will we **inspire**

Understanding
Learning
Courage
Wisdom
Innovation
Enthusiasm
Wonder
Care
Creativity
Optimism
Hope
Imagination
Determination
Collaboration
Effort
Progress

...Greatness?

What kind of future will we create?

Never before has so much seemed possible. Indeed, Louisiana is on the verge of dramatically transforming K-12 public education, largely due to the determination of educators and policy makers to reform and improve ineffective policies, programs and practices.

Fundamental to our progress is our belief that all children can learn and deserve to reach their full potential. But to ensure our next generation has the necessary knowledge and skills to thrive as complex thinkers, productive workers and informed and engaged citizens, we must support improvement at every level. We must challenge ourselves and each other to reinvent and refine our abilities and our efforts.

Will we rise to the challenge?

The reality is that despite our achievement nearly one-third of Louisiana's students are still below grade level, and one-third of our students fail to earn a high school diploma in four years. If we are going to improve student outcomes, we must begin by acknowledging that these shortfalls in no way represent our intent or our effort. Instead, what the education community has largely lacked is relevant and meaningful information to guide and inform systemic, district, school and individual improvement.

Since the state launched its accountability system in 1999, education leaders have asked that performance scores measure what schools add to student learning and that these calculations consider previous outcomes and relevant factors. Now, through the adoption of Act 54, educators will have the opportunity to engage in the development, implementation and revision of new performance models that are designed to provide teachers, administrators and policy makers with a constructive analysis of their impact on student achievement.

Even more importantly, those who influence student achievement through their work and leadership will have information to improve and be the best they can be, as they strive to meet the needs of their students.

Will we collaborate to formulate effective solutions?

Critical to the success of Act 54 is the involvement of educators and other groups as each component of the law is considered, applied and perfected. Over the next 18 months, through grassroots initiatives, focus groups, and technical advisory committees, officials with the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) will partner with other organizations to aggressively solicit ideas and feedback from teachers, administrators, parents, students, communities and others across the state. The Department will also study best practices and rely on technical support from national experts throughout the process.

Further, the new statute will be phased in over a two year period, thereby allowing for several models of each component to be tested, critiqued and adjusted in order to achieve the most effective design and implementation plan.

Can we see beyond today?

Enacted by lawmakers in 2010, Act 54 requires performance at every level of K-12 public education to be based on student growth. Unlike existing measurements that represent current achievement levels, Act 54 calls for performance measures to take into account starting points and other variables that might influence actual performance outcomes.

For example, in the case of teacher evaluations, Louisiana's highly praised value-added model recognizes that not all students begin the school year at the same level. Instead of examining a teacher's impact solely on the basis of end-of-year test scores, this method assesses the change in the achievement level of a teacher's students from the end of one school year to the next.

While much attention has focused on educator evaluations, the new statute also calls on the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to adopt and utilize value-added measurements to assess the performance of schools, school districts, the state as a whole, and even LDOE's leadership team. The Accountability Commission, appointed by BESE, is currently considering how to incorporate value-added data into school, district and state performance scores and is expected to make a recommendation to BESE in the spring of 2011.

A statewide advisory panel, composed of teachers, principals, parents, legislators, and representatives of education organizations, the Advisory Committee on Educator Evaluation (ACEE), has been formed to guide the other components of Act 54, which focus on educator evaluations. As required by the law, half of ACEE's members are practicing teachers.

Will we embrace and endorse change?

Research shows the efficacy of teachers and school leaders is the most important school-related factor affecting student performance. Therefore, as we attempt to advance K-12 public education, our most powerful lever is supporting the capacity of administrators and teachers to improve student achievement. Yet the subjective evaluation system currently in place fails to provide teachers and administrators with pertinent and objective data to understand and improve their effectiveness.

