

## Sample questions for Superintendent John White's Teacher Town Hall Meetings

### Act 1 of 2012: Teacher evaluations, tenure and compensation

- Suppose a teacher in a tested and graded subject receives an “ineffective” rating on the value added portion on the evaluation and “highly effective” on the observation portion. Is it true that the teacher will be rated “ineffective” overall? Is there a process for teachers to see their Value Added data or appeal the evaluation?
- The current version of Bulletin 130 by BESE says “Any educator receiving a rating of “ineffective” in either the student growth or the qualitative performance component of the evaluation shall receive an overall final rating of “ineffective”. Act 1 provides for a second evaluation if the teacher receives an “ineffective” on the observation portion. Does the law provide any recourse if teachers are rated “ineffective” on the growth portion of the evaluation?
- When I heard George Noell, the architect of the Value Added Model, talk about VAM, he said that any one-year snapshot of a teachers’ effectiveness is not an accurate reflection of a teacher’s ability. Multiple sets of data are required. In any year, a rating of “ineffective” or “highly effective” could be an anomaly. Why then does a teacher lose tenure and due process rights after being judged “ineffective” just one time?
- You have said that teachers who are rated “ineffective” for two years will be terminated. But a teacher rated “ineffective” once loses tenure and becomes an at-will employee with very few due process rights. Doesn’t that mean that teachers are really at risk of losing their jobs after just one “ineffective” rating?
- New teachers, or those who lose tenure, must be rated “highly effective” for five out of six years. Your statistics say that only 10% of teachers state wide will be rated highly effective in any one year and only 1% to 2% state wide will receive “highly effective” two years in a row. What do your statistics say is the probability of any teacher who does not already have tenure ever earning it?
- If there is a big discrepancy between the Value Added score and the subjective evaluation – for example, a teacher is rated “highly effective” on one and “ineffective” on another, is there some sort of automatic review to determine how such a discrepancy occurred for **both** the “value added” portion and the observation portion of the evaluation?
- Future pay raises will be based on “effectiveness as determined by evaluation results, content or license area, and experience.” There is also an “opportunity to reward teachers who go above and beyond.” Will the DOE put forth guidelines to make this a fair and unbiased process? With no increases in the MFP funding for the past four years, where will the money for pay raises come from in the future?
- When the new evaluation system in Act 54 was piloted, it included a five point scale to assess the “final composite score”. But in April, the scale was changed to the four point Danielson rubric. Does that mean we are operating under a system that has not been adequately piloted?
- If a teacher is assigned to a combination of core and non-tested graded subjects, will a teacher be evaluated using the VAM or the NTGS instrument, or both?
- What is there in the Value Added Model that identifies a teacher’s strengths or weaknesses? Will teachers be given feedback from the test scores which they can use to become more effective?
- Some teachers mentor student teachers and interns. Will the teacher’s evaluation be affected by the performance of their mentees?

### Act 2 of 2012: Charters and voucher schools

- Teachers in Louisiana public schools must be certified. But teachers in the new Type 1b charter schools don’t need to be certified. Why is that?

- Teachers in online virtual schools will be automatically certified in Louisiana, while those of us who teach in real schools worked hard to earn our certificates. Will virtual school teachers be evaluated and rated as ineffective, effective or highly effective? Will they have value added scores? Will they be fingerprinted and be subjected to criminal background checks, like teachers in real schools?
- The new law calls for five charter school authorizers in each of the eight regional market areas, and each authorizer must create at least five charter schools. That means we will have as many as 200 new charter schools springing up in the near future. How is it possible for the state to monitor and evaluate that many new schools?
- You have noted in the past that Stanford University's CREDO study says that Louisiana charter schools are performing somewhat better than charter schools in other states. The study implies that it is because we had stricter limits and accountability over charter schools. The new law opens the floodgates to the creation of more charter schools. Doesn't that erase the advantage that was mentioned in the CREDO study?
- Act 2 talks about a state fund that will use taxpayer money to provide new charter schools with startup loans. How much money is in the fund, and where does it come from?
- Private and religious schools are not subject to the same accountability as public schools. If private and religious schools don't release test scores for all their students, and they don't receive letter grades like public schools, how is it possible for parents to make an informed choice about where their child will go to school? How will a parent know if they are putting their children into a school that would have low rankings if it were held to the same standards as a public school?
- Will all students in schools accepting vouchers be tested by the same test as children in public schools or just the students who use vouchers?
- Will teachers in private and religious schools that accept vouchers be evaluated and rated as "ineffective," "effective" or "highly effective" like public school teachers? Will **all** teachers in virtual schools go through the same evaluation process as a public school teacher?
- Will students who attend private and religious schools on vouchers receive social promotions if they fail on tests that would require holding back a public school student?
- Will students who attend private and religious schools on vouchers be subject to the same discipline and expulsion policies as children in public schools?
- Will private and religious schools that accept vouchers be required to provide the same special education services as public schools?