

FILE THREE

FEEDBACK ON COMMON EXAMS & ROSTER VERIFICATION (TEACHERS)

MS. PRESTON: We're going to do another quick sound check just to make sure that everyone can hear. If you can hear the sound of my voice, please raise your hand on your webinar dashboard. All right, perfect. Thanks, everybody. Looks like we are good to get started.

So we're going to start off today first with a couple of welcomes from some people who are here to bring greetings today. I'm first going to turn it over to Angela Farthing from the NC Association of Educators.

MS. FARTHING: Good afternoon, everyone. I'm so thankful that you are giving your time on a busy day to learn more about the issues facing you in your classrooms and to provide feedback to the Department of Public Instruction. On behalf of Rodney Ellis, your president of NCAE who could not be here today, I'm representing NCAE. I do want you to know that the Department of Public Instruction has been very collaborative and was very helpful in trying to make sure that the issues that we are faced with in all the new reforms have been worked out. I just want you to know that I'm glad you're here, and I look forward to your questions and the answers.

MS. PRESTON: Thank you so much, Angela. You're primarily going to be hearing from two folks today. My name is Jennifer Preston. I'm one of the Race to the Top project coordinators for Educator Effectiveness, and my colleague in the room who will also be asking some of the questions for today's webinar is Dr. Robin McCoy, who is the Race to the Top program administrator for Standards and Assessments.

There is another one of me whose name is also Jen, conveniently, Jennifer DeNeil, who is our second Race to the Top project coordinator for Educator Effectiveness, is also here and will be answering questions as you ask them about particular topics.

So first, just a couple of logistics before we dive in. For right now, all of the participants on the webinar

are muted just so that we don't have to deal with background noise or any difficulties of that nature. But this webinar is actually going to be different from most because we don't really have a set of information to share with you. What we want to do is hear from you about two topics: Common Exams and roster verification. There are two ways that we can have folks provide that feedback. We sometimes have technical problems with the first one, but if you are hooked up to a computer or are calling in and you would like to provide your feedback verbally, raise your hand on the dashboard and we can take you off mute. You can then talk into your computer or your phone, however you're connected.

What typically works a little bit better is for folks to provide written feedback. You can do that by typing into the questions bar. We'll read questions to the group so that what you say is shared just like if you were stating it over the phone, and either one of those two ways will work. We'll see how it goes with the technology cooperating.

All right, so I'm going to turn it over to Robin to get started for today. We already do have a question coming in, so we'll try and address that as we go. Robin will kick off by asking the first question.

DR. MCCOY: All right. Thank you for being with us. We're going to start by asking for your feedback regarding the roster verification process that we used last school year. We will be using your feedback as we refine the process for this year, so thank you again in advance for sharing with us.

First question, did you feel that you had sufficient guidance from your district or principals in the roster verification process, such as webinars, the webpage, and district communication? If you did not feel that you had enough support, what would have been helpful to you?

Again, if you can either raise your hand, we'll call on you, or people are already typing in the questions bar, so we'll also use that method.

MS. PRESTON: So we do have one person with their hand raised and that's Tracy Stevens. Tracy, I'm going to take you off mute and then we'll see if we can hear you. I'm not sure if you're connected with phone or -- Tracy has taken her hand down now, but has also typed something in, so --

DR. MCCOY: All right. The question that was typed in is, "First-year teacher --."

MS. PRESTON: Tracy, you typed in first-year-teacher, so we are thinking that it wasn't clear to a first-year teacher or that there was a question specifically for a first-year teacher.

MS. DENEAL: If you'll provide clarification, we'll go ahead to the next comment.

DR. MCCOY: "Roster verification was not an issue here at Kings Mountain High School, Cleveland County Schools." Thank you.

The next comment says, "No training was provided. We got a random email with little instruction. Those who were supposed to be helping teachers were not adequately trained. It was a disaster."

"Instructions say not to deduct in the area of instructional availability due to student aptitude, but then we heard to deduct if a teacher is absent for more than 20 days. Which is it?"

