



Early Views on Teacher Quality Committees

May 4, 2007

The passage of S.F. 277 provides a great opportunity for educators to provide input into important professional decisions. With that input it is hoped that the professional life of educators will be more meaningful and successful. With this opportunity comes responsibility.

Lessons of the past provide us with a sense of some mistakes to avoid. If we go back to the early days of Phase III where much of that joint effort was often spent fighting for power and control, we learned that our work is about more than control. It is about organizing the work and professional lives of educators so they are able to help more students be successful and learn.

We will have a variety of issues to consider and address. Previously we could just complain and often no one listened. Now, educators get to help decide more and have a formal role in addressing issues regarding Teacher Quality. That does not mean things will always go the way we want.

We all want to know what to do to respond effectively to this new law. History tells us no matter how much we anticipate, some issue will appear all of a sudden and others go away over time. With that, there are several things a local can do.

Inquire of Superintendent

The local president may decide to send a letter such as the draft included here to inquire about professional development plans already in place for 07-08. According to the Iowa Department of Education, Teacher Quality Professional Development funds can only be spent with the approval of the Teacher Quality Committee (explained later in this document), therefore if a district plans to use these funds for professional development at the beginning of the 07-08 school year, it is important that that the local association and administration discuss those plans prior to the end of the 06-07 school year. *If you decide to use the draft, be sure to remove generic references and personalize it to the local association, district or AEA, and superintendent.*

Once you have a reply from the Superintendent, local leaders can consider how to respond. One option is that locals may decide to agree to the spending of the Teacher Quality Professional Development funds for those already planned events for the beginning of the 07-08 school year. Plans for future professional development activities

for the 07-08 school year, may wait until the Teacher Quality Committee has been formed.

Teacher Quality Committee Guidelines

The Teacher Quality Committee provides an opportunity for educators to be partners in the profession with the district or AEA. The law requires that:

- Each district and AEA has a Teacher Quality Committee.
- The committee has equal representation of administrators and teachers.
- The teacher members are appointed by the local association.
- Compensation for teachers on the committee doing work beyond the contract day must be determined through the collective bargaining process.

As an alternative, the law allows the local association and administration to mutually agree to assign the responsibilities to an existing committee, appoint members of an existing committee to the Teacher Quality Committee, or authorize an existing committee to advise the committee.

Teacher Quality Committee Responsibilities

The Teacher Quality Committee must do all of the following:

- Monitor implementation of the entire student achievement and teacher quality program, including mentoring and induction.
- Monitor the evaluation procedures to ensure the procedures are conducted in a fair and consistent manner and develop model evidence.
- Determine the use and distribution of the Teacher Quality professional development funds based on the district or agency, attendance center and individual professional development plans. The committee must follow the Iowa Professional Development Model.
- Monitor professional development in the district or agency, for each attendance center, and individual professional development plans
- Make recommendations regarding the expenditure of market factor incentives.

It will take some time and study for ISEA to offer recommendations on how a Teacher Quality Committee might address these responsibilities. ISEA leadership is involved in discussions with the Iowa Department of Education and School Administrators of Iowa on how the three groups might provide support for Teacher Quality Committees.

ISEA will be developing additional materials for use by locals; leaders and interested members are encouraged to attend the ISEA Summer Conference July 31- August 2, 2007 for updates.

Appointing Members to the Teacher Quality Committee

While the law allows local associations and the administration to mutually agree to assign the Teacher Quality Responsibilities to another group, at this time it is not recommended.

Each local has a formal process as well as informal processes for making decisions such as who should represent the Association on the committee. Local leaders are urged to work together and weigh the various options. While the law does not go into effect until July 1, 2007, it may make sense to make decisions on committee members prior to the end of this school year.

Issues to Consider

1. Appoint members only
2. Make sure the committee is representative of members' needs and interests. (For example, a small local you may want to have three representatives, one for each level – elementary, middle school/junior high, and high school)
3. You will want to have representatives who bring various expertises to the committee: local association leadership, bargaining, grievance, and professional development (Building a Better Teaching and Learning Environment). You need some of each.
4. Don't make the committee too small or too large.

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