



SIG Regional Conference

LEADING SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL TURNAROUNDS:
LEARNING FROM RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Teacher evaluation for professional growth: The role of school leadership in fostering an evidence based system

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The goal of teacher evaluation

*The **ultimate** goal of all teacher evaluation should be...*

**TO IMPROVE
TEACHING AND
LEARNING**

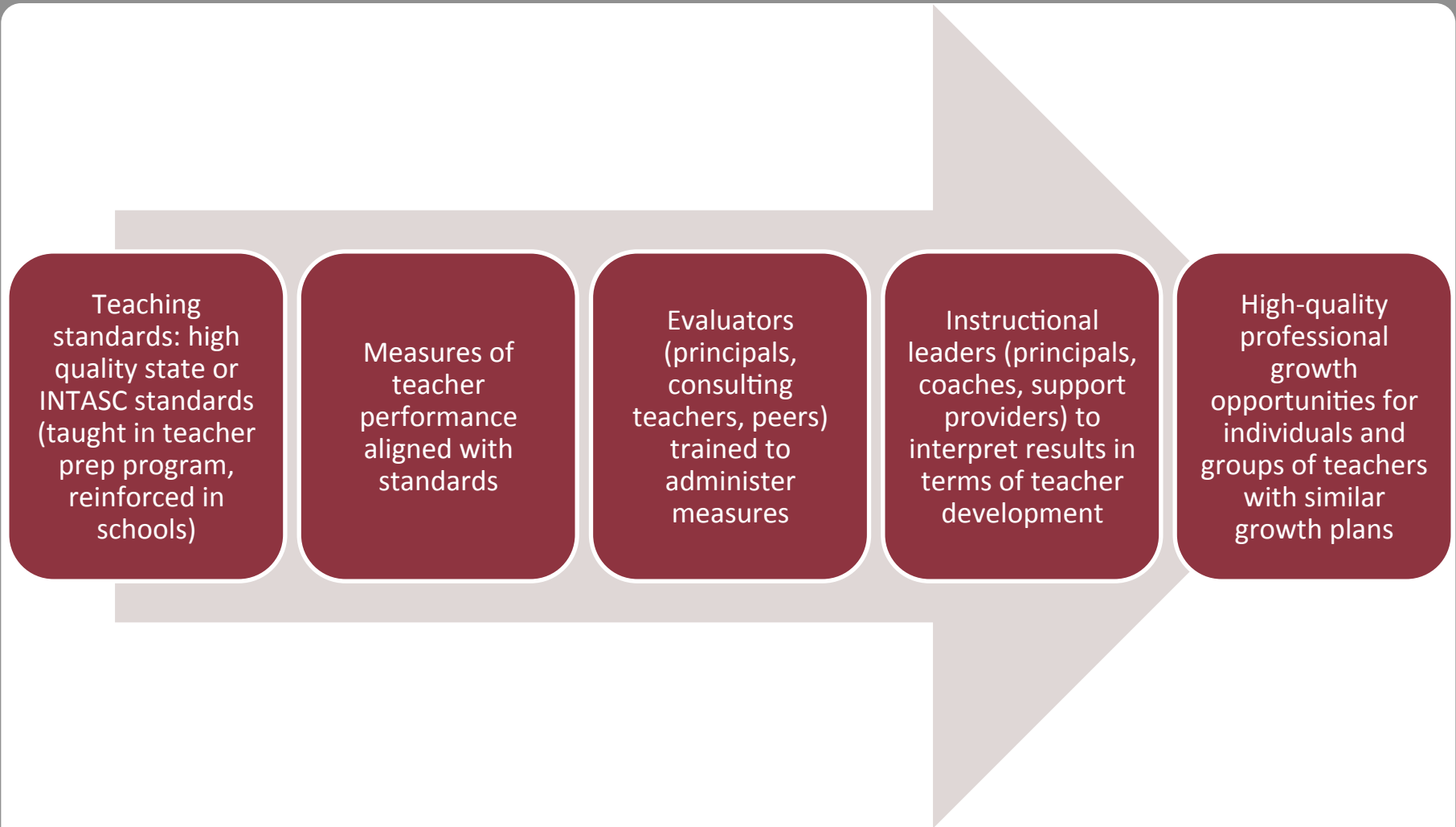
Teachers and leaders are the key

- Strong teachers and leaders are the key to improving student outcomes
- Two ways to get strong teachers and leaders:
 - Remove less effective teachers and leaders and replace them with more effective ones
 - Not always a good option for isolated rural or hard-to-staff urban schools.
 - Provide guidance and support to help less effective teachers and leaders improve performance

An aligned evaluation system supports strong teachers and leaders

- Lots of worry about multiple measures
 - What is the right combination of measures?
 - How do we “weight” measures?
 - Are student growth measures fair and valid for measuring teacher performance?
- Need more thinking around how to create systems that turn *evidence* from multiple measures into *strategies* for continuous improvement

An aligned teacher evaluation system: Part I



An aligned teacher evaluation system: Part II

Results from teacher evaluation inform evaluation of teacher evaluation system (including measures, training, and processes)

Results from teacher evaluation inform planning for professional development and growth opportunities

Results from teacher evaluation and professional growth are shared (with privacy protection) with teacher preparation programs

Results from teacher evaluation and professional growth are used to inform school *leadership* evaluation and professional growth

Results from teacher and leadership evaluation are used for school accountability and district/state improvement planning

Teaching standards

- A set of practices teachers should aspire to
- A teaching tool in teacher preparation programs
- A guiding document with which to align:
 - Measurement tools and processes for teacher evaluation, such as classroom observations, surveys, portfolios/evidence binders, student outcomes, etc.
 - Teacher professional growth opportunities, based on evaluation of performance on standards