All right, thank you. Let me go ahead and answer that one. The students' absences should not be reflected in roster verification in either column. The students' enrollment is what we go by - their membership - and we do not indicate anything about their absences. For teachers, unless a teacher is away from students for a significant period of time, and we are saying 20 days or more, then they would not reflect absences either. We are providing you with up-to-date guidelines, which should be out very soon that will make sure that is clarified and how to enter the information about the teacher.

A comment here is that, "Clear trainers -- clear that our trainers didn't even watch the DPI webinars."

"Not sufficient guidance. We were told exactly what to write and told to sign it. There was no training and our AP, who was in charge, could not answer our questions."

So we're getting several here that indicate we need to do some work with our districts in making sure they have the needed information for you.

Another comment, "Teachers were a bit resentful due to the fact that the test only counted for the students if it helped them, but it definitely counted for the teachers. The students got word, and as you would expect, did not perform their best in a lot of cases."

MS. PRESTON: That's something that the State Board is going to be addressing at their meeting next month, which is actually only a couple of weeks away at this point. How to count the Common Exams for students is something that districts were given flexibility around, but due to comments like that, which we've heard from across the state, the State Board is going to require that the exams count in the final grade for high school students and that it count at a set percentage across the state. They'll be having discussion about exactly what percentage that is, but the percentage they select would be in place for all school districts.

DR. MCCOY: Another comment, "Some confusion about directions, but questions were answered quickly by district coordinators. As a principal, there were some questions that I was not sure how to answer, particularly about attendance of the teacher and some split classes."

Question, "What if the teacher absences are random and frequent?" To answer that question, even if a teacher's absences are random, in other words, not 20 days in a row, we do not want you to include those in either column, in either the availability or the responsibility.

Another comment was, "This is my first year teaching. What is the roster verification process?" All right. Roster verification is a process wherein a teacher verifies their students in their specific classes, and you will get direction from your principal and from the Department of Public Instruction and your district as to how to complete this process. It relates to the success of your students in their courses that have EOGs, EOCs, Common Exams, or CTE exams. And it's used to populate your Standard 6 on your teacher evaluation.

"It would be nice if there was a phone help desk for technical issues. The online contact-us link is not timely or efficient."

All right. There seem to be plenty of questions and feedback from that first question. Let's move on to, "Did you understand the purpose of the roster verification process?" We know that the first-year teacher is not aware of it yet, but let's see what other folks have to say about that.

This comment says, "Co-teaching percentage was a big problem. Couldn't claim regular-ed kids if was an EC teacher. Will this change this year?" Yes, we are working with our Exceptional Children's department here at the Department of Public Instruction to make sure we're all looking at this in a similar fashion and we're creating scenarios that we will send out to you that will help you and provide guidance to you as you complete that section.

All right. Let's move on to the next question. "Did you find the software easy to navigate? And if not, what types of problems did you encounter?" And by "software," we mean the roster verification process through SAS.

Comment, "I understand the State Board told systems not to use last year's test scores and evaluations because of the roster verification problem, but my county did."

MS. PRESTON: That would be something we'd need to ask several follow-up questions about, so if that individual wouldn't mind getting in touch with us maybe after the webinar. We'll have an email address up at the end. We'll probably have to have a discussion about that that would be better done via email and for a phone call and not necessarily on the line today.

DR. MCCOY: This comment, "I don't remember any issues."

Someone said, "Yes, it was easy to navigate."

And we'll move on to the next question. "Did you find the timeline to complete the process reasonable? If not, do you have suggestions?"

Comment, "The timeline was reasonable."

Another comment, "My school district is also using the data even though they know that it was unfair to the teachers as I mentioned before." So this is a continuation of that previous comment - please get in touch with us so that we can further discuss that with you.

MS. PRESTON: And another thing that we've mentioned once today is around some State Board of Education policy actions, specifically around the Common Exams. In October, the Board is also going to

be making some changes to the educator effectiveness model itself, and some of the questions that folks are asking today are really going to be answered by some policy revisions that they may be making. This webinar has been scheduled for quite a while, but I know Angela and I have already talked about having another webinar in early October to really bring teachers up to speed on what the Board does approve. Some of it will center on the three years of data - what years count, what years don't, and those are the kind of questions that are being asked today.

