



# STERLING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Where kids achieve!



## ST. LOUIS CARDINALS

Where we achieved, again!

**TO: STAFF**

**FROM: TAD EVERETT, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

**DATE: THURSDAY NOVEMBER 17, 2011**

**RE: SUPERINTENDENT NOTES**

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Other than be an obnoxious sore winner, the focus of today's Superintendent's Notes is a legislative update and input from staff regarding first quarter's Q & A meetings.

### Senate Bill 7 and PERA Summary

As I discussed at this past week's Labor Management Council meeting and the Board of Education meeting, the effects of Senate Bill 7 are in full swing. In order to help SPS staff better understand the complexity of this new law, I have composed the attached document that summarizes the key issues surrounding Senate Bill 7 and PERA. Whether it is via this summary document or other legislative resources, I strongly urge you to become educated about these two new important educational acts. As I have stated before, they will change RIF and our evaluation process as we currently know it.

### Q & A Follow-up

During the recent District Office's Q & A I shared the results of the Board of Education's Retreat conversation. This included a document showing those items or programs that our Board categorized as either "great, good, or needs improvement." As I communicated at those Q & A meetings, the Board and I desired staff feedback on this Board Retreat exercise. I want to thank those staff members who took the time to add comments and questions.

This past week I shared those comments and questions with members of the Labor Management Council. After discussion it was agreed that there may be staff members who desire to provide input on what they see as items and topics in our District that are "great, good, and needs improvement." To facilitate this communication, five forms will be placed in each building in an area agreed upon by the Principal and

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LMC Reps. The intent is to give staff one more opportunity for input into this important topic. These forms will be placed in buildings until the end of the day Tuesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Happy Thanksgiving**

It is hard to believe that we are almost to Thanksgiving Break. I hope that each staff member has a peaceful and restful holiday and has the opportunity to enjoy quality time with family and friends.

As always, please feel free to email me any questions or comments you may have regarding today's SN, or any other topic for that matter.

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**Sterling Public Schools Presents Information About:**  
**The Educational Reform Act (“SB7”)**  
**The Performance Evaluation Reform Act (“PERA”)**  
**The Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (“PEAC”)**



----- **SB7** -----

Illinois Senate Bill 7 is an education reform measure enacted in June 2011 (Public Act 97-0008). Generally, the Act requires the District to consider performance evaluation ratings when making decisions about granting teachers’ tenure and reducing its teaching staff. SB7 also requires schools to consider certain qualifications, including performance evaluation ratings, if available, when filling new or vacant teaching positions. Additionally, SB7 streamlines the procedures for a tenured teacher dismissal, establishes a Survey of Learning Conditions, requires School Board Member Leadership training and modifies some of the existing contract mediation, impasse and strike procedures. SB7 follows the state’s enactment of the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) in 2010 and is intended to align with the state’s goal of linking teaching performance to important employment decisions.

*SB7 Joint Committee on Honorable Dismissals*

SB7 requires a Joint Committee comprised of an equal number of district representatives and teacher union members to meet to consider possible modifications to performance grouping criteria as it relates to the sequence of dismissal to be followed if the Board decides to decrease the number of teachers or discontinue some particular type of teaching service.

*When must the SB7 Joint Committee on Honorable Dismissals be established?*

The SB7 Joint Committee must be established and the first meeting must occur on or before December 1, 2011. The Joint Committee must reach agreement on a matter on or before February 1<sup>st</sup> of a school year if the agreement will apply to the sequence of dismissal for that school year.

----- **PERA** -----

The Performance Evaluation Reform Act, or PERA, was signed into law by Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn in January 2010. PERA establishes how teachers’ and principals’ performance is measured and requires performance evaluation plans to be based both on professional competencies and student growth as a significant performance factor. PERA also establishes evaluator training requirements. Under PERA, the work of teachers and principals must be rated in one of four categories:

- Excellent
- Proficient
- Needs Improvement
- Unsatisfactory

### What's the rationale of PERA?

According to the Illinois State Board of Education, the rationale behind PERA is to support Illinois educators with new evaluation systems that will help teachers and principals help their students. ISBE's website states, "Illinois students deserve an excellent education. And Illinois educators deserve more objective reviews, better feedback, and greater support aligned to their students' needs. That's why Illinois educators are creating more effective evaluation tools, which will provide teachers and principals a clearer picture of what's happening in their classrooms and schools, while expanding opportunities for professional growth. These new evaluation models are part of the state's long-term commitment to outstanding public schools."

IL Governor Quinn also has commented on the change in evaluation systems, mentioning it was brought on by research that showed current evaluation systems didn't accurately or objectively measure how educators were doing, or identify their strengths and areas for growth. Moreover, most current evaluations do not formally connect student growth measures with educator performance. The new evaluation systems will combine multiple measures of student growth and professional practice. They will also provide clear descriptions of professional excellence so everyone understands what great teaching and school leadership mean. The evaluations will be based on standards of effective teaching, with evaluators trained and pre-qualified to conduct observations, collect evidence, and provide helpful feedback in a timely way.

### When will the new teacher evaluation systems be implemented?

The teacher practice requirements must be implemented by September 1, 2012. The student growth requirements will be phased-in via a multi-year process:

- (2012-2013) Chicago and select schools in eight other school districts will begin using their new systems.
- (2013-2016) Implementation for remaining school districts will occur beginning in 2013, with all districts required to consider student growth as a significant factor in teacher performance evaluation ratings by September 1, 2016.

### What about principal's evaluations, are they different?

Principals will be evaluated based both on the professional competencies and student growth as a significant factor beginning with the 2012-2013 school year. Local school administrators and boards of education may establish their own student growth indicators and measures or choose to use the state's "default model." The intent is to ensure that locally developed systems are not a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach dictated by the state.

### PERA Joint Committee on Student Growth

PERA requires the District to establish a Joint Committee comprised of equal district representatives and teacher union members for the purpose of incorporating the use of data and indicators of student growth as a significant factor in rating teacher performance into the District's evaluation plan.

### When must the PERA Joint Committee on Student Growth be established?

There is no specific date by which the PERA Joint Committee must meet. However, an evaluation plan including student growth as a significant factor in rating teacher performance must be in place by no later than September 1, 2016. Additionally, once the PERA Joint Committee holds its first meeting, it has 180 calendar days to work toward reaching agreement on the new evaluation plan. Otherwise, the District must implement the state's model evaluation plan at least with respect to the use of data and indicators on student growth as a significant factor in rating teacher performance.

## ----- PEAC -----

PERA established the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council, or PEAC. It is a special advisory group appointed by ISBE, including 32 teachers, administrators, and stakeholder and union leaders. Their primary role is to make recommendations to ISBE later this year in two major areas:

- The minimum components to be included by districts developing their own teacher and principal evaluation systems
- The state model for teacher and principal evaluation systems

Based on PEAC's recommendations, the state board will propose administrative rules later this year, with the expectation of having final rules by spring 2012.