- A tool for coaching and mentoring teachers:
 - Teachers analyze and reflect on their strengths and challenges and discuss with consulting teachers

Interpreting results for *alignment with teacher professional learning options*

- Different approach; not looking at “absolute gains”
- Requires ability to determine and/or link student outcomes to what likely happened *instructionally*
- Requires ability to “diagnose” instruction and recommend/and or provide appropriate professional growth opportunities
 - Individual coaching/feedback on instruction
 - Observing “master teachers”
 - Group professional development (when several teachers have similar needs)

High-quality professional growth opportunities

- *The ultimate goal of teacher evaluation should be to improve teaching & learning*
 - Individual coaching/feedback on instruction
 - *Trained* coaches, not just “good teachers”
 - Observing “master teachers”
 - Provide opportunities to discuss specific practices
 - May be especially helpful at beginning of year when master teachers are creating a “learning environment”
 - Group PD and teacher learning communities
 - Opportunity to grow together as a cohort

Teachers as instructional leaders

“In February, fifth-grade teacher Miguel Aguilar stood in the front of a class, nervous and sweating. The subject — reading and comprehension — was nothing new. But on this day, his students weren't 11-year-olds in sneakers and sweatshirts: They were 30 of his fellow teachers. It was the first time anyone at Broadous Elementary School in Pacoima could remember a teacher there being singled out for his skill and called upon to share his secrets school-wide.”

Singled-out L.A. Unified teacher shares skills with colleagues. Los Angeles Times 4/3/11.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-broadous-teachers-20110403:0,4961288.story>

Memphis professional development system

- Teaching and Learning Academy began April '96
- Nationally commended program intended to
 - "...provide a collegial place for teachers, teacher leaders and administrators to meet, study, and discuss application and implementation of learning...to impact student growth and development"
- Practitioners propose and develop courses
 - Responsive to school/district evaluation results
 - Offerings must be aligned with NSDC standards
 - ~336 On-line and in-person courses, many topics