DR. MCCOY: All right, the next question on timeline -- oh, I mean the next comment. It says that -- this person says, "The timeline was not reasonable, that teachers need more training and time, especially when figuring in new students' percentiles."

Another comment that, "Yes, it was okay."

We are working to allow more time for teachers to complete the work.

Let's move on to the next question. "What situations did you encounter where it was not clear to you how to complete the instructional availability and/or instructional responsibility field?"

Comment, "I found the roster verification process fine. My concerns are the other issues."

There are no other comments -- wait, one more comment. "I agree with that last comment, roster verification wasn't an issue. It is others."

A comment, "Co-teaching and teacher absences, especially when school is (indiscernible) by school."

All right. "We are planning to have two roster verification windows this year, one after first semester and one at the end of the year. Do you feel this is a good idea?"

A comment, "That's fine," "That sounds fine."

"Yes, I like that idea," another comment.

Is there anyone who thinks that it would not be a good idea?

This comment says -- now, this was sent in before I asked that last question - so this is still about it being a good idea. It says, "Yes, because student information for first semester will be fresher in our minds."

And a high school principal says he would like to have two.

And another person says, "It's a great idea."

We'll have an opportunity at the very end if you have additional thoughts that come to you about roster verification that you'd like to share with us. Right now, we'll transition to asking for your feedback on Common Exams. The first question we'd like to you is "should the Common Exams have constructed response items, or should they include only multiple-choice items? And if you have a feeling one way or the other, we'd love to hear an explanation of your opinion as well.

We're not seeing any comments. Does anyone have a feeling? Let's see; here we go. This is a comment, "They should only include multiple choice. First, constructed-response questions are security risks because students tell each other the question and answer."

A comment, "I like the constructed response items, but it is the grading of it that was time-consuming. It would be appropriate for an outside source to grade them. It would be more effective."

Another comment, "There should certainly be constructed response items as one of the tenets of new schools is the writing component."

Comment, "If there are constructed response, they should be scored by DPI."

Another comment, "The constructed response items were too many and too lengthy for students to respond well. They either need to be shortened or the time lengthened."

Comment, "Perhaps the grading process could be altered a little."

Comment, "Yes to constructed response, but need to be concept-based and not little things. We need to get these kids writing. EOCs killed writing skills."

"There has been a lot of effort put into working with teachers and students to increase the rigor of testing and how to use constructed response. I would be disappointed if we went back to just multiple choice."

Comment, "Second, since we're paying SAS the millions we are, they should step up and grade them rather than use us as graders."

"The constructed response questions that I saw were not very good. We had a lot of concerns. If the questions were better, I'd feel better about it."

"Agreed with having DPI score. More time should be given."

"The students did not have enough time to finish the test, especially with the constructed response."

"I thought one of our constructed response questions lacked validity, by the way. I hope the rest of the MSL was more valid."

"Everyone should see the YouTube video 'I Choose C.' You would then know that constructed responses are necessary."

"They need to be written like AP response. Limit the verbs in each question."

MS. PRESTON: One thing I would add to the discussion, since it's obvious there are some people who have really strong opinions, is to make sure that you share those opinions with other folks, with your principal if you're a teacher, and with your central office. Right now, the State is pretty evenly split, at least among the superintendents. Seems like 50 percent of them really want to keep constructed response items and 50 percent of them would really prefer to go back to multiple-choice items. That's ultimately a decision the Board will make. What we always encourage you to do if you feel strongly and your background and experience with doing constructed response makes you feel one way or the other, just make sure that that is getting to folks so that they know that when they're representing to the State Board what the right way to move forward would be.

DR. MCCOY: Comment, "I understand the grading took a lot of time, but it was good for our local teachers to see student responses and reflect on their own grading practices, and it actually brought some of the curriculum areas together on standards and rigor."

