SCORE

State Collaborative on Reforming Education

SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE TEACHING IN TENNESSEE:

LISTENING AND GATHERING FEEDBACK ON TENNESSEE'S TEACHER EVALUATIONS

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➤ **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Tennessee has emerged over the past three years as a national leader in education reform. To ensure that more of its students graduate from high school with the skills they need to be successful in life, Tennessee has made a series of significant policy changes. In 2009, teachers began teaching the higher academic standards of the Tennessee Diploma Project in classrooms. In 2010, the General Assembly passed the First to the Top Act, the most sweeping education reform legislation in the state since 1992, which laid the groundwork for Tennessee's first-round Race to the Top win. Rapid implementation of the state's First to the Top plan is now underway, putting Tennessee in a unique position to start realizing significant gains in student achievement.[1] "There is no state that has a greater opportunity…to be a national leader than Tennessee," U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan told an audience in Nashville last year. "There is a commitment, a sense of courage here that we find absolutely remarkable…My challenge to you – and my hope – is that Tennessee can be the fastest improving state in the country."[2]

While Tennessee has shown early signs of success in preparing students for the rigors of postsecondary education and the workforce, significant work remains to ensure policy changes create positive results for our students. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data released in 2011 indicated that although there was no statistical change in the state's fourth and eighth grade reading and math scores from 2009, other states made improvements during this period that pushed Tennessee further down in the rankings. (Tennessee currently ranks 46th among states in math proficiency levels and 41st in reading, based on fourth-grade results.) Similarly, only 15 percent of students are considered college-ready across all four ACT college benchmarks (English, reading, math, and science).[3]

These education outcomes have implications not only for our students' futures, but for the economic strength of our state. The ability for our students to be prepared for college and high-quality jobs and for our state to attract business investments rests on the quality of our public education system.

While the work is difficult, the pathway to improvement is clear. Research shows that effective teaching is the most important school-based factor in improving student growth and achievement.[4] In order to help teachers improve, they need meaningful and ongoing feedback on their performance. This feedback must be closely linked to supports and training that help teachers learn, build on their strengths, and address their areas for development.[5]

Tennessee's Teacher Evaluation System

In the past, meaningful feedback for teachers has been an important missing link in the efforts to improve instruction in classrooms across Tennessee. Under the old system, tenured teachers could go years without evaluations and the feedback they needed to improve instruction. While the state did not routinely collect evaluation results from districts under the previous system, the vast majority of teachers were typically deemed to be performing at high levels. In such cases, evaluations failed to effectively differentiate teachers and were inconsistent with student educational outcomes.[6] To address this issue, Tennessee's First to the Top plan prioritizes improving the state's system of providing feedback to teachers.

Old Teacher Evaluation System	New Teacher Evaluation System
Evaluation was based on classroom observations, teacher self-reflection, and a review of teachers' professional growth	Evaluation is based on multiple measures, including classroom observations, student achievement data, and student growth data
Teachers with less than three years of experience were formally evaluated once a year. Teachers who had taught three years or more were formally evaluated twice over a 10-year period	All teachers receive a formal annual evaluation
Teachers with two years of experience were observed three times each year. Teachers with three or more years of experience were observed two times during the year they were evaluated	Teachers without a professional license receive six observations each year (with the option of combining a portion of the observations for a minimum total of four classroom visits). Teachers with a professional license receive four observations each year (with the option of combining a portion of the observations for a minimum total of two classroom visits). Half of the observations must be unannounced
Teachers received one of four ratings: Unsatisfactory, Level A – Developing, Level B – Proficient, and Level C – Advanced	Evaluations differentiate teachers into one of five effectiveness groups, from significantly above expectations to significantly below expectations
Evaluators were required to provide teachers feedback after each observation cycle, which ranged from three times a year to four times in a decade	All teachers receive timely feedback from observations throughout the year
Evaluations were not required to be used to inform personnel decisions	Evaluations are used to inform human capital decisions, including professional development, assignment, promotion, tenure, and compensation

To identify and support effective teaching, Tennessee has completed its first year of implementing a new statewide teacher evaluation system. The primary purpose of the evaluation system is "to identify and support instruction that will lead to high levels of student achievement."

Major characteristics of the system include:

• Teacher evaluations will be based on multiple measures, with 50 percent based on student achievement data and 50 percent based on qualitative measures (such as classroom observations of teachers);

• All teachers will receive an annual evaluation;

• Evaluations will differentiate teachers into one of five effectiveness groups (significantly above expectations, above expectations, at expectations, below expectations, and significantly below expectations);

• Evaluations will be used to inform personnel decisions such as professional development, assignment, promotion, retention, tenure, and compensation.[7]

Flexibility exists for districts to develop their own variations, provided their plans are consistent with the format described above and meet with approval from the State Board of Education. School districts across the state are now implementing one of four evaluation models. The Tennessee Department of Education is supporting the implementation of the model being used by most districts in the state (the TEAM model). However, Memphis City Schools, Hamilton County Schools, and several districts participating in the Association of Independent and Municipal Schools (AIMS) have devised and are applying their own models of evaluation.[8]

Summary of the four teacher evaluation models

Model	Districts	Number of teachers (Percent of TN teachers)[9]	Qualitative component and weighting
Project COACH	Hamilton County	2,925 teachers (5 percent)	• Observations of teacher practice, based on Kim Marshall's model (50 percent)
TEM	Memphis City Schools	7,329 teachers (11 percent)	• Observations of teacher practice, based on DC IMPACT (40 percent) • Student feedback, using Tripod Survey (5 percent) • Teacher knowledge, list of approved options (5 percent)
TIGER	Alamo City, Alcoa City, Bradford Special, Greeneville City, Lebanon Special, Lenoir City, Lexington City, Maryville City, Milan Special, Paris Special, Trenton Special, Trousdale County	1,606 teachers (2 percent)	• Observations of teacher practice, based on Charlotte Danielson's model (50 percent)
TEAM	All other districts	52,989 teachers (82 percent)	• Observations of teacher practice, based on TAP Teaching Standards (50 percent)

SCORE'S TEACHER EVALUATION FEEDBACK PROCESS

During the first year of the implementation, the new teacher evaluation system is serving as a powerful platform for increasing inspired, high-quality teaching across the state. As with any significant implementation process, challenges have arisen.

In December 2011, Governor Bill Haslam asked the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) to conduct a formal statewide listening and feedback process, independent of state government, on Tennessee's teacher evaluation system. As part of the process, Governor Haslam asked SCORE to produce a report to the State Board of Education and Department of Education that would reflect feedback from across the state and propose a range of policy considerations for refining Tennessee's teacher evaluation system moving forward. This feedback process complements other feedback being collected by the Department of Education and the Tennessee Consortium on Research, Evaluation, and Development (TNCRED).

SCORE's role in this process was to listen. SCORE collected feedback from stakeholders across the state including teachers, principals, superintendents, parents, local and state officials, community and business leaders, and other citizens.

SCORE gathered feedback and input in the following ways:

- Held nine public roundtables in rural, urban, and suburban communities in all three grand divisions of the state in February, March, and April of this year.
- Conducted an online questionnaire that was sent to all teachers and principals in every school district across the state.
- Conducted in-depth interviews on teacher evaluation with leaders in Tennessee and across the nation, including with educators overseeing each of the four approved evaluation models being used in Tennessee.
- Formed an Educator Work Team comprised of 22 teachers, principals, and district leaders from across the state.
- Received additional feedback from existing networks of teachers, principals, and district leaders, and fielded input from numerous educators and citizens of the state.

This feedback process would not have been possible without the eight organizations who partnered with SCORE in gathering critical input from educators and community members throughout Tennessee. They include the Tennessee Education Association (TEA), Tennessee Principals Association, Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents (TOSS), Tennessee School Boards Association (TSBA), Tennessee PTA, Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Tennessee Business Roundtable, and Professional Educators of Tennessee (PET).

POSITIVE FEEDBACK ON THE TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM

Tennessee's teacher evaluation system is improving both the quality of instruction in the classroom as well as the establishment of accountability for student results.

In this process, SCORE received the following positive input on the system:

- Educators have much clearer and more rigorous performance expectations, along with an understanding of what constitutes effective teaching.
- Educators are receiving more regular and specific feedback on their performance.
- Clear expectations and regular feedback are leading to more self-reflection and collaboration among teachers.
- New kinds of conversations have been generated about the improvement of instruction and outcomes for students.

- The evaluation system has encouraged more intentional use of student data by individual teachers and has driven school-wide collaboration around student growth.
- The evaluation system is highlighting the importance of individualized professional learning for teachers.
- The system also is establishing clear expectations for principals to serve as instructional leaders who understand and support effective teaching in their school.
- Most principals and other evaluators feel that the system is having positive impacts on student achievement in their schools.
- Highly promising and diverse sets of practices have emerged across the four different models.

FEEDBACK ON CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

In addition to positive attributes of the system, several challenges and concerns were also identified:

- Unlike most principals and evaluators, many teachers are not yet convinced of the benefits of the evaluation system.
- Teachers do not have access to high-quality professional learning opportunities tied to their performance feedback.
- Approximately two-thirds of teachers do not have individual value-added student growth data for their grades and subjects.[10] For these teachers, 35 percent of their evaluation is not directly tied to their own individual performance.
- Currently, the 15 percent student achievement measure is not viewed as directly driving effective teaching.
- Educators feel that balancing the evaluation system with existing responsibilities is a challenge for administrators.
- Not all principals and evaluators have developed the instructional leadership skills to effectively recognize and assess teaching practice.
- Many teachers reported that observations of classroom practice do not always capture authentic instruction, and that there has been inconsistent interpretation and implementation of the rubric.
- There is not yet sufficient focus on how the pending implementation of the Common Core State Standards needs to be reflected in and reinforced by the teacher evaluation system.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION MOVING FORWARD

Meaningful feedback and related professional development opportunities are a significant component of improving teaching and learning in Tennessee. As Tennessee continues to implement the new teacher evaluation system, any changes that are made must support this goal. Below, we have outlined seven major recommendations that support the continued effective implementation of the system.

Recommendation 1

Ensure current and prospective teachers and leaders receive sufficient training in the evaluation system. Teachers and evaluators need high-quality ongoing training in order to produce consistent and accurate evaluation results.

Recommendation 2

Link the feedback that teachers receive with high-quality, collaborative, and individualized professional learning opportunities so that they can improve their instruction. Tennessee's teacher evaluation system needs to balance accountability for results with a focus on improving instruction, which is the key to improving student outcomes. To do so, the Department of Education and districts must provide meaningful professional learning and support to help teachers improve.

Recommendation 3

Address challenges with the current quantitative and qualitative measures of teacher effectiveness. Many of the issues that have arisen are not due to problems with the First to the Top plan for teacher evaluation, but rather from the remaining gaps in the development and implementation of the multiple measures that form the backbone of the evaluation system. We recommend these gaps in the quantitative measure, and some missing elements in the qualitative measure, be addressed as soon as possible. For example, we recommend the state offer teachers in non-tested grades and subjects (who do not yet have individual student growth, or value-added, data) the option of temporarily increasing the weighting of the qualitative portion of the evaluation.

