to file a grievance for an SLP who was already working a 1.0 contract, but was assigned an additional caseload at another school. We expect that grievance to be won and will update SLPs on the outcome. In the meantime, please contact the union office for details on the formula if you believe your caseload is excessive.

Pay for Extended Contracts

A problem has emerged this year for individuals on extended contracts with regard to how they are being paid. Included in this group are elementary and secondary counselors and librarians and secondary vocational teachers. Language in the negotiated agreement states that: All teachers working an entire school year will be paid in twenty-six (26) equal installments on a bi-weekly basis.

However, the pay program the district is utilizing this year requires that all employees be paid on the basis of a 183-day contract and that the pay for the extended contracts be reflected and paid on time sheets. While this has not created any specific pay problems for these individuals that we are aware of, it is not consistent with our language in the agreement. It has caused some confusion because the contracts issued to these individuals do not reflect their extended contracts.

Unfortunately, the District and the Federation have not yet been able to reach a resolution on this matter in spite of the fact that ATF has offered what we feel is a viable solution. We were even willing to wait until next year to implement the fix. We will continue to seek a remedy to this matter and will keep you posted on any new developments.

I | A | O

issues | advocacy | organizing

You've Got Weingarten Rights

Often times when teachers are called into the principal's office, they tend to say too much before they seek representation. Members should be cautious when their principal asks them to attend a meeting and does not tell them the reason.

First, ask the reason for the meeting. Then remember: The principal is under no obligation to tell you about your right to representation. But, ATF members are entitled to it any time the reason is for disciplinary action, an allegation of abuse, or a complaint by a parent, student or community member.

We can thank the U.S. Supreme Court, which 30 years ago protected unionized workers' rights to due process during questioning by a supervisor. The case, *NLRB v. J. Weingarten*, has come to define what's known as your Weingarten Rights. If you are asked to attend a meeting with your principal or supervisor for an unspecified reason, you should exercise these rights.

Ask the principal or supervisor to clarify the reason for the meeting. You cannot refuse to attend a meeting called by your principal. To do so would be insubordination. The choice of representative is up to you. It is your right as a dues-paying ATF member. Your administrator should never arrange for representation on your behalf.

ORGANIZING

Act & Advocate...Communicate!

Your ATF staff and leadership have been out in over 100 schools since Labor Day, holding extremely important presentations & discussions on the state's proposed changes to teacher evaluation, versus a plan ATF has developed that we believe is better—better for you, and better for your students! If we've already been out to your school, but you were unable to attend the meeting, you can go through the presentation on your own at www.atfunion.org.

If we haven't made it to your school yet, not to worry! Your organizing team is working hard to get every school on the schedule—ideally before the second week of December. Ask your Fed Rep for more information, as they are the people the organizers are working with to set these up. PLEASE do what you can to attend either the meeting at your school or go through it on your own at atfunion.org, as the changes the state is proposing could completely alter your career. The only way we can fight for the RIGHT reform is to make sure you're informed and that you take action!

If we are going to defeat Governor Martinez's and Secretary-designate Skandera's scheme for overhauling teacher evaluation and basing it at least half on student test scores, every educator needs to stand together and take collective action. The first step is constant communication with your lawmakers!

You need to contact your state senator and representative once per week, from now until the end of the

legislative session. You can find out who your senator and representative are and get their contact information at www.nmlegis.gov. Email, write letters, or make phone calls. Tell them:

- Education cuts ARE hurting kids – you need to increase revenue and sufficiently fund public education, which includes providing funding for any and all education reforms, not just “passing the buck” to districts.
- Include teachers in education reform, instead of pre-determined reforms that have not been proven valid or effective.
- Respectfully listen to, and consider, the ATF's alternative evaluation plan that professional educators in New Mexico believe is better for both students and teachers.
- Take time to reform public education in New Mexico the right way, instead of railroading through a plan that was cut and pasted from other states' anti-teacher legislation over two months, with virtually no public input.

Stand Together/Stand a Chance!

Q: What is the only thing that stands between our elected lawmakers' agenda to implement more bad education policies and the drastically negative impact they will have on you and your students if enacted?

