



June 6, 2013

Commissioner Chester,

The greatest impact on student achievement is an effective teacher. The ultimate influence on effective teachers are successful leaders who create the environments and circumstances that allow teaching and learning to happen.

The collaboration between teachers and leaders is an integral part of two of the primary goals of educator evaluations: to promote growth and development of leaders and teachers and to place student learning at the center.

The Educator Evaluation Data Advisory Committee formed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) has been tasked with, among other things, determining how such educator evaluation information shall be made available to the public annually. I am representing the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (M.A.S.S.) on the Committee and our organization wishes to express particular concerns related to the public reporting of educator evaluation data specific to performance ratings on standards.

The varying levels of evaluation implementation among districts is a key item. Race to the Top (RTTT) districts, non-RTTT districts, districts who adopted, adapted or revised are all noteworthy in that ESE will not have a comprehensive, state-wide set of information for a minimum of two years. It is well known that some districts have not even begun contract negotiations related to evaluations with their unions.

In addition, the evaluation method, by itself, permits variance between districts due to value systems and emphasis of standards at the local level. The skill sets of our principals and other evaluators is not yet consistent among schools due to the very nature of the many components of the system and the intricacies involving rubrics and appropriate evidence. Time will improve those skills as we continue developing evaluation strategies, professional development and guidelines.

Further, the process of evaluations is an important part of building honesty, trust and integrity amongst our staff. Evaluations should be a progression of engaging, thoughtful conversation centered around the growth and development of educators at all levels. It is not a process of comparing staff within and between schools or across districts for the sake of making data available to the public because of legislative or statutory regulations. As the report indicated, reporting the ratings would emphasize the distribution of educators across levels rather than promoting growth and development of educators. Evaluation results and ratings should be framed to encourage development and discourage comparisons.

M.A.S.S. recognizes that transparency of education data has become –and will continue to be– an important tool in disseminating best practices, education models and promoting our achievements and progress. Our recommendation is that ESE not release standard-specific data until all districts have reported such data or until ESE receives a public, legislative or research request for the data. Should such data be requested of ESE, it is the position of M.A.S.S. that ESE present and discuss the information to the Executive Board of M.A.S.S. prior to public release of the data.

Sincerely,

Mary Czajkowski, Ed.  
Superintendent, Barnstable Public Schools  
M.A.S.S. President-Elect