

FAQs - Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why does the Tulsa Model spend time on assisting Effective Teachers (rated at 3) to improve their practices? Doesn't SB2033 only address Teachers falling into the performance categories of 1- Ineffective and 2 – Needs Improvement?

The Tulsa Model was designed as a performance-based evaluation system and process that would assure that every classroom, every child and young adult would have an Effective Teacher. Yes, SB2033 focuses on less than effective categories of performance and certainly the Tulsa Model addresses that mandate with a comprehensive, detailed and supportive system of sequenced processes. Effectiveness is viewed on a continuum. Effectiveness can be enhanced within all educators; therefore, the Tulsa Model forwards a platform of support, guidance and suggestion for those Teachers who wish to move beyond their current levels of effectiveness and achieve efficacy in their impact on students.

2. Each Domain has an assigned WEIGHT by percentage. Can we change the distribution of Weights? What is the purpose and significance of assigning Weights?

Nearly 3 years of implementation of the Tulsa Model and participation of 3,000 Teachers and 150 Evaluators on an annual basis crafted the parameters of the Tulsa Model. The assignment of percentage weight by Domain (SB2033 performance measures) was adjusted over this extended period to respond to the professional views of all stakeholders to the process. The impact on student achievement and performance prompted the current configuration of weights: Classroom Management – 30%; Instructional Effectiveness – 50%; Professional Development / Continuous Improvement – 10%; Interpersonal Skills – 5%; and, Leadership – 5%. In other words, 80% of the Observation and Evaluations Processes focus upon Classroom Management and Instructional Effectiveness. This weighting is a material and substantive component of the Tulsa Model and cannot be changed or altered.

3. Why is it imperative that you, as the evaluator, share all Tulsa Model documents (Rubric, Observation Form, Evaluation Form, Evaluator Handbook) with all staff? How would you distribute them? With such a volume of information what is the best approach for sharing / explanation?

The Tulsa Model is built upon a foundation of collaboration, transparency and sharing. There should be no mystery as to effectiveness expectations and the actual measures that will be used in the observation and evaluation of staff. A roll-out plan needs to be designed that best meets the needs of an individual school and staff. There is an expression “how do you eat an elephant?” And, the answer is “one bite at a time.” The Tulsa Model should be presented in a brief overview (PowerPoint suggested and provided under Training Materials on the Tulsa Model Portal). This will develop a sense of the comprehensiveness of the Model. Next, each component should be shared in sequence fashion, e.g., Rubric, then Observation+, then Feedback and Support (Push Pins and Personal Development Plans), etc. As many interactive, hands-on activities should be included. Again, four (4) hands-on activities are included within the Portal under Training Materials. Once information is delivered it should be systematically reinforced throughout the year. Additionally, throughout the year staff may exit and new staff arrives. There must be a plan for sharing / explaining the Tulsa Model to those new arrivals.

The first two years of Tulsa Model roll-out within Tulsa had every staff member receive a copy of every written component of the Model, including the Evaluator’s Handbook. Every office, library and faculty room had a copy of the documents available within the room. Important components, e.g., the Flowchart of Observations and Evaluations, were laminated and posted in faculty rooms.

4. You have five (5) new Probationary Teachers to your building and three (3) new Career Teachers via transfers. How do you introduce the Tulsa Model to the new staff members and seasoned staff members (remember... the Tulsa Model is NEW to everyone)? What is the best way to schedule Observations, Conferences and Evaluations?

Since the Tulsa Model will be NEW to everyone on staff, everyone needs a complete and full in-serving on the Model. See response to #3 above. Additionally, new Teachers (those not previously exposed to a performance-based system) may need additional sessions explaining the components of the Model. Using established PLCs may be well suited for these efforts.

“Catch up” is always problematic. Do not allow yourself to procrastinate. The most successful Evaluators plan their observations, conferences and evaluations with the onset of the school year. Yes, the dynamics of running a school will turn that schedule inside out. So, use a pencil. But, you MUST plan ahead. Use a whiteboard, post-it notes, or Outlook schedule your staff.

The question is often raised as to the requirement of announced or unannounced observations. The Tulsa Model is silent on this issue. Local negotiated language and/or past practice determined that issue.

5. What is the difference between Walk-throughs and Observations? Do you have to do Walk-throughs? What is the value of Walk-Throughs? May you replace Walk-Throughs for Observations?

Walk-throughs are short visits (5-10 minutes) to “get the gist” of what is occurring in the instructional setting. They do not require an observation form or an observation conference. There is a provided Walk-Through Form that may be used at the option of an evaluator. Walk-Through are not required; however, they have the potential of adding data (informing) the observation and evaluation processes.

