

Developing Administrator Confidence and Skill in Using NEPF

Overview

Humboldt County School District (HCSD) partnered with the Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program (NRPDP) for the purpose of better implementing the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) in the school year of 2015-16. The goals were to develop a level of capacity and comfort among school administrators with the framework as a means for improving instruction. Since the partnership was focused only on administrative training, the specific goals were:

1. Principals and assistant principals will feel more comfortable assigning scores using the NEPF instructional standards and indicators.
2. Principals will feel more confident while assigning scores.
3. Principals will identify challenges in the system and make recommendations for process changes at the state level.

Training

The training was scheduled to be delivered four hours per month for eight months, starting in September. The materials used for the training were the Inter-Rater Reliability training modules developed by Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing (CRESST), which was commissioned by the Teachers and Leaders Council. The primary for delivering the training was Aaron Hansen, NNRPDP Leadership Coordinator, who received module training from Margaret Heritage, former CRESST Director. The modules were designed to have administrators watch videos (11-15 min) of a teacher delivering instruction at various grade levels, within various subjects, and with various demographics of students. Then participants assigned scores using the NEPF rubric and scoring guides. Participants compared their scores with a learning partner, and then in groups of four, coming to consensus through discussion. Once consensus was achieved, the groups reviewed and discussed with the NNRPDP coordinator a set of master scorer's scores and notes provided by CRESST. The purpose of these modules was to align participant thinking with that of the master scorers'. The intent of these modules was that administrators across the state would experience the same modules with the same processes in order to achieve some rater reliability across the state.

All responding participants indicated that the training was either effective or highly effective.

Measuring Progress

The process for measuring the goals listed above was to administer the same survey questions to administrators, once at the beginning of the year and once at the end of the year. An additional three questions were posed on the post survey.

Survey Questions

1. *I could explain the NEPF instructional standards to a colleague.*
2. *I can name the five instructional standards included in the NEPF.*
3. *I feel comfortable in my ability to use the NEPF rubric to give accurate scores for my teachers' practice.*

4. *What was your comfort level at the beginning of this year in your ability to assign accurate scores to your teachers' practice?*
5. *What is your comfort level in justifying your scores with evidence as you meet with your teachers?*
6. *What is your comfort level in justifying your scores with evidence as you meet with contentious teachers you supervise?*
7. *I have a system for collecting and organizing evidence for teacher evaluations.*
8. *To what degree do you believe the NEPF evaluation system is doable?*
9. *To what degree do you believe the NEPF evaluation system will change instructional practices?*
10. *To what degree do you believe the NEPF framework will better allow you to recognize and provide meaningful feedback to your highly effective teachers?*
11. *To what degree do you believe the NEPF framework will better allow you to hold ineffective teachers accountable compared to the old system?*
12. *Do you feel like you have received sufficient training for assigning accurate scores to your teachers?*
13. *What currently is your greatest obstacle to implementing the NEPF evaluation system well?*

In addition to the original questions, principals and assistant principals were asked the following questions during the post survey:

1. *How effective do you feel the training has been?*
2. *If you could suggest a change in the NEPF evaluation process, what would it be?*
3. *What resources, if any, do you feel that you need to more effectively use the NEPF to improve instruction?*

Results

Upon request the full data set may be made available. Some of the more notable results are represented in Figures 5 through 11 below.