Recommendation 4

Support school and district leaders in becoming strong instructional leaders capable of assessing and developing effective teaching – and hold them accountable for doing so. The initial work of implementation has focused on evaluating and developing the performance of teachers. For the full impact of this work to be sustained, it must be combined with a similar effort for school and district leaders.

Recommendation 5

Re-engage educators in those districts where implementation of the teacher evaluation system has faltered during the first year of work. Initial implementation of the teacher evaluation system in some districts has been less effective than in others. In districts with more room for improvement, many school and district leaders do not yet believe in the value of the teacher evaluation system, have not made implementation one of their top priorities, and/or may not have the skills and experience needed to drive implementation. As a result, there is especially high dissatisfaction among teachers and low confidence that the evaluation system will help improve their practice and ultimately their students' learning.

Recommendation 6

Integrate the ongoing implementation of the teacher evaluation system and the Common Core State Standards so that they work together to improve student outcomes. We recommend the State Board and Department of Education ensure that all of the approved evaluation models are refined to reflect the shifts in instruction that will be required by the Common Core State Standards and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments.

Recommendation 7

Drive continuous improvement of the teacher evaluation system at the state, district, and school levels. Leaders and educators must commit to improving the teacher evaluation system on an ongoing basis to maximize its impact on student achievement.

SCORE has not been a disinterested observer of the teacher evaluation system. In SCORE's 2009 Roadmap to Success plan, SCORE recommended that Tennessee "develop, pilot, and roll out a statewide teacher effectiveness measure based on multiple measures including student achievement gains and potentially principal evaluations, peer review, and parent and student surveys." After conducting this feedback process, we believe that Tennessee's teacher evaluation policy is critical to fostering and supporting effective teaching in Tennessee and to improving student achievement. The system that Tennessee is implementing is improving the quality of teaching in the classroom and is supporting effective instruction in many districts. As refinements continue to be made and the system is fully implemented with fidelity, it will fully realize its potential to serve as a powerful platform for supporting inspired, high-quality instruction across the state and, therefore, gains in student achievement and growth. Tennessee cannot and should not return to the old system or step back from implementation of the new system.

The following pages lay out in greater detail SCORE's teacher evaluation feedback process and the inputs SCORE received, the successes and challenges voiced about the evaluation system, and recommendations for consideration to continue improving the evaluation system moving forward.

SCORE'S Teacher Evaluation Feedback Process

SCORE'S TEACHER EVALUATION FEEDBACK PROCESS

In the past, meaningful feedback for teachers has been an important missing link in the efforts to improve instruction in classrooms across Tennessee. Under the old system, tenured teachers could go years without evaluations and the feedback they needed to improve instruction. While the state did not routinely collect evaluation results from districts under the previous system, the vast majority of teachers were typically deemed to be performing at high levels.[11] In such cases, evaluations failed to effectively differentiate teachers and were inconsistent with the state's educational outcomes. To address this issue, Tennessee's First to the Top plan prioritizes improving the state's system of providing feedback to teachers.

As with any large-scale change – in this instance, one that requires adaptation in the professional beliefs and behaviors of tens of thousands of educators working in schools across the state – there are significant and promising signs of progress as well as challenges emerging in the initial implementation.

In December 2011, Governor Bill Haslam asked the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) to conduct a formal statewide listening and feedback process, independent of the state government, on Tennessee's teacher evaluation system. In addition, Governor Haslam asked SCORE to produce a report to the Tennessee State Board of Education and Department of Education at the conclusion of this process that would reflect feedback from across the state and propose a range of policy considerations for refining Tennessee's teacher evaluation system moving forward. This feedback process complements other feedback being done by the Department of Education and the Tennessee Consortium on Research, Evaluation, and Development (TNCRED).*

SCORE collected feedback in multiple ways from stakeholders across the state including teachers, principals, superintendents, parents, local and state officials, community and business leaders, and other citizens.

First, SCORE held nine public roundtables throughout the state, including in rural, urban, and suburban communities in all three grand divisions. At each of these roundtable sessions, which were held between February and April of this year, SCORE facilitated a discussion among a group that included teachers, principals, superintendents, business and civic leaders, parents, and state and local officials about successes and challenges faced in implementing the system. SCORE worked with partner organizations – listed below – to identify participants for each of the nine sessions.

Second, in order to give every educator in the state the opportunity to provide input, SCORE conducted an online questionnaire that was sent to all teachers and principals in every school district across Tennessee. In all, 15,401 teachers, 932 principals, and 831 other evaluators responded to the questionnaire, which included multiple choice and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was not a scientific poll, but was nevertheless a valuable tool in providing educators an accessible format to submit their feedback. (For additional information on SCORE's online questionnaire, see the Appendix.)

Third, SCORE conducted in-depth interviews on teacher evaluation with leaders in Tennessee and across the nation. These interviews included in-depth conversations with educators overseeing each of the four approved observation models in the state and discussions with leaders at the Danielson Group, Stanford University's School Redesign Network, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Measures of Effective Teaching Project, The New Teacher Project, and Student Achievement Partners. SCORE also reviewed additional materials and policy papers produced by these groups.

Fourth, SCORE formed an Educator Work Team comprised of 22 teachers, principals, and district leaders working throughout the state. This group of experienced and diverse practitioners provided additional guidance to SCORE on the implementation of the evaluation system.

Finally, SCORE received feedback from outside these formal channels as we met with existing networks of teachers, principals, and district leaders, and fielded input from numerous educators and citizens of the state who called, wrote, or emailed us directly to share their valuable perspectives.

This feedback process would not have been possible without the eight organizations that partnered with SCORE in gathering critical feedback from educators and community members throughout Tennessee. They include the Tennessee Education Association (TEA), Tennessee Principals Association, Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents (TOSS), Tennessee School Boards Association (TSBA), Tennessee PTA, Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Tennessee Business Roundtable, and Professional Educators of Tennessee (PET). These partner organizations also provided us with feedback for this report.

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*As of the release of this report, value-added information for educators had not yet been released. This information is expected in mid-June 2012. In addition, the Department of Education will be issuing a legislative report on the evaluation system in July 2012. Finally, TNCRED will be releasing a report with feedback on the evaluation system in Fall 2012.

Key Themes from Feedback Collected Across the State

KEY THEMES FROM FEEDBACK COLLECTED ACROSS THE STATE

Positive changes surfaced through our feedback process:

The feedback process revealed a number of promising developments that have resulted from the implementation of the teacher evaluation system. These developments include:

- Educators have much clearer and more rigorous performance expectations, along with an understanding of what constitutes effective teaching.
- Educators are receiving more regular and specific feedback on their performance.
- Clear expectations and regular feedback are leading to more self-reflection and collaboration among teachers.
- New kinds of conversations have been generated about the improvement of instruction and outcomes for students.
- The evaluation system has encouraged more intentional use of student data by individual teachers and has driven school-wide collaboration around student growth.
- The evaluation system is highlighting the importance of individualized professional learning for teachers.
- The system also is establishing new expectations for principals to serve as instructional leaders who understand and support effective teaching in their schools.
- Most principals and other evaluators feel that the system is having positive impacts on student achievement in their schools.
- Highly promising and diverse sets of practices have emerged across the four different models.

Educators have much clearer and more rigorous performance expectations, along with an understanding of what constitutes effective teaching.

During the feedback process, many teachers said they appreciate the evaluation system's definition of clear, high, and specific expectations of what constitutes effective teaching. When asked to select up to three attributes of the new system they liked best, 28 percent of teachers who responded to SCORE's questionnaire indicated the system "gives me a much clearer understanding of my school's expectations for effective teaching."[12]

Teachers told us the evaluation system outlines exactly what is expected of them and what they need to demonstrate, whereas "in the past, it was hit or miss."[13] One roundtable participant from a district using the TEAM model said, "Never before have teachers known what the expectations were. Now they have a list and great guidance about what good teaching looks like."[14] Teachers consistently acknowledged that the qualitative rubrics are rooted in best practices, and many reflected that they and their colleagues have already been striving to incorporate more of these best practices into their instruction this year. Several district superintendents echoed these sentiments and said they felt like instruction improved dramatically this year. Teachers also said the rubrics provide a common instructional language for educators and prompt professional collaboration. Teachers consistently said they appreciated having these clear, specific expectations early in their careers.

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>
> – Roundtable participant

In SCORE feedback sessions, educators also said they appreciated how the process was bringing a renewed focus on student learning and mastery. As one roundtable participant observed, "The new evaluation system is taking the focus off of teaching and onto learning; it's about what students are doing in the classroom and how much ownership they're taking in the learning process."[15]

Educators are receiving more regular and specific feedback on their performance.

Teachers responding to SCORE's online questionnaire cited the insight they gain on their classroom performance as the greatest benefit of the new evaluation system. When asked to name three positive aspects of the evaluation system, 33 percent of teacher respondents indicated that "it gives me a much clearer idea of my individual strengths and areas for growth." Teachers consistently said that they appreciated the timeliness of the feedback they received from evaluators after being observed. One teacher shared, "It is beneficial for me to pinpoint the areas I need to improve in. In the old system it was generic, but this is very specific about what I need to work on and recommendations around how to do that."[16]

Teachers, principals, district leaders, and other educators consistently agreed that one of the most powerful results of the evaluation system has been the feedback conversations between teachers and evaluators. In a survey conducted by Project COACH in Hamilton County, 95 percent of administrators and 73 percent of teachers felt an increased level of trust and collaboration with their teachers / building administrators as a result of the mini-observations that occurred this school year.[17] Teachers across the state frequently said that their school administrators have taken a greater interest in their work, and 25 percent of teachers who responded to SCORE's online questionnaire cited this aspect as one of the features they liked best about the new system. During one roundtable, an administrator said, "This is opening the dialogue versus in the past where we were in for a minute, signed a form, and were out."[18] Another roundtable participant said: "The most valuable piece is the conversation before and after – the conversations are phenomenal. They are rich; they are powerful. Teachers say, 'How can I make this better? What did you see? How can I improve?'"[19] A principal said, "The single biggest positive has been the conversations I've had with my faculty. I wouldn't trade those one-on-one conversations for anything."[20]

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>
> **– Roundtable principal participant**

The Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM) implemented in Memphis City Schools incorporates student feedback on teacher performance as an additional qualitative input, weighted at 5 percent of a teacher's evaluation. Memphis is part of the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) research project, which found the Tripod student survey results (developed by Ronald F. Ferguson and provided by Cambridge Education) to be "highly reliable…and also stable for a given teacher during the school year."[21] A teacher from the Memphis and Shelby County roundtable shared her appreciation for the inclusion of student feedback in her evaluation by stating, "I love the idea of getting my students' feedback. Nobody is with me more than those students. They're with me 180 days and, in all reality, they know better than anyone what I'm doing in the classroom."[22]

Clear expectations and regular feedback are leading to more self-reflection and collaboration among teachers.