Rural schools: creating an aligned teacher evaluation system

- *Evidence of growth in student learning:* Student progress assessed with multiple measures and a focus on collaboration among teachers
- *Evidence of instructional quality:* observations with pre- and post-conferences
- *Professional responsibilities:* principal report, documentation of work with parents & community (and the impact of that work)
- Principal (or designee) should undergo training to ensure rating system is applied consistently

Putting it all together: Weights and measures

- There are no “rules” here; weights are likely to be determined by local priorities and beliefs
- Need to decide whether a high score on one measure/component can make up for a low score on another (“compensatory”)
- Need to decide whether to have a minimum score
 - High score on another component will not compensate
- The specific “mix” of measures may be locally determined within state guidelines
 - The mix should be evaluated year-to-year to see how the set of measures and weights are working

Putting it all together: Levels of performance

- Important to consider what different levels of performance might “trigger”
 - Rewards, recognition, advancement, tenure, etc. for highest performance (level 4)
 - Recognition, encouragement (level 3)
 - Examination of evidence, diagnosis of performance and outcomes, support, improvement plan (level 2)
 - Examination of evidence, diagnosis of performance and outcomes, improvement plan, intensive supervision and assistance, loss of tenure, and/or dismissal for lowest performance (level 1)
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Measuring teachers' contributions to student learning growth: Rural challenges

- Highly mobile student populations
 - Assess entering students' knowledge and skills as soon as possible
 - More frequent assessments of students' progress
 - Less weight on once-a-year standardized tests for measuring a teacher's contribution since the teacher may have had a limited opportunity to impact student learning

Measuring teachers' contributions to student learning growth: Rural challenges

- Teachers who are seen as “outsiders” may have problems building positive relationships with students and engaging them in learning
 - Help teacher get connected to community by assigning a community mentor to help teacher integrate into local culture
 - Use place-based learning strategies to engage students and teachers in discovering local history and culture while addressing community needs
 - Provide professional development on “cultural relativism”

Measuring teachers' contributions to student learning growth: Rural challenges

- Extreme poverty, health issues, family instability may hinder students' ability to learn and their interest in school success
 - Value and acknowledge teachers' efforts to encourage, inspire and engage students
 - Some things we value can't be measured with a test score
 - Arrange for on-site services (visiting nurses and dentists, social workers, even laundry and showers) to help address problems that impact student learning
 - Structure and rules along with explicit directions may help students from unstable or chaotic environments adjust to schooling

Leadership in rural schools

- Principals impact student learning indirectly
 - They may not teach but they do have a key role in providing the structure and conditions that allow teachers to do their best
- Principals also have a responsibility to provide the resources and support for teachers to increase their effectiveness
 - Time and opportunity
 - Guidance and feedback

Principal retention

- Many of the same factors that are associated with teacher retention are found in principal retention
- They are more likely to leave rural and small town schools and less likely to leave suburban schools (Fuller, 2009)
- Achievement impacts stay: principals leave low-achieving schools and stay at high-achieving schools
- Their stay is shortest at high-schools, longest at elementary schools

Administrators' beliefs about performance pay for teachers

- Am Assn of School Administrators survey, 52% rural respondents (Ellerson, 2009)
 - 45% expressed moderate-to-strong interest in pay for performance
 - 20% who don't support pay for performance contend that *"...good teachers are already doing the best they can, and performance-based pay is highly unlikely to improve their teaching ability...poor and mediocre teachers do not become better teacher because more money is offered."*

Performance pay may improve retention of effective teachers

- Little evidence that pay-for-performance improves student outcomes, but it does impact teacher retention in high-poverty, low-achieving schools (Springer et al., 2009)
- Thus, financial incentives for effective teachers may work as a signal to them that they are successful, and successful teachers are more likely to stay in placements

What “ineffective” and “effective” teachers mean to school leaders

- What are the consequences (to teachers, schools, and districts) in identifying teachers as effective or ineffective?
 - How will effective and ineffective teachers impact schools' use of resources (rewarding or supporting teachers, overseeing improvement plans, etc.)
- How will identifying teachers as effective or ineffective impact teacher morale, school culture, recruitment and retention?