Observations are an evaluator’s intentional study and analysis of the teacher’s performance (e.g., the teacher’s classroom instruction) from the date of the last observation or evaluation forward (whichever is later). Classroom observations must be a minimum of 20 to 30 so that there is sufficient time to thoughtful assess multiple aspects of the teacher’s performance. Observations cannot be replaced.

See Section 5, pages 12-14 of the Evaluation Handbook for Evaluators.

6. What are “Inter-Rater Reliability Observations?” What are their purpose / value; what will you learn from them; and do you have to do them? What are the purposes of Calibration Training and the viewing of videos? Will you have to take another certification test on calibration?

“Inter-Rater Reliability Observations” occur when a Tulsa Model “certified trainer or evaluator” simultaneously conducts an observation of a teacher with assigned building evaluator. Following the observation, the two adjourn to the office and conference as to observation rating results. The goal is to “hone” the rating calibration skills of the building evaluator by increasing rating accuracy and consistency.

Calibration training is a requirement of the Tulsa Model and, in fact, is a requirement for all Oklahoma performance-based frameworks. Calibration training has the same intent as Inter-Rater Reliability Observations (IRROs); however, within the Tulsa Model Calibration Training uses the process of video viewing. Again, the goal is to “hone” the rating calibration skills of the building evaluator by increasing rating

accuracy and consistency. IRROs are not required, but of significant value. Yes, all Evaluators will have to successfully pass a certification test on calibration.

7. You met with your Superintendent and he said that you will only participate in the Tulsa Model with a sampling of staff and pick and choose which components to pilot. Which components are optional, if any?

The use of “pilot” was a most unfortunate and misinterpreted choice of terms. Why, because there are many interpretations of “pilot,” often defined to “fit” the needs of the user. Simply put, NO, the Tulsa Model cannot be “sampled” like an appetizer. Every component, every timeline, every form used of material and substantive design must be adhered to throughout the 2012-13 school year.

8. Can we use the Tulsa Model’s performance-based Evaluation system for high-stakes (employment decisions) if we have not abandoned our current Board Policies for evaluation? What are the advantage / disadvantage of holding onto our current model?

During the 2012-13 school year, evaluation scores and data from the piloted evaluation systems shall not be used by a school district as the basis of an employment decision UNLESS the school district has adopted the piloted evaluation system as its official teacher evaluation policy/system for the district (replacing the prior evaluation system). In the absence of Board adoption of the Tulsa model/framework as its official evaluation policy/system prior to the beginning of the 2012-13 school year, a DUAL platform of evaluation will be needed – the current and in-place system used by the district for high-stakes employment decision-making, with the Tulsa model as a no stakes “pilot.” With Board adoption of the Tulsa model/framework prior to the beginning of the 2012-13 school year, then the Tulsa model becomes the high-stakes evaluation system. The prior system is replaced.

9. You received a directive from your Superintendent stating that you are not going to do 2 Observations prior to an Evaluation. You will be doing 1 Observation of 45 – 60 minutes in length... the equivalent of two (2) Observations of 20 to 30 minutes. Is that OK?

No. The Tulsa Model process requires two (2) observations (20 to 30 minutes each in length) prior to an evaluation. The Tulsa Model was approved by the OSDE and must be followed as written. Specifically, material or substantive alteration to the Tulsa Model is not permitted.

10. What is the rationale behind having ONE Evaluator conducting all steps of the Evaluation processes from A to Z? Why cannot 2 Evaluators split the work with one evaluator doing one observation and another doing the second?

A performance-based observation / evaluation process is complex. It occurs on a continuum of activity, review and analysis of effectiveness. It requires that a full and complete picture is maintained in view. Its efficacy is reduced through a piecemeal approach. It cannot be reduced to an “averaging” of thoughts between two evaluators.

11. What is the purpose of an Artifact File? Is it required? What do you do when a Teacher submits completely and totally non-related artifacts to the Indicators? How would you share the concept of an Artifact File at a staff meeting? What are the advantages and disadvantages in using an Artifact File from the perspective of the Teacher and the Evaluator?

On a completely voluntary basis, a teacher may provide his or her evaluator with additional evidence of professional proficiency in the form of a portfolio or artifact file/binder for purposes of his or her evaluation. This is allowed; however, such evidence is not required. Moreover, an evaluator should be careful to not suggest that teachers produce a portfolio or artifact file, as they may feel as if it is an implied requirement or expectation of the evaluator. The portfolio and artifact file is simply a tool for expanding / prompting the thought processes of both evaluators and educators, since teachers regularly perform tasks, create documents, and take on responsibilities that are significant and valuable despite their commonplace nature.

12. Why do you have to do face-to-face conferencing following Observations, Evaluations and PDPs? Why can't an electronic forwarding suffice? Why does it have to have within 5 instructional days? What are the consequences if you do not follow the process?