Equipped with clear performance expectations and regular opportunities for feedback, teachers consistently spoke about being more intentional about their practice this year. Several shared that they are reflecting on their instruction and the state content standards more in order to pinpoint what they need to do to help their students achieve at higher levels. One teacher said, "I am a lot more conscious about my teaching and my everyday instruction. It has caused me to be more aware of my students' participation in the learning process. I'm more astute about their responses to my instruction."[23] One district leader said, "Neither teachers nor principals have ever been more intentional and purposeful about what they're doing."[24] Educators consistently said the evaluation system is enabling more self-reflection and purpose around instruction for many educators across the state.

Educators said the TIGER (Teacher Instructional Growth for Effectiveness and Results) model has additional design features that encourage further self-reflection among teachers. Teachers using the TIGER model engage in detailed self-reflection at the beginning of the year, assessing themselves on the entire rubric. That self-assessment then forms the basis of their professional growth plans and ongoing coaching throughout the year.

Educators in SCORE feedback sessions consistently said they appreciated how the evaluation system was leading to more dialogue and collaboration among colleagues as well. "This system allows for collaboration that in the past we haven't had," a teacher said. "Before, in my classroom I did things a certain way and if it didn't yield the results I wanted, I was kind of stumped. Now teachers are helping each other and willing to share."[25] A principal said, "The reflection part has been invaluable. The specificity has led to incredible conversations between teachers and principals and among teachers in our learning communities. 'What instruction is working best? How are you fostering student learning?'"[26] Several teachers noted increased collaboration, especially between experienced and novice teachers. In one school, more experienced teachers volunteered to teach in the classrooms of their less experienced colleagues for a day to model certain elements of effective instruction.[27] Research has found that peer learning among teachers is correlated with improved student achievement over time.[28]

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New kinds of conversations have been generated about the improvement of instruction and outcomes for students.

Educators consistently said that they are talking about improving instruction in ways that they are not used to – and they like this change. "Teachers are talking to each other more than they have before. Now they are not confined to one room on an island, but together discussing how they are planning their lessons, how the lessons went," one instructional coach said. "The reflection is huge. When we stop and ask – 'why are we doing this?' – it becomes more powerful for the classroom."[29] Educators said these conversations are happening more due to the common language the evaluation system provides. One principal from a district using the TEAM model said, "It provides a common language for my staff to engage with. While the rubric is challenging and rigorous, this is the first time we've had common conversations around every aspect of effective teaching."[30]

Several district leaders said the evaluation system is changing conversations between central office leaders and principals. Conversations that used to be focused on building management are now instructionally based discussions driven by questions like, "What does the data show your teachers need help on? How are you focusing your professional development on those areas?"[31] Another district leader said the evaluation system was also leading to collaboration across schools in this district. "We're all seeking the same instructional goals," he said. "Instead of pockets of schools trying to refine their own needs and programs, we're all talking as a district to help each other."[32]

The evaluation system has encouraged more intentional use of student data by individual teachers and has driven school-wide collaboration around student growth.

Teachers and principals said the evaluation system is helping them get a greater command over their student data and increasing school-wide collaboration around how to improve student learning. One educator said, "We're analyzing data to identify missing strands. We mine the data to make sure instruction is covering all the standards and that students are learning them."[33] Teachers also said the regular feedback they get as part of the process helps them make needed adjustments to continually improve. Another educator said, "It's important to us to be data-driven. Now we're not waiting until the end of the year; now we're getting some inroads earlier on that allow us to course correct along the way so we can improve quicker."[34] A representative from a statewide stakeholder association said, "[The new evaluation system] has really brought the focus back to student achievement and how we improve student achievement and support teachers to get better."[35]

The evaluation system is highlighting the importance of individualized professional learning for teachers.

Educators said the evaluation system identifies their areas of needed improvement, prompting them to pursue individualized professional learning. One school leader said, "We look at our teachers' scores and can target professional learning to the areas our teachers need it most."[36] For their part, many teachers said they are becoming more engaged participants in their own professional development. "All of a sudden, professional learning is fresh, it's more important, it matters to me," one teacher said.[37]

Another teacher said, "We have much better professional development in-house now. The evaluation system brings to light best practices that haven't been introduced to the faculty as a whole before. Best practices are becoming a part of everyday routine, where before they weren't because teachers didn't know about them."[38]

Principals said that having a clearer understanding of their teachers' strengths and development areas enables them to better target professional learning to their teachers' needs. "This has allowed us as administrators to go in and differentiate our professional development," one principal said. "Typically, we'd have this blanket professional development. Now, this [system] has allowed us to identify specific goals for teachers to then go in and say, 'Here's something I want you to read on this, here's someone you should go watch.'"[39] District leaders said this specific performance information is also helping them be more targeted and intentional with the professional learning opportunities they provide for the system. One district leader said, "As we look at our evaluation scores, we're beginning to pinpoint those areas where we need professional development and coaching efforts to ensure success for both our teachers and our students."[40]

The system also is establishing clearer expectations for principals to serve as instructional leaders who understand and support effective teaching in their school.

In SCORE feedback sessions, teachers and principals consistently said they appreciated principals' increased presence in classrooms. Forty-seven percent of principals and other evaluators who responded to the questionnaire indicated that one of the three things they liked best about the new system is that it "helps me have better conversations with my teachers about effective instruction." A teacher using the COACH model said, "Teachers are seeing principals as instructional leaders and like having principals in the classroom right along with them, giving them suggestions."[41]

District leaders frequently said that principals' capacity to serve as instructional leaders was important to effectively implementing the evaluation system. They also said these redefined expectations are requiring them to rethink the support and professional development they provide for school leaders. "This has really challenged us as a district, to help all of our principals improve," one district leader said. "Principals understand the importance of being an instructional leader. It has forced us as a central office to focus on how we support our principals."[42]

Most principals and other evaluators feel that the system is having positive impacts on student achievement in their schools.

In the roundtable sessions, principals and other evaluators frequently said the framework and guidance provided in the new evaluation system are enabling them to carry out their work more effectively. "The system is building the confidence of evaluators," one district leader said. "They're learning to be instructional leaders, not just building managers. This is helping them focus on being an instructional leader."[43]

Seventy-six percent of the principals and evaluators who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the system "will have a positive impact on instruction in my school," 70 percent agreed that it "will have a positive impact on student achievement in my school," and 69 percent agreed that it "represents an improvement over past teacher practices in my school."

A highly promising and diverse set of practices has emerged across the four different models.

In feedback sessions, educators highlighted positive attributes of each approved evaluation model. Consistent themes from those discussions are highlighted below.

Project COACH

- **Shorter, more frequent, and unannounced observations have in many instances reduced teacher anxiety and enabled educators to observe authentic instruction.** Teachers are observed at least six to eight times a year through shorter, unannounced walkthroughs. In a survey conducted in Hamilton County, 96 percent of teachers said they "are comfortable receiving constructive feedback from administrators at my school," and 91 percent of teachers agreed that the verbal feedback they have received has been helpful in improving their classroom instruction. Sixty-six percent of teachers said instructional conversations have increased at their school because of the design of Project COACH.[44]

- **The use of technology has reduced the administrative burden for principals and enabled quick turnaround of feedback.** Principals reported that the observation process has allowed them to focus on having good and timely feedback conversations with their teachers. The use of technology, such as iPads to record written feedback, has reduced the administrative burden on evaluators. When principals and other evaluators chose their top three concerns about the evaluation model, 52 percent of principals and evaluators from TIGER, TEAM, and TEM models indicated that the time required to implement the model was a concern, compared to only 15 percent of principals and other evaluators using the COACH model.[45]

- **Evidence of effective practice is collected on a cumulative basis throughout the year, but educators only receive ratings or scores on the rubric at the end of the year.** As teaching practice is observed throughout the year, evidence is cumulatively collected and recorded. Teachers can present additional evidence of effective practice throughout the year and scores are determined at the end of the year, enabling educators to focus on professional growth rather than accountability.

TIGER

- **Emphasis on the formative assessment component to support improvement of teacher practice.** The coaching that teachers receive is aligned with, but distinct from, their formal evaluations.

- **A focus on coaching and development is differentiated for teachers at different stages.** Beginning and less effective teachers receive more individual coaching, while effective and highly effective teachers pursue continuous learning in professional communities and can apply for leadership and coaching positions. At the beginning of the year, all teachers complete a self-reflection and personal growth plan that guides their professional learning over the course of the year. Several teachers using TIGER reported feeling high degrees of ownership over their professional growth as a result.

- **Tools and supports for principals to be strong instructional leaders.** Beyond training in the evaluation process itself, principals receive training and tools in how to deliver feedback and have effective conversations with teachers.

- **Evidence of effective practice is collected on a cumulative basis over the year, but educators only receive ratings or scores at the end of the year.** Teachers can present evidence of effective practice throughout the year during and after observations. They receive feedback tied directly to the rubric after each observation, but only receive scores at the end of the year.

TEM

- **Inclusion of student feedback provides important additional performance information for teachers.** In the Memphis TEM model, student feedback through an annual survey comprises 5 percent of teachers' evaluation scores. The MET research project found that the combination of these student survey results, value-added results, and observations of teacher practice was the best predictor of student achievement in a given teacher's classroom.[46]

- **Initial and ongoing evaluator training helps ensure the accuracy of observers.** Initial training for observers consists of two days on the observation instrument and how to use it, followed by independent practice scoring observations for several weeks before taking a certification test. Observers participate in regular follow-up sessions to monitor and ensure reliability.

TEAM

- **All teachers and principals have access to a rigorous evaluation model and related training and tools, regardless of geography or placement.** The state-developed model ensures all teachers and principals have access to a rigorous evaluation system to provide teachers with needed feedback and supports to improve instruction, regardless of their district's budgetary situations or geographic location.

- **An online resource portal provides a useful set of resources for teachers and principals.** Teachers and principals said they appreciated the availability of these resources to support instruction in their schools. Educators consistently called for more resources to be added, especially exemplars of effective teaching in multiple grades and subject areas.

- **A data system that houses all teacher evaluation data enables school, district, and state leaders to monitor results on an ongoing basis.** All schools and districts using the TEAM model have access to the data system housing their evaluation data, enabling ongoing reflection and refinement throughout the year.

In districts where teachers are actively engaged in the implementation and ongoing refinement of the evaluation system, and where improving instruction was emphasized as the ultimate goal of implementation, teacher satisfaction is higher. This was consistently reported among those districts implementing the TIGER model and in Hamilton County, where the COACH model is being implemented. Of respondents to SCORE's online questionnaire, 56 percent of teachers in TIGER districts and 55 percent of teachers in Hamilton County agreed that "overall, the new teacher evaluation system we are using in my school will have a positive impact on my own teaching practice," compared with 29 percent for teacher respondents in the aggregate.

It is also worth noting that there are several districts using the TEAM model in which more than 50 percent of the teachers responding to our questionnaire agreed that the evaluation system would improve their practice. This finding suggests that which evaluation model is being used may matter less than how it is used – in particular, results may depend on how district and school leaders and other evaluators and coaches engage teachers to help them improve their instruction and, ultimately, students' outcomes.

