Assurances Document for Michigan Users

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Section 1249.b.2.a: The Research Base:

The co-principal investigators for School ADvance™ are Dr. Patricia Reeves and Patricia McNeill. Dr. Reeves is an Associate Professor of Educational Leadership and Research at Western Michigan University (since 2004) and served as a Michigan local school district central office administrator and superintendent from 1984-2004. She also served as a contracted associate executive for education policy, leadership development and credentialing and educator evaluation from 2004-2016. Patricia McNeill served as executive director for Michigan ASCD from 2010-2013 and as a Michigan district administrator and assistant superintendent for from the mid 1980s through 2010.

Additionally, the two above referenced Co-Principal Investigators and Researchers collaborated with a number of WMU faculty, doctoral assistants, school leaders, other experts in the field, and co-researchers through several major grant projects to develop the research base for the School ADvance Administrator Evaluation system. For a list of some of the major published works that informed the development of School ADvance see "Research Base References".

Development and Design of the School ADvance Administrator Frameworks and Rubrics

School ADvance™ is a research-supported framework with tools and training to assist schools and districts in developing an educator evaluation system to support learning, growth, and adaptation for teachers and administrators at the school and district level. School ADvance is also an aligned system of administrator evaluation tools, processes, and training for principals

and district leaders (including the superintendent).

The Research and Standards Base

School ADvance was developed in three stages:

1. Dr. Patricia Reeves worked with principal investigators, Dr. Jianping Shen and Dr. Van Cooley of Western Michigan University, under a grant funded by the Wallace Foundation, to study principal practices with an emphasis on evidence based decision-making. As part of the grant activity, Dr. Shen obtained permission from Dr. Robert Marzano for the development of a multi-rater instrument to assess the extent to which principals monitor the eleven "What Works in Schools" (2003) factors that Dr. Marzano and his team of researchers at McREL isolated from a meta-analysis on school level factors with positive associations with student achievement.

   Dr. Reeves constructed the principal rating instrument and, through two consecutive Wallace Foundation grants, Dr. Shen and the grant team systematically used the instrument to collect large data samples. Subsequently, Dr. Shen and two other research associates conducted reliability and validity studies. This tool was disseminated nationally through the Wallace Foundation and selected by the Michigan Department of Education as part of the MI-LIFE Leadership Development Program and the Michigan School Improvement Framework. The tool was also disseminated to the field through specialty endorsement programs sponsored by the school administrator professional associations (Michigan Association of School Administrators [MASA], Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association [MEMSPA], Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals [MASSP], Michigan ASCD, and the Michigan Association of School Boards [MASB].

   Dr. Reeves, subsequently, used the tool as one of the primary sources to inform the constructs and descriptors for development of the School ADvance principal rubrics for which she is co-author. Dr. Marzano also cites this instrument as one of the sources for his "School Leadership Evaluation Model" for principals.

2. For the second phase of the work leading up to the creation of the School ADvance Administrator Evaluation System, Dr. Reeves and graduate assistant George Aramath, spent two years examining, analyzing and synthesizing, the research literature on performance assessment and feedback systems. They focused particularly on studies that identify characteristics of performance assessment and feedback that can be positively associated with learning, growth, and adaptation. Through an extensive coding and distillation process, Dr. Reeves and Dr. Aramath found strong support for six characteristics of performance assessment and feedback systems that show positive correlations to learning, growth, and/or adaptation.

   The two researchers then organized the six characteristics into a framework for guiding schools and school districts in the design of their educator performance evaluation systems. A synopsis of the six characteristics (principles) is located in Appendix A of this Assurances Document. These six research supported characteristics also became the foundation for development of the School ADvance Administrator Evaluation System as detailed in the School ADvance Evaluation User's Guide.

3. Phase three of the work was collaboration between Dr. Reeves and Patricia McNeill, Executive Director of Michigan ASCD, and volunteer internal and external reviewers. In 2010, the two co-authors of the School ADvance Rubrics initiated a search for administrator evaluation instruments that met the requirements of Michigan's educator evaluation statutes. After an extensive review of available instruments for building and district level leaders, the

School ADvance authors found the following:

a. Developmental rubrics for use in administrator evaluations were just emerging and several major researchers had instruments in various stages of development. None of the instruments in rubric format, however, had been in use long enough for the conduct of full validation studies. The review included both rubrics and rating scales in order to include instruments such as the Val-ED rating scale, McREL's Balanced Leadership rating scale and the Data-Informed Decision-Making on High Impact Strategies Principal rating scale, which have all undergone extensive reliability and validity studies.

