Introduction to the Series
Evaluation & Support: Strategies for Success

Teachers matter. Effective teachers raise student achievement, close achievement gaps, and set up their students to succeed in college and careers. Districts and states across the country are working to improve the quality of teaching by changing how they evaluate and support teachers. Over the past three years, 16 states have changed how they evaluate teachers; another 28 states are slated to do so in the next few years.[1] But as many of those states are learning, simply developing new evaluation tools is not enough: To raise student achievement and improve practice, states and districts must commit the resources needed to implement those tools with fidelity.

What implementation challenges are vexing states and districts? Which states and districts have adopted promising practices to address these challenges? This series of briefs addresses those questions and provides practical advice to help leaders develop or refine their teacher evaluation and support systems. Each brief covers a unique topic related to evaluation and support, highlights promising practices and links to resources that education leaders can use to strengthen their own systems.

Several themes cut across the series. These themes represent the underlying principles that form the foundation of a successful evaluation and support system:

1. **Evaluation is a means to improve the quality of teaching, not an end in itself.** All evaluation systems should aim to improve the quality of teaching, build a culture of professional growth and raise student achievement. Evaluation systems that simply sort teachers or assign them ratings may be treated as compliance exercises rather than an opportunity to improve instruction.

2. **Use evaluation data to establish a culture of continued improvement.** In addition to improving individual teachers' practices, evaluation data can be used to assess and enhance professional development, talent management, principal support and the efficacy of the evaluation system itself. With better information, states and districts can make more strategic decisions.

3. **Engage educators in evaluation design and implementation via feedback loops.** No one knows more about teaching and learning than teachers and principals. Thus, states and districts should create feedback loops to gather educators' input on key evaluation policy decisions and ensure that teachers are getting feedback they need to improve their practice.

4. **Align evaluation systems with college- and career-ready standards.** Many school systems are simultaneously implementing new college- and career-ready standards and new evaluation and support systems. States and districts should help educators see how these initiatives strengthen and reinforce each other.

5. **Develop instructional leadership skills in teachers, principals and principal supervisors.** Principals set the tone for supportive school cultures and influence how teachers experience evaluation and support systems, but they can't do it alone. States and districts should build instructional leadership skills—such as conducting reliable observations, providing teachers with actionable feedback, and creating collaborative school cultures that emphasize growth and development—in teacher leaders, principals and principal supervisors.

Building high-quality evaluation and support systems requires a clear vision and a significant commitment from states and districts. But it is work worth doing, and these briefs will help states and districts develop evaluation and support systems that make teachers more effective and students more successful.

EVALUATION & SUPPORT: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

BRIEF TOPICS

ROUND 1
1. Classroom Observations
2. Student Surveys
3. Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

ROUND 2
4. Professional Development and Support
5. Educator Engagement and Communications
6. Combining Multiple Measures

---

educationfirst
experience | quality | results