"There was also a lack of practice materials for constructed response last year prior to the Common Exam, so teachers didn't know what to expect in terms of a question's content. I know in our county, we were surprised at the rigor of the questions in comparison to the practice materials we were given. Will

DPI be providing more practice materials this year?"

MS. PRESTON: Sometime in the very near future, we will be releasing the Common Exams from last year. We may be holding back a couple of items because we're going to look more toward doing embedded field testing so that we can kind of link the Common Exams from year to year. You can only do that when you have one year under your belt with an assessment and now we can move forward. So you may see a couple of items here or there blacked out, but largely, the test will be released and you can see what was administered last year, as well as use those as sample questions with your students if you'd like.

MS. MCCOY: "As I said before, and I want to stress, the students talked about the constructed response questions and their answers. There's no way this can be considered secure and valid."

And someone else saying "true."

All right. Those seem to be the responses to that question. Thank you.

MS. FARTHING: I would like to address the issue about the confidentiality. I know that one of the issues that some LEAs faced was that they had numerous days of exams. They took more days having the exams than they did actually teaching. And I think if we go back to having less time taking the exams, that will help with the confidentiality issue.

And two of the issues that you all have brought up in the comments and questions were that the MSLs should count a percent statewide. That is an issue that we heard from across the state and then shared with the State Board and with DPI, and the issue of co-teaching. Robin worked with me last year because there were several locals that were doing it differently, and so those are two main issues that we heard loud and clear in May that we have been working on with DPI. And that's why I want you all to know that they are collaborating and working with us to fix these issues.

DR. MCCOY: A comment, "Why can't you give your own MSL? We give our own EOCs?"

MS. PRESTON: So that may be a local policy. The state policy last year was that you give your own

EOCs with a proctor. Proctors were required. State policy around the MSL was that a teacher could administer to his or her own students as long as they're with a proctor, or they could switch. So if Robin and I were in the same school, I could administer an assessment to Robin's students without a proctor, and Robin could administer to my students without a proctor, which is similar to how our CTE assessments go - if you're a high school person and know how that works in your school. Your district may have had additional requirements in place.

DR. MCCOY: All right. The question we have before us now that we'd like your feedback on is "if the constructed response items remain on the Common Exams, who should score them?" Some of you have already begun to share some information about that, but we'd like to hear from you. Who should score them?

Here's a comment, "DPI or outside unbiased source."

Someone saying "DPI."

"I like grading them because it allows me to see what students were thinking, but we are paying SAS millions out of our budget. Make them do it."

Another comment, "Hard to say. Don't want to waste more money, but don't want to waste more of teacher's time."

"My district put labels over the kids' name and ensured we didn't grade our own school. We graded other schools. It went well; however, there was not a difference between scoring a zero because the student didn't know the information versus they didn't have time to answer the question."

"Our teachers did not mind grading, but they did not like the rubric."

"My district gave early release days for two days for teachers to grade the assessments."

All right. We'll go on to the next question. "Should the Common Exams fit within a 90-minute administration window or should students have more time?"

We have a comment from the previous question. "Because of the connection with growth and teacher

accountability, it needs to be unbiased so that would make it DPI or an outside resource. I believe this would be of benefit if teachers graded, but some incentive for that would certainly help morale. Some concerns with the rubric between zero and one."

All right. Now back to this question. "Since all tests have to be given within the last five days, the time should align with EOCs."

Another comment, "More time. Again, we need to distinguish between a zero being that the student doesn't know the answer versus they didn't have time to answer."

"More time."

"The exams need to fit within a 90-minute window."

"Ninety minutes unless special accommodations are needed."

Another person that said "more time."

Comment, "Ninety minutes was not enough. It was not a good measure since some students did not even get time to start all the questions."

"If the test is a 90-minute window, then take away the number of questions students are expected to answer."

All right, we'll move on to the next question. "Should the Common Exams replace teacher-made final exams?"

MS. PRESTON: As folks start to type in their comments here, this is something that the State Board of Education will also be considering at their October meeting. In the vast majority of school districts, the Common Exams did replace teacher-made exams last year, but there were some places where they did not and students took two exams. The Board is considering a policy that would require them to replace teacher-made exams. So we're looking for feedback here so we can report to them on what we've heard from teachers.

