

Good morning, members, and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to offer my petition regarding the observation portion of teacher evaluations. I want to assure you that I am not, in any way, asking you to change the process, but instead, to correct ambiguous language that doesn't affirm the spirit of the teacher evaluation bill, as it was passed.

In 2010, Rep. Frank Hoffman submitted House Bill 1033 to amend Revised Statute 17:3902. In its original form, the bill deleted language in the old statute that required an observation to take place at a time the teacher and the administrator agree upon. In the House Education committee meeting, accompanied by Ms. Bendily representing the governor's office, Rep. Hoffman offered a seven page amendment that made 53 changes to the bill. Among the many changes, the language requiring that an observation take place at an agreed upon time was reinserted in the bill. In its final state, the bill requires,

1. A pre-observation conference to discuss any relevant information.
2. An agreed upon time for the observation to take place.
3. A post-observation conference to discuss the results.

BESE policy regarding teacher evaluations, as promulgated in bulletin 130, states that an observation:

*“shall include a minimum of two observations per academic year and may include more observations, particularly for teachers or administrators that are not meeting expectations. **At least one of these observations shall be announced and shall include a pre- and post-observation conference.**”*

In the written response to my formal petition, LDOE asserts that BESE is within its authority to promulgate the rule in accordance with R.S 17:3902(B) which states:

*B. The elements of evaluation and standards for effectiveness shall be defined by the board pursuant to rules and regulations promulgated for such purpose. Such rules and regulations shall require that, **at a minimum** [emphasis added], local evaluation plans contain the following elements: . . . (1) A job description... (2) A professional growth*

plan... (3) Observation and conferencing... (4) Classroom visitation... (5) Measure of effectiveness...

Furthermore, it states that BESE is within its authority to require a minimum of two observations with at least one being announced. I do not dispute BESE's authority to require as many observations as it would like; however, the department's response appears to blur the lines between a local district's "evaluation plan," and the actual "evaluation process," defined in statute which states, among other things,

"The observation shall occur at a time and place established in advance"

If it wishes, BESE could require that each teacher and administrator undergo 5, 10, or even 20 observations; however, each of the conducted observations must meet the minimum requirement as set forth in statute. To do otherwise, would deny the person being evaluated any opportunity to provide pertinent information in a pre-observation conference, and forces that person into a defensive posture in the post-observation conference, IF a post-observation conference is even conducted given that neither a pre-observation conference was conducted, nor a time was agreed upon.

I urge you to consider taking action to correct this language in an effort to facilitate an evaluation process that is conducive to improving instructional outcomes. Again, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to present this petition. I look forward to hearing your motion to move forward for rulemaking.