Challenges and room for improvement surfaced through the feedback process:

Educators highlighted several challenges of implementing the new evaluation system. These challenges include:

- Unlike most principals and evaluators, many teachers are not yet convinced of the benefits of the evaluation system.
- Teachers do not have access to high-quality professional learning and growth opportunities tied to their performance feedback.
- Approximately two-thirds of teachers do not have individual value-added student growth data for their grades and subjects. For these teachers, 35 percent of their evaluation is not directly tied to their own individual performance.
- Currently, the 15 percent student achievement measure is not viewed as directly driving effective teaching.
- Educators feel that balancing the evaluation system with existing responsibilities is a challenge for administrators.
- Not all principals and evaluators have developed the instructional leadership skills to effectively assess and help improve teaching practice.
- Observations of classroom practice do not always capture authentic instruction.
- There is not yet sufficient focus on how the pending implementation of the Common Core State Standards needs to be reflected in and reinforced by the teacher evaluation system.

Unlike most principals and evaluators, many teachers are not yet convinced of the benefits of the evaluation system.

In feedback sessions across the state, educators repeatedly said they want to be held accountable to high standards and desire regular feedback on their performance along with the support to improve. However, many teachers reported feeling that implementation has stressed accountability over improvement. Only 29 percent of the teacher respondents to SCORE's questionnaire agreed that the evaluation system "will have a positive impact on my own teaching practice."

In some instances, teachers said that the evaluation system left them feeling "reduced to a number." Many educators also said they were concerned that their performance assessment would be adjusted to fit a bell curve, rather than reflect their true performance. In multiple instances, educators said they were told that the upper levels of effective teaching on the rubric were nearly impossible to achieve this year, which they said made them feel like their ratings were out of their control.

Teacher buy-in and morale appeared to be especially low where teachers have felt the system was designed to punish them, rather than help them improve their instruction. Where leaders have emphasized professional growth instead, teachers reported more favorable perceptions of the evaluation system. As one principal observed, "we want it to be about growth. We do not talk about scores first. We discuss the lesson, what the teacher felt most comfortable with, where he or she wants my help to get better. Then we pull out the scores from the teacher's self-reflection and from my observation."[47]

Finally, teachers and school leaders said they were concerned about the preparation on the teacher evaluation system provided to prospective and current teachers and leaders by postsecondary programs.

Teachers do not have access to high-quality professional learning and growth opportunities tied to their performance feedback.

Throughout the feedback process, educators consistently highlighted that lack of access to high-quality professional learning opportunities limited the usefulness of the feedback they received about instruction. "What you do once you have that honest professional conversation [is important]," one principal said. "We cannot just say 'Good luck.'"[48] While many educators said they are experiencing new levels of collaboration and improved professional learning opportunities, this experience was not reflected in every district across the state.

> "WHAT YOU DO ONCE YOU HAVE THAT HONEST PROFESSIONAL CONVERSATION [IS IMPORTANT]. WE CANNOT JUST SAY 'GOOD LUCK.'"
> **– Principal**

"We need to ensure our administrators have resources to support teachers," another educator said. "Going forward, we want to identify those areas where our teachers need the most help and build a resource library to help [administrators] support their teachers."[49] A teacher roundtable participant called for more targeted professional development: "I want districts to create interventions for teachers receiving 1s and 2s."[50]

Approximately two-thirds of teachers do not yet have individual value-added student growth data for their grades and subjects. For these teachers, 35 percent of their evaluation is not directly tied to their own individual performance.

Currently, it is estimated that only about one-third of Tennessee teachers have individual value-added student data that is used to calculate 35 percent of their annual evaluation for the 2011-12 school year. For the nearly two-thirds of teachers without these data, school-wide value-added data is being used for their evaluation. These educators consistently said that they do not believe that using a school-wide average for such a significant portion of their evaluation is a fair or accurate representation of their individual performance. Among teachers without individual value-added data who responded to the online questionnaire, 48 percent indicated that one of their top three concerns with the new system was that, "I am not confident that the available value-added student growth data…accurately reflect my effectiveness." Fifty-six percent of principals and other evaluators also cited the accuracy of the value-added student growth data, as a measure of teacher effectiveness, one of the top three things they think are most in need of improvement with the teacher evaluation system.

Additionally, there are conflicting policies regarding the use of data for special education students who take the regular TCAP assessments. Currently, these data are factored into school composite scores, but are not utilized in calculating individual teacher's effectiveness levels. Concern remains over this matter with some teachers and school and district leaders.

Currently, the 15 percent student achievement measure is not viewed as directly driving effective teaching.

In selecting their top three concerns with the new evaluation system, 36 percent of questionnaire respondents agreed with the statement, "I am not confident the student achievement measures (15 percent of teachers' evaluations) accurately reflect my effectiveness." Principals and other evaluators echoed these concerns, with 44 percent indicating the validity of the student achievement measures was one of their top three concerns with the new system.

The state-approved options that teachers and their evaluators can select for the student achievement measures themselves have been a concern. Several participants in SCORE's feedback process called for an expansion of the options available to teachers and principals, especially to allow educators to use measures already in place at the local level, such as existing district-developed common assessments.

Educators feel that balancing the evaluation system with existing responsibilities is a challenge for administrators.

Administrators often noted that the time it took to conduct observations and share feedback with teachers reduced the time they had for the other responsibilities they have as a leader, including student discipline, communicating with parents, and informal classroom drop-ins. Educators using the TEAM model also said that the data entry process was very time-intensive. Educators often said that these additional responsibilities were placed upon them without needed supports and training. This was highlighted as a concern across the models, with the exception of the COACH model where principals said the new evaluation system has reduced the hours they spend on evaluations, largely due to technology supports.

In order to alleviate the burden felt by principals this year, several participants across feedback sessions suggested reducing the minimum number of annual observations in order to reduce the burden on principals. Last fall, the State Board passed an amendment to its teacher evaluation policy that provides districts with the option to combine a portion of teacher observations over the course of the year.[52]

Research from the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project concluded that multiple observations are needed in order to produce consistent and reliable results.[53] With fewer observations, MET researchers found that factors like atypical lessons or group variations are more likely to influence observation results and obscure true variation in teacher practice.

Not all principals and evaluators have developed the instructional leadership skills to effectively assess and help improve teaching practice.

In selecting their top three concerns with the new evaluation system, 23 percent of questionnaire respondents agreed with the statement, "I am not confident in my evaluator's ability to accurately assess my performance on a consistent basis."[54] This concern was consistently repeated in in-person feedback sessions as well. Teachers said they worried that evaluators often lack a common understanding of what instruction looks like at each level of the rubric. Additionally, evaluators reported receiving inconsistent messages in trainings around what highly effective instruction looks like at levels 4 and 5, in part due to a lack of sufficient exemplar videos showing what instruction looks like at those levels. Teachers and evaluators alike said they need access to sufficient exemplars of what highly effective instruction looks like across grade levels and subjects. Some educators also said they worried that their evaluator's lack of expertise in their specific assignment or role was preventing them from accurately assessing effective instruction. Educators using the TEAM rubric said the lack of definitions for levels 2 and 4 on the rubric left room for different interpretations when scoring.

Teachers and evaluators said they need consistent and ongoing training, especially as refinements are made to the observation process and tools. One promising approach to evaluator training has been developed in the TEM model. Evaluators first complete initial training and certification, where they demonstrate the ability to rate teacher performance accurately and consistently. In each subsequent month, they participate in ongoing training and calibration to ensure strong inter-rater reliability persists over time.

Many teachers reported that observations of classroom practice have not consistently captured authentic instruction, and that there has been inconsistent interpretation and implementation of the rubric.

In selecting their top three concerns with the new evaluation system, 48 percent of questionnaire respondents agreed with the statement that, "I do not believe I can effectively demonstrate all required indicators on the evaluation rubric in a given lesson." Thirty-four percent of principals and other evaluators indicated that one of their top three concerns was that, "I do not believe I can effectively assess all required indicators on the evaluation rubric in a given lesson."[55] Through-out the feedback process, educators—teachers, principals, and evaluators—said they felt like the observation rubric had become a "checklist" of actions a teacher must demonstrate that does not always encourage authentic assessment of instruction, despite evaluator training discouraging the use of the rubric as a "checklist." In some cases, educators said the announced observations were leading teachers to spend significant time planning "perfect" lessons that reflect all aspects of the rubric that may not actually improve instruction and student learning.

Across the models, the different ways in which observation and scoring are conducted leads to different expectations in some cases. For example, in the TEM and TEAM models, evaluators assess teachers on separate sections of the rubric – such as planning or environment – during different observations. Final scores are calculated as an average of scores on these different domains. While teachers said this approach gave them a clear sense of where their performance fell on the rubrics, some said they felt like they were expected to demonstrate an unrealistic number of indicators in every lesson.

Many educators also said that evaluators had different interpretations regarding how they observe and score lessons. For example, teachers said there was disagreement as to whether they are being observed at the indicator or the descriptor level on the TEAM rubric. For example, for the "grouping students" indicator, some teachers said they were being assessed on all of the descriptors – meaning they would be penalized if their students were not in small groups – rather than at the indicator level which stipulates that "the instructional grouping arrangements…consistently maximize student understanding and learning efficiency."[56] Additionally, educators said that the TEAM rubric itself left a lot of room for subjective interpretation. For example, educators said the lack of descriptions for what teaching looks like for some effectiveness levels made it difficult for many evaluators to accurately and consistently assess teaching practice. Participants in the feedback process suggested further study and refinements are needed to ensure that the TEAM rubric language is sufficiently clear and specific and that absolutes, such as "always" and "never," are used appropriately.

Finally, there are differences in opinion regarding the topic of adaptation of rubrics. Some educators said they felt that the rubrics are not an accurate tool to gauge performance for some teaching roles. For example, they wondered how well the rubric applied to early childhood instructors, special education teachers of non-verbal students, and librarians. While three evaluation models – TEM, TIGER, and Project COACH – have adapted rubrics for educators in special assignments, some educators disagreed with the idea of having multiple rubrics. "Good teaching is good teaching across the board," one teacher at a roundtable said. "So much of what we have in front of us in the rubric is not content specific."[57]

There is not yet sufficient focus on how the pending implementation of the Common Core State Standards needs to be reflected in and reinforced by the teacher evaluation system.

Although integrating Common Core with the teacher evaluation system was not expressed frequently during our conversations with Tennessee teachers and principals, leaders in teacher evaluation both in and outside of the state highlighted this as an important area of consideration.[58] In these interviews, some individuals advised that as teachers and other educators begin using the new standards, several substantive instructional shifts will be required. These shifts will need to be reflected in and reinforced by the teacher evaluation system where appropriate, for example, in the qualitative rubrics at the core of the evaluation system.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

Tennessee's teacher evaluation system is improving both the quality of instruction in the classroom as well as the establishment of accountability for student results. As Tennessee continues its work to implement the system, many of the challenges highlighted by educators should be addressed to ensure the system identifies and supports instruction that leads to high levels of student achievement.