The practice of face-to-face conferencing supports the Tulsa Model's goals of transparency, communication, and customized feedback and support. Conferencing within five days of an observation assures feedback and support occurs in a timely manner. Failure to adhere to the requirements of the Model will invalidate the process.

13. You gave a PDP with 3 areas of concern (Indicators that fell below the Effective ranking). Why can't you just cite the Indicators and tell the Teacher that it is her

responsibility to come up with solutions to achieve my effectiveness expectation?
What is this Follow-Up PDP Reporting all about? What do I have to do? When
do you do it? What if you do not do it?

SB 2033 requires comprehensive remediation plans and instructional coaching for all teachers rated as needs improvement or ineffective. It is the responsibility of the evaluator to clearly specify levels of expected performance and provide customized support. The Tulsa Model requires a sequenced, detailed approach of feedback and support as delineated by the use of a SMART-formatted action plan. If non-compliance occurs you are subjecting yourself to a challenge of the validity of the evaluation process.

14. What is this Follow-Up PDP Reporting all about? What do I have to do? When do I do it? What if I do not do it?

The evaluator shall meet with the teacher to review his or her success in meeting the requirements and goals of the PDP in a follow-up progress review conference, which should occur in relation to the timeframes established in the PDP. This follow-up is a necessary component of all PDPs. Follow-up documentation **must** appear within the original PDP in the designated area of the PDP Form. The timeframe for meeting the goals and actions in the PDP may not exceed two months. This is a mandate within SB2033 and non-compliance will lead to the invalidation of the PDP process.

15. You gave a PDP with 4 areas of concern by Indicator, but that is not the entire list of Indicators that the Teacher has to work on. How and when do you address the other 3 areas? You do not wish to give the impression that there are only 4 problem areas.

It is a wise decision to focus on 3 or 4 “priority” Indicators so as not to overwhelm a staff member with the onset of a performance-based system. Give them an opportunity to experience success and movement to higher levels of effectiveness. However, you can ill-afford to ignore other Indicators. It is suggested that you insert language near the bottom of the PDP form that forwards this type of approach: “During our conferences we also discussed the Indicator issues of (insert), (insert) and (insert). At the point that we, you and I, feel progress has been achieved in our first cluster of Indicators, then we will turn our attention to the other Indicators and work side-by-side in the spirit of feedback and support. This second tier of personal development planning may take the form of a new PDP.

16. School calendars are tight enough and now you expect a 10 day window between the last Observation Conference and the next Observation. Why the huge delay? Is there a way of getting around the 10 days? Why are some days exempted from the Observation Process? What is the rationale?

SB2033 clearly states and implies throughout its summary that there must be an adequate opportunity for feedback and support. An Evaluator cannot go into a room on day 14, issue an Observation Form or even a PDP, identifying 4 Indicators that will need significant attention to achieve effectiveness on the part of the staff member, AND return on day 16 to measure the level of improvement. If the expected, corrective action is complex, and requires an appropriate learning curve, then an adequate, supported time must be awarded.

17. Why are some days exempted from the Observation Process? Again, you are limiting my days to observe. What is the rationale?

Schools are dynamic academic and social settings. There are events that “disrupt” in a positive way the focus on academics yet are needed components to be woven into the fabric of the culture of the school. Pep rallies, holiday parties, return from competitions, award ceremonies, etc. all add to the definition of “school.” Logic and common sense should prevail in the scheduling of Observations, Conferences and Evaluations. The day before and the day after a scheduled or unanticipated extended break should be avoided.

18. When do you use a “Push Pin” approach and when do you issue a Personal Development Plan (PDP) on that same issue? What are the advantages / disadvantages of Push Pin use versus PDP use?

Push Pins are less formal, yet documented approaches to remedy areas of concern. In and by themselves they do not achieve a level of intervention that other situations may warrant. However, a “sequence” of accelerated action step-by-step is required if the concern does not evaporate. It is the professional judgment of the Evaluation to determine which “tool” will be most effective within the parameters of: the situation; the affected staff member; and concern for school-wide consistency.

A Personal Development Plan (PDP) is a 2nd tier approach to providing feedback and support (concept mandated by SB2033). It codifies and formalizes those areas of effectiveness concern via a prescribed template that requires: 1) the citing / summarizing of the situations and/or Observation / Evaluation details; 2) providing a list of expectations; 3) providing an Action Plan using a SMART format (specific,

measurable, attainable, resources attached/identified, and timeline included; and, providing a Follow-Up Progress Reporting within a two month window.

19. I heard that we have to write narrative comments for any and all 4 – Highly Effective and 5 – Superior ratings on the bottom of the Evaluation Form. What are the consequences of not doing it?

SB2033 mandates that rankings of Highly Effective and Superior be narratively documented providing specifics regarding the “why” behind the award of such rankings. Non-compliance would be a violation of SB2033 and you would create internal issues with the staff who is expecting comments for Highly Effective and Superior.