

State Department of Education to pilot new teacher evaluation system

by Rebecca Grapevine | Aug 31, 2022 | Capitol Beat News Service



ATLANTA – The Georgia Department of Education (DOE) Wednesday [announced](#) a pilot project to test a new method for evaluating teacher performance.

The new program will be called GaLEADS. It will be tried in a dozen Georgia school districts beginning in the 2023-2024 school year. Districts will be able to apply to participate in the pilot beginning Thursday.

“I am fully committed to developing a teacher evaluation model that treats teachers as professionals and helps them succeed throughout their careers, to the benefit of students

– rather than a punitive ‘gotcha’ system,” said State School Superintendent Richard Woods.

“This pilot is an opportunity for proof of concept and will allow us to work with school districts throughout the state to create an evaluation system that’s designed for teacher growth.”

The DOE recently published a [report](#) exploring the reasons for teacher burnout in Georgia. Teachers said they face unrealistic performance expectations, especially given the learning disruption caused by the COVID pandemic.

“Coming out of the pandemic, the desire to ‘return to normal’ has also come with an unrealistic expectation ... without giving teachers the time, support, resources, and compassion to meet students at their current level,” [the report said](#).

The [Professional Association of Georgia Educators](#) (PAGE) agreed that the new pilot could help address teachers’ concerns about the evaluation system.

“PAGE is encouraged by the announced teacher evaluation pilot,” said Margaret Ciccarelli, director of legislative services for the organization.

Data from a 2021 statewide survey indicated that 45% of educators felt supervisor feedback under the current system was not helpful to their instructional practices, Ciccarelli said.

“A more effective Georgia educator evaluation system will better serve students by supporting teachers at every stage of their career, recognizing that the coaching needs of beginning teachers differ from the needs of skilled veteran educators,” she said.

Lisa Morgan, president of the [Georgia Association of Educators](#), called for increased teacher involvement in revamping the state’s teacher-evaluation program.

“Classroom teachers are the experts and must be the principal voices speaking to the necessary supports available for themselves and their colleagues,” she said. “We look forward to working with the department to ensure that current classroom educators are involved throughout the process.”

Republican Woods was first elected state school superintendent in 2014. [He is running](#) for a third term against [Democrat Alisha Thomas Searcy](#).

Searcy hit back at Wednesday’s announcement about the new teacher-evaluation program, calling it an election gimmick with questionable timing.

“Why is the current state superintendent, who has been in office for almost eight years, deciding that now, 69 days before the election, he wants to make teacher evaluations a priority?” Searcy asked. “This has been a concern for teachers for at least eight years.”

Searcy said teachers should be involved in revamping the teacher-evaluation process.

“Educators, students, and parents deserve a state school superintendent who is a collaborator and who seeks the feedback of teachers,” she said.

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