DR. MCCOY: We have a comment that a person thought they already did replace them.

"No," another comment.

A comment, "Yes, they should."

Comment, "If they were well written, they weren't last year. Terrible."

"If they are made well, then I don't see why not; however, I observed several assessment items that were not my curriculum."

"If we are going to continue to give Common Exams, I think that also giving teacher-made exams is too much testing."

"It makes it a more even playing field for measurement."

"Of course they should. It is crazy to make the kids take a bunch of tests."

The comment, "Major revision to the questions and time elements should be made before these exams replace teacher-made exams."

"Yes, if they are fair with adequate time. The exams were not well made"

"Make sure that the questions test the curriculum (indiscernible)."

"How are people 'observing' the exam?" If you could provide clarification for us on that comment, I would appreciate it.

"Yes," another comment.

"I agree. If the test were well written, these tests should replace. I, however, saw too many questions on these exams that were not on my curriculum that I was scheduled to teach to my students."

"Yes, keep the constructed response."

"Somebody said they didn't think the MSLs covered their curriculum. How would they know?" That was the question from the writer.

All right. We will move to the next question. Should the Common Exams count in students' grades and should the weight be consistent across all school districts?

MS. PRESTON: Here, if you have any suggestions on what the weight should be, we'd be very

interested in hearing that along with an explanation of why you would support that weight. We've certainly heard things ranging from ten percent to 25 percent, 15, so any feedback you have on what would be the correct percent would be appreciated.

DR. MCCOY: Comment, "Yes, they should count in students' grades."

"Yes," another comment.

"If they are counted, then yes, consistency would be key. It should align with the same weight for EOCs."

"Yes, they should count in their grades. Why else would they take them seriously? If they have to take an exam, it needs to count."

"It should count 25 percent just like EOC. They're basically the same thing."

"It needs to count 25 percent. There needs to be accountability for them as there is for teachers."

"Yes, it should count as 25 percent as we have three six-weeks' grades, so 25 percent would be appropriate. This should only happen if revisions are made to the current exam."

Our next question, "did you encounter any problems with the content of the common exam? Did you report the problems to NCDPI?"

There were a couple more comments before we begin with this last question. "I believe the test should count in a student's grade. We counted the Common Exams the same as EOC: 25 percent."

"Yes, it should count at 20 percent after revisions have been made to the exam."

I think we're now back to this question. "However, Social Studies is different for Math or ELA. It doesn't build. Many concepts are isolated concepts. Asking kids to recall this information from 12 months prior, year round, is not fair to them. If counted, maybe giving a mid-year and end-of-year assessment would be more beneficial."

"How could we when teachers should not be looking at the content of the test?"

"Based on what I've heard, folks have seen and know the content. Can questions even be used for field-

testing in this case?"

Comment, "Told my district accountability person," which is the correct thing to do. Thank you.

"I reported the content problems to my district curriculum specialist, who said he relayed it to DPI."

"Yes, on the constructed response. We did report it to our local LEA."

"I wasn't able to review the content of my MSL. We didn't administer our MSLs in my county. People are making comments that they were able to review the MSL somehow. I'm lost. Am I missing something here?"

MS. PRESTON: So one way that teachers were definitely finding, and then perhaps reporting, content errors is in scoring. When you're scoring a constructed response item, you obviously have to be seeing the question in order to score. Some of the teachers that I heard from were reporting issues with the multiple-choice questions. They had discovered them when they did read-aloud for EC students. In literally going through and reading aloud every question, they had identified some issues that they wanted to report afterwards. Those are just two possibilities for how teachers may be reporting things.

DR. MCCOY: Comment, "Teachers had major concerns about the alignment of the exams to the grade-level curriculum."

"While administering the test, I had many kids concerned over the questions because they recognized they weren't seventh-grade Social Studies."

"Teachers of the MSL or EOC should not be doing read-alouds of their own MSL or EOC."

"I just reiterated for them to do their best."