b. The research base for the emerging administrator evaluation rubrics was broad and each of the instruments reviewed offered areas of overlap and areas of difference. In other words, they did not map onto each other as a complete match in terms of the research supported elements addressed.

c. The standards base for the instruments was also varied, but the common denominator was the 2008 ISLLC Standards (though the authors found varying degrees of alignment with the Standards). Moreover, the instruments reviewed did not directly address standards related to technology; the inclusion of parent, student, staff and community feedback; and principals' and district leaders' management of the teacher evaluation process (all requirements of the Michigan statute).

d. The instruments reviewed also offered varying degrees of developmental language (i.e., behavioral and/or operational descriptors that represent a clearly identifiable developmental frame where one level of performance builds upon another); varying degrees of objective versus subjective, value laden, or judgmental language (i.e., observable and/or documentable descriptors versus descriptors that call for judgment or inference).

4. Phase 4 of the process for development of the School ADvance Administrator Evaluation System and Rubrics began with the conclusions derived from the phase three review:

a. There was a need for more comprehensive administrator evaluation rubrics for both principals and central office/superintendent administrators.

b. There was a need for rubrics that align the work of teachers, principals, and district leaders.

c. There was a need for rubrics with consistently observable and/or documentable descriptors.

d. There was a need for rubrics that provide administrators with a clear developmental path for growth, development, and refinement of professional practice.

e. There was a need for Administrator Evaluation tools and systems that are grounded in research supported principles/characteristics of performance assessment and feedback that supports learning, growth, and adaptation.

5. These conclusions became the criteria for creating the School ADvance Administrator Evaluation System. The co-authors (Reeves/McNeill) used the following steps in developing and vetting the framework for the School ADvance Administrator Evaluation Rubrics:

a. The authors created a crosswalk map of the ISLLC (2008) Standards, the State of Michigan preparation standards for school leaders, the National Technology Standards

for Administrators (2009), the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning (2010 draft/2011 final). The authors next identified state statutory and federal statutory Race to the Top (RTTT) criteria for educator/administrator performance and educator effectiveness and added those requirements or criteria to the framework created by our standards crosswalk map.

b. Finally, we did a cross-walk of the administrator practice domains, factors, and characteristics published by major authors and research centers: Marzano, et al; McREL, Reeves, D; Hattie & Hallinger; Shen & et al; Leithwood; Stronge; Hoyle; Darling-Hammond; Wallace Foundation, etc. The authors collapsed this cross-walk into four practice and one results domain with aligned factors and characteristics that map onto the standards cross-walk described above (See Appendix B: School ADvance Standards Alignment and Appendix C: Central Office/Superintendent Specialty Endorsement Standards).

c. Next, the authors mapped the research and standards crosswalk tables onto one another to create a broad spectrum of factors and characteristics associated with (a) statutory requirements; (b) state and national standards; and/or research findings connecting administrator practice to positive student outcomes. The authors then collapsed the broad map into five domains (one results domain and four practice domains) to frame both the Principal and the Superintendent/Central Office evaluation rubrics.

6. The final step in the process of building the School ADvance Administrator Evaluation Rubrics was developing the actual developmental descriptors for each characteristic assessed in the rubrics. The descriptors are written in such a way as to establish a clear path of growth from the lowest to the highest ratings of performance for each characteristic. There is no descriptor for ineffective. The authors avoided describing the negative. The absence of observable behaviors described in the first level (minimally effective) places the administrator in the ineffective category for that performance characteristic for now. Each level of development for each characteristic builds deeper levels of practice for that characteristic as the descriptors are read from left to right.

School ADvance Administrator Performance Levels

The School ADvance Rubrics are organized around four levels of performance: Highly Effective, Effective, Minimally Effective, and Ineffective as required by the State of Michigan statute. The authors give permission to use other comparable performance category terms according to the requirements of Michigan or other state statutes and/or user district preferences (e.g., Extended, Developed, Minimally Established, Not Established).

7. Each of the research validated School ADvance characteristics is described in behavioral terms deriving from detailed descriptions of the work associated with positive school and district results distilled from multiple studies. To create differentiated performance levels for each characteristic, Reeves/McNeill created a developmental key that applies to each characteristic as follows:

a. Ineffective or Not Established: The administrator is not able to demonstrate, at least, a minimal level of performance in the characteristic

b. Minimally Effective or Minimally Established: The administrator can demonstrate personal knowledge, compliance, and/or ownership sufficient to administer the work associated with the characteristic at a maintenance level.

c. Effective or Developed: The administrator can demonstrate the engagement, direction, and motivation with key staff and stakeholders (i.e. developing their knowledge, ownership, compliance, etc.) to conduct the critical work associated with the characteristic at a developing level.

d. Highly Effective or Extended: The administrator can demonstrate the development, motivation, and empowerment of leaders among key staff and stakeholders to conduct the critical work associated with the characteristic at an extended level; and/or the administrator can demonstrate extended personal leadership for the work associated with the characteristic at a level beyond the scope of responsibility for the position the administrator holds.