Much of the discussion around where and how to improve the evaluation system has focused on technical adjustments. Examples of technical adjustments include how many observation sessions should occur over the course of the year for teachers of different experience levels, how long lessons should be, and how much planning should be required for the model. As we noted above, there may be some opportunities to streamline and adjust the different models. However, we must maintain a focus on continuous learning with regard to teacher evaluation that results in improved student achievement, and this effort will require more than technical adjustments.

Our recommendations do not address the full universe of possibilities regarding technical adjustments to Tennessee's teacher evaluation system. We do, however, support certain flexibility from the Department of Education and the state Board of Education regarding items such as the number of classroom visits for teachers. More can be learned by studying the longer-term implementation of all the approved models and creating an ongoing feedback process while working within current State Board guidelines.

As we continue to put a robust teacher evaluation system in place, the ultimate goal is to foster a culture in Tennessee's schools that supports meaningful feedback and related professional development opportunities – for teachers and principals alike – as the essential professional culture required for improving instruction and student outcomes.[59]

With this goal in mind, we offer the following recommendations:

1. Ensure current and prospective teachers and leaders receive sufficient training in the new evaluation system.

2. Link the feedback that teachers receive with high-quality, collaborative, and individualized professional learning opportunities so that they can improve their instruction.

3. Address challenges with the current quantitative and qualitative measures of teacher effectiveness.

4. Support school and district leaders in becoming strong instructional leaders capable of assessing and developing effective teaching – and hold them accountable for doing so.

5. Re-engage educators in those districts where implementation of the teacher evaluation system has faltered during the first year of work.

6. Integrate the ongoing implementation of the new teacher evaluation system and the Common Core State Standards so that they work together to improve student outcomes.

7. Drive continuous improvement of the teacher evaluation system at the state, district, and school levels.

Recommendation 1

Ensure current and prospective teachers and leaders receive sufficient training in the new evaluation system. We recommend:

1(a) **District leaders train and support principals and other evaluators to successfully implement the qualitative observation of teaching practice in their districts.** They should ensure both evaluators and teachers receive adequate training in the evaluation process and measures to accurately and reliably assess teacher performance. Recent research from the MET Project recommends that teacher evaluator training and certification include exemplars of videos of classroom lessons, authentic scoring practice, and require evaluators to score accurately across various grades and subjects.[60] We further recommend training also explicitly target key misunderstandings surfaced by evaluators and experts in the field. One of these issues could be how to score the indicators versus the descriptors on the TEAM rubric. Leaders for TEAM, TIGER, and COACH should examine the Memphis TEM model as a promising approach to ensure ongoing inter-rater reliability.

1(b) **The Department and district leaders ensure district and school leaders receive appropriate communication and training on the use of student growth and achievement measures to drive effective teaching across their classrooms and schools.**

1(c) **Teachers work proactively as individual practitioners and collaboratively with their colleagues and school leadership to fully take part in training opportunities.**

1(d) **Postsecondary teacher and leader preparation programs ensure curricula are aligned with state policies and standards, including educator evaluation systems.**

Recommendation 2

Link the feedback that teachers receive with high-quality, collaborative, and individualized professional learning opportunities so that they can improve their instruction. The Department of Education and districts must provide meaningful professional learning and support to help teachers improve. We recommend:

2(a) **The State Board and Department help districts connect with high-quality professional development resources for their teachers and principals that align with the effective teaching practices undergirding the evaluation system. Examples of this work include:**

I. Producing a score card of vendors to help districts with quality assurance.

II. Expanding the existing portal to include a fuller set of exemplar lessons.

III. Creating an expanded online repository of professional learning resources, such as sample lesson plans and online resources linked to the standards that is made available to districts.

IV. Supporting regional district collaborations, such as regional professional learning community networking opportunities.

2(b) **District leaders work collaboratively with school leaders to ensure the availability of high-quality learning opportunities linked to teachers' individual areas of need.**

2(c) **School leaders create the time and structures for regular and meaningful professional learning opportunities for their teachers.** These opportunities should be tied to their performance feedback and draw on the expertise within and beyond their buildings to enable educators to highlight and share evidence-based practices that lead to high levels of student learning growth and achievement.

2(d) **Teachers use the feedback, tools, and resources provided by the evaluation system to reflect on their practice.** Teachers should also share expertise and best practices with their colleagues, seek out the expertise and best practices of other educators, and work together to improve their collective practice and students' learning.[61]
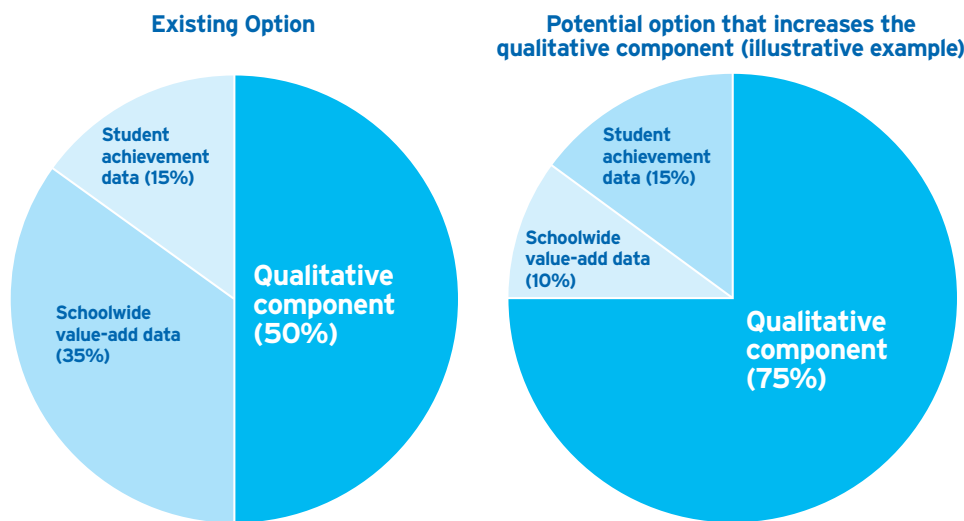
Recommendation 3

Address challenges with the current quantitative and qualitative measures of teacher effectiveness. We recommend:

3(a) Addressing immediate issues with the quantitative student growth portion (35 percent) of the evaluation system:

I. The Board and Department should continue to develop meaningful assessments of non-tested grades/subjects that are aligned with Common Core State Standards and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments. We recommend these assessments link educators with the subset of students in the school with whom they work so that the data are representative of teachers' individual performances. This change may not be appropriate for all. Educators who work with students throughout the school, such as instructional coaches and librarians, should continue to use school-wide TVAAS composites as they align with their roles and responsibilities.

II. As these assessments are developed, teachers who do not yet have individual value-added or comparable data should temporarily be given the option of increasing the weighting of the qualitative measures while decreasing the weighting of the school-wide value-added composites (see example below). Based on the feedback received from educators however, school-wide value-added data serve as a powerful tool to drive collaboration and the sharing of best-practices, and should be maintained as a meaningful component of the evaluation.

Existing Option

Potential option that increases the qualitative component (illustrative example)

Student achievement data (15%)

Schoolwide value-add data (35%)

Qualitative component (50%)

Student achievement data (15%)

Schoolwide value-add data (10%)

Qualitative component (75%)

III. Moving forward, the Department should develop a process to continually assess and improve the measures of student growth used in the teacher evaluation system. This process should include a review of the latest research and educator input. The following issues should be examined through this process:

a. We recommend that over time, the State Board and Department consider allowing teachers who have consistently achieved high levels of student growth to have the option for greater weight to be given to their student growth measures as a proportion of their evaluation.

b. The Department of Education should work to ensure that educators have earlier access to TVAAS results and all student data used in the evaluation system so that evaluations can be completed in a timelier manner.

c. The State Board of Education and Department of Education should consider allowing districts and educators the option to use one year of school-wide TVAAS data instead of a three-year average where appropriate, such as in a school turnaround situation.

d. The State Board of Education and Department of Education should study the use of special education students in TVAAS analyses and consider policy implications based upon this analysis of the data (i.e. examine the policy implications of recommending that scores of special education students who take the regular TCAP assessments be included in the TVAAS teacher analyses).

3(b) Revisiting the 15 percent quantitative student achievement component of the evaluation and strengthening implementation so that it meaningfully drives effective teaching.

    I. We recommend the Department create an ongoing feedback loop to review the list of measures for this component on an annual basis. This could be done as part of a larger process that reviews the 50 percent of teacher evaluation that measures student growth and achievement on an ongoing basis. In the near term, the Department should consider revising the current list of approved options to ensure that options are valid and reliable, support district and school priorities, and are available in a timely manner.

    II. When selecting appropriate measures of student achievement, teachers and principals should select the measure that most closely aligns with the individual teacher's role and with school and district-wide priorities. To determine the appropriate scoring scale, we recommend teachers and principals discuss and set ambitious and achievable goals for their students' achievement. Educators should embrace this goal-setting opportunity to drive teaching and learning in their classrooms and schools.

    III. District leaders should ensure that the measures selected are based on rigorous goals for improved classroom instruction and student growth.

    IV. The Department of Education should continuously evaluate whether the 15 percent measure is driving teaching effectiveness. If this measure is ultimately not able to drive effective teaching, its place in the evaluation system should be reconsidered.

3(c) With educator input, determine how to best put the authentic assessment of teacher practice at the center of the observation system where initial implementation has faltered.

    I. Districts that have not yet done so should engage their educators to identify the specific challenges preventing the authentic assessment of teacher practice and create a plan to address those challenges. We recommend:

        a. Districts utilize the existing flexibility to address concerns where applicable, such as unannounced vs. announced observations or the use of peer evaluators/coaches.

        b. Districts also apply for additional flexibility to address their unique issues. This could include changes they believe will improve authentic assessments of instruction in their schools, but are outside of existing flexibility requirements.

    II. The evaluation system requires a minimum of two classroom visits for professionally licensed teachers per year and four classroom visits for non-professionally licensed teachers per year. Existing research on the issue of observation frequency supports multiple observations for all teachers.[62] Therefore, the current system, with multiple observations per year for all teachers, is a critical piece of Tennessee's teacher evaluation system. There is, however, an opportunity for the State Board of Education to provide additional clarity to districts regarding this requirement.

    III. We encourage the Department to create a process to continually review progress and identify potential revisions to the qualitative process to ensure it results in accurate and meaningful assessments of instruction for all teachers. In particular, this process should be used for the following:

        a. The Department of Education should consider accelerating the identification and use of student surveys as a percentage of the qualitative score for all current models, based on existing research on the reliability and validity of such results for teacher evaluation.[63]

        b. Over time, the Department and State Board should examine and consider a process for allowing districts to utilize their highest performing teachers to provide growth opportunities for educators who are in need of support.

        c. TEAM leaders could consider the development and use of adapted rubrics for specialized teaching assignments or other roles, such as counselors and instructional coaches. This should be balanced to ensure the effectiveness of the system is not unintentionally undermined by an excessive number of adaptions. Project COACH, TEM, and TIGER leaders should assess how the adapted rubrics in their respective models are driving effectiveness across roles and assignments and consider any revisions accordingly.

    d. The Department should work with representatives from TEAM districts to consider building out the descriptions of what teaching looks like at every effectiveness level, including in the "2" and "4" rating categories. The Department and district representatives should also consider revising the usage of absolute language, such as "always" and "never," which many educators said felt too stringent.

    e. The Department and districts using TEAM should review and revise the professionalism rubric to ensure it is driving effective teaching. The use of the professionalism rubric should be considered as a part of the initial and ongoing TEAM training as is appropriate.

    f. Across models, educators frequently commented that the rubrics are powerful instruments in driving effective teaching. We recommend additional guidance to evaluators and teachers regarding best practice in using the rubric. This guidance should specifically include strategies around ensuring the rubric is not used as a checklist.

    g. The State Department of Education should be deliberate in its study of the range of approaches being used to assess teachers across the approved models.