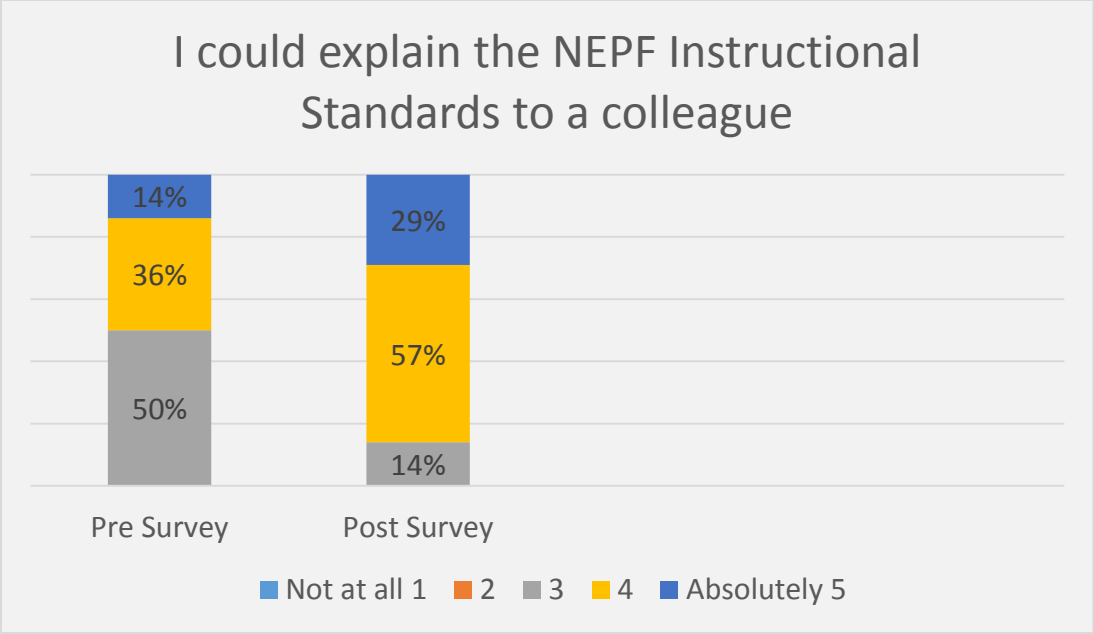


Figure 1: Explaining Instructional Standards to a Colleague

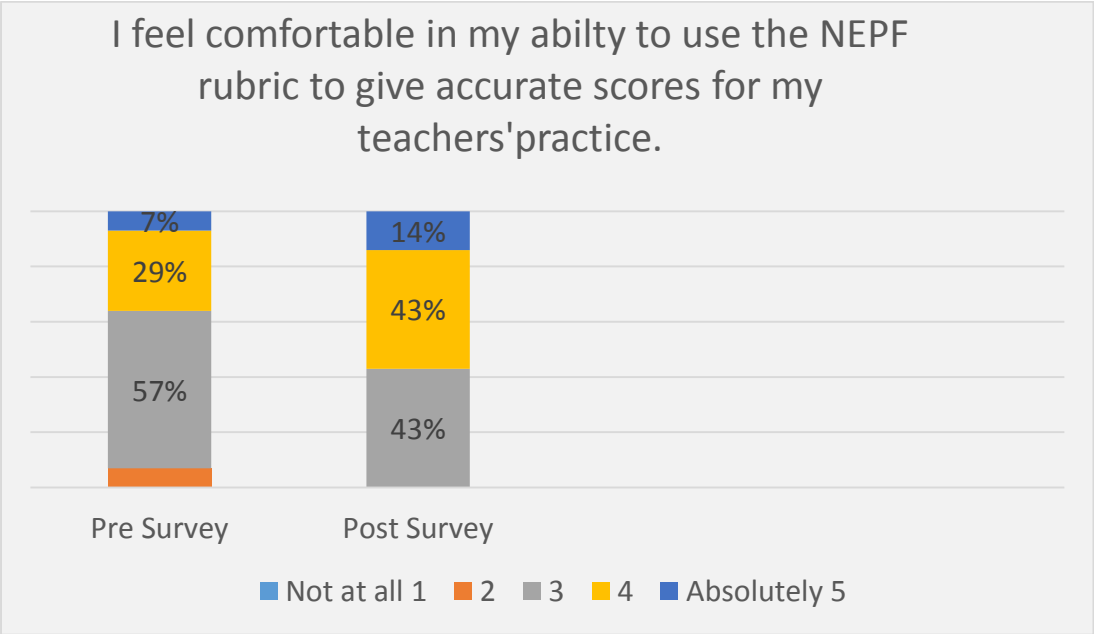


Figure 2: Use of NEPF Rubric

What is your comfort level in justifying your scores with evidence as you meet with your teachers?

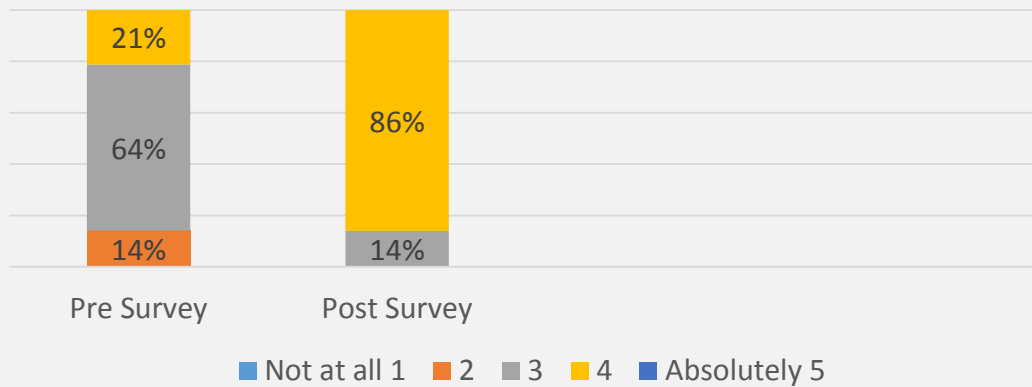


Figure 3: Comfort Level in Justifying Scores

To what degree do you believe that the NEPF evaluation system is doable?

