Boston Teacher Evaluations

After contract negotiations on the issue of teacher evaluations stalled in 2012, both parties agreed to implement the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's model contract language for teacher evaluations. This model brought about several key changes by allowing the BPS to conduct progressive evaluations driven by teachers' collaboration with evaluators as opposed to the past system, which was viewed as less constructive. This model is an improvement because this cycle is focused on retaining effective teachers, supporting the growth of all teachers, and exiting ineffective teachers who do not improve with support. By moving from a two-point "satisfactory"/" unsatisfactory" system to a four point scale, it allows for greater differentiation of teachers based on their demonstrated effectiveness.

In the new process, teachers start each five-part evaluation cycle with a Self Assessment, and then meet with their evaluators to develop goals and a growth plan. Teachers receive continuous interim observations, feedback, and opportunities for development. At the end of a plan, a Summative Evaluation is issued, including a rating based on multiple measures outlined in a clear rating schedule. Higher-rated teachers can be placed on longer, more independent plans, while teachers who need more help are placed on shorter, guided plans. Teachers with the weakest performance may be given plans with a minimum length of 30 calendar days, and at the plan's end may be terminated if they fail to improve.

Online Web-based Portal - Due to the complexity of the model with its multiple procedural steps, the BPS developed a web application for the evaluation process which tracks evaluation steps for each teacher and then assists evaluators in meeting timelines. The web application also helps BPS administrators and in monitoring evaluations and targeting professional development. Teachers are able to track their own evaluations and identify available position within their certification area.