A: Your union and a better plan! The Albuquerque Teachers Federation is fighting for a better evaluation system that uses real tools to measure real student growth at all grade levels, in all subjects.

We need every APS educator to help us fight for a FAIR system that values real teaching and learning. If you are not yet an ATF member, take a stand for a better evaluation system by joining today and helping us fight! See your school's ATF Fed Rep for an application, or go to www.atfunion.org to download it, and send it in to “ATF Office” through interschool mail.

Our children deserve far more than a test-centric curriculum and instruction. Congress should ameliorate, not intensify, that problem. It should not mandate or overly encourage state-wide educator evaluation systems or require the use of student test scores in the development of any federally-funded evaluation system.

**"What Should Congress Do About Teacher Evaluation?"
Forum on Educational Accountability
<http://www.edaccountability.org>**

AROUND



THE NATION

AFT Gives Leaders Information on ESEA Waivers

With reauthorization of ESEA still pending in Congress, the White House last month announced that states could apply for waivers of some requirements. They include such key areas as the 2013-14 timeline for determining adequate yearly progress, implementation requirements for school improvement and local education agency (LEA) improvement, schoolwide programs, and highly qualified teacher improvement plans. States may submit applications by Nov. 14 for December review or by mid-February 2012 for review in the spring.

At least 35 states already have expressed interest in obtaining ESEA waivers. To qualify, states must:

- demonstrate that they have college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics, are implementing these standards statewide for all students and schools, and are aligning these standards with high-quality assessments and achievement standards that measure student growth;
- develop and implement a system of differentiated recognition, accountability and support for all LEAs and for all Title I schools that creates incentives, tailored interventions and help to improve student achievement and graduation rates, and to close achievement gaps for all subgroups;
- commit to work with teachers and principals to develop teacher and principal evaluation and support systems that will be used for continual improvement of instruction and will differentiate performance levels using multiple valid measures along with data on student growth; and
- remove duplicative and burdensome reporting requirements that have little or no impact on student outcomes.

"States have to commit to do all of these simultaneously" in order to qualify for waivers, AFT legislative director Tor Cowan explained to the audience. He also stressed that the waiver process expands the reach of the so-called "construction clause," requiring states to respect collective bargaining agreements and memoranda of understanding, as they address each of these four areas.

The expanded reach of the construction clause is welcome but also can be problematic, Cowan warned—states may use it as an opportunity to "create enormous pressure to change agreements" by casting contracts as roadblocks to easing federal requirements. Such was the case in many states under the federal Race to the Top competition, and state and local leaders must closely monitor how this language is being used under the new waiver process.

Relatively broad requirements govern several aspects of the new waiver process, Rob Weil, director of field programs for the AFT educational issues department, told the Web audience. That makes it imperative for affiliates to "get involved in the application process up front—no surprises is the best policy here."

AFT Praises Changes to ESEA Reauthorization Proposal

The AFT is pleased by significant changes concerning teacher evaluation that have been made in a revised proposal to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in Congress, AFT president Randi Weingarten says.

"Reauthorizing a piece of legislation as far reaching and important as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is never a simple task," Weingarten says. "We commend Sens. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and Michael Enzi (R-Wyo.) for the care and thoughtfulness with which they are approaching this task.

"While we believe further improvements can and should be made in the draft—particularly in the area of turning around low-performing schools and ensuring that 360-degree accountability applies to all schools—we are pleased to see that significant changes already have been made in a substitute proposal concerning teacher evaluation.

"The AFT has been resolute on the need to revamp teacher evaluations. When done correctly, teacher evaluations should be essential tools for continuous improvement in teaching and learning. When done incorrectly, however, they serve only as sorting mechanisms to get rid of teachers without even legitimately discerning who is or is not a good teacher.

"We are pleased that Sens. Harkin and Enzi revised their ESEA reauthorization proposal after listening to the concerns of teachers and others who believe that teacher evaluation systems should be designed on the local level, with teachers working with district officials to get it right.

"Comprehensive teacher evaluations are a critical part of helping to ensure all our kids succeed. They are best developed and designed locally with teachers' input, not federally. Sadly, as we can see from what is happening in Tennessee one of the first recipients of the Race to the Top grants—a rush to impose an evaluation system does not yield true, sustainable reform. A better course is to focus on doing it right, not simply doing it.

