

Students have already seen additional testing to accommodate the need to measure student growth for the OTES. The challenge for measuring student growth is that there is not a single student assessment that can be used for all teachers. Data from the state Ohio Achievement Assessments will be used when available. Next year, some student growth measures for teacher evaluations will be generated from the new PARCC testing system. For subjects where traditional assessments are not an option (such as music or art), local education agencies will establish their own assessments to measure student progress. As a result, students will be tested more next year than any other time in Ohio's educational history. Principals and other administrators who become credentialed OTES evaluators will need to devote a considerable amount of time to completing the evaluation process. The Buckeye Association of School Administrators is estimating an average of six to seven hours to evaluate a single teacher. Small local schools estimate between 5 and 7 weeks of their principals' job responsibilities over the course of a school year are now fully dedicated to implementing the state required teacher evaluation system.

Why is the state making this change?

A variety of state and federal mandates and policies are behind these changes in our community and state. In 2009, House Bill 1 directed the state's Educator Standards Board to develop a new and "improved" way to evaluate Ohio's teachers. The 2011 state budget required Ohio's Board of Education to approve an evaluation system outline by the end of 2011, with a requirement that at least 50 percent of a teacher's evaluation must be based on students' academic growth. Changes to teacher (and principal) evaluation systems were also part of the reason Ohio received a \$400 million federal Race-to-the-Top grant. Ohio also had to commit to changes in its teacher evaluation system in order to get a waiver from the federal government for some parts of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

Our state has seen an unprecedented number of changes to educational practices recently, including new and increased testing for our students, a new local report card, and a new teacher and principal evaluation system. While so much change can be difficult to process, I am committed to working with you and with the dedicated teachers in our local schools to meet these challenges. While we may be making changes to the way we evaluate our teachers, the passion and dedication the teachers in our district bring to the classroom remains the same. Together, we remain committed to providing the students in our community with the tools they need to succeed. I look forward to supporting our teachers as we meet this latest challenge together.

Sincerely,

Dr. Suzanne Darmer, Superintendent