With the passing of Act 54, 50 percent of every teacher's and principal's evaluation will center on the growth their students make over the course of the school year, beginning with the 2012-2013 school year. This measurement will be known as the Growth Outcomes Index, or GO-Index. The remaining 50 percent, the Site-Index, will be multi-dimensional and based on traditional evaluation techniques, such as classroom observations. Together, the GO-Index and Site-Index will provide teachers and administrators with a comprehensive, objective, fair and meaningful assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses and improve instruction for the benefit of students.

For example, teachers will be able to identify the subjects and classes where their students are making the most and the least progress. And these results can be used to develop tailored professional development plans, targeting specific areas and thus improving instruction.

Likewise, school management teams can use data to identify strengths and mitigate areas of weakness. For example, if a teacher is making exemplary progress, the school could create a professional learning community around this teacher's work, to share that teacher's approach with other teachers.

Whereas previous law required informal evaluations to be conducted annually and formal evaluations to be conducted every three years, Act 54 requires all educators to be formally evaluated annually.

Additionally, the new law calls on BESE to not only establish components of effectiveness, as previously required, but to now define measures of effectiveness and respective values. But specifically the law calls for the student growth component (GO-Index) to account for 50 percent of the evaluation model.

Will we build on our strengths and success?

Louisiana is recognized as a national leader in its use of value-added performance measures. Teachers and students in more than 75 schools are already benefitting from Louisiana's System for Teacher and Student Advancement (TAP™), which utilizes value-added data to guide professional development and improve teacher effectiveness. And since 2007, Louisiana has used value-added data to measure the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs by tying student growth measures to their teachers, and to the colleges and universities that trained those teachers.

The same value-added approach used to study the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs and educators participating in TAP™ can now be used to comply with Act 54, which mandates that the value-added method be used for teacher evaluations if statewide assessment data are available. Currently, about one-third of Louisiana's teachers provide instruction in grades and subjects currently tested, and therefore fall into this category.

Louisiana's value-added model for tested grades and subjects is currently being piloted in 20 districts. BESE will consider a recommendation to officially adopt the test model no sooner than spring 2011.

Will we be open-minded and forward-thinking as we deliberate our direction?

Of particular interest to almost two-thirds of Louisiana teachers whose students do not participate in statewide assessments is the development of a GO-Index to fairly evaluate their impact on student growth. After intense outreach with educators, LDOE will submit to ACEE a proposed framework, and, if necessary, multiple models for non-tested grades and subjects no sooner than spring 2011. ACEE will make a recommendation to BESE for a final decision by the state board no sooner than summer 2012.

Additionally, Act 54 directs BESE to use measures of student growth to evaluate the performance of principals and to develop standards for *ineffective* and *effective* principals. BESE will make a final decision on the GO-Index for principals no sooner than fall 2011, but again will rely heavily on input from the education community as this component of Act 54 is addressed.

Q and A

For more information, please visit **www.act54.org**.

1. How does Act 54 differ from previous law?

When fully implemented, Act 54 will require all educators to be formally evaluated annually; currently educators receive formal evaluations every three years and informal evaluations annually.

Act 54 requires *student academic growth* to count for 50% of educator evaluations; the remaining 50% will be based on traditional measures of effectiveness, such as observations and peer reviews; previous law did not require measures of student growth for teacher evaluations.

While previous law required BESE to define components of effectiveness, Act 54 calls on the state board to define measures of effectiveness and respective values.

Rather than relying primarily on test results as previous law outlined, Act 54 mandates the use of value-added data to determine school, district and state performance scores, taking into account actual student growth.

2. What is the timeline for implementation?

Act 54 will be phased in over two years, allowing for collaboration with educators and other groups and allowing several models of each component to be tested and adjusted, in order to achieve the most effective design.

3. Who will be included in the value-added assessment?

For a student's test scores to contribute to a value-added assessment of a teacher, the student must have a prior year of standardized test data; participate in LEAP, *i*LEAP or End-of-Course tests; must have been enrolled in that school from early fall until test time; and a teacher must agree the student was enrolled in his/her class. If a student was taught by two teachers during a school year, each teacher receives one-half of the score.

Based on these criteria, the state's value-assessment model is currently only applicable to teachers with students in grades 4-9, and results will only be available in core subjects.