Senators Introduce Proposal to Reauthorize ESEA

A new proposal from Sens. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and Mike Enzi (R-Wyoming) to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (also known as No Child Left Behind) attempts to address a broken accountability system and acknowledges the importance of adopting higher standards, including the Common Core State Standards, AFT president Randi Weingarten says.

"There is widespread agreement that No Child Left Behind needs to be overhauled," she says. "NCLB's broken accountability system has led to an overemphasis on testing and sanctioning schools rather than improving teaching and learning."

"The AFT has a long history of embracing change and reform, from Al Shanker's support for education reform after the 'A Nation At Risk' report to our embrace of focusing on teacher development and evaluation as a means to improve instruction, starting with the January 2010 unveiling of our proposal, now being used by more than 100 school districts."

"The Harkin-Enzi bill also addresses teacher evaluation, a new area in federal education law. When done correctly, evaluations with tools and supports for teachers can lead toward a path of vibrant instruction. When done incorrectly, it becomes just a human resources sorting mechanism that devalues teachers, limits their growth and undercuts our children's education. We need to heed the lessons of school districts like New Haven, Conn., and the countries that outperform us to get this very critical human resources tool right so evaluations can inform instruction and learning. Valid and reliable teacher development and evaluation systems should be based on multiple measures, not just test scores, and should provide teachers with the feedback, tools and conditions they need for continuous improvement."

"This is a lengthy bill that will require much analysis. The AFT and our members will work throughout the process to ensure that a reauthorized ESEA bill will make a positive difference in teaching and learning."

Grim Poverty Figures Show Need for Wraparound Services

There are tens of millions of human faces behind the grim U.S. Census Bureau report on poverty in America, demonstrating the urgent need to help these families by creating jobs and maintaining stable schools that have wraparound services to address their unmet needs, AFT president Randi Weingarten says.

Economists analyzing the report say that unemployment is the main factor responsible for the increase of 2.6 million more Americans living in poverty. Weingarten says the impact of lingering high joblessness, especially long-term unemployment, illustrates the need for quick congressional action on the jobs plan President Obama proposed last week. "The president is wisely calling for investment in jobs and programs that will rebuild our nation as well as ensure that students will have the teachers they need and fewer rundown schools," she says.

The Census Bureau says a total of 46.2 million Americans were in poverty in 2010—the highest number since the bureau began publishing poverty rate figures 52 years ago. Overall, 15.1 percent of Americans were living below the official poverty line in 2010 (\$22,314 for a family of four). The impact on children is even worse, Weingarten says, noting that 16.4 million children, or 22 percent, live in poverty—the highest number since 1993.

"Current political rhetoric and policy decisions by some governors and other political officials can't mask the reality. We can't pretend that poverty and its terrible consequences don't exist," Weingarten says. "Now more than ever we have to face up and deal with the factors both inside and outside schools that affect disadvantaged children and their families."

Wraparound services provided in schools by public agencies, community groups and nonprofit organizations are helping to address unmet needs in many places. After-school academic programs; recreational opportunities; health, dental and social services; housing counseling and information; job banks; and GED and training programs for parents all help eliminate the barriers to success for students and entire communities.

"Some critics like to say that these unacceptable poverty figures are just excuses for problems in our schools. These are not excuses—these are facts," Weingarten says, "and we have to be honest about that and deal with them."

Across America, nearly two-thirds of school staff report they regularly see kids who are having trouble in school because of hunger, according to Share Our Strength, an organization with which the AFT has worked to respond to childhood food insecurity. Studies show that hungry children cannot grow, develop or learn like other kids.

The Census Bureau also reports that the number of Americans without health insurance increased by 900,000 last year, to a total of 49.9 million. The growth in the uninsured is another reason why wraparound services at community schools are so important now, Weingarten says.

Teacher-Led Reform Shines in Massachusetts

Teacher-led reform, trust and collaboration took the spotlight in Massachusetts this month when Gov. Deval Patrick and state officials announced results from the 2011 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) at a Lowell school that has put these approaches to spectacular use.

