

Focusing on Teachers

Educator Effectiveness Conferences outline state's framework and prep school leaders for coming changes

The WASB, in partnership with the Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators (WASDA) and the Association of Wisconsin School Administrators (AWSA), presented Joint Educator Effectiveness Conferences August 6 in Madison and August 8 in Green Bay.

Deputy State Superintendent Michael Thompson opened the conferences with an overview of the state's educator effectiveness work, which centers on four major areas: standards and instruction; assessment and data systems; school and educator effectiveness; and school finance reform.

Under the state's educator effectiveness framework, which allows districts to create their own rubrics for evaluating teachers, educators would be evaluated on educator practice and student growth. While the focus is on improving teachers, Thompson said school leaders need to work with educators and not use evaluations as a way to place blame.

"These systems of accountability have to raise the respect of our teachers," Thompson said.

WASB Staff Counsel Bob Butler reviewed 2011 Wisconsin Act 10 and its legal implications for school leaders. Among other topics covered, Butler addressed grievance procedures, employee handbooks, total base wages and other compensation issues.



Butler said the Act handed down a host of changes to school districts, but also allows for increased flexibility for school board members at the local level. Butler stressed the importance of networking with other school leaders in your region and across the state, and sharing what works in school districts.

"We have 424 laboratories of innovation across the state on this," Butler said. "Let's work together and see what works best for our schools."

The conference featured three different tracks, allowing school leaders to pick the presentations that were most relevant to them. Julie Brilli of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) covered the State Model Framework for Educator Effectiveness. Brilli went into detail on how the state model evaluates

teachers and principals, providing examples and fielding questions. Glenn Schilling, administrator of the Hartland/Lakeside School District, offered his district's story of how they worked with teachers and principals to establish educator evaluations in their schools.

In track 2, Bradley Carl of the Value-Added Research Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, provided an introduction to value-added measures, which are essential in accurately tracking student growth. Among other things, value-added measures account for the prior-year knowledge of students, account for test measurement error, and control student demographic characteristics. In short, using value-added assessments provide a more accurate picture of student growth, which is an essential piece of educator evaluations.

Other key presentations included Educator Evaluation Policies, presented by WASB Legal and Policy Services Staff Counsel Dan Mallin; Professional Development in the New System, presented by Joe Schroeder, AWSA associate executive director; and Educator Compensation in the New Landscape, presented by WASB Staff Counsel Bob Butler. ■

