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## **New plan calls on Gov. Snyder, Legislature to implement sweeping reforms to Michigan's educator evaluation system**

*Evaluations expected to improve classroom instruction for state's 1.5 million K-12 students*

LANSING – For the first time, Michigan would have a system for providing meaningful and targeted feedback to all educators in the state under a sweeping new evaluation proposal submitted to Gov. Snyder, the legislature, and the State Board of Education today by the Michigan Council for Educator Effectiveness (MCEE).

The council – an independent commission of education experts created by Snyder and the legislature as part of the state's 2011 teacher tenure reform efforts – worked for the past 18 months to produce educator evaluation recommendations that would mark a major shift for Michigan's public and charter schools.

Hearings could be held as early as this summer to review the MCEE report and study potential costs, according to state Sen. Phil Pavlov (R-St. Clair Township), who chairs the Senate Education Committee. The new evaluation system, if approved by the legislature, would require all Michigan schools to have an educator evaluation system in place by 2015-16.

“Our recommendations reflect the council's commitment to Michigan's teachers and administrators as they work to develop their professional practice and advance children's learning,” said MCEE Chair Deborah Loewenberg Ball, the dean of the University of Michigan School of Education.

The recommended statewide educator evaluation model would provide much better and consistent feedback to educators about their classroom practice, Ball said. The goal of the system is to support educators in their efforts to improve students' learning. Since 2009, at least 36 states and the District of Columbia have altered their teacher evaluation systems, including increasing the number of times teachers are observed or tying teacher ratings to student achievement.

Until now, Michigan school leaders have had little objective information about educators' effectiveness. In 2012, the nonpartisan Center for Michigan polled Michigan residents and found that 69 percent of people believe it is important or crucial to hold educators more accountable for student learning outcomes.

“Every child in Michigan deserves skillful teachers, not just some of the time but each and every year,” Ball said. “And every teacher deserves the opportunity to develop and continue to refine his or her professional skill – to receive targeted feedback and professional learning opportunities to improve instruction. We believe a fair, transparent, and rigorous teacher evaluation system can help transform the culture of the teaching profession and benefit the state's 1.5 million schoolchildren.”

Michigan's new system would base half of teacher evaluations on classroom practice and the other half on student growth as determined by scores on standardized tests, student learning objectives, and other locally determined measures. Historically, Michigan's educator evaluation standards have not measured student growth.

“An improvement-focused system of educator evaluation will contribute to enhanced instruction, improve student achievement, and support ongoing professional learning,” Ball said. “The council believes its recommendations will result in the best possible outcomes for students, educators, and, ultimately, for Michigan.”

Under the MCEE plan, teachers and school administrators – including superintendents, principals, and assistant principals – would be rated “professional,” “provisional,” or “ineffective.” The evaluations would give personalized feedback and evaluators would provide guidance for improvement. Classroom evaluators would be trained through a consistent statewide program. Teachers and administrators rated ineffective for two consecutive years would face dismissal from their positions.

“One goal of the evaluation system is to identify weak or underperforming educators and provide them with targeted learning opportunities to improve their skills. But the real power of the system will lie in its potential to contribute to continuous improvement of practice by all of Michigan’s educators, even those earning a professional rating,” Ball said. The MCEE’s recommendations are “oriented to student learning and instructional improvement, not building a system that is punitive,” she added.

MCEE has proposed that the state use a competitive RFP process to select one of four piloted teacher observation tools and one of two administrator evaluation tools. Public school districts and charter schools would not be mandated to use the state-selected tools.

Public school districts and charter schools could choose to use one of the other piloted teacher observation tools or the other recommended administrator evaluation tool. However, they would have to pay for any expenses above the base cost supplied by the state, including the costs of technical support, training, and data management. Districts that wish to develop their own tools or use tools that are not included in the MCEE’s recommendations would have to seek a waiver to ensure that their evaluation measures comply with state-level quality standards.

Some Michigan school districts and charters have already begun implementing evaluation systems for teachers and administrators as allowed by a 2011 state law. Others have waited for the MCEE to complete its work in order to review the report and determine how to move forward pending state legislative approval.

MCEE’s recommendations call for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years to be a two-year phase-in period for implementation of the statewide model. The MCEE plan is for all Michigan school districts and charter schools to have evaluation systems become fully operational and aligned with the state system by the 2015-16 school year.

Unlike states such as Colorado and Indiana, Michigan would not tie teacher compensation to evaluations under the MCEE plan. There is insufficient evidence to support pay for performance programs at this time, according to Ball. The MCEE also said individual educator ratings should not be subject to the state’s open records law and must be treated as confidential personnel information.

The MCEE has five voting members: Ball; Mark Reckase, professor, Michigan State University College of Education; Nicholas Sheltrown, director of measurement, research, and accountability, National Heritage Academies in Grand Rapids; David Vensel, principal, Jefferson High School in Monroe; and Jennifer Hammond, principal, Grand Blanc High School. Joseph Martineau, the Michigan Department of Education’s deputy superintendent for accountability services, serves on the MCEE without a vote and is the designee of the superintendent of public instruction.

The MCEE report reflects input from a broad range of groups, including advocates for parents, students, teachers, administrators, and school boards, as well as business and civic organizations. In addition, MCEE used the findings from 13 school districts selected from among more than 70 that applied to participate in the state’s \$6 million pilot program to address technical, logistical, and financial issues before recommending a statewide system. The pilot initiative also served to assure key stakeholders that the system was tested before enactment.

“Michigan has an opportunity to build a system that supports improvement throughout our schools,” Ball said. “An emphasis on improvement of practice will position the state as a leader in the national effort to provide quality teaching and learning for all youth.”

*Visit the MCEE website for an in-depth look at the council’s work: [www.mcede.org](http://www.mcede.org)*

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