Okay. That concludes the questions that we had for you, and we appreciate so much the feedback that you have provided. If you would like to ask any questions or provide any more feedback on either roster verification or the Common Exams, we would appreciate that as well.

A comment, "Do not read aloud. It seems that you are implying that teachers should be looking at the content of the assessments that they give and that would not perhaps be good."

MS. PRESTON: As Robin said, we did finish up a little bit early, but we are certainly happy to stay on the line to answer any other questions or get any other feedback. On the screen, there is the email address for the educator effectiveness account where you can always send any thoughts or questions you have after the webinar is over today, and then also our educator effectiveness website where you can find resources, though we're happy to answer other questions that come in.

DR. MCCOY: We have a question, "Is DPI going to decide whether last year's MSLs count for Standard 6?"

MS. PRESTON: This is one of the things that the State Board is going to be making some decisions about at their October meeting. At the last State Board meeting, a group of superintendents made a recommendation that, rather than using three years of data, as we roll out the new educator effectiveness system, we switch to using the best two of three years of data. So the answer to the question "do last year's MSLs count?" would really depend on how a teacher's growth score looked last year. If we think about the possibility for the three years being '12-13, '13-14 and '14-15, then if a teacher does well and exceeds expected growth, let's say, in '12-13 and '13-14, those would be the two years that count. For some teachers, their best two years may be the school year we're in and next school year. In that case, the '12-13 school year wouldn't count. So if the Board approves that policy moving forward, it would really depend on when your best two years were and that would answer the question on if the '12-13 school year counts or not.

MS. FARTHING: One of the services that I do provide for you all that are NCAE members is that I monitor the State Board of Education. After every meeting, I do prepare a report and it's on our website, the NCAE.org website, and it will be under "news." I did outline the changes that may take place that meeting in October.

DR. MCCOY: Comment, "We would need to remember that we are to be teaching the standards, not specific content."

Another comment, "I would love to know how the MSLs are helping increase student achievement."

MS. PRESTON: Sure. The chain of logic that we share with Angela and the NC Association for Educators and lots of other folks involved in this work is that the fastest and sure-fire way to achieve student achievement is by making sure that we have effective educators in all of our classrooms. Using the MSLs is one indicator of educator effectiveness – a way to take a look at whether teachers are growing their students or not. With their ratings on Standards 1 through 5, we have, what we think, is a complete picture of a teacher's effectiveness. It's not just about if they grow their kids, but it's also about if they lead in their classrooms and their schools, and if they create positive classroom environments for students. In looking at all of those things, we will be able to identify teachers in our state that are doing a fantastic job. We want to know who those folks are so we can help move them into school leadership positions, not necessarily being an administrator, but being department chair, the school improvement team chair, things like that.

We also need to know who our teachers are who are in need of some help. They need to get the help, but then ultimately if they don't want to get better or can't, we do have some tough decisions to make about how long we have teachers teaching students when the teachers just aren't getting the students to grow in the way they should or the teachers just aren't performing the professional practices that they need to in the way they should.

It is a growth model. We want everyone to be meeting expectations. That's what all the principals want, the Department wants, and the State Board wants. Ultimately, when it comes down to a teacher who doesn't really want and can't improve to meet those expectations, we have to think about what's going on for kids in that classroom.

DR. MCCOY: A comment, "We don't even get the results until well after our students are gone."

MS. PRESTON: That's true for all of our student assessments, and I think the response to that is it provides them information about how teachers in a larger sense are able to impact the learning of their

students. That's information that can be used as we think about professional development for teachers. There are also reports within the EVAAS system that you can use to look at what kinds of students are performing well and what kind of students are not. You can see that AIG learners in a particular classroom just aren't being challenged and aren't growing, or it could be that Exceptional Children aren't being challenged in the right way and are not growing. So, yes, the data do come back after the school year is over, but they still provide information about teaching practices that can help as a teacher looks to the next school year.

DR. MCCOY: And those timelines should improve as we move forward so that you get them sooner than you are this year.

"Since the scores are tied to our evaluations, it would be nice to be able to preview them to ensure for accuracy. I understand we don't want teachers teaching to the test, but it is not fair to the kids or to the teacher when they are asked questions that are not in the North Carolina ES for their grade level.