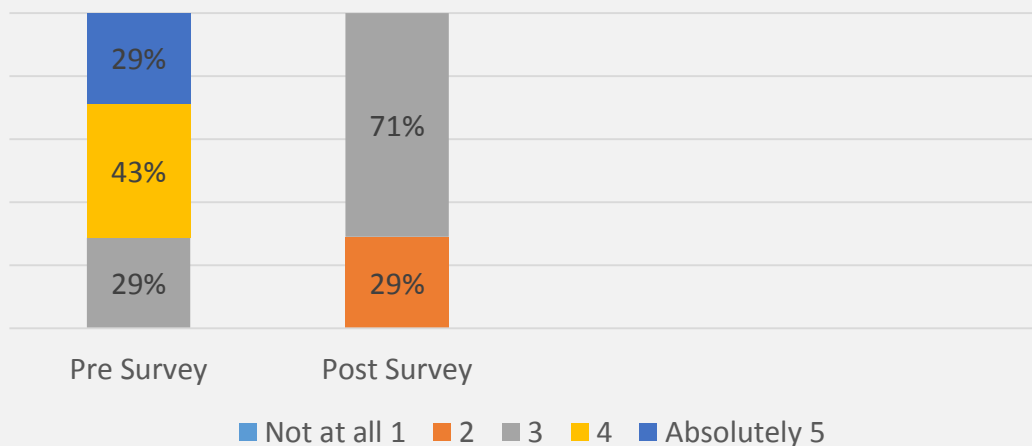


Figure 4: Belief that NEPF is Doable

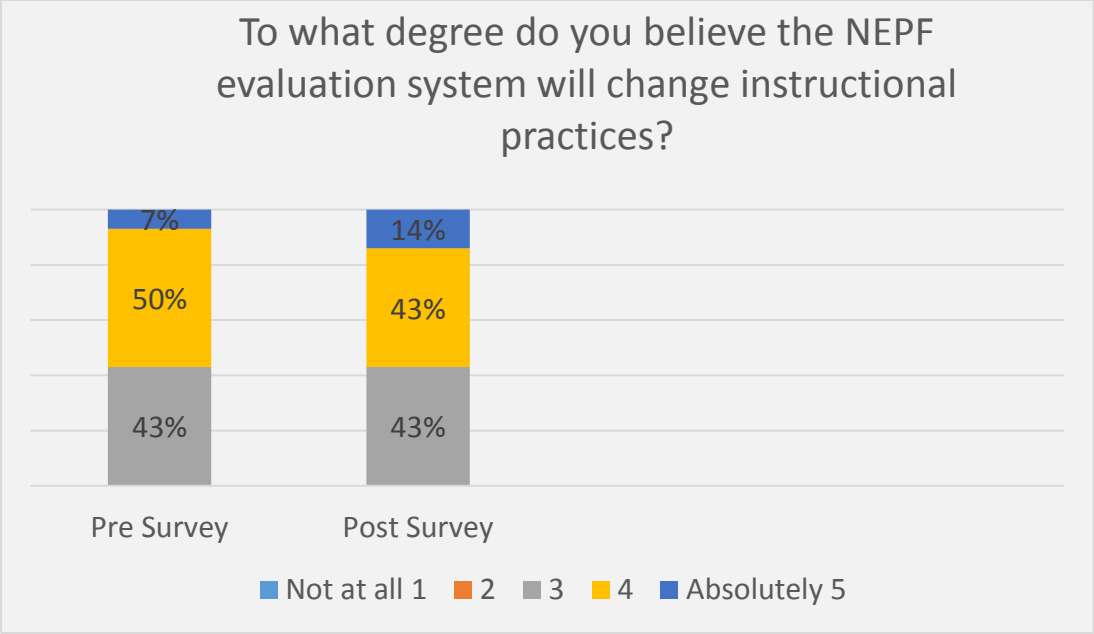


Figure 5: Belief NEPF Will Change Instruction

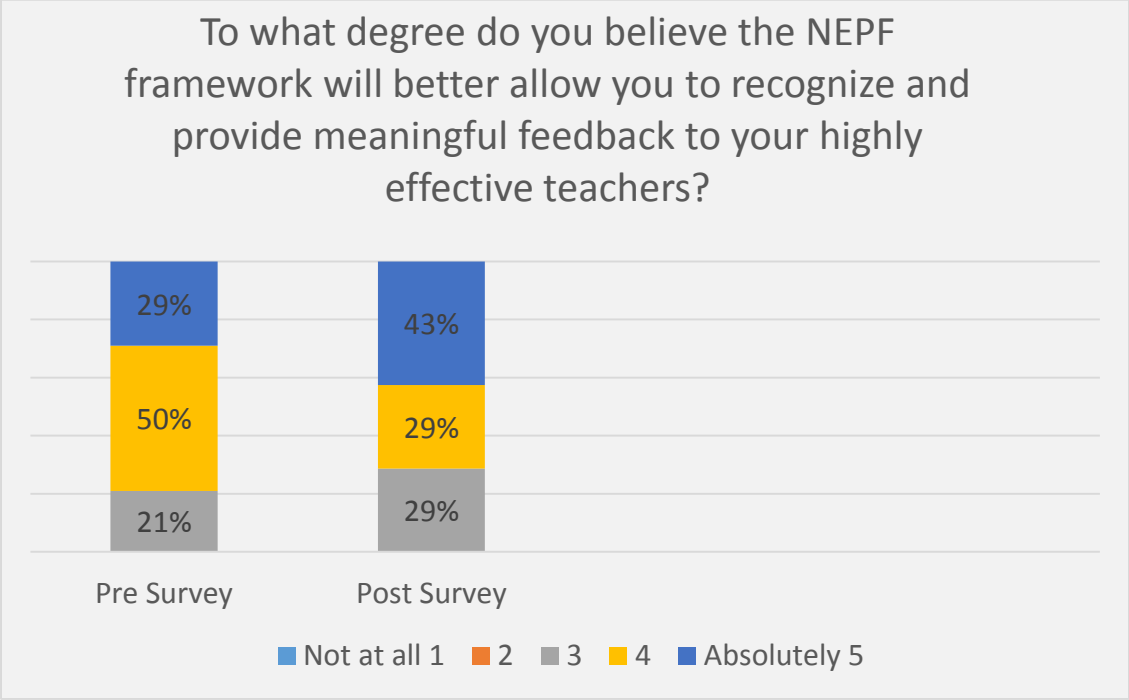


Figure 6: NEPF and Effective Feedback

