Teacher Evaluation 2014-2015
Frequently Asked Questions

General Background

1. **Why is the basis for teacher evaluations?**
   According to the Student Success Act (SB 736), teacher evaluations are to be based in part on the performance of students and on instructional practice. The additional statues indicates that at least 33% of a performance evaluation must be based upon data and indicators of student learning growth. In Sarasota, PRIDE will be used for the instructional practice portion of the evaluation.

2. **What are the performance ratings?**
   According to SB736, the evaluation system must differentiate among four levels of performance. These are Highly Effective, Effective, Developing (or Needs Improvement for teachers during their first three years), and Unsatisfactory.

3. **What is the history of value-added?**
   Value-added was developed by the statistician Dr. William Sanders while working at the University of Tennessee. In the early 1980's, when Lamar Alexander was Governor of Tennessee, Sanders learned that the administration was searching for an objective measure by which schools and educators could be held accountable for student learning. In 1992, a Tennessee Supreme Court order demanded a more equitable funding system for schools and Sanders' value-added formula became part of Tennessee's Educational Improvement Act and is in use across Tennessee today. Since that time other value-added models have been developed, modified, and used in other states.

4. **How many states and school districts are using value-added assessment?**
   Value-added assessment has been used statewide in Tennessee since 1992, and it has been mandated for use by all school districts in Pennsylvania and Ohio and hundreds of school districts nationwide. Florida started using its own value-added model starting with the 2011-2012 school year.

5. **Do districts have any flexibility in the timeline for the new teacher evaluation?**
   No, the FLDOE established the timeline for the implementation of the new evaluation system for all Florida school districts, beginning with the 2011-12 school year.

6. **Did teachers vote to adopt the teacher evaluation system?**
   The district's 2011-12 through 2014-15 evaluation systems were designed to be in compliance with Florida statute, and were subsequently negotiated with the Sarasota County Teacher's Association (SCTA) and approved by the School Board. The new evaluation requirements are stipulated in contract language.

PRIDE (Professional Rubrics Investing and Developing Educator Excellence)/ Instructional Practice Component

7. **What is PRIDE?**
   PRIDE is Sarasota's qualitative tool used measure the instructional practice standards. As required by the state, PRIDE standards and competencies are aligned to the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPS). The four Domains of the PRIDE are Domain I: Creating a Culture for Learning, Domain II: Planning for Success, Domain III: Instructing and Assessing for Student Achievement, and Domain IV: Communicating Professional Commitment.

8. **Is the PRIDE the same one used last year?**
   The PRIDE competencies, forms and Rubrics used for the 14-15 evaluation are essentially the same as the prior year. Each competency has a value and points associated with it in order to report the PRIDE component score. Slight narrative changes on the rubric were made for clarification. The PRIDE form is in digital format to facilitate collection and reporting of the information.

9. **What is the PRIDE "component score?"**
   Each PRIDE domain has competencies in which teachers will receive points ratings based on their performance. The points associated with each performance level are as follows: Highly Effective = 3 points, Effective = 2 points, Developing/Needs Improvement = 1 point and Unsatisfactory = 0. Each point value is multiplied by the weight value associated with the corresponding competency. The PRIDE component score is derived by converting the total points on the PRIDE portion of the evaluation to a concordant score.

10. **How were the points associated with each competency determined? By whom?**
    The FLDOE provided guidance as to the relative weights for each of the FEAPS Domains to reflect the most essential aspects of the instructional practice. The FLDOE recommended that districts who are using their own form, such as Sarasota's PRIDE, distribute the weights in a similar fashion. A representative group of district and school administrators and classroom and non-classroom teachers convened to determine the appropriate weights for each Domain and competencies within the respective Domains. It was determined that Domains 2 (Planning for Success) and Domain 3 (Instructing and Assessing for Student Achievement) would proportionally carry the most weight.

11. **What criteria are used to evaluate the competencies on PRIDE?**
    Indicators for each competency on PRIDE are included in the Rubric. The criteria are defined for the following ratings: Highly Effective, Effective, Developing/Needs Improvement, and Unsatisfactory. School administrators compare what they see and hear when visiting classrooms and observing teachers and students with the indicators on PRIDE.

12. **How often will I be observed by my principal/assistant principal?**
    First year teachers must be observed in the first 20 student days of school. This observation does not have to be announced. First year teachers are also observed at least once (announced) by Winter Break and, at least once (unannounced) by mid-to-late May. All teachers will be observed multiple times by school administrators. These observations will be of varying lengths and conducted throughout the school year.