Another person saying, "I also heard that we will not be getting scores until November instead of October. Why the delay?"

DR. QUICK: Good afternoon. This is Angela Quick. Jennifer Preston mentioned earlier that our State Board is deliberating over the cut scores for our particular assessments - EOCs, EOGs - and any Common Exams or Measures of Student Learning also are tied into all that work indirectly. So we want to be releasing scores in November, and we're hoping that it will be November, but, again, that's based on Board action.

DR. MCCOY: A comment, "Are last year's MSL's scores going to be changed in October based on statewide scores like EOCs?"

MS. PRESTON: So what we're looking at with the EOCs is that cut point for proficiency - whether or not students are a Level 1, Level 2 and so on. Because the Measures of Student Learning focus on growth and aren't really used to measure proficiency, the Board doesn't have to set any cut points. There's no

such thing really is making a Level 4 on a chemistry Common Exam. The scores for the Measures of Student Learning that were on the score reports when your district scanned the assessments last year are the scores. The teacher and school-level growth scores will be coming out in October, but that's not tied specifically to the Board action that Angela was just talking about.

DR. MCCOY: Question, "I heard if Standards 1 through 5 are good, but 6 isn't, you will be regarded as needs improvement. I think you meant that if the teacher was at least proficient on 1 through 5, but wasn't on 6, that this teacher would get a needs improvement. Is this true?"

MS. PRESTON: The State's educator effectiveness model works almost as a series of hurdles, if you kind of think of an Olympic hurdler. We don't believe that there's any one practice or any one standard out of our six that is more important than the other. They're all equally important. So, if over three years a teacher does not meet expected growth (and that has to be over three years or potentially two, depending on the Board's action) and the teacher is rated at proficient or higher on Standards 1 through 5, yes, that teacher would be in need of improvement. But it could also work the other way. A teacher could be exceeding growth over a three-year time period but receive a developing on Standard 1. That teacher would also be in need of improvement because in either case, there's something the teacher needs to work on. That's sort of why it's called in need of improvement and not ineffective. That was actually a very distinct Board decision. It means there's an area for growth, and then the principal, the Department, and central office staff members all want to support teachers in addressing those areas for growth.

DR. MCCOY: This comment says, "The teachers are not the only variable."

"Common Core is scaffolding."

A comment, "Valid data will take many years."

MS. PRESTON: Those are from the same person, so I think they're connected.

DR. MCCOY: A comment, "I am for effective educators. I'm also for valid, reliable, and responsible measures of educators."

"Value-added methods have been shown to be unstable. Teachers moving up and down the range without explanation. See Darling-Hammond's research and research coming from Houston, Texas."

Question, "How much will growth count this year?"

MS. PRESTON: So I think this question. If I answer it incorrectly, just type in a clarification so I can answer it correctly. In the North Carolina system, growth doesn't count as a particular percentage for a teacher's evaluation. In lots of other states, they have it set up that way. The growth is 50 percent of your evaluation or 60 percent of your evaluation. North Carolina doesn't have a percentage system. We have those six standards and the expectation is that teachers meet growth over a three-year time period on Standard 6, but then also achieve ratings of at least proficient on Standards 1 through 5. So we don't really have a system where growth -- or any other standard for that matter -- is counting for a particular percent.

DR. MCCOY: This comment says, "That last comment isn't true for us year-round people. Today, I ended my first quarter. By the time I get the results, I will be halfway through or at the end of the second quarter. That's late."

"Are you aware that you are teaching two subjects, the same student will count against your score for 200 percent? The students that you are teaching will affect your score tremendously because of this."

MS. PRESTON: That's one of the reasons that when they adopted the educator effectiveness model, the Board felt very strongly about using multiple years of data. A situation where you're teaching two subjects to the same student is more common in elementary school. You might have a self-contained classroom where a teacher is doing English, Math and Science at the fifth grade, and we do have three test scores from that student in that teacher's value-added score. But for those teachers, it's particularly important that we look at multiple years of data. For a high school teacher, they may be teaching hundreds of kids just in one school year. For elementary school teachers, the use of multiple years is even more important because of the smaller number of students.