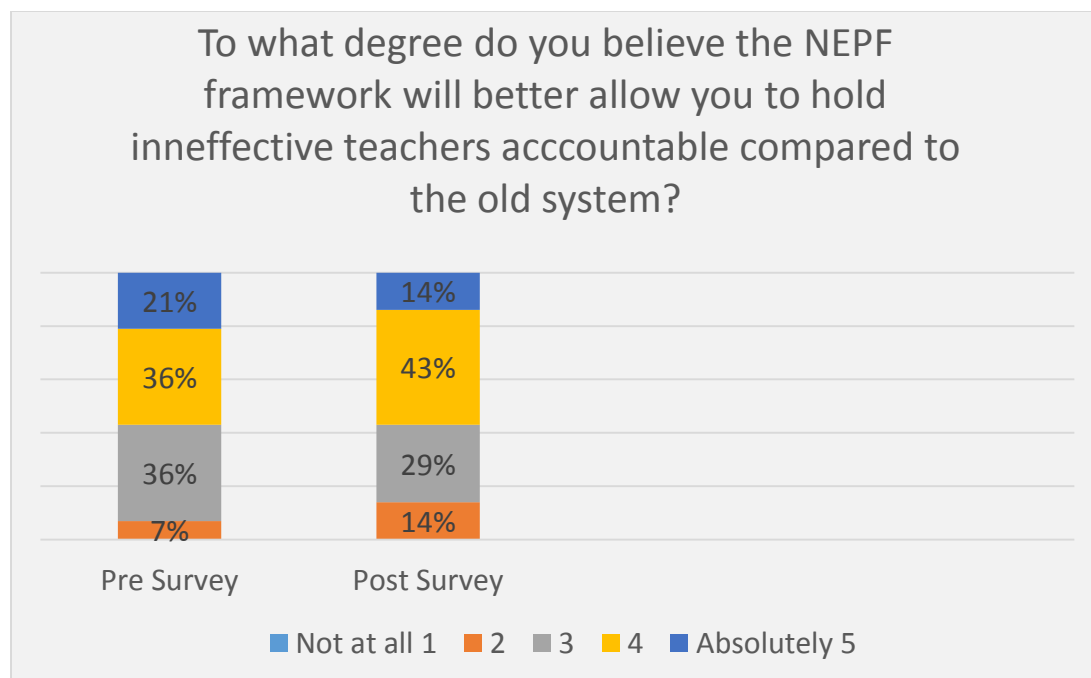


Figure 7: NEPF and Accountability

Narrative Comment

Following is a sample of the responses to the written response questions on the post survey:

Q 1. What currently is your greatest obstacle to implementing the NEPF evaluation system well?