Each descriptor for the next performance level builds upon the descriptor for the previous performance level. Additionally, the descriptors in the rubrics articulate increasing levels of performance for each characteristic as per the above developmental key. Users and reviewers are encouraged to spend some time examining the language of the rubrics and the way that language provides a frame for continuous practice and results improvement. Users are also advised that rater and inter-rater reliability are greatly enhanced by the identification of specific evidence that fits the context in which the administrator works.

Ongoing Reliability, Validity, and Efficacy Studies

The first drafts of the completed rubrics were submitted for review by internal and external reviewers with an emphasis on clarity of descriptors, consistency of interpretation, and the ability to either observe and/or document the descriptor. Feedback from reviewers was incorporated into the final 1.0 version of the rubrics and School ADvance began issuing licenses for use of the rubrics in the fall of 2011. Part of the limited license agreement is a provision for the authors to access user data (anonymously) from those districts using the School ADvance rubrics in specified on- line management systems (under a separate limited licensing agreement for management system providers) for further research and development including reliability and validity studies. Since Michigan schools began use of the School ADvance rubrics for the first time in spring 2013, with the bulk of users implementing between 2013 and 2016, the researchers will began downloading user data in the summer of 2014 for conducting the validation studies. Also, the co-authors will begin working through the user's group in 2016-17 to collect data on inter-rater reliability.

System Components

Domains, Factors, and Characteristics

The School ADvance Administrator Evaluation framework starts with five domains of leadership practice for the principal and five for the central office administrator or superintendent. For all administrators, the first domain (Domain 1) is Results (in Michigan, referenced in Section 1249.b as "student growth"). School ADvance provides a framework for linking results to an administrator's evaluation that will adapt to a state growth or value added model. The Results domain allows districts to set growth or other improvement targets in a variety of ways, to provide a more robust picture of performance impact. The Results domain is also tied directly to school and district level improvement goals.

The other Four Domains for principals and central office/superintendents are broadly aligned, but also adapted to fit the differences in both level and scope of responsibility between building level and district administration. Each domain is broken down to performance Factors that correspond to major areas of responsibility found in research for building and district leaders. Within each Factor, there is also a set of 3-5 characteristics derived from deeper analysis of research findings.

Rubric Design

Each of the characteristics of the School ADvance Administrator Evaluation Framework is supported by a set of descriptors that correspond to that characteristic in ways that are observable and/or documentable. The descriptors avoid value-laden words and qualifiers that are not observable or documentable.

The Formative Rubrics
The descriptors in the Formative Rubrics are sufficiently detailed to provide administrators with explicit reference points for their work and for the ways to raise performance levels. Thus, they are useful for self-assessment, establishing a performance profile baseline, providing guidance to the collection of evidence, and developing activities for a performance growth plan.

The Summative Rubrics
The descriptors in the Summative Rubrics collapse the detailed elements from the Formative Rubrics into a summary descriptor that is useful for developing the summative evaluation. The Summative Rubric descriptors are also useful for determining priority performance areas and guiding the performance improvement planning process.
As described in the Research and Standards Basis section (pages 5-9), the authors systematically cross-referenced several sources of research findings and state/national standards (including the 2008 ISLLC Standards), and made a map of the cross-referenced standards and the research base for those standards. The authors used the resulting map to determine the specific factors and characteristics for each performance domain in the School ADvance Rubrics for both Principal and Superintendent/Central Office Administrator Evaluations. Since the research on administrator effectiveness does not address performance levels within a characteristic associated with positive impact, the authors used experience and other sources of current literature on the work of school leadership to guide the discrimination between levels of performance for each characteristic.

Other Important Features of the School ADvance Rubrics

Based on Multiple Sources of Evidence (collected over time)
The School ADvance Evaluation Rubrics are designed to assist administrators and their evaluators in developing a comprehensive profile of practice and performance. Our collaboration with various web based evaluation management systems has produced an efficient way for administrators and others who contribute observation and feedback data for an administrator's performance review and assessment to upload and link evidence, observations, feedback, and artifacts to the various domains, factors, and characteristics of the evaluation rubrics. The School ADvance training for Educator Evaluation emphasizes use of the developmental rubrics as a high utility "playbook" within which administrators and their supervisors identify priority performance areas linked to district and school improvement goals. The training also emphasizes the importance of building evidence-based portfolios to aid ongoing self-assessment, reflective practice, and alignment of practice to priority school improvement targets, and reliability and validity of supervisor ratings.