DR. MCCOY: "Are there going to be Extend 2 versions of the MSLs for our EC students?"

MS. PRESTON: So there will not be, and that is something that we will be moving to as a state. After this current school year, the '13-14 school year, there will no longer be Extend 2 versions of any of our state assessments. So this is the last year for Extend 2 for our EOCs and EOGs. Then there will be no more Extend 2 versions. Extend 1 will continue, though. There will always be an alternate assessment for that population of students. But, given that we are moving in that direction, and these students will be expected to be looking at standard-level assessments, it's a move that we're going to gradually take to help prepare them for it.

DR. MCCOY: Next comment, "I also appreciate the comment made about EVAAS data being one piece of data used to judge teachers. The problem is with the stress on outcomes from standardized testing from principals and other teachers, the value-added outcomes will surely trump other measures. People appreciate quantitative measures much more than qualitative data. The stress on testing outcomes will trump. See Campbell's Law. It has been shown in Florida and Texas that administrators are making their qualitative judgments from classroom observations jive with value-added outcomes. We are heading to the point with all of this stressing on testing that the VAM will be a hundred percent of our evaluation."

A question, "We will be going to a national test in science along with the rest of the country as we adopt the national science standards." I think that question is, "Will we be going to a national test in science?"

DR. QUICK: Good afternoon. This is Angela Quick again. Currently, there is not a national assessment associated with these national science standards. When we implement, which is years from now, two years from now, there is no assessment link with them. That is something that is on the drawing board to talk about around the nation, but right now there is no assessment for next generation science standards.

DR. MCCOY: "Who wrote the Common Exams, and are we using the same people this year?"

MS. PRESTON: So the Common Exams were designed in sort of two steps that had different people

involved in the two steps. The first step was with the design of what we call the roadmap for the assessment, and that was done by a group of 800 teachers who came together in Chapel Hill several years ago. They were divided into content-specific groups. They took a look at their content standards, thought about how they would assess those standards, and then relayed that information back to us through a series of questions we asked them to respond to. That's why you see constructed response items - because teachers in those original groups said that there were standards in their curriculum where constructed response is really the best way to assess, and that's why you see some constructed response items on the assessment.

They handed off that information to the Department and we passed it along to TOPS at NC State University. Those are the same folks that help us with writing the End-of-Grade and End-of-Course assessments. While they do have staff members there, the actual item-writing is done by other North Carolina teachers, some of whom do it over the summer, some of whom do it during the school year. They're trained by the staff members at NC State, and they assist in reviewing the items, but it's teachers writing them. Once the teachers wrote the items for the Common Exams, the original teachers that we had came back to review the items and to make recommendations for what items needed to be tweaked, what items were good to go as they were, and what items needed to really just be thrown out completely and not used at all in the process. That gets us to sort of a final review stage where we have curriculum and instruction folks from DPI looking. We had some institutions of higher ed folks help us do final review for some content areas, our accountability test experts review the exams, and that's how we sort of get to a finalized exam that's administered in the schools.

In terms of who's writing them this year, it may be some of the same people. Some teachers who wrote items last year may be writing items again. There are always people who decide that they don't have time or don't want to do it and we hire new ones, so there will probably be new folks in the mix, too.

For some particular content areas, the Department will be bringing teachers together to specifically look

at the exams before they're administered. We need to take a look at social studies at the secondary level, secondary being middle and high school, and we also need to take a look at upper-level math with that being Advanced Functions and Modeling and Pre-Calculus. So those are the target areas where we want to get more teachers in to take a look at the assessments before we administer again this school year.

DR. MCCOY: A comment, "I'm not saying the questions are bad. Possibly some ended up on grade-level exams that should have been on other grade-level exams."

All right, that appears to be the end of our questions and comments. Again, we thank you for your time and your feedback. Have a good afternoon.

(CONCLUDED)

WPU

Gloria Veilleux, Transcriber