    Specifically, during teacher observations with two models – TEM and TEAM – many teachers said they are expected to demonstrate all pieces of one or more domains of the rubric in every observation and they are scored on each accordingly. Those scores are then averaged to produce a final summative score at the end of the year. Alternatively, in the Project COACH and TIGER models, observers provide formative feedback after every observation, but do not rate or score the teacher until the end of the year. Partly as a result of their approach to scoring, teachers perceived that the Project COACH and TIGER models prioritized their growth and improvement, and fostered teacher ownership as well. It is yet to be seen whether one approach or the other results in more effective evaluation results.

3(d) Committees within the approved models create a process to review their respective rubrics on an ongoing basis and make revisions accordingly to drive improved instruction.

    I. Educator feedback highlighted a key tension around the rubric tool itself. Educators said they appreciate the depth and specificity of the rubrics. They also said the rubrics can easily become unwieldy tools for guiding and improving instruction. Committees within each of the four models should tackle this learning question to inform continuous improvement of the rubrics themselves going forward. A near-term focus for this work will be to review and revise the rubrics where appropriate to align with and reinforce the Common Core State Standards to create a coherent and integrated set of expectations for teaching and learning.[64]

Recommendation 4

Support school and district leaders in becoming strong instructional leaders capable of assessing and developing effective teaching – and hold them accountable for doing so. We recommend:

4(a) Accelerating the development and implementation of a robust principal evaluation system and supporting principals in their primary roles as instructional leaders.

    I. The State Board of Education and Department of Education should accelerate the development of a principal evaluation system that significantly elevates the role of the principal as an instructional leader and focuses on teacher evaluation, feedback, and corresponding professional development.

    II. Districts need to support principals as strong instructional leaders who are effective at improving instruction in their schools.[65] This instructional role is crucial to the success of the teacher evaluation system, and principals will need to be trained and supported to do this work. Where appropriate, district leaders may need to find ways to remove other responsibilities to enable school leaders to focus on instruction. For example, districts should research how technology could be used to further effective teaching and learning in their schools, similar to the Project COACH model. Districts might reconsider their provision of resources to provide principals with support staff, who could take responsibility for building management tasks to enable school leaders to focus on instruction. We do not recommend further reducing the number of classroom visits each teacher receives (as a way of reducing the burden on principals) because teachers warrant multiple opportunities for feedback to drive continuous learning and research has shown that multiple observations are needed to produce reliable results.[66]

4(b) Supporting and holding superintendents accountable for the development of principals as strong instructional leaders who effectively support and evaluate their teachers.

    I. Local school board leaders responsible for supervising superintendents should hold them accountable for developing instructional leaders in their schools and for the effective implementation of a teacher evaluation system that helps to drive continuous improvement in teaching practice across the district.

    II. Superintendents, supported by TOSS, AIMS, and other appropriate associations, should create networks of superintendent professional learning communities within existing organizations such as field service centers to help superintendents support strong instructional leadership across their schools.

4(c) Supporting principals and superintendents in developing the skills they need to build strong and collaborative school cultures that prioritize achieving ambitious student learning goals.

    I. District and school leaders must create trusting and collaborative cultures focused on improving student achievement. In these cultures, educators take collective ownership for student learning and the continuous improvement of teaching practice to achieve shared goals in their schools and districts. Principals must support and empower teachers to develop leadership capabilities. Teachers must take ownership of their instruction and collaborate to improve their collective practice. The foundation of a strong teaching and learning system must be trusting and collaborative relationships among staff and students in the pursuit of effective practice and high levels of student learning.[67]

    II. The Department and professional associations including TOSS and the Tennessee Principals Association should support school and district leaders to build the skills and capabilities they need to build strong school cultures. As field service centers are fully developed, they could be an important venue for this type of best practice sharing and professional learning.

    III. Teachers should be active co-creators of student learning goals and also collaborate with colleagues to share evidenced-based practices that lead to high levels of learning for their students.[68]

    IV. We recommend existing educator associations provide professional learning opportunities that are high-quality and support student growth and effective teaching. These associations could be natural venues for communities of practice and supporting teacher ownership of a redefined profession that promotes continuous learning and development.

Recommendation 5

Re-engage educators in those districts where implementation of the teacher evaluation system has faltered during the first year of work.

Initial implementation of the teacher evaluation system in some districts has been less effective than in others. Districts and schools with more room for improvement are characterized by the following:

- District leaders do not believe in the value of the teacher evaluation system and have not made implementation one of their top priorities this year.

- School administrators have not been engaged or have struggled to implement the evaluation system.

- Especially high dissatisfaction among teachers and low confidence that the evaluation system will help them improve their practice and ultimately their students' learning.

- An especially low correlation between student outcomes and assessed observations of teaching practice.

5(a) Continue to invite and, when warranted, approve new proposals from school districts to adopt or develop teacher evaluation models that fit within the parameters established by First to the Top and State Board policy and hold the promise of effective implementation.

> I. The Board and the Department have provided an important process for districts to apply for flexibility to address the unique challenges they face. We recommend districts utilize this flexibility where appropriate. The Board and Department should continue to welcome proposals from school districts to adopt or develop teacher evaluation models that fit within the parameters established by the First to the Top legislation, provided there is a rationale and evidence of district commitment to implement with fidelity. The Board and Department should maintain an annual application process for districts to apply for this flexibility and communicate the process and deadlines in a timely manner so districts can thoughtfully plan proposed refinements.

5(b) Assess progress and determine whether districts need to reset implementation system-wide or in particular schools.

> I. District governing bodies and superintendents should assess implementation progress to date and determine whether they meet the characteristics for districts and schools where implementation is not going well.

Districts should reflect on the following questions to help them assess their present situations:

- Are we on a path with implementing the teacher evaluation system that will lead to improved instruction across our schools and district?
- If not, what steps – as recommended in other places in this report – do we need to take that will put us on the right path? Who is responsible for taking those steps?
- How will our communication process with teachers be different to support teacher and student success?
- How will our communication process with teachers be different and supportive of helping all teachers improve and students be successful?

> II. If a district determines its implementation is in need of resetting, that district must develop a plan for how this resetting will occur, using the questions above as a guide. Districts should also consult with other districts in their region where implementation has gone more smoothly to help them troubleshoot and learn from best practices.

5(c) The Department should identify, engage, challenge, and support districts where implementation has faltered to get back on track.

> I. The Department should identify, engage with, challenge, and support districts where implementation has lapsed. Without calling districts out specifically, the Department should meet with district leaders and support them in developing solutions and a path forward to the successful implementation of a teacher evaluation system.

Recommendation 6

Integrate the ongoing implementation of the new teacher evaluation system and the Common Core State Standards so that they work together to improve student outcomes.

6(a) As the Common Core State Standards are implemented, review and refine the qualitative observation instruments where appropriate to reflect the shifts in instruction necessitated by the Common Core State Standards. Ensure the quantitative measures align with the new expectations as well.[69] We recommend:

I. The Board and Department refine the teacher evaluation system and approved models to reflect the shifts in instruction that the Common Core State Standards and the PARCC assessments require. The Department should reduce redundancies and eliminate conflicts where appropriate to promote a common language among educators. Ultimately, the teacher evaluation system should reflect and reinforce the new standards. To this end, we encourage the Department of Education to ask districts using alternative evaluation models to share how they are planning to reflect these instructional shifts in their observation instruments.

II. District leaders create networks to collaborate and plan refinements that will reflect the instructional shifts embedded in the Common Core State Standards. We encourage these networks of districts to include significant educator input and participation and to seek best practices both within and beyond Tennessee.

III. The Board and the Department coordinate the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and PARCC assessments with ongoing refinements to the quantitative measures in the teacher evaluation system to ensure aligned instructional expectations.

6(b) Track and incorporate how various Tennessee districts and other states implement these same standards to determine best practices in curriculum, instruction, assessments, professional learning, resources, and all other areas. We recommend:

I. The Department of Education support the categorization and sharing of tools, resources, and professional learning modules, and work to ensure that the implementation of Common Core State Standards works together with teacher evaluation to improve instruction and student learning.

II. District leaders, school leaders, and teachers seek opportunities to collaborate and share resources that support the successful implementation of the new standards.

III. Principals, other evaluators, and teachers be fully trained and participate in professional learning opportunities to effectively use the teacher evaluation system in ways that support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

IV. Teachers have a sense of ownership for the successful implementation of the new standards in their classrooms. They should seek to deeply understand the new standards and the instructional shifts embedded within them and to chart a collective course forward to implement them in ways that lead to high levels of learning for their students.

Recommendation 7

Drive continuous improvement of the teacher evaluation system at the state, district, and school levels.

7(a) Support ongoing assessment and continuous improvement of teacher evaluation across districts.

I. The Department and leaders from each of the evaluation models should ensure the right processes are in place to drive improvements to the evaluation system on an ongoing basis. Where there appears to be a misapplication of a teacher evaluation system (for example, where student performance may remain consistently low, but the teacher and principal evaluations are not reflecting the need for improvement), the Department should work with district leaders to explore solutions to identified implementation challenges. This should be done on a limited and judicious basis, and with an eye towards building trusting and collaborative relationships. Patterns should be observed in the evaluation results and, where the relationship with student outcomes appears to break down and appropriate differentiation of teaching is not occurring, the state should work collaboratively with districts to develop solutions. As the regional field service centers fully develop, they could be an impactful venue for this engagement.

II. The Department should coordinate the collection of promising practices and lessons learned across the multiple models being implemented, given its overview of all approved models. Through its tracking and reporting of the contributions different models make to teacher effectiveness and student outcomes, the Department is in an excellent position to identify best practices.

7(b) Support ongoing assessment and continuous improvement of teacher evaluation across schools.

I. District leaders should assess and improve the relative quality of teacher evaluations across schools by taking into account the following: student outcomes and teacher evaluations and the correlation, or lack thereof, between them; teachers' perceptions of the validity, reliability, and overall impact of the evaluation system; and evaluators' perceptions of the validity, reliability, and overall impact of the evaluation system.

II. Through ongoing assessment, district leaders should drive continuous improvement and refinement of teacher evaluation practices, with significant opportunity for educator input and feedback into those refinements. Each district should develop a plan for how it will continuously improve and refine teacher evaluation practices to ensure learning is taken into account and used to drive improvement. Districts should use the Department's annual flexibility application as necessary to pursue the refinements they seek. Districts should serve as the clearinghouse of practices and experiences of their schools and should draw upon best practices both within and beyond their boundaries.

