



Washington Teachers' Union

Section A: LEAP Comments and Observations from DCPS Educators

1. I have been with DCPS for 16 years. I have yet to see any evaluation system that DCPS has rolled out effectively. They tend to get these ideas without proper research, and they just run with them. We the teachers are always at risk because of their quick decisions. How are we supposed to trust them with another evaluation system when so many of the others have failed? I'm open to new ideas if they are effective research-based ideas.
2. Under this new model, LEAP, the master educators (who subjectively evaluated teachers) are now COACHES, and will be placed inside the classrooms to offer feedback instead of using observations as a punitive device. As the *Washington Post* article states, "Those observations won't be part of the city's teacher evaluation and solely meant to help teachers improve, officials said." How can you continue to use the same people who gave punitive teacher evaluations under IMPACT in the new LEAP program? The same mindset is still there, and the same IMPACT system is still there—just with a different name. In all fairness, the whole IMPACT system should be dismantled.
3. The idea of forced collaboration seems desperate. My fifth grade team and I collaborate every day, every week. We do so formally and informally. We do so because we find it helps us to build a better fifth grade atmosphere. What we don't get enough of is time to grade papers and time to plan.
4. IMPACT and DCPS does not involve its employees, it punishes employees. You cannot transform your organization to ensure that goals are consistently being met in an effective and efficient manner with a punitive evaluation system or process.
5. LEAP and Cornerstones are examples of an administration that does not trust its teachers and does not trust their principals--despite the fact that 75% of the teachers and almost 100% of the principals have been put there by DCPS' own machinations. Because they do not trust they keep looking for the magic bullet that will simultaneously raise test scores, eradicate the racial achievement gap, and drive graduation rates up. What they have yet to try is long-term investment in the teachers in their schools. IMPACT and Highly Effective ratings have not made us feel supported, merely condescended to.
6. My biggest concern is that principals will be the sole observers and evaluators of teachers in the classroom. This will allow principals to give high scores to their



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personal favorites and low scores to anyone with whom they have a personal problem. It will also allow principals to effectively threaten teachers with their scores all year long. Without an unbiased observer's (master educator's) scores, teachers who disagree with their principal's scores will have no way to argue that they are unfair. This deeply worries me.

7. I believe that the Master Educators play a vital role in the observation cycles. Therefore, I don't feel principals should have full autonomy of the evaluation tool. Moreover, M.E.'s provided an unbiased viewpoint that is beneficial to my colleagues and myself.
8. I continue to be concerned about the use of instructional coaches who may act as assistants to the principals and may forward inaccurate teacher assessments when that is not their role.
9. I think I can speak for every teacher at Eaton when I say we are not taken in by the reasons for this "new" program--IMPACT was costing the district money. So now we are to be evaluated by our students?! Really? My students are ten and still use the words "good" and "bad" as descriptors for all situations. This seems a desperate reach by an administration that, admittedly, is trying things but without much success.
10. There are many concerns about the student evaluation component, not least of all that this is yet again a way for teachers to be held accountable without a parallel accountability system for students (for example, with PARCC, the scores count only for teacher and school grades, but there is no accountability for students, therefore, no incentives for them to try to do well).
11. I usually give a survey at the end of my classes for student feedback for the year, but I'm not sure I'd want the results of student surveys to be considered for my performance pay increase.
12. I am concerned with a culture of teacher-aggressive policy and rhetoric. I wish DCPS would shoulder a more progressive and community-centric management model, one based on the notion that the village it takes to raise a child bears a great burden together.