Supporting ineffective teachers: Not all “1s” are the same

- There may be conditions under which it would be acceptable for a teacher to be a “1” for a brief period of time
 - Novice teachers
 - Teachers who have moved grades/schools
 - Teachers who are teaching “out of field”
 - Teachers who may have language/cultural shifts to navigate
 - Teachers who have experienced a serious health problem or personal loss

A single “bad” year vs. a pattern

- Any teacher can have a year where they struggle
- The key is to identify whether this is a “difficult” year or a “pattern” of poor performance
 - Response to a “difficult” year should be mostly supportive with targeted assistance
 - Response to a pattern should be more intensive with diagnosis of problem areas, improvement plan, time limit for improvement, etc.
- Teachers *want* to be successful!

Effectiveness can be improved!

- Most teachers are doing the best they can
 - Help them do better with feedback, support, coaching, and a focus on classroom environment and relationships with students
- Teachers who are discouraged may need to see successful teachers with similar kids
- Teachers who are consistently effective should be encouraged to model and teach specific practices to less effective teachers

Why you should keep the less effective teachers

- With the right instructional strategies and guidance, motivated teachers can improve practice and student outcomes
- Learning environment is key: helping teachers create and maintain a better learning environment allows students to be more successful
- The teachers you hire to replace your less effective teachers are not necessarily going to be more effective
- You may not be able to find better replacements!

Keep in mind...

All teachers want to be effective, and supporting them to be effective is perhaps the most powerful talent management strategy we have

Results from teacher evaluation inform evaluation of school leaders

- Principal evaluation systems are moving away from strictly formative towards summative
- They are increasingly likely to include student outcomes: achievement, promotion, graduation
- The aggregate student learning growth across the school may be used as one indicator of a principal's effectiveness
- Retaining and/or recruiting “effective” teachers (based on student learning growth) may also be used in principal evaluation

Next steps

- Ensure that evaluation systems allow you to differentiate between effective and less effective teachers
- Focus on improving effectiveness of teachers you already have
- Develop strategies for retaining effective and potentially effective teachers
- Recruit effective teachers through multiple, coordinated strategies (not one time bonuses)

Final thoughts

- The limitations:
 - There are no perfect measures
 - There are no perfect models
 - Standardized test scores provide limited information for teacher/principal evaluation
 - Changing the culture of evaluation is hard
- The opportunities:
 - Evidence can be used to support struggling teachers and acknowledge effective ones
 - Multiple sources of evidence can provide powerful information to improve teaching and learning

References

- Ellerson, N. M. (2009). *Exploring the possibility and potential for pay for performance in America's public schools*. Washington, DC: American Association of School Administrators.
- Fuller, E., & Young, M. D. (2009). *Tenure and retention of newly hired principals in Texas*. Austin, TX: Texas High School Project Leadership Initiative.
- Springer, M., Lewis, J. L., Podgursky, M. J., Ehlert, M. W., Taylor, L. L., Lopez, O. S., et al. (2009). *Governor's Educator Excellence Grant (GEEG) Program: Year three evaluation report (Policy Evaluation Report)*. Nashville, TN: National Center on Performance Incentives.

Resources

- Memphis Professional Development System
 - Main site:
<http://www.mcsk12.net/admin/tlapages/academyhome.asp>
 - PD Catalog:
<http://www.mcsk12.net/aoti/pd/docs/PD%20Catalog%20Spring%202011r.pdf>
 - Individualized Professional Development Resource Book:
<http://www.mcsk12.net/aoti/pd/docs/Individualized%20Growth%20Resource%20Book.pdf>
- Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education
<http://www.valed.com/>
 - Also see the VAL-Ed Powerpoint at
http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/Documents/pdf/LSI/VALED_AssessLCL.ppt



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