NATIONAL PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION™
THE VOICE OF SCHOOL LEADERS

POLICY ISSUE BRIEF:
SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION

Issue at a Glance

There is broad consensus that we must improve overall student achievement in the United States. To help teachers successfully fulfill their role in this endeavor, effective teacher supervision and evaluation systems that inform teacher professional development and improve instruction are essential. These systems help teachers who require improved knowledge and skills to help students perform to their fullest potential as well as those who are currently performing at the highest levels. They are also a core element in the effort to improve student learning and necessary to inform compensation systems based on teacher performance. Disagreement over what those systems should measure remains, however, and researchers caution against relying solely on student test scores as a defining metric.

Currently, teacher supervision and evaluation systems vary greatly across the nation, particularly tenured teachers, but the results of these diverse systems have been historically very similar. The landmark 2009 publication, "The Widget Effect," a study of teacher evaluation practices in 12 diverse districts in four states, found that over 99% of tenured teachers in districts using a satisfactory or unsatisfactory rating system earned a positive rating. Among districts with more than two rating options, 94% of the teachers still earned one of the top two ratings, and less than 1% were rated unsatisfactory. This seminal report made it clear that teacher evaluations at the time were largely a rubber stamp with little insight into the actual effectiveness of their performance.

This influential publication—coupled with federal incentives and requirements for states to revamp teacher evaluation, including "Race to the Top" grants in 2009 and the ESEA flexibility waiver process in 2012—led to a national resurgence of state action on evaluation. Almost every state has designed and adopted new teacher evaluation systems in the last decade as a result.

Incentives for states to continue to assess, improve, and implement new evaluation systems dropped considerably even though Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015. While ESSA does require states to have a definition of what constitutes teacher effectiveness, states are not required to implement evaluation systems, and it prohibits the secretary of education from requiring evaluations or establishing any parameters around how states define teacher effectiveness. Some states have begun to roll back teacher evaluation requirements in recent years, as well, specifically around student growth measures being used in evaluations. In 2015, 27 states required annual evaluations for all teachers, compared to just 15 states in 2009. That number has dropped to 22 states in recent years.

As policymakers continue to revamp teacher evaluation requirements, it will be critical to ensure adequate levels of support are provided in the correct areas in addition to ensuring that the most appropriate indicators of success are being measured. For example, a commonly stated purpose of teacher evaluations is targeted professional development to improve teacher effectiveness. But research shows that less than

half of all teachers receive continuous professional development, mentoring or coaching, or engage in peer observation as a result of evaluation. Ninety percent of teachers participate in one- or two-day workshops or conferences to fulfill professional development requirements in lieu of participation in sustained professional development that has been shown to deliver significant returns in student achievement, such as lesson study, peer observation and coaching, and ongoing learning opportunities embedded in practice.

National Principals Association Position

- National Principals Association supports the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) which state that effective leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
- National Principals Association recognizes that school administrators are the instructional leaders of the school and as such should be experts in instruction and in assessing and enhancing the instructional performance of their staff, as evidenced by student performance.
- National Principals Association believes that teaching is a complex craft and that evaluation of effective teaching should be based on close examination of a variety of variables through quantitative and qualitative data, take into account the context in which a teacher works, and not be limited to students' performance on standardized tests.
- National Principals Association recognizes that although states or districts currently bear the responsibility for creating the structure and format of teacher performance appraisals and determining the multiple measures used in assessing teacher performance, principals carry out the process of daily supervision and are responsible for the development of teacher capacity.
- State and federal policymakers must increase funding for high-quality professional development programs for teachers to ensure that they receive the ongoing training they need to deliver excellent education to all students.
- National Principals Association has additional policy issue briefs on Principal and Teacher Shortage, Teacher Quality and Leadership, and High-Stakes Assessment that offer additional recommendations and resources.

Recommendations for Federal Policymakers

- In collaboration with all education stakeholders, develop a teacher evaluation and support system that includes the following components:
  - Feedback and reflective practice.
  - Multiple measures of classroom practice, student learning, and other evidence related to a teacher's contribution to schoolwide improvement.
  - High-quality training, credentialing, and ongoing professional development for principals to fully understand the teacher evaluation rubric and to coach and mentor teachers to improve their practice.
- The U.S. Department of Education should support ongoing research to establish the validity and reliability of comprehensive teacher evaluation programs, further examine the efficacy of value-added models of teacher evaluation, and support adequate training and professional development of evaluators to ensure fidelity of implementation of evaluation models found to be effective in improving teaching and learning.

- Fully fund Title II, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, which provides resources for states and districts to strengthen teacher and principal preparation programs and offer continuous high-quality professional development including mentoring and coaching.
- Reauthorize the Higher Education Act (HEA) to:
  - Ensure that teacher preparation programs include a strong residency program or substantial student teaching experience, ongoing mentoring, and support for new educators and;
  - Create a Teacher Leader Development Program to provide grants for teacher leaders, including those in high-need schools, to receive professional development, training, and support that ultimately leads to a teacher leader credential.
- Fully fund the Teacher Quality Partnership grant program under Title II of HEA to strengthen and reform educator preparation programs.

Recommendations for State and Local Policymakers and School Districts

- States and districts should develop frameworks for teacher performance appraisal that are based on research-supported best practices, consistent in application, fair to teachers and evaluators, and valid and reliable measures of teacher performance.
- States and districts should include multiple measures of performance, including but not limited to: input measures such as evidence of a teacher's knowledge of subject matter; skill in planning, delivering, monitoring, and assessing students' learning; skill in developing and maintaining positive relationships with students, parents, and colleagues; knowledge and skill in pedagogical methods to meet the needs of students with an array of learning preferences and needs; and commitment to students' learning to their utmost potential. Examples of outcome data that are also appropriate and necessary to assess teacher effectiveness are: students' individual growth and progress as measured on valid and reliable standardized instruments; teacher-made tests that align with the curriculum; student performance demonstrations in a variety of media; and portfolios of student work.
- States and districts should establish systems in which all stakeholders collaborate in the development of teacher performance appraisal processes and instruments to create ownership and commitment to effective performance appraisal focused on improved student learning. That should include creating a committee comprising teachers, state, and local teacher union or collective bargaining representatives, principals, assistant principals, and district administrators to select or develop validated and reliable evaluation instruments that constituent districts and schools can use.
- States and districts should establish performance appraisal frameworks that recognize improved teaching as the collective responsibility of principals, assistant principals, teacher leaders, teachers, and district office personnel, utilizing subject-area and grade-level specialists, where available, to enrich the appraisals and more effectively guide subsequent professional development.
- States and districts should take into consideration the demands placed on the principal and other personnel who conduct the evaluations because effective teacher performance appraisal must be thorough and accurate—thus, time and labor intensive.

- States and districts should create performance appraisal systems with differentiated approaches to evaluation that are based on teachers' knowledge, skills, and experience. For example, beginning teachers may require more intensive supervision in the evaluation process.
- States and districts should provide comprehensive training to personnel who contribute to an evaluation to ensure effective and fair evaluations.
- States and districts should use evaluation results to develop professional learning opportunities for teachers.
- States and districts should require that principal licensure programs include evidence of knowledge of methods of teacher evaluation and evidence of proficiency in supervision of instruction as core competencies.