- “Getting into classrooms regularly to truly ascertain levels of implementation.”
- “I feel like it is taking me entirely too long. I question if I am over processing it. Am I not managing my time efficiently? This is overwhelming and very frustrating.”
- “Time-Time-Time”
- “Time!”
- “The learning process we have engaged in is valuable and effective. However, the process for writing the evaluations using the Summative Evaluation document is tedious and time consuming.”
- “I love the NEPF... I think it is Too much to evaluate anyone on in one year’s time and therefore in turn takes away from teaching and preparation time to try and collect artifacts and connect with standards etc. Its asking too much at once.”
- “This system is no different that the Danielson model. We junked that because it was a check list. This is no different. We now just ask teachers to scan things in the computer and "prove it," or check it off the list, which is really ineffective”

Q 2. If you could suggest a change in the NEPF evaluation process, what would it be?

- “Checklists on final evaluation indicators so less time-consuming.”
- “Consolidate some of the indicators and mandatory evidence sources. There is a lot of redundancy and it creates more time and work.”
- “Go back to a system for Teachers to "focus" on say 2 Standards a year, but need to include all within their individual Instructional Practices. The next year would be 3 Standards. 2. Also, the amount of time an Admin. is putting into all evaluations is unreasonable. Come up with a check off sheet for your effective-highly effective Teachers to help spend necessary time working with your lower end Teachers. In a sense you would also be more likely to truly identify the lower end Teachers. Reminder, Teachers aren't banging on our doors to get into the Nevada School Systems to Teach.”
- “Evaluate on 2 standards each year, so teachers can focus in on those two in depth. Only ask for 1 artifact per indicator. I feel as if it was too overwhelming for teachers this year.”
- “I would like to see a checklist for each standard and indicator where you simply check off the evidence you have observed and then based on what you have checked off a number can be assigned.”

What resources, if any, do you feel that you need to more effectively use the NEPF to improve instruction?

- “Training time for teachers!”
- “Time for administrators.”
- “Possibly timeline/requirement document samples to track observations and evaluations. Perhaps a look into what other districts have in place to make this work.”

Discussion

As the 2015-16 school year began, the district administrators had already received significant amounts of training in the standards, but the focus of that training had not yet been on scoring. Despite the prior exposure to the standards, there was high levels of anxiety, not just in the district but state wide, related to the new evaluation system. In part, the anxiousness came simply from the fact that the system has potentially high consequences for individual educators, and it was unfamiliar. Many administrators lacked confidence in their ability to use the tool to fairly evaluate the level of effectiveness of educators.

What became apparent as the training continued throughout the year, along with administrators learning through the experience of doing live evaluations, was that administrators did become more comfortable with assigning scores and became more confident in the viability of those scores.

However, it is noteworthy to point out that, while their level of efficacy regarding their ability to make accurate scores went up, administrator beliefs about the system's viability did not raise commensurately. In fact, when asked if the system is doable, respondents reported beliefs

overwhelmingly declined. Also worthy of notice is that respondents' beliefs either stayed static or improved when asked about whether the system would help them better recognize highly effective teachers or hold ineffective teachers accountable. The seeming contrast of these findings are best answered in the narrative answers that were given by respondents.

Overwhelmingly, respondents named time or the unwieldy process of the actual evaluation as their number one obstacle for implementing the system as designed. The data suggests that while administrators can develop confidence in using the NEPF and their belief in its intentions of providing better feedback to all teachers, they simply do not feel like they have the time to do it.

Recommendations and Reflections for Future Viability of NEPF

The NEPF process is very labor intensive, particularly if done well. However, it isn't the labor itself that is holding the system back. It is not difficult for most administrators to see the potential power of teachers receiving constructive feedback through a common framework, using a common vocabulary, precisely describing what they do well and what they can do better. Despite the potential, the time demand on a typical administrator throughout a typical day is what is inhibiting most administrators from using the system as intended.

If the system is to have a chance at realizing its potential, the state or districts must start to allocate resources to schools to garner the time needed. With appropriate resources, schools could hire or assign one leader as a true leader of instruction that will use the NEPF system as intended, or help redefine the principal's day to day role to become the leader of instruction by hiring additional staff to manage the day to day managerial duties of a school. It is apparent that without these changes, the NEPF evaluation system will never fully realize its complete potential of improving instruction and learning at the scope for which it was created.