

Teacher Professional Growth Continuum

Teachers and administrators in schools are talking about the new state mandate for the teacher performance evaluations. Teacher education program faculty are talking about the TPAC performance assessment for new teachers. Those involved with National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) are talking about the continuation of teachers seeking the highest level of certification and in schools participating in *Take One!* What many people are not talking about is how all of these assessments and evaluations fit in the continuum for teacher growth and how this continuum builds on high quality professional development. The graphic titled, “Teacher Professional Growth Continuum,” and this document attempt to explain how each stage of assessment/evaluation of teachers build to the highest level of performance.

Importance of NBPTS in the Continuum

The NBPTS process is more important than ever in the context of federal mandates and the Illinois Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA)—Public Act 096-0861). This law was enacted in 2010 to establish guidelines for the development and implementation of a performance evaluation system for teachers and principals. Also teacher candidates in Illinois will be required by 2015 to reach the cut score of the Teacher Performance Assessment Consortia (TPAC) upon completing pre-service requirements. Both the TPAC and teacher performance evaluations fit on a continuum toward NBPTS certification.

Timeline

Each of these stages evolved since the 1990’s. The NBPTS standards and National Board Certification (NBC) came first in the 1990’s, followed by the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards, Charlotte Danielson’s framework, and the development and revision of the Illinois Teaching Professional Standards. TPAC and Illinois’ PERA’s teacher performance evaluations are being developed, piloted, and implemented over the next few years.

Continuum

All of these stages of development, standards, and assessments/evaluations are aligned within the continuum for teacher growth. In the past, NBPTS certification was the only performance evaluation for teachers. Now, teachers will have the opportunity to participate in performance assessments and evaluations throughout their careers for continued growth toward the highest levels. TPAC and the NBPTS process are the bookend evidence-based teacher performance assessments from novice teachers to accomplished teachers. Teachers will participate in performance evaluations throughout their careers. By completing the NBPTS *Take One!* and the NBPTS certification process, teachers will learn how to prepare and show evidence and analyze and reflect on their performance to impact student learning. This supports their learning and performance in their evaluations and offers opportunities to continue to learn and reach for the highest level of teaching and student learning. The NBPTS certification process is more important than ever in Illinois.

Alignment

TPAC, *Take One!*, and teacher performance evaluations are being designed with principles and processes forming a continuum toward the first teaching performance assessment and the most rigorous and highest level of performance assessment for teachers, National Board Certification process—

- Collection of evidence through artifacts and written or oral commentaries.
- Videotape and/or observation of lessons.
- Collection and analysis of student work/assessment over time.
- Analysis of student learning based on teaching decisions for instructional context, goals, planning, and instruction.
- Reflection on effectiveness of teaching decisions on student learning.
- Evidence of key concepts in a four-leveled rubric for teaching.
- Alignment to Charlotte Danielson’s domains, Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, and NBPTS process: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities.

TPAC

By 2015, all new teachers from Illinois teacher education programs will be required to meet the cut score of the Teacher Performance Assessment Consortium (TPAC). Based on the Charlotte Danielson framework and new teacher standards, pre-service teachers will submit artifacts including videotapes and student work and commentaries to describe plans and practice and analyze the effectiveness of teaching decisions to impact student learning. TPAC was developed from the NBPTS process, Charlotte Danielson's Framework, and new teacher standards.

NBPTS *Take One!*

Take One! is a voluntary experience that engages teachers in completing one NBPTS pre-selected portfolio entry in which participants show evidence of how they meet the NBPTS high standards of teaching in knowledge of their students, setting student learning goals, selecting appropriate instruction, evaluating student learning in light of the goals and instruction, and reflecting on the effectiveness of their teaching decisions to impact student learning. Teachers submit a videotape and a written commentary in which they describe, analyze, and reflect on their performance and student learning.

Teacher Performance Evaluations

The Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) states on their website that "Under the provisions of PERA Public Act 096-0861), state law requires school districts to create and implement performance evaluation systems within five years to measure teachers' skills while factoring in student academic growth... The new more objective systems will clearly define professional excellence, using observation and evidence to rate teachers." Like TPAC, NBPTS *Take One*, and the NBPTS process, the Illinois Teacher Performance Evaluation will

- Center on student learning.
- Align with district and school goals.
- Inform professional development.
- Focus on school & student improvement.
- Include both formative and summative measures.
- Include self-assessment and reflection.
- Add value to teacher's professional life.
- Be flexible and context-sensitive.
- Include a four level rubric

PEAC identified common themes from the legislation: equity, cultural sensitivity, high expectation, developmental appropriateness, accommodating individual needs, and appropriate use of technology. These themes align with the NBPTS standards and key concepts in the rubrics for the portfolio entries for both NBPTS *Take One!* and the NBPTS process.

NBPTS Certification

The NBPTS process is a voluntary rigorous standards-based assessment of a teacher showing evidence of meeting the high NBPTS standards through four portfolio entries and six scenario-based prompts at an assessment center. Teachers have the opportunity to submit videotapes, student work, artifacts, and documentation with a written commentary that describes, analyzes, and reflects on how their decisions improve student learning and ways of learning. Teachers show how they are (a) committed to their student learning through continuous analysis of student progress; (b) knowledgeable about the subjects they teach and how to teach them; (c) are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning; (d) systematically reflect on the effectiveness of their practice and learn from experience; and members of learning communities. Scorers assess the portfolio entries and assessment center exercises using a four level rubric. Of all the assessments/evaluations in the "The Teacher Professional Growth Continuum," the NBPTS process is the most rigorous experience. Teachers who complete the process say they spent at least 400 hours outside of the classroom working on their portfolios and preparing for the assessment center. Many NBCTs state that "NBPTS was the best professional development experience I have ever had."