The MCAS announcement was held at Lowell's Charlotte M. Murkland Elementary School on Sept. 20. Identified as one of the state's lowest-performing schools just a year ago, the school has demonstrated a stunning rise in student achievement since then. In a single year, the portion of students scoring proficient or advanced in English language arts increased by 13 percentage points and in math by a staggering 20 percentage points. Students improved at a faster pace than their peers statewide, especially in math.

"This is what it looks like when a school embraces teacher-centered education reform," says Paul Georges, president of the United Teachers of Lowell. "We had an outstanding process, and it has resulted in fantastic gains in student achievement."

The Murkland school redesign, which began three years ago, included from the outset educators as well as representatives from the United Teachers of Lowell. Teachers and paraprofessionals who were involved in the process were given the additional responsibility of taking key information back to their colleagues. The redesign has also involved a deep restructuring of the way that teaching and learning take place, with the emphasis at the school shifting away from individual classrooms and toward a shared responsibility for all students.

Happy Thanksgiving

ATF is thankful for all our members and activists: YOU are our union!



albuquerque teachers federation
professional progressive unionism

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NALC/ Roadrunner Food Bank Drive

ATF is working with the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) and Roadrunner Food Bank to encourage schools to participate in this year's Stamp Out Hunger drive in November. If your principal has agreed to participate, your school's letter carrier will pick up all food donations each day during the week of November 14-18. ATF and AEA also have over 40 volunteers going to Roadrunner on November 20 to help sort all the donations from the Stamp Out Hunger drive. If you'd like to help, email kjo@atfunion.org.

Clothing Bank Drive

Thank you to everyone who participated in ATF's fifth annual drive to benefit the PTA Clothing Bank! Every \$1.00 donation helps the clothing bank purchase new items, like socks and underwear, for our APS students in need.

2012: Closer Than We Think

By Sara Attleson, ATF-COPE Chair



The next election that we face is several months away. June 5, 2012 is Primary Election Day for our state legislators, U.S. Senate, and Congressional seats. The primary will take us into the 2012 General Election. These elections are not exactly around the corner yet. But, the months we have before the next elections provide a time to fine-tune our voices so we can be heard.

As public school educators, we presently face countless issues that impact our profession. These issues are related to policies created by and enforced by our local and national politicians. Educators are dealing directly with the policies being made by non-educators, and often our voices are not always heard. Therefore, we must be poised and vocal so that our leaders hear what reforms will or will not work in our schools.

It is certain that merit pay and third grade retention will surface in the 2012 New Mexico Legislative Session and, as educators, we know that these issues, based on limited, flawed research and data, are not relevant educational reforms. However, as we saw in a recent *Albuquerque Journal* article, President Obama and U.S. Education Secretary Duncan aligned themselves with Governor Martínez and N.M. Secretary of Education-Designate Skandera. Secretary Duncan praised the direction New Mexico was going with our education reform. We must decide now if we will sit passively while politicians decide the fate of public education or if we will choose to alert our leaders that we will no longer support politicians that do not support public education. This is the critical battle of 2012.

In the months leading up to the primary and general elections, we must use this time to communicate with our politicians by phone calls, letters, emails and face-to-face meetings to inform them about vital public education needs. We must be vocal and insistent on what is relevant to our students and educational success, as well as what is irrelevant and detrimental. Our jobs are political and we have a voice; let us use it to alert the politicians that we know best what works in education. We can no longer stay home silent. Contact your leaders now and continue to contact them throughout 2012. If they don't hear your voice, they will continue to implement ineffective policies that harm our profession.

DON'T FALL BEHIND...

344-3571
M-TH 5:30-8:30 PM
REMIND YOUR STUDENTS TO CALL FOR FREE HOMEWORK HELP IN ENGLISH OR SPANISH.

GET HOMEWORK HELP

PRESIDENT

Ellen Bernstein

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Pat Halama

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MIDDLE SCHOOL VP

Mary Mercier

Roosevelt Middle School

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL VPs

Stephanie DeBellis

Navajo Elementary School

Miriam Martinez

Los Padillas Elementary School

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