

Kansas KEEP Pilot Participant Meeting Summary

KSDE and REL Central at Marzano Research Corporation, Newman University, Wichita, KS

10:00 am to 3:00 pm, February 19, 2014

The KEEP Pilot meeting was convened at the Newman Center Auditorium at 10 a.m. About 80 administrators and teachers attended the session.

After providing an overview of the day, KSDE staff presented and discussed the instructional practice protocol, summarizing its development and use. Immediately following, KSDE staff reviewed results of a survey administered to evaluate the KEEP pilot to date (see attached PowerPoint). Staff remarked that the results showed good progress and some common implementation challenges.

REL Central staff then facilitated a brainstorming session where groups where participants volunteered to get into groups that discussed challenges associated with understanding the KEEP system; orientation to KEEP; provision of feedback to teachers; specific KEEP components; and specific KEEP processes. The group recorded the highlights of their conversations. Specific suggestions for meeting challenges identified by the groups included:

1. Currently, many staff does not have a clear understanding of the KEEP system. Only those teachers whose year it is to be evaluated understand the requirements. KSDE should provide a stronger orientation to the KEEP system and materials that are clear and can be easily presented and understood by teachers.
2. The KEEP system does not lend itself to measuring personal characteristics important to teachers' roles, including following the contract, coming to work on time, and so on. Consider adding those components to KEEP.
3. At present, users must complete specific steps in an exact order which may not match the sequence of steps taking place at the district or school. If users do not follow that order, they are locked out. This has created a lot of frustration. Consider opening all aspects of KEEP for data entry, not just one at a time.
4. KEEP has prompted high quality reflection conversations with staff during evaluation times. Principals should plan for these conversations.
5. KEEP nurtures professional conversations about instructional goals. Information should be provided to help teachers think about how to write a good professional goal.
6. It is difficult to make improvement suggestions for excellent teachers. KEEP guidance should provide guidance and/or not require suggestions to be made once a teacher is deemed highly effective.
7. KEEP is hard to maneuver. Enhancements should be made to the system.

8. Teachers have difficulty providing reactions or giving input to evaluators. Provide an easier way for teachers to do this and examples of appropriate input.
9. KEEP appears to require principals to be an “all-knowing expert.” Consider allowing subject matter experts the opportunity to provide input to the principal for topics on which principals are not experts.
10. Principals need guidance on conducting difficult conversations. Consider developing some FAQs or guidance briefs for this topic.
11. The system does not tell the user when they are finished. Consider adding a component to the system that informs that user when everything is complete or what is missing.
12. Consider developing a training of trainers approach and adding guidance to existing training. Add a checklist of activities and timeline; an indication of fields that must be completed.
13. Open all sections of KEEP at the beginning of the year.
14. Allow individuals to save drafts in progress.
15. Provide videos of highly effective practices. Help users to identify the differences between effective and highly effective practices.
16. Provide calibration training for KEEP evaluators to improve inter-rater reliability.
17. Provide information on how to measure growth within the school setting.
18. Work with universities to inform them about the expectations for practice embedded within KEEP so they can better prepare teacher candidates.
19. Help provide information for subject specific evaluations.
20. Provide activities for teachers to understand KEEP components. For example, divide teachers into groups; have them discuss the highly effective portions of the rubrics; have teachers define what each component would look like; and provide or solicit ideas of examples for artifacts.
21. Components: The goal setting component has too much redundancy and does not allow enough time to reach goals. Teachers are frustrated. Review and revise the component and allow more time.
22. The rubrics are too “black and white,” meaning you either met or did not meet them. Consider more flexibility such as partially met.
23. The timeline is too rigid. Consider adding flexibility.
24. The user cannot edit the date in the observation process component once saved. Consider allowing revision.

25. Consider adding a notification system for post-conferencing.
26. Web Programming: separate save and submit. Open up the artifact area – it is too confined. The time out length is too short. Allow more time before being timed out. Make it easy to access an archive.
27. Allow both the evaluator and the teacher being evaluated to see the evaluation artifacts.
28. Beginning teachers may not know if they are in a one-cycle or two-cycle evaluation. Perhaps something can be added to the “Assign Evaluator” page.
29. On page 32 of the KEEP guidance, it would be helpful to add a suggested timeline of that indicates when each task should be conducted and completed.
30. It would be helpful to allow users to open multiple forms at the same time.
31. Consider developing an online walkthrough tool for principals to use as they observe. This could be like the McREL Power Walkthrough tools.
32. Conferences and summary rating – the program is designed so that you cannot view the next form until each step is complete. It would be helpful to view all of the forms so that the user knows the expectations.
33. Wording and terminology on the superintendent evaluation process was too difficult for non-educators to interpret. Board members would like a more simplified explanation.

The group was thanked for its work and dismissed for lunch.

After lunch, the group learned about student growth measures that must be added to the evaluation system. KSDE staff discussed which measures were acceptable and provided a matrix with sample measures for various grade levels. Questions were asked about the criteria for technical quality, the number of measures that must be used, what to do if there are no existing standardized academic measures (e.g., for music or physical education teachers), what to do for early grades, and how to combine or weight the measures. Guidance was provided for each question and the group was reminded that academic achievement scores should comprise about 20% or more of the multiple student growth measures that are reported. Participants requested more guidance in writing and perhaps through regional workshops.

In the last session of the day, participants were asked to prioritize data enhancements for the KEEP system. They were asked to indicate their priorities using a matrix provided by KSDE. Individuals at each table completed a matrix, and then each table aggregated its results. The following list provides the priorities provided by participants:

1. Notification system (8 tables)
2. Ability to upload artifacts throughout the process (6 tables)
3. All saved/archived available to see (6 tables)

4. Ability to edit goals throughout the process (5 tables)
5. Teachers goals page allow save at any time (4 tables)
6. Display the step in process for evaluation (4 tables)

The next set of recommendations was provided by 3 tables:

1. Human resource access
2. Direct access to submit informal observations
3. Expandable boxes
4. Ability to have 2 evaluations at same time
5. View all evaluatees
6. Notification of successful save
7. Multiple evaluators
8. File size increase

Two tables prioritized the following:

1. Save and print buttons are constantly available
2. Cooperative can be assigned as evaluators or observers in any district that they serve
3. Allow cut and pasting of text only
4. The ability of evaluates to access their evaluations when they are not in a district that participates in KEEP
5. The submit to KEEP button should be clarified

All other suggestions on the list received priority votes by one table each except the following, which received no votes:

- Private school access
- Technical support staff ability to see a test environment
- Individuals who have not yet started an evaluation should be listed.

In addition, some tables provided suggestions:

- Ability to save and edit as you go.
- Spell check.
- Submit multiple years of artifacts.
- Separate submit and save buttons.
- Artifacts open until summary submitted.
- Open all areas at once.
- Both the evaluator and evaluatee should be able to enter goals.
- Users should be able to add informal evaluations in the repository
- Users should be able to work in the summary page throughout the process.