III. With district support, principals and other evaluators should review and refine their approach to evaluation at the school-level, in light of the correlation, or lack thereof, between the qualitative, observation-based assessment of teacher performance and the quantitative assessment of student achievement.

IV. Teachers have a critical role to play in ongoing refinements and improvements to the evaluation system. Therefore, they must take ownership over the collective improvement of instruction, and seek both meaningful feedback on their performance as well as high-quality opportunities for professional learning and growth with colleagues and other experts both within and beyond their schools. Where they are not receiving the feedback and professional growth opportunities that they need to improve their practice and their students' learning, teachers should be proactive advocates to school and district leaders. Finally, teachers must actively utilize the resources that are available to them to improve their own instruction. Our students' ultimate success depends in large part on ensuring this proper balance of support and accountability for teachers.

Conclusion

CONCLUSION

SCORE has not been a disinterested observer of the teacher evaluation system. Research shows that effective teaching is the most important school based factor in improving student achievement. In SCORE's 2009 Roadmap to Success report, SCORE recommended that Tennessee "develop, pilot, and roll out a statewide teacher effectiveness measure based on multiple measures including student achievement gains and potentially principal evaluations, peer review, and parent and student surveys." This new evaluation system is an important part of ensuring that that effective teaching occurs in every classroom in Tennessee.

As the first year of implementation of this new system comes to a close, there are significant and promising signs of progress. As with any implementation process, challenges and concerns have surfaced as well. The new evaluation system is nuanced and complex, because the art of teaching is nuanced and complex. Continued improvement, over time, is critical.

After conducting this feedback process, we believe that Tennessee's teacher evaluation policy is critical to fostering and supporting effective teaching in Tennessee and ultimately to improving student achievement. The system that Tennessee is implementing is improving the quality of teaching in the classroom and is supporting effective instruction in many districts. It is our hope that this report, and its recommendations, will help identify areas where continued improvements can be made moving forward. As refinements continue to be made and the system is fully implemented with fidelity, it will fully realize its potential to serve as a powerful platform for supporting inspired, high-quality instruction across the state and, therefore, gains in student achievement and growth.

Finally, it has been our great pleasure to listen to and learn from educators and other stakeholders across Tennessee over the last five months. The work our teachers, principals, administrators, and other educators do to prepare students for the future is truly heroic. It is our hope that this report is both a broad reflection of the thoughts and opinions of these educators, as well as an investment in their profession.
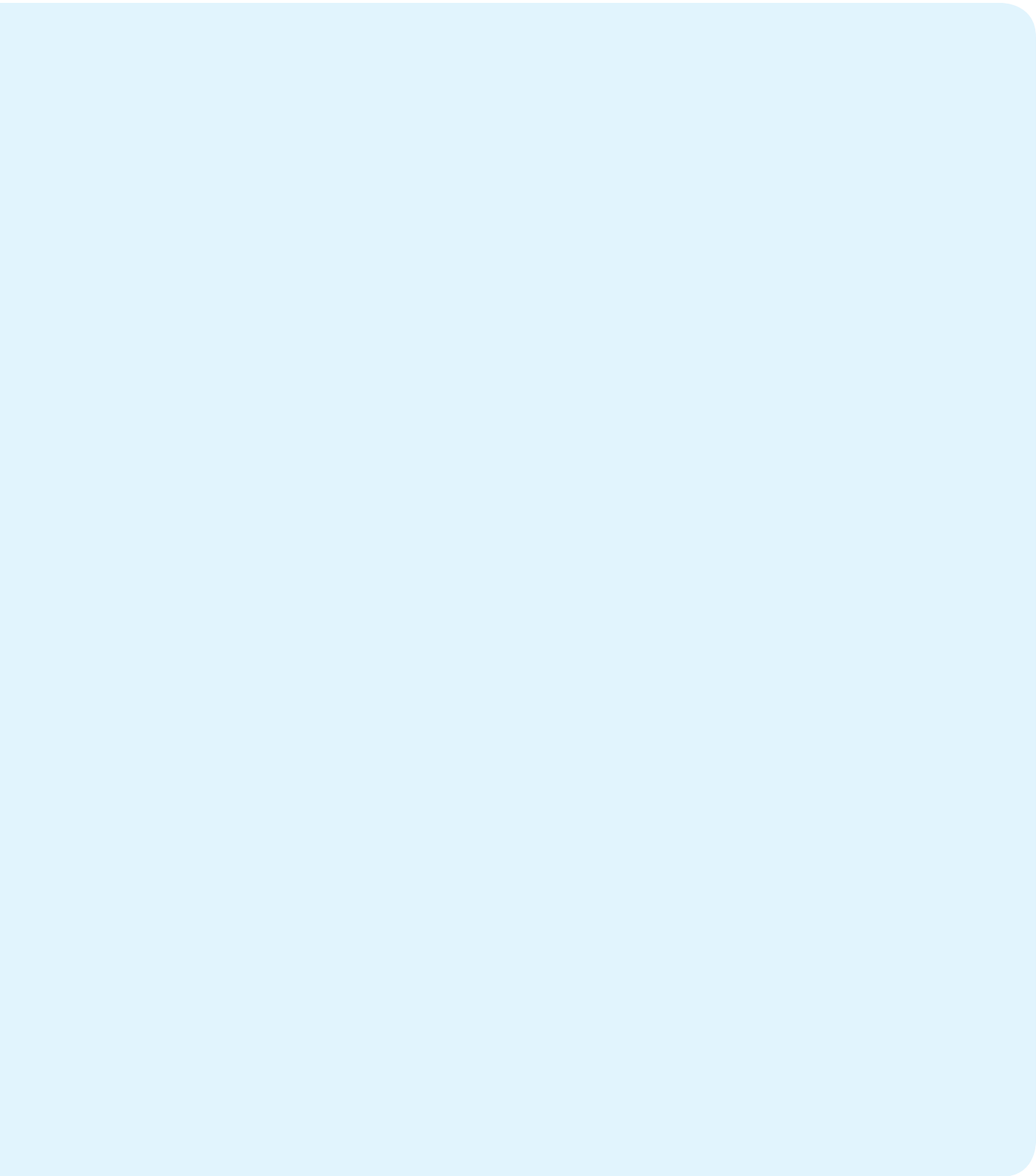
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APPENDIX

Regional roundtables

Date	Location	Number of participants	Input collected

February to April, 2012	Districts across Tennessee	• 133 panel participants
		• 581 audience members
		  • 256 teachers
		  • 202 business/community
		  • 60 principals
		  • 19 parents
		  • 19 superintendents
		  • 14 school board members
		  • 10 students
		  • 1 legislator
			• Panel discussions
			• 329 audience surveys

Feb 9	Cookeville Regional Tennessee Tech University 10 West 7th Street Cookeville, TN	• 17 panelists • 45 audience members	• Panel discussion • 33 audience surveys
Feb 23	Nashville Regional David Lipscomb University 3901 Granny White Pike Nashville, TN	• 15 panelists • 74 audience members	• Panel discussion • 61 audience surveys
March 5	Knoxville Regional The University of Tennessee 2712 Neyland Drive Knoxville, TN	• 16 panelists • 141 audience members	• Panel discussion • 74 audience surveys
March 6	Johnson City Regional East Tennessee State University 2001 Millennium Place Johnson City, TN	• 14 panelists • 73 audience members	• Panel discussion • 30 audience surveys
March 12	Chattanooga Regional Chattanooga State Community College 4501 Amnicola Highway Chattanooga, TN	• 14 panelists • 54 audience members	• Panel discussion • 25 audience surveys
March 22	Lawrenceburg Regional Columbia State Community College 1620 Springer Road Lawrenceburg, TN	• 14 panelists • 54 audience members	• Panel discussion • 51 audience surveys
April 2	Memphis Regional University of Memphis 499 University Street Memphis, TN	• 14 panelists • 9 audience members	• Panel discussion • 3 audience surveys
April 2	Memphis and Shelby County University of Memphis 499 University Street Memphis, TN	• 17 panelists • 65 audience members	• Panel discussion • 28 audience surveys
April 3	Jackson Regional Union University 1050 Union University Drive Jackson, TN	• 13 panelists • 42 audience members	• Panel discussion • 24 audience surveys

Online Educator Questionnaire

Date	Location	Number of participants	Input collected
March 1-31	• Available in all school districts in Tennessee	• 15,401 teachers (92% from TEAM, ~3% each from TEM, TIGER, and COACH) • 932 principals • 831 other evaluators	• Online questionnaire responses

Educator Work Team

Date	Location	Number of participants	Input collected
March 16	Nashville	• 21 attendees of 22 confirmed invitations, representing the 3 Grand Divisions	• Work team discussions
April 5	Nashville	• 9 attendees of 22 confirmed invitations, representing the 3 Grand Divisions	• Work team discussions

In-depth interviews with leaders on teacher evaluation systems in Tennessee and across the nation

Date	Participants	Input collected
TEAM: Feb 8, March 8, April 4	• Kevin Huffman, Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Education • Emily Barton, Assistant Commissioner, Curriculum and Instruction, Tennessee Department of Education • Sara Heyburn, Assistant Commissioner, Teachers and Leaders, Tennessee Department of Education • Aneesh Sohoni, Director of Policy and Communications for Teacher and Principal Evaluations, Tennessee Department of Education	• Interviews
Project COACH: Feb 13	• Stacy Stewart, Assistant Superintendent, Hamilton County Schools • John Stewart, Program Manager, Project COACH • John Kim, CEO, District Management Council (DMC) • Garret Smith and Amy Sutherland, District Management Council (DMC)	• Interview • "Hamilton County Department of Education, Project COACH Evaluation Model 2011-2012 Fall Survey," 107 administrators, 1,317 teachers , Fall '11
TIGER: Feb 27	• Wayne Miller, Superintendent, Lenoir City Schools	• Interview
TEM: Feb 28	• Tequilla Banks, Executive Director, Department of Teacher Talent and Effectiveness, Memphis City Schools • Ken Foster, Executive Director, Memphis Education Association	• Interview • "February 2012, Memphis City Schools Teacher Survey Results," 4,246 teachers • TEM: Key Messages and FAQs
Interviews with national teacher evaluation leaders		
March 13	• Amy Briggs and Katya Levitan-Reiner, Student Achievement Partners	• Interview
March 13	• Dan Weisberg, The New Teacher Project	• Interview
April 4	• Steve Cantrell, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Measures of Effective Teaching Project	• Interview
April 10	• Charlotte Danielson, Danielson Group	• Interview
May 1	• Linda Darling-Hammond, Stanford's Center on School Redesign	• Interview

Feedback from existing groups, networks, and experts in Tennessee

Date	Participants	Input collected
Jan 18, Feb 1 and 22	• Superintendent Study Council and TOSS	• Facilitated group discussion, TOSS Board (Jan 18); 12 participants • Facilitated discussions, Superintendent Study Council (Feb 22), Mid-Cumberland and Southwest Regional Superintendent Study Councils (Feb 1); 35 total participants
Jan 11	• Principal/Supervisor's Study Council	• Facilitated group discussion; 19 participants
Feb 12 and 28	• Tennessee Principal Association Board of Directors	• Facilitated group discussions; 9 participants
March 9, April 20	• South Central Supervisor Study Council, Southwest Supervisor Study Council	• Facilitated group discussions; 41 total participants
April 19	• SCORE Rural Education Network	• Facilitated group discussion; 11 participants
April 24	• Rutherford County outreach / educator work team	• Facilitated group discussion; 26 participants
February 2012	• Williamson County TEAM Teacher Feedback Committee	• Recommendations from WCS TEAM Teacher Feedback Committee • 18 participants (teachers, librarian, counselor, and administrators)
Fall '11 – Winter '12	• Tennessee Education Association	• Agenda to Address the Annual Evaluation System • TEA Surveys, 656 administrators, 3,953 teachers in Phase I, and 3,474 teachers in Phase II, Fall '11 to Winter '12

Other feedback inputs submitted to SCORE

• Emails and phone calls from educators and citizens to SCORE directly

SURVEY

Teacher Evaluation Questionnaire for Educators and Administrators

Introduction

To identify and support effective teaching, Tennessee is now in the first year of implementing a new teacher evaluation system based on multiple measures. Critical to the success of the implementation of the new evaluation system is providing a clear opportunity for input from educators to inform potential improvements going forward.

