FAQS ABOUT PERA

Q: What is PERA?
A: PERA is the Illinois Teacher Performance Evaluation Reform Act of 2010. It was enacted by the Illinois General Assembly after state-wide teacher unions, the CTU and leaders from school districts came to agreement on its provisions.

Q: What is the purpose of PERA?
A: PERA mandates the redesign of most teacher and principal evaluation systems in the state of Illinois. It was enacted in response to widely shared beliefs among teachers, administrators, and teacher unions that teacher and principal performance evaluations systems were not serving their purpose of providing teachers and principals with the support they need to improve their practice and student outcomes.

Q: What does PERA require?
A: It requires that school districts develop new evaluation systems in good faith cooperation with their teachers or their teachers’ union. Further, districts are required to include a measure of student growth as a “significant factor” in evaluations in addition to a measure of teacher practice.

Q: Who made the rules surrounding the new performance evaluation system?
A: A group of local educational professionals from labor unions, school districts, and recognized educational experts from a diverse mix of teacher-support organizations were appointed to a body called the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Illinois State Board of Education on how the new law will apply to school districts. After months of work, they developed rules regarding teacher practice and student growth components of evaluations, which were ultimately adopted by ISBE.

Q: What do the rules require for student growth?
A: Those rules require student growth account for a minimum of 25% of teachers’ evaluation in the first two years of the teacher evaluation program and 30% thereafter.

Q: When does CPS have to implement PERA?
A: PERA must be implemented in CPS in school year (2012-13) in a minimum of 300 schools.

Q: How was the new CPS teacher evaluation system developed?
A: CPS and CTU formed a joint committee that began meeting on December 9th. It met over 35 times for a total of over 90 hours to develop the plan. The plan uses the minimum amount of student growth allowed by law for its first three years.

Q: To whom will the plan apply next year?
A: All teachers will benefit from some elements of the new teacher evaluation system. The full system will apply to all probationary teachers and to tenured teachers required to be evaluated next year (i.e., tenured teachers who received less than excellent evaluations this year).

Q: Will CPS continually review the PERA plan and adjust it?
A: Yes. CPS and CTU have jointly committed to continuing the PERA Joint Committee to study, through independent evaluators, the efficacy of the plan and its components. CPS is committed to ensuring that teachers are evaluated accurately and fairly.
Q: Where can I get more information on CPS' PERA Plan?
A. On the CPS teacher evaluation website—REACH Students.