
DATABASE ON STATE TEACHER EVALUATION POLICIES

Executive Summary

As state and district leaders across the country design and implement new teacher evaluation systems, they are looking to learn from other states engaged in similar reform efforts. The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center) has created multiple resources to help regions, states, and districts in these efforts. In May 2011, the TQ Center released a *Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation Systems* that highlights eight components of comprehensive teacher evaluation systems and provides resources and tips on thinking through how to incorporate these components into a new or redesigned system. Expanding on this resource, the TQ Center has created a new online resource, the *Database on State Teacher Evaluation Policies*. Structured around the eight components in the Practical Guide, the database provides information on specific elements of teacher evaluation systems. Among the elements¹ are the following:

- The types of methods used to measure student growth in tested and nontested subjects and grades
- Methods used to assess teacher performance and how ratings are determined
- How much weight is given to each measure in the evaluation system
- The number and titles of proficiency levels used by the state
- How the states use evaluation results in human resource decisions

The database currently includes information on 17 states and will be expanded to include additional states and updated regularly as these systems change and grow.² Through the online database, users can compare states on selected components, compare up to three states across all components, or obtain comprehensive information for a single state across all components. The user can then print or download customized PDF reports displaying the requested information. Each report includes links to detailed source lists³ for each state, which allow users to quickly locate the original source for the information in each table. This executive summary provides a high-level overview of selected information contained in the database and a few key findings based on the current sample of seventeen states.

Key Findings: Planning and Communication

- All 17 states included improving teachers' practice and promoting professional growth as a goal of the evaluation system. In addition, 10 states identified assessing teacher performance in a clear and fair manner as a key goal and 9 states mentioned improving student learning.

¹For a complete list of the components and topic areas, please visit <http://resource.tqsource.org/stateevaldb/Components.aspx>

² Current states are Colorado, the District of Columbia, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, North Carolina, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Washington.

³ Sources include state legislation, administrative and civil codes, state policy and official guidance documents, and other relevant, publically available sources.

- In 15 states where information was available, the state required stakeholder feedback to be included in the development of the new system, usually through advisory councils that included broad representation from educators, unions, professional associations, and business and community leaders. In a few states, such as Iowa and Ohio, the state requires local districts to use a collaborative process that includes district administrators, school leadership, and teachers in the final design or adoption of a new evaluation model at the local level.
- Several states created broader outreach efforts and opportunities for collecting feedback by holding informational meetings and focus groups and conducting early model system pilots. Indiana, for example, reported having facilitated discussions with more than 30,000 teachers across the state while developing their new state model. Washington is currently engaged in a two-year piloting process that allows nine pilot districts to develop their own evaluation systems in order to inform the further development of state mandates and models for teacher evaluation.

Key Findings: Measurement

- Sixteen states explicitly require that teacher evaluations use multiple measures of teachers' performance.
- Observation is a commonly required type of measurement across all 17 states; only four states, however, mandate a specific observation instrument (three are state-developed and one is the *Danielson Framework for Teaching*). Nine states recommend a specific observation instrument; 5 recommend a state-developed instrument, and 4 recommend an instrument developed by a national expert. Three states have not yet selected a final instrument to recommend. New York requires districts to select an observation instrument from a state-approved list.
- Seven states explicitly require that teachers be observed more than once a year. Tennessee tops the high end of the list by requiring four to six observations per year under the TAP model it adopted in 2011. Many states also provide differentiated requirements for the type and frequency of observation on the basis of a teacher's level of experience or previous evaluation results (12 states).
- Fourteen states require measures of student growth and learning for all teachers. States vary widely, however, in the type and specificity of regulations surrounding the use of student growth in teacher evaluation. For teachers in grades and subjects assessed through state exams, 4 states require the use of a value-added model and 4 states require the use of a student growth–percentile model. Four states have not yet decided on a final model. Two states allow districts to decide locally how to measure student growth (within state guidelines) but provide recommended growth models (1 recommends value-added and 1 student growth–percentile). Eight states have selected or are considering the use of student learning objectives (SLOs) in addition to student growth models.
- For measures of student growth for nontested subjects and grades, 14 states allow districts to select the measures, typically from a state-approved list. Ten states have provided an actual list or at least one measurement option to districts.

- Additional measures of teacher performance beyond observation and student growth are required by 9 states and recommended by 7 states. The states vary widely in the types of additional measures and the degree of specificity they provide on the use of additional measures. Users can access more detailed information on alternative measures in each state through Component 3 in the online database.

Key Findings: Combining Multiple Measures

- States have adopted a number of approaches to combining multiple measures into a final, summative score for each teacher. The most common approach (8 states) is to simply apply weights (either points or percentages) to different measures⁴ and use the final score to identify a teacher with a particular performance level (distinguished, proficient, etc.).
- Other approaches rely on a set of decision rules (i.e., a teacher's rating on component *x* must be above 4 to receive a 5 overall). Rhode Island and Massachusetts use a multistep process that relies on a series of matrixes (based on decision rules) that progressively combine a teacher's performance level on each evaluation system component to determine a final performance level. North Carolina⁵ takes the median score across all components. Delaware uses a set of decision rules to determine a teacher's final rating and Maryland uses both weighting and matrixes.

Key Findings: Use of Results

- Most states currently use, or plan to use, teacher evaluation results in making key human resource decisions. Fourteen states will use results to make dismissal, retention, and renewal decisions, and 11 states will also use results to make compensation and promotion decisions. Eight states explicitly use teacher evaluation results to make tenure decisions and 5 states include evaluation results in decisions to grant certification or continuing licensure.

⁴ Colorado uses weighting, but it weights each performance on each teaching standard rather than weighting different types of measurement.

⁵ North Carolina takes the median score across each component; final decisions about how the student growth component is incorporated have not been released, but it has provided a set of decision rules that establish basic guidelines.