4. How will the value-added assessment work?

The model uses each student's test scores in core subjects for up to three years and critical factors (e.g. eligibility for special education services, attendance, discipline history, and free and reduced meal status) to predict a student's level of achievement for the current year. The predicted achievement is compared to actual achievement. The results for all students in a teacher's assignment are combined for that teacher. If a teacher's students make more progress than expected, the teacher receives a positive result; teachers whose students make less progress receive a negative result. If students' results are consistent with their prior performance, that would be reflected as no change.

Teachers can verify their rosters and access their results through a designated portal. Principals and superintendents access results for their teachers through the same portal. Act 54 limits sharing of results to these individuals.

5. What happens if a teacher or principal is rated *ineffective*?

Local districts will maintain control over personnel decisions, including hiring and pay. Act 54 extends previous law by requiring educators that are rated *ineffective* to be provided with intense remediation to improve their performance. Unchanged from previous law is the requirement that local districts take disciplinary action when an educator is rated *ineffective* for two consecutive years.

Further, based on the new law, educators rated *ineffective* for three years during a recertification period will not be recertified by the state unless, an appeal is made by the local school board.

6. What about teachers of non-tested grades and subjects?

Based on feedback from educators and technical advisory groups, BESE, as provided by Act 54, will outline measures of student growth in grades and subjects not participating in statewide assessments.

Act 54 Component	Stakeholder Input	ACEE Action	BESE Decision/Action	Implementation
GO-Index Tested Grades & Subjects	› Teacher Focus Groups: Fall 2010 › Grassroots Outreach: Fall 2010 - Spring 2011	› ACEE Recommendations to BESE: No sooner than Spring 2011	› No sooner than Spring 2011	› 20 Pilot Districts: Fall 2010 › Statewide Pilot: Fall 2011-2012 › Statewide Deployment: 2012-2013
GO-Index Non-Tested Grades & Subjects	› Subject-Based Focus Groups: Fall 2010 - Winter 2011 › Grassroots Outreach: Fall 2010 - Spring 2011 › Technical Advisory Group: Fall 2010 - Spring 2011	› ACEE Recommendations to BESE: No sooner than Spring 2011	› No sooner than Summer 2012	› Pilot: Fall 2011 › Statewide Deployment: 2012-2013
Principal GO-Index	› Principal & Superintendent Focus Groups: Date TBD › Grassroots Outreach: Date TBD	› ACEE Recommendations to BESE: No sooner than Summer 2011	› No sooner than Fall 2011	› Pilot: Date TBD › Statewide Deployment: 2012-2013
Components & Weights of Effectiveness	› Strategy Focus Groups: Date TBD › Grassroots Outreach: Fall 2010 - Spring 2011	› ACEE Considers Standards: No sooner than Fall 2011	› No sooner than Fall 2011	› Statewide Deployment: 2012-2013
Value-Added Performance Scores	› Accountability Commission Projected Recommendation to BESE: No sooner than Spring 2011	› Not Applicable	› No sooner than Spring 2011	› Statewide Deployment: 2012-2013

Will we be more and achieve more than we ever imagined possible?

We have the ability to create the future we want for our children. But it's a future that requires us to move beyond our own cynicism, fear and pride. It's a future that calls on us to move forward not based on what we believe, but based on examinations of verifiable and valuable information. And it's a future that compels us to be humble, unbiased and selfless.

Each of us today has the choice and ability to contribute to the unlimited future of the next generation. Right now, one of the greatest engineering minds of the 21st century is sitting in Algebra I, an aspiring presidential hopeful is in the library searching for a book about Abraham Lincoln, and a future Pulitzer Prize novelist is texting his best friend about their plans this weekend. What will we teach them? Will they learn what they need to know to meet their destinies?

We must embrace these questions. And we must respond to the answers, making changes to improve whenever we can.

With the future of our children first and foremost at the heart of our work and our direction, we must resolve to be better than we ever imagined possible.

Please visit **act54.louisianaschools.net**.

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