Governor Bill Haslam charged SCORE with leading a feedback process, independent of state government, on the new evaluation system. SCORE's role in this process is to listen – we are gathering feedback on both successes and challenges across the state and will report back to the Department of Education and State Board of Education with our findings by June 1.

We have partnered with the following organizations to gather feedback from educators and community leaders across Tennessee: Tennessee Education Association (TEA), Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents (TOSS), Tennessee School Boards Association (TSBA), Tennessee PTA, Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Tennessee Business Roundtable, Tennessee Principals Association, and the Professional Educators of Tennessee.

This Educator and Evaluator Questionnaire is an important source of input in SCORE's feedback process as it provides every teacher and principal in the state with the opportunity to respond. It is an important feedback tool that will inform the ultimate report – however, it is not a scientific survey meant to generate statistically significant research findings.

Thank you for taking this opportunity to provide your input.

1) Please select your primary role:*

( ) Teacher   ( ) Principal   ( ) Other evaluator

2) If you have selected "Other evaluator" please choose from below:*

( ) School/district administrator   ( ) Lead/Master teacher/Instructional coach   ( ) Other: _____

Teachers

3) How many total years have you been in education?*

( ) 1-3   ( ) 4-6   ( ) 7-10   ( ) 11-20   ( ) 21-30   ( ) 30+

4) How many total years have you been in your current teaching role?*

( ) 1-3   ( ) 4-6   ( ) 7-10   ( ) 11-20   ( ) 21-30   ( ) 30+

5) Please select your district from the following list:*

[All school districts in Tennessee listed]

6) Please select your school's configuration from the following list:*

( ) Elementary school   ( ) K-12 school   ( ) High school

( ) K-8 school   ( ) Middle school   ( ) Other   ( ) Alternative or Special Education school

7) Please select the subject area that best represents your current role:*

( ) State-tested subject area (e.g., Third through eighth grade English-Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies)

( ) Non-state-tested subject area (e.g., PreK-2nd grades, Physical Education)

8) Please select the teacher evaluation model your school is using this year:*

( ) COACH   ( ) TEAM   ( ) TEM   ( ) TIGER   ( ) Don't know

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

9) Overall, I think the new teacher evaluation system we are using will have a positive impact on my own teaching practice:*

( ) Strongly agree   ( ) Agree   ( ) Disagree   ( ) Strongly Disagree   ( ) Don't know

10) Overall, I think the new teacher evaluation system we are using will have a positive impact on student achievement in my school:*

( ) Strongly agree   ( ) Agree   ( ) Disagree   ( ) Strongly Disagree   ( ) Don't know

11) The new teacher evaluation system we are using in my school this year represents an improvement over past teacher evaluation practices in my school:*

( ) Strongly agree   ( ) Agree   ( ) Disagree   ( ) Strongly Disagree   ( ) Don't know

12) I received the information and training I needed this year on the new teacher evaluation system we are using in my school:*

( ) Strongly agree   ( ) Agree   ( ) Disagree   ( ) Strongly Disagree   ( ) Don't know

13) I believe there were sufficient opportunities for educator input into the design and implementation of the new teacher evaluation system we are using in my school:*

( ) Strongly agree   ( ) Agree   ( ) Disagree   ( ) Strongly Disagree   ( ) Don't know

Below we have listed potential benefits and potential challenges that could be associated with the implementation of a new teacher evaluation system.

14) Please select up to three things you like best about the new teacher evaluation system you are using this year:*

[ ] It gives me a much clearer understanding of what constitutes effective teaching

[ ] It gives me a much clearer idea of my individual strengths and areas for growth

[ ] It gives me a much clearer understanding of my school's expectations for effective teaching

[ ] It helps me improve my instruction and grow as a professional

[ ] It highlights student learning and achievement as a primary determinant of my effectiveness

[ ] It connects my students' learning results to my teaching and instruction

[ ] It helps me feel a part of a professional learning community

[ ] It has resulted in my school administrator taking a greater interest in my work

[ ] It allows me to see how my students are improving on formative and other assessments

[ ] Other _____   [ ] Other _____

15) Please indicate up to three things about the new teacher evaluation system you are using this year that you think are most in need of improvement going forward:*

[ ] It is not helping me to improve my instruction and grow as a professional

[ ] The definition of effective teaching outlined by the evaluation system does not align with what I believe constitutes effective teaching

[ ] The evaluation system is not providing me with a clear understanding of my individual strengths and areas for growth

[ ] I am not confident in my evaluator's ability to accurately assess my performance on a consistent basis

[ ] I do not have access to the support and development opportunities I need to become more effective

[ ] The evaluation system is not helping me collaborate with my colleagues as part of a professional learning community

[ ] I am not confident the available value-added student growth data (35% of teachers' evaluations) accurately reflect my effectiveness

[ ] I am not confident the student achievement measures (15% of teachers' evaluations) accurately reflect my effectiveness

[ ] I am not confident the observations of my teaching accurately reflect my effectiveness

[ ] I do not believe I can effectively demonstrate all required indicators on the evaluation rubric in a given lesson

[ ] The new evaluation system we are using in my school is too time-consuming to implement effectively

[ ] Other _____   [ ] Other _____

Please note that this data collection is distinct from the Tennessee Consortium's annual, springtime First to the Top survey. An invitation to participate in this broader survey will arrive in educators' inboxes later this spring, and we strongly encourage your participation in that effort.

Evaluators

16) How many total years have you been in education?*

( ) 1-3   ( ) 4-6   ( ) 7-10   ( ) 11-20   ( ) 21-30   ( ) 30+

17) How many total years have you been in your current teaching role (e.g., school or district administrator, master teacher)?*

( ) 1-3   ( ) 4-6   ( ) 7-10   ( ) 11-20   ( ) 21-30   ( ) 30+

18) Please select your district from the following list:*

[All school districts in Tennessee listed]

19) Please select your school's configuration from the following list:*

( ) Elementary school   ( ) K-12 school   ( ) High school

( ) K-8 school   ( ) Middle school   ( ) Other   ( ) Alternative or Special Education school

20) Please select the teacher evaluation model your school is using this year:*

( ) COACH   ( ) TEAM   ( ) TEM   ( ) TIGER   ( ) Don't know

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

21) Overall, I think the new teacher evaluation system we are using will have a positive impact on instruction in my school:*

( ) Strongly agree ( ) Agree ( ) Disagree   ( ) Strongly Disagree   ( ) Don't know

22) Overall, I think the new teacher evaluation system we are using will have a positive impact on student achievement in my school:*

( ) Strongly agree ( ) Agree ( ) Disagree   ( ) Strongly Disagree   ( ) Don't know

23) The new teacher evaluation system we are using in my school this year represents an improvement over past teacher evaluation practices in my school:*

( ) Strongly agree ( ) Agree ( ) Disagree   ( ) Strongly Disagree   ( ) Don't know

24) I had the information and training I needed to successfully implement the teacher evaluation system we are using this year in my school:*

( ) Strongly agree ( ) Agree ( ) Disagree   ( ) Strongly Disagree   ( ) Don't know

25) I believe there were sufficient opportunities for educator input into the design and implementation of the new teacher evaluation system we are using in my school this year:*

( ) Strongly agree ( ) Agree ( ) Disagree   ( ) Strongly Disagree   ( ) Don't know

Below we've listed potential benefits and potential challenges that could be associated with the implementation of a new teacher evaluation system.

26) Please select up to three things you like best about the new teacher evaluation system you are using this year:*

[ ] It gives me a much clearer understanding of what constitutes effective teaching

[ ] It gives me a much clearer understanding of my teachers' strengths and areas for growth

[ ] It gives me a much clearer understanding of what I need to do to evaluate my teachers effectively

[ ] It is leading to more effective instruction in my school

[ ] It highlights student learning and achievement as a primary determinant of effective teaching

[ ] It connects student learning results to teaching and instruction

[ ] As a result of the new evaluation system, I am evaluating my staff more effectively

[ ] It helps me to better support effective instruction and student learning in my school

[ ] It helps me to have better conversations with my teachers about effective instruction

[ ] As a result of the new evaluation system, teachers in my school are collaborating more effectively as part of a professional learning community

[ ] It allows me to see how our students are improving on formative and other assessments

[ ] Other _____

27) Please indicate up to three things about the new teacher evaluation system you are using this year that you think are most in need of improvement going forward:*

[ ] It is not leading to more effective instruction in my school

[ ] The definition of effective teaching outlined by the evaluation system does not align with what I believe constitutes effective teaching

[ ] The evaluation system is not providing me with a clear understanding of my teachers' individual strengths and areas for growth

[ ] I have not had sufficient training to accurately assess teachers' performance consistently

[ ] I am not confident I have the knowledge and capability to support my teachers to become more effective

[ ] The evaluation system is not helping teachers in my school to collaborate as part of a professional learning community

[ ] I am not confident the available value-added student growth data (35% of teachers' evaluations) accurately reflect the effectiveness of all of my teachers' instruction

[ ] I am not confident the student achievement measures (15% of teachers' evaluations) accurately reflect the effectiveness of all of my teachers' instruction

[ ] I am not confident the observations of teaching accurately reflect the effectiveness of all of my teachers' instruction

[ ] I do not believe I can effectively assess all required indicators on the evaluation rubric in a given lesson

[ ] The time required to implement the new teacher evaluation system effectively does not seem feasible

[ ] Other _____

Please note that this data collection is distinct from the Tennessee Consortium's annual, springtime First to the Top survey. An invitation to participate in this broader survey will arrive in educators' inboxes later this spring, and we strongly encourage your participation in that effort.

SCORE

State Collaborative on Reforming Education