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13. When teachers at my school saw Jason's notice about LEAP there was a lot of shaking of heads and whispered words of "what next." Nobody here has faith in this other than as another way to micro-manage our teaching. DCPS wants to know how to retain their top teachers? Stop making them feel as if they do not know how to do their jobs.
14. I'm sickened at the level at which testing and graduation rates drive the entire focus of our priorities in this district. Our end goal needs to be to produce responsible, educated, invested citizens.
15. Well, eight years into mayoral takeover in DC, where seniority ended 16 years ago and due process is arbitrarily ignored, schools have been closed, charters have expanded, over 2/3 of the teachers replaced with many of their replacements leaving after 2 or 3 years and the only real academic gains are tied to changing demographics: fewer African-American, more white students.
16. So, we are confused at my school. Apparently instructional coaches will move to one of the two coaching spots that will now open at every building (ELA and Math), but they did not add any additional funds to the school budget to pick up the second instructional coaching position. Rumor at our school is that DCPS wants some teachers to voluntarily become TFIs in which they teach half day and coach the second half. This not only puts burdens on local schools to lose a specialist to make room for the coach, or cut specialists to half time to do so.

Is central office planning to fund the extra coach at schools who previously only had one?

Section B: LEAP Questions

General Questions

1. What measures will be instituted to ensure/safeguard teachers that dispute observation practices and scores?



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2. I teach in a CES classroom where my students are focused more on communication and functional behavior skills that are not aligned to Common Core State Standards. How will LEAP be modified for specialized programs?
3. Will the various LIFT statuses be affected? There are several people in my building who are anticipating one formal observation next year and step increases.
4. I am wondering how this new system fits in with LIFT and my prior highly effective ratings. Does the new system negate my once per year observations that I've earned?
5. I am curious as to how this plays out for related service providers like myself. Do we get a social worker "LEAP" or are we leapt over?
6. Why can't we make the whole year based on PLCs where you do peer observations or have the content specialist give you constant feedback?
7. With ESSA and the new mandate to test less is giving more teacher priority to these tests a good idea?
8. I don't have value-added data because I don't have standardized testing. Were teachers who teach the tested subjects provided value-added data?

Section C: Instructional Coaches

1. There is nothing to address developing teachers who want help in classroom management and cross content best practices. The whole point of having an onsite instructional coach was being able to get help with these kind of things. Is moving to content specialists going to take the focus away from this?
2. From a highly effective instructional coach: Current coaches have been told that they will to re-apply for their jobs, but we will have to pass an "assessment". Why is this necessary if principals have submitted who they want for the positions and feel



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that they are qualified? Is this just another ploy to get rid of personnel whose positions DCPS want for someone else? This is very unfair.

Section D: Master Educators

1. Now that the Master Educators have been disbanded, will we be at the mercy of our Administrators when dealing with IMPACT scores? How will we be able to combat the point shaving, so to say?
2. If the Master Educators are not going to be doing observations, does that mean less observation throughout the year?
3. Does that mean that the Master Educators will be forced to apply for the new content specific coaching positions?

Section E: Student Surveys

1. What research was used to determine that student evaluations are an accurate measure of teacher effectiveness, and to design the new IMPACT component?
2. If students think they can "fire" teachers, what sort of learning environment will this create?
3. Overwhelmingly, research shows that student evaluations of instructors are based on factors such as grades received, class standing, gender, and personal appearance. How does the new IMPACT component control for these factors?
4. Studies have found that instructors adapt to student evaluations through grade inflation, as higher course grades correlate to better ratings. How will the new IMPACT model ensure that teachers maintain professional integrity and ethics in grading if they are incentivized to "pad" student grades?
5. Will my students simply mark me down one week because they were angry that I called their parents and assigned them detention?



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Section F: Curriculum

1. DCPS needs to create a curriculum for teachers to follow. When will this happen, and why is it so difficult for them to do it?

Section G: Service Providers

1. What is the impact on related service providers (Social workers, Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Arts Therapist, etc.), early childhood teachers, support staff (guidance counselor, etc.) and special teachers (arts, music, foreign language, PE)? I was told LEAP does not apply to these people. What changes are suggested for these employees?

2. For related service providers, will they still be evaluated by Program Managers and Principals? Currently each have 40% of the IMPACT evaluation, is that remaining the same?