13. **When is the PRIDE portion of my evaluation completed?**
    The timeline for submissions of all evaluations is provided by the Human Resources Department at the beginning of each school year. Typically, the PRIDE portion of a teacher's evaluation is completed two weeks before the last duty day for teachers. In addition, all first year teachers receive a mid-year evaluation before Winter Break.

14. **What if I disagree with my principal's evaluation of my job performance?**
    Should you not agree with your administrator's evaluation of your performance, you may write comments on the form or you may attach a statement.

Professional Development and Teacher Support

15. **How will the evaluation results be used?**
    District staff, principals, and assistant principals will analyze PRIDE evaluation results to determine areas of need for professional development at the individual, school and district levels.

16. **Will an IPDP (Individual Professional Development Plan) be required?**
    All teachers are required to complete an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) by the end of the first quarter. The IPDP should be based on student data, the teacher's past PRIDE evaluation, and aligned to at least one of the School's Improvement Plan goals.

17. **How will teachers in need of assistance be identified?**
    Teachers whose <u>final</u> teacher evaluation scores result in a "Developing/Needs Improvement" or "Unsatisfactory" rating will be offered assistance through the Performance Improvement Process (PIP). Further, if principals have documented concerns and a teacher is at risk or receiving a "Developing/Needs Improvement" or "Unsatisfactory" rating on their PRIDE Evaluation he/she will be offered assistance through the PIP.

18. **How will mentors and coaches be assigned?**
    All new teachers will be assigned a mentor during their first year. A principal may request a mentor for a second year when a teacher has changed grade levels or schools. Coaches are assigned to any teacher on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).

19. **What resources and support are available to help me improve my practice?**
    At the school level, Professional Development will be offered during the year. In addition, all teachers can gain support from their peers during Collaborative Planning Time (CPT) each week. Principals and assistant principals will also offer specific feedback and suggestions for improving practice. District-wide Professional Development, aligned with the PRIDE competencies, will also be offered during the year. Additional resources will be made available on Instructional Improvement System (IIS).

Details about Florida's Value-Added Model (VAM) and Value-Added Assessment

20. **Who decided on Florida's value-added model (VAM)?**
    The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) convened a committee of stakeholders called the Student Growth Implementation Committee (SGIC) to select the type of VAM to be used, and the factors to be adjusted for in the selected model. Technical expertise in VAM was provided through a contract with American Institutes for Research (AIR). The SGIC consisted of 27 members from across Florida, including teachers, school administrators, and District administrators, among others. The SGIC explored eight types of models for FCAT Reading and Mathematics and chose a model that they felt worked best for both. This model was approved by Florida's Commissioner of Education. Later on Algebra I model for grade 9 was approved.

21. What is a value-added model (VAM)?

A Value-Added Model (VAM) analyzes student test data and ties results back to teaching. It is a statistical model that attempts to measure how much a teacher impacts the student's learning over the course of a year. Value-added models analyze test data that can measure teaching and learning. Based on a review of students' test score gains from previous grades, predictions are made about the amount of growth students are likely to make in a given year. Thus, value-added assessment can show whether particular students – for example, those taking a certain Algebra class, - made the expected amount of progress, made less progress than expected, or made more progress than expected. Using the same methods, one can look back over several years to measure the long-term impact that a particular teacher or school had on student achievement.

22. How does a VAM work?

A VAM calculates the expected amount of growth a student should make in a given year. The expected growth, also called predicted growth, is adjusted for certain characteristics of students, classrooms and schools that are included in the model. Florida's VAM model attempts to "level the playing field" by accounting for differences in proficiency and other characteristics of students assigned to teachers in the State of Florida. Based on the data, the VAM will show whether students made the expected amount of growth, have made less growth than expected, or have made progress beyond expectations.

23. How is value-added data different from traditional measures of student performance?

VAM data provides information about student growth. VAM attempts to answer the question, "How much value did a teacher add to their student's growth?" Statisticians use a student's prior test scores and the other student and classroom variables in the model to calculate what a student should score on the test. This is called the *predicted score* or *expected score*. Then, the student's *actual score* is compared to the *predicted/expected score*. The difference between a student's predicted/expected score and actual score is assumed to be due to the teacher and the school, since the model has adjusted for many student and classroom variables. By aggregating all of the individual student results, statisticians can estimate how much a teacher contributed to the improved student achievement.