Balance Between Demonstration and Inspection

School ADvance recommends a thoughtful balance between demonstration and inspection with a strong locus of control for the person being evaluated. The user training provides assistance to both evaluators and evaluatees for establishing rater and inter-rater reliability through examples of evidence that could support each of the factors and characteristics of the administrator evaluation rubrics. The training also provides practice on having authentic and crucial conversations on: (a) performance and practice priorities; (b) performance and practice growth edges; and (c) performance and practice results. School ADvance recommends that the

administrator evaluation tools be supported by a robust educator evaluation management system and be used as the basis for an ongoing conversation between administrators and their staffs and administrators and their supervisors (including the Board of Education).

Quality Feedback from Supervisors

The School ADvance training emphasizes the importance of ongoing dialogue and interaction between administrators and their supervisors around performance and practice priorities and performance results. To assist in making this ongoing dialogue authentic and relevant to the achievement of district, school, program, and performance improvement targets, we recommend that supervisors regularly upload artifacts of their interactions with the school administrators they supervise. These artifacts can include notes from conversations, copies of communications with the administrator, observation notes, and summaries of performance and results conferences. The feature in Stages for building this evidence base keeps track of what the supervisor uploaded into the system as well as what the administrator being evaluated uploaded into the system.

Assessment of Progress on School or District Level Improvement Goals

School ADvance meets this criterion in two ways: First, the administrator evaluation rubrics include a domain for incorporating results into the performance evaluation. There are four components to the Domain 1: Results framework. These four components all require that the administrator work with district leaders (and in the case of the superintendent, the board of education) to establish improvements targets for student results at the district, school, program, and classroom levels. The four-part framework works off of those targets and accounts for four levels of attainment that link back to the administrator's evaluation (see School ADvance Rubrics).

Second, the School ADvance rating system can be used to develop three performance ratings: (a) an overall practice rating covering all elements in the rubrics; (b) a priority practice rating for domains, factors and characteristics identified by the employing district as being essential or priority performance areas; and (c) a growth rating that recognizes performance growth in either the overall all practice rating and the priority practice rating.

Finally, to assist the process of rating, School ADvance provides a Summative Rubric, which collapses all the descriptors for a given characteristic into a single summative framework for rating that entire set of descriptors (see Summative Rubrics).

Incorporation of Stakeholder (Staff, Student, Parent Feedback

School ADvance calls for the incorporation of feedback from teachers and other stakeholders as appropriate to the administrator's position in two ways: First, the system calls for the administrator to upload stakeholder feedback into their evidence documentation. Second, the rubrics for both principal and central office/superintendent evaluations include several areas where feedback is required as part of effective and/or highly effective evidence based or data informed process, e.g. school improvement.

Focus on Teaching and Learning

Domain 3 of the School ADvance Rubrics addresses two school program factors. The first factor is "High Fidelity and Reliability Instructional Programs. This factor in both the principal and central office/superintendent rubrics provides the details of how building and district leaders are held to performance criteria related to Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. The expectations for exercising curriculum, instruction, and assessment leadership, along with evidence based (data informed) decision-making, are a dominant feature in the School ADvance Rubrics.

Capacity Building

While domain 3 focuses strongly on administrators' oversight of the instructional program (see above), Domain 5, the Human Capacity Factors, provide strong direction for principals and central office administrators to systematically develop the professional capacities of staff with an emphasis on effective instructional practice. Domain 3 of the Principal Rubrics includes the Human Capacity Factors referenced above with an entire section of the rubrics that focuses on the characteristic of Performance Evaluation, Professional Development, and Leadership Development. These sections of the rubrics place emphasis on the development of effective professional practice and the cultivation of leadership capacity among staff and administrators, parents and students, and the board of education.

Training and Support

School ADvance offers a comprehensive program of training support. To find a training opportunity click here (http://www.goschooladvance.org/training-opportunities).

The Evaluation Frameworks and Rubrics

School ADvance offers evaluation frameworks and rubrics for building level, district level, and superintendents. Review the frameworks and rubrics here (http://www.goschooladvance.org/evaluation-tools).

A comprehensive instructional personnel performance review and evaluation system conclusions document can be requested from the Genesee Intermediate School District Human Resources Department at 810-591-4553.