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VETTING STUDENT ASSESSMENTS FOR QUALITY

BACKGROUND

With the advent of PERA, the need for quality assessments has been given renewed attention. Curiously enough, when districts have been asked, “If PERA went away tomorrow, what is one thing you would keep doing?” The answer, unanimously, has been: “Keep improving our assessments.”

THE CHALLENGE

The challenge is in providing a common understanding of quality components as well as the time and expertise to review the assessments for adherence to these components. The quality of teacher-created assessments may vary widely within a school. Vetting assessments for quality and consistency is time-consuming for administrators who already find their time shrinking with the additional requirements in the teacher evaluation process.

THE SOLUTION

The DuPage Regional Office of Education is prepared to help districts meet this challenge. We offer a service which reviews teacher-created assessments providing feedback on: *validity and reliability; format options; effective rubric construction; determining depth of knowledge; and documenting evidence of student growth.* The process we use helps to build capacity so teachers and administrators can continue this work through PLCs and/or Building Leadership Teams.

THE PROCESS

Step 1 - Creating a common understanding of quality components

This overview is designed to build the background knowledge and common language required to design quality assessments and understand the feedback that is given in written reviews of the assessments. This takes approximately two hours (may be broken into two one-hour sessions) and can be tailored to the time you have available: after school meetings, early dismissals, PLC time, etc.

Step 2 - Consultant review and feedback

Once a common understanding and language has been established, the ROE consultant is provided with the *assessment, standards addressed in the assessment, answer key, and rubrics or scoring guides where applicable.* The consultant will review the assessments and provide written feedback regarding validity, reliability, depth of knowledge, fairness and formatting. Feedback will then be sent to the school.

Step 3 – Teachers review feedback

Teachers should be given an opportunity to review and discuss the feedback in their teams, PLCs, etc. If they have any questions, these should be sent to the consultant.

Step 4 – Teachers, administrators and consultant meet to discuss feedback

The purpose of this step is to have meaningful grade level or subject area discussions about assessment and provide teachers with guidance and support as they revise their assessments. Administrators can sit in on these discussions or meet separately with the consultant to discuss assessment reviews.

Advantages of this process

1. All parties will have participated in the vetting process through discussion, review, revision and increased understanding of quality assessments. This creates capacity for continued substantive assessment review and discussion between teachers and administrators.
2. Everyone in the school is on the same page, using common language and quality components.
3. Administrators feel more confident in their ability to review teacher assessments, having the support of a consultant with expertise in assessment.