24. What characteristics of students and classrooms are included in the VAM to adjust expected scores in the FSA Reading and Math Models?

The following student characteristics are included:
- Up to three years of prior achievement data
- Number of subject-relevant courses in which a student is enrolled
- Students with Disabilities (SWD) status
- English Language Learner (ELL) status
- Gifted status
- Attendance
- Mobility (number of transitions)
- Retention (measured by difference from the most common age in grade)

The following classroom characteristics are included:
- Class size
- Similarity of students' prior test scores in the class

25. **What characteristics of students are NOT included in the Florida VAM?**
    Gender, race, ethnicity and socio-economic status are <u>not</u> included in the VAM model, because Florida law, as recorded in the Student Success Act, specifically prohibits their inclusion into the model.

26. **What is the School Component?**
    The school component is the student growth measure of all students within the school. It is the aggregate difference between what all students are predicted and actually score on the assessment.

Sarasota's Value-Added Model (VAM) and Teacher Groups

27. **What VAM will Sarasota County adopt?**
    Sarasota County will use the VAM FSA Model adopted by the state of Florida as required for applicable teachers. Similar models also will be used for all other teacher groups. Specifics are detailed in the table below.

28. **Who developed the 2014-2015 FSA Reading and Mathematics VAM scores that Sarasota will use?**
    For 2014-15, VAM models have been developed by FLDOE for the FSA 2.0 Mathematics and Reading Tests and Algebra I for grade 9, taking into account FSA/FCAT scores from the previous years. Differences between students' predicted/expected scores and actual scores on these assessments will be the basis for teacher VAM scores. Each teacher's VAM score will be an aggregate of the students that they teach.

29. **What assessments are used to calculate student growth?**
    The following table delineates how the student growth component will be calculated for specific groups of teachers for the 2014-2015 school year:

Teacher Group	Teacher Description	Assessments/Student Growth	Number of Years of Data
Group 1 Pre-KG Teachers	Battelle Pre-KG teacher	Pre-KG AP 1 to AP 3	1 year
Group 1 Classroom Teachers	Classroom teachers who instructed the primary courses (Reading, Math, Civics, Algebra…) where at least 10 OR 30% of their students took Batelle: Grade Pre-K iReady: Grades K-2 SAT10-FSA: Grade 3 FSA Reading: Grades 4-10 FSA Math: Grades 4-8 Alg I, Bio, Geo, Physical Sci, US Hist, Civics, World Hist, Earth/Space Sci, Life Sci, Alg II, Econ, Gov, ELA IV, and ELA IV Honors teachers: Various Grades AP, IB, AICE teachers: Grade 9-12 FAA: Grades 4-11 FCAT Science: Grade 8	Student Growth will be based on the students' grade appropriate test scores.	1 to 3 years*

Teacher Group	Teacher Description	Assessments/Student Growth	Number of Years of Data
Group 2 Classroom Teachers	Classroom teachers who are NOT instructing Reading, Mathematics and/or one of the group 1 courses listed above, but the majority of their students took iReady, Batelle, SAT10, FSA Reading, FAA, SAT, PERT, or ACT.	Student Growth will be based on their students' grade appropriate test scores.	1 to 3 years*
Group 3 Classroom Teachers	Classroom teachers who are NOT instructing Reading and/or Mathematics courses and the majority of their student did not take Group 1 assessments listed above.	Reading FSA Student Growth will be based on the appropriate school level FSA Reading test scores.	1 to 3 years*
Group 4 Non-Classroom Teachers	Predominately Non-Classroom teachers who are NOT directly instructing students and are assigned to one or two schools. In some cases, this group may include classroom teachers who instruct students at more than one school.	Reading and Mathematics FSA and Algebra (9th grade). Student Growth will be based on the appropriate school level FSA Reading test scores.	1 to 3 years*
Group 5 Non-Classroom Teachers	Predominately Non-Classroom teachers who are NOT directly instructing students and are assigned to three or more schools or the district. In some cases, this group may include classroom teachers who instruct students at three or more schools.	Reading and Mathematics FSA and Algebra (9th grade). Student Growth will be based on the appropriate district level FSA test scores.	1 to 3 years*

The number of years of data included depends on how long the teacher was employed within that same teacher group.

30. **Why are teachers grouped into categories?**
The state set different analysis criteria depending on whether the individual is a classroom or non-classroom teacher, whether they teach the content area on which the students are tested and the number of years of available data. The five-category system is useful when working with large, complex datasets and large numbers of calculations. This practice is followed by many school districts that use value-added model calculations.

