

Setting the record straight on the evaluation law

NYSUT President Dick Iannuzzi sets the record straight on the state's new teacher and principal evaluation process in an [essay](#) summarizing the facts and countering misconceptions.

Please share Iannuzzi's essay with members to let them know the principles undergirding the agreement and the built-in safeguards against unfair evaluations. As Iannuzzi notes, the process is complex and some critics who have blogged about it are misstating the facts. Their misinterpretation of the law spreads even more anxiety in teachers and mistrust in New York's educational bureaucracy, which unfortunately has demonstrated more than its share of inefficiencies and shortcomings. The agreement ensures that 80 percent of the process for a teacher's evaluation must be collectively bargained; it retains key decisions at the local level.

Critics, such as principal Carol Burris, who claim a teacher could be effective in all three areas of an evaluation and still be labeled "ineffective," show a lack of understanding of the law, Iannuzzi says. (By the way, while the media largely ignore this detail, principals are subject to evaluations under the law, as well.) The last issue of *NYSUT United* reported the agreement and upcoming issues will continue to provide information for members and leaders.

Iannuzzi has been communicating non-stop on the evaluation agreement with local leaders and members, and to state and national media. He welcomes your feedback and questions. Email them to dialogue@nysutmail.org and follow [@RichardIannuzzi on Twitter](#).

Frequently Asked Questions on the evaluation law

NYSUT Research and Educational Services, under the direction of Vice President Maria Neira, has prepared a detailed [FAQ](#) on the many components of the new evaluation process, answering leader and member questions on scoring, choice of student tests and more.

This FAQ will reside on our [teacher evaluation website](#) and we will update it as needed, Neira said. We know this is a complicated process and we are committed to providing clear and useful information on how to make it work.

In this anti-union climate, NYSUT succeeded in protecting the role of collective bargaining and ensuring locals have a voice in the development of evaluations that are objective and fair. NYSUT will be there every step of the way to provide guidance and tools for local leaders to use with their Labor Relations Specialists to shape evaluation plans at the local level.

NYSUT: Publicizing teacher ratings "deplorable"

In a strongly worded [statement](#), NYSUT President Iannuzzi condemned the publication of teacher ratings in New York City, saying: "This sensationalized release of teacher scores from a New York City pilot project is a betrayal of the essential purpose of evaluations, which is to support all teachers in improving their effectiveness. The decision by the Bloomberg administration and the New York City Department of Education not to oppose releasing scores by individual teachers is deplorable."

As we move forward with a new statewide process for teacher evaluations, Iannuzzi said, NYSUT will vigorously defend the principle that evaluations must remain confidential and must not be released by name. "We will take every possible measure, including legal action, to prevent APPRs from being misused to publicly shame or punish teachers," Iannuzzi said. The purpose of the proposed statewide legislation is to help all teachers improve.

Iannuzzi cited an unlikely ally who called publicizing teachers' individual performance assessments "a big mistake." In a [New York Times op-ed](#), Microsoft founder Bill Gates said, "Developing a systematic way to help teachers get better is the most powerful idea in education today ... The surest way to weaken it is to twist it into a capricious exercise in public shaming."

Iannuzzi discusses next steps in eval with local presidents

NYSUT's third tele-town hall conversation between President Dick Iannuzzi and hundreds of local presidents this week focused on the new agreement on Annual Professional Performance Reviews. He explained how this agreement incorporates significant safeguards against abuse, safeguards that are unmatched in any other state. It requires the specifics of 80 percent of evaluations to be collectively bargained and limits the use of state standardized tests to 20 percent, rather than the 50 percent the state had been seeking.

Iannuzzi made it clear that NYSUT will vigorously oppose any efforts to release evaluation scores or use them to publicly target teachers.

He also pledged NYSUT will be "extremely" vigilant: holding the State Education Department accountable for its areas of responsibility; challenging ratings based on a flawed measure or lack of support; and providing the guidance and support needed for locals to negotiate fair evaluation processes and develop state-required Student Learning Objectives.

"We understand the pressure you face," said Iannuzzi. "NYSUT is diligently monitoring every step, and we will push it right back at SED if it is not being done right. If major flaws develop, we will hold SED accountable. We have no trouble calling out the commissioner."

NYSUT Vice President Maria Neira notes that union staff is gearing up to provide regional training on [Student Learning Objectives](#) to bring expertise to the field. (SLOs are what SED will require districts to use for teacher evaluations to measure student growth in non-tested subject areas.)

NYSUT is also developing a clearinghouse of guidance and model language for locals to use in concert with their Labor Relations Specialists in negotiating evaluation processes and selecting appropriate local measures. The union is pressing SED for a process to incorporate student attendance into any measure of student achievement.

For more go to our [teacher evaluation website](#).