31. **How will student growth be calculated for those teachers working at the district-level?** Teachers at the Landings have been grouped into the 'non-classroom teachers at more than two schools group' or Group 5. The student growth scores for all schools will be used in the calculation of their student growth component.

32. **How will the VAM or student growth be computed for teachers working on multiple campuses?** If a teacher serves on two campuses, the student growth component will be based on student performance

from both campuses (e.g., Group 4). If a teacher serves on more than two campuses, the student growth component will be based on student performance from all schools (e.g., Group 5).

33. **Is it fair to evaluate teachers with FSA results even if they teach a non-FSA-tested subject?** Senate Bills 736 and 1642 require that every teacher's evaluation be partially based on a student growth component of their own students. The statute requires that the FSA be used for teachers' whose students have these test scores. If assessments are available in other content areas, these other assessments will be used in lieu of the FSA Reading and Mathematics, as appropriate. Sarasota County's implementation of these requirements will be as fair as possible within the limitations of state law.

34. **How is a VAM score determined if a teacher's subject area is not Reading or Mathematics (e.g., music, physical education)?**
One example is, for teachers who instruct in non-FSA-tested content areas (e.g., art, music, physical education), but who teach in an FSA-tested grade. These teachers are in Group 2. These teachers' student growth components will be based on the FSA Reading scores of the students they teach.

35. **How will the iReady assessments be used?**
iReady will be used to measure student growth in reading for KG, 1st, and 2nd grade students. iReady assessment Period 1 (AP1) scores will be compared to iReady assessment Period 3 (AP3) within the same school year.

36. **How will you determine value–added scores at the end of the year if students score high at the beginning of the year on iReady?**
iReady scores from AP1 will be used as the baseline data to determine student growth for KG, 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade students. Statistical adjustments will be made to account for situations whereby growth is stifled due to high scores at the beginning of the year. That is, the calculation of student growth will take into account the students' "starting point" on the iReady scores used as the baseline to determine student growth.

37. **Is there a VAMS for the Florida Alternative Assessment?**
A local z-score difference model will be used for FAA results. Scores for 13-14 FAA will serve as a baseline for spring 14-15 FAA.

38. **Will VAM scores be available for the FSA Writing and/or FCAT Science?**
No. The FSA writing component is included in the FSA ELA assessment. The FCAT Science will have a local student growth model for grade 8.

Test Validity and Security

39. **Since the Teacher Evaluation System now depends on student test scores, how will security be ensured during testing? What is the standard response/protocol if a principal suspects cheating on a test where the data will be used to produce a student growth score?**
Security procedures are infused throughout the assessment process. Test Coordinators and test administrators are trained in security protocol. Any security breaches are brought to the attention of the school principal and the Office of Research, Assessment, Evaluation and School Improvement (RAE). The

Florida Department of Education has strict security procedures in place and these are enforced. Further, the Department of Education employs Caveon Forensics, a data security corporation. Assessment scores are analyzed thoroughly and cheating patterns are uncovered and brought to the district's attention. The RAE Office investigates each security breach and reports findings to the district's Human Resources Department, the Florida Department of Education, and the Florida Department of Instructional Practices.

40. **Should teachers in K-2 administer iReady to their own students?**
The administration of iReady at KG-2 is individualized and therefore often given by the student's teacher. Other individualized assessments such as the Florida Alternate Assessment are individual and often given by the student's teacher. In these cases the benefit of a student's familiarity with the teacher often puts the child at ease and ensures their comfort during the testing situation. Ensuring the validity of assessment results is of utmost importance. Strict adherence to maintaining the security of tests and following test administration procedures are expected and will be enforced. Procedures to address breaches in security are maintained at all times.

Other Value-Added Questions/Concerns

41. **Who is responsible for tracking students who transfer schools or classes?**
All student transfers are documented centrally through ESD, the Student Information System.

42. **Will I know what my students' expected scores are at the beginning of the school year?** Statisticians use the terms "*expected*" and "*predicted*" in ways that are different from the ways non-statisticians use them. Florida's VAM models do not actually predict into the future, but rather explain the past. Because statisticians need both the "before" and "after" test scores for each student to calculate each student's predicted/expected score, the score cannot be determined at the start of the school year. Predicted/expected scores for each individual student are calculated after the scores of all other students in the State of Florida are known.

43. **Are value-added models going to be developed for other tests?**
The FLDOE has not committed to developing other VAM models at this time.

44. **How do value-added models take into consideration the teacher's and the student's contribution to student growth?**
Because individual students rather than cohorts are traced over time, each student serves as his or her own "baseline" or control, which removes virtually all of the influence of the unvarying characteristics of the student, such as race or socioeconomic factors. Test scores are projected for students and then compared to the scores they actually achieve at the end of the school year. Classroom scores that equal or exceed projected values suggest that instruction was highly effective. Conversely, scores that are mostly below projections suggest that the instruction was ineffective. At the same time, this approach recognizes student-related factors and other extenuating circumstances. For instance, imagine that a student's performance falls far below projected scores, while other students in the same class, with comparable academic records, do make the progress they were expected to make. This would be taken as evidence of an external effect, related to the student's home environment or some other variable lying outside the range of a teacher's influence.

45. Does value-added assessment help to improve student achievement?
The information provided by value-added assessment can certainly be useful to people working to raise student achievement. These data also can help states and districts design comprehensive accountability systems which can assess the impact of particular kinds of teaching, curriculum, and professional development on academic achievement.

46. What information can value-added provide educators?
With a value-added analysis, educators now have a tool that provides them with the ability to determine their instructional results, the focus of their instruction (identifying which students have benefited most) and their instructional impact (how effective it has been in providing students with a year's worth of growth). Student achievement by classroom, grade, subject, school or district can be displayed showing distinct patterns of growth for students of different achievement levels.

47. If a teacher has low-performing students, won't the ratings be lower?
The level of student performance is not an issue in an individual educator's value-added score because what is being measured is growth, not absolute achievement. Value-added assessment measures the difference between a student's projected score - which is based on past performance - and his or her actual score. Therefore, it doesn't matter what the mix of students is at the start of the year or if any specific students (whether they are previously low achievers or high achievers) drop out.

Final Teacher Evaluation Results

48. Where and when will a teacher be able to access to their own final evaluation report?
A teacher will be able to access their own evaluation report through a secure website within the Instructional Improvement System (MY IIS). They will be provided a web link, and asked to sign on with their 'A" number. The site will be confidential.

49. Are principals required to meet with me to review my evaluation?
As in the past, Principals/APs do meet with the teachers and instructional staff to review the PRIDE portion of the evaluation. Because the "student growth" or VAMS component of the evaluation is generated by state assessment data and added to the PRIDE well after the end of the school year, principals are not required to hold individual meetings with staff to review the final evaluation.

50. What is the difference between "Developing" and "Needs Improvement" ratings?
The rating "Developing" will be used for teachers who need improvement in the first three (3) years of employment. Teachers with more than 3 years of service who need to improve their performance will be rated as "Needs Improvement."

51. What happens if a teacher receives an "Unsatisfactory" rating on the final evaluation?
If the final evaluation rating (TES) is "Unsatisfactory," the teacher will be offered a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) for one year. If the teacher receives a second "Unsatisfactory" rating in two years or a combination of "Needs Improvement" or "Unsatisfactory" ratings, the teacher's contract may be non-renewed.

52. **What happens if a teacher receives a "Needs Improvement" rating on the final evaluation?** If the final evaluation rating is "Needs Improvement" the teacher will be offered a Performance Improvement Plan for one year. If the teacher receives three consecutive "Needs Improvement" or a combination of "Needs Improvement" or "Unsatisfactory" ratings the teacher will be non-renewed.

53. **Can a teacher appeal the final evaluation rating?**
As long as personnel evaluation procedures are followed appropriately the evaluation of the teacher by the administrator is final and not subject to appeal. However, if it is believed that a scoring error or computation inaccuracy occurred with the student growth or VAMS component, a process will be in place to verify and confirm the results.

54. **Will the Teacher Evaluations be linked to pay?**
The link between the Teacher Evaluation System and teacher salary has not been established. Various methods are currently being investigated to meet the requirements of Florida statute.

55. **Will my final evaluation report be filed with Human Resources?**
Yes, a teacher's final PRIDE Evaluation and his/her final TES Report showing both the PRIDE component and the Student Growth Component will be electronically filed with Human Resources.

56. **Are the evaluation results available to others or to the media?**
Current year evaluations are confidential and are not public record. To be in compliance with state requirements, the district will be required to report a summary of the percentage of teachers and instructional personnel that fall within each of the four ratings.

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