

Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness

Emerging Trends Reflected in the State Phase 1

RACE TO THE TOP Applications

May 2010

An EMERGING TRENDS REPORT From Learning Point Associates

Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness

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RACE TO THE TOP Applications

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About This Series

This report is one in a series of reports exploring specific education issues reflected in the state Phase 1 Race to the Top applications that were submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in January 2010. Learning Point Associates has analyzed the 41 applications and is reporting on emerging trends that are occurring in the states.

Other reports in this series focus on the following topics:

- State legislation
- Expanded learning opportunities
- Measurement of student growth
- Charter schools
- School improvement

Acknowledgments

Learning Point Associates, in collaboration with the Council of Chief School Officers, conducted the initial research and data collection of all 41 Phase 1 Race to the Top applications during February and March 2010. Data analysis of these 41 applications relating specifically to teacher evaluation was conducted by Learning Point Associates in April 2010. Staff from the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality—a federally funded technical assistance center at Learning Point Associates—were instrumental in analyzing the state Race to the Top applications for data related to improving educator effectiveness. Special thanks go to Amy Potemski, Trish Brennan-Gac, and Liz Kershaw for their contributions to this report.

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OVERVIEW

Race to the Top Competition

Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, a significant amount of funding has been targeted to improve state and local education systems. The Race to the Top Fund in particular is providing \$4.35 billion in competitive grants for states.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2009), the Race to the Top Fund is:

A competitive grant program designed to encourage and reward states that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, and ensuring student preparation for success in college and careers; and implementing ambitious plans in four core education reform areas:

- Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy;
- Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction;
- Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and
- Turning around our lowest-achieving schools. (p. 2)

The U.S. Department of Education designated two phases for the Race to the Top grant competition. Phase 1 applications were due January 19, 2010. For Phase 1, the Education Department received a total of 41 applications—from 40 states and the District of Columbia. In March 2010, the Education Department selected 16 applications as finalists and then awarded grants to two states: Delaware and Tennessee. During the next four years, Delaware will receive \$100 million and Tennessee will receive \$500 million to implement their comprehensive school reform plans.

Phase 2 applications are due June 1, 2010, and the Education Department will announce the awards in September 2010; \$3.4 billion is available for Phase 2 (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

Preliminary Review of Phase 1 Applications

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and Learning Point Associates conducted a preliminary review of the 41 Phase 1 Race to the Top applications and identified key questions related to CCSSO's strategic initiatives. These questions, focusing on several themes across the applications that provide useful information to states and districts considering systemic education reform, were used as a framework for data collection. The report of findings, titled *Preliminary Review: CCSSO Strategic Initiatives Identified in State Phase 1 Race to the Top Applications*, was released at the CCSSO Legislative Conference in March 2010.

Preliminary Findings Related to Teacher Evaluation

The preliminary review of the 41 applications resulted in some interesting findings about state methods of teacher evaluation:

- All 41 state applications included descriptions of proposed practices for teacher evaluation, but states differed significantly in their timelines and strategies for implementation. Some states indicated they intend to develop a uniform system of teacher evaluation for all districts. Other states indicated they would provide a model process or pilot a new approach for adoption at the district level. Still other states proposed only to provide technical assistance to districts in improving evaluation processes.
- States currently are at widely varying stages of readiness for the task of including evidence of student performance in teacher evaluations. For example:
 - Nine states (22 percent) already use a student growth model, though not necessarily a value-added model (see definitions of *student growth measures* and *value-added measures* on pages 3 and 4 respectively); 12 states (29 percent) indicated that the development of a student growth model is in progress; and 20 states (49 percent) do not have a student growth model, nor did they indicate current work leading to the development of a student growth model (see Figure 1).
 - Eighteen states (44 percent) defined what role student growth or achievement would play in teacher evaluations. The rest (56 percent) only mentioned that it would be a “significant” role (see Figure 2).
 - Nine states (22 percent) reported that the state currently differentiates teacher effectiveness using multiple rating categories (see Figure 3).

After this preliminary review of the 41 Race to the Top applications was completed, Learning Point Associates conducted additional analyses, looking in depth at some emerging trends for specific policy issue areas. The next section of this report focuses on the emerging trends related to measures of teacher performance, as reflected in the applications.

Figure 1. Per the Application, Does the State Have a Student Growth Model?

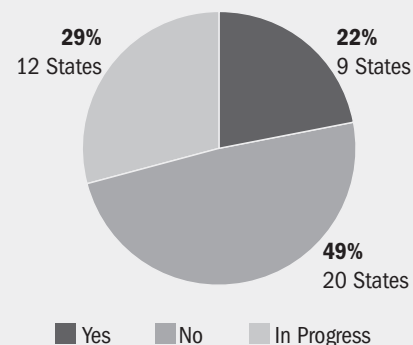


Figure 2. Does the Application Define How Student Growth Will Play a “Significant” Role in Teacher Evaluations?

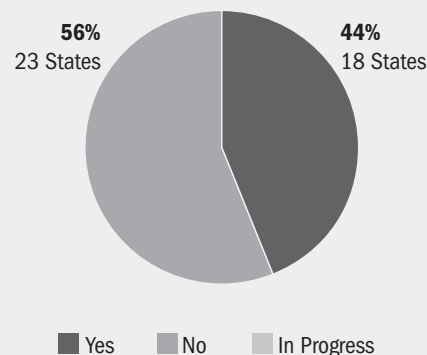
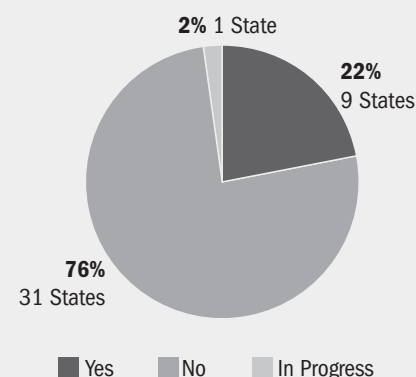


Figure 3. Per the Application, Does the State Currently Differentiate Teacher Effectiveness Using Multiple Rating Categories?



EMERGING TRENDS: MEASURES OF TEACHER PERFORMANCE

The Great Teachers and Leaders section of Race to the Top application focused heavily on improving teacher effectiveness based on performance. As required in the application, states provided multiple measures for determining teacher performance.

During the review of the 41 applications, Learning Point Associates identified the following trends for measuring teacher performance: student growth measures, other quantitative measures related to student performance, teacher observations, analysis of teacher artifacts or portfolios, and other measures.

Student Growth Measures

In a major policy shift, the Race to the Top application requires states to develop teacher evaluation systems that use student achievement data as a “significant factor” in determining teacher effectiveness (U.S. Department of Education, 2009, p. 9). To meet this requirement, a total of 33 states (80 percent) expressed interest in measuring student growth: 26 states indicated interest in student growth models, and seven states indicated interest in value-added measures (see definitions on pages 3 and 4). In addition, seven states indicated the level at which these data would be aggregated for use (e.g., student, class, or school levels, or a combination of the three). Eight states, however, indicated that their data systems currently are not capable of measuring student growth.

Other Quantitative Measures Related to Student Performance

Beyond value-added or other student growth models, three states indicated they would look into other student achievement measures, including performance measured against student achievement benchmarks and ACT scores where applicable. Of those three states, one specifically mentioned that it would use such measures for students in untested grades and subjects.

Teacher Observations

A major component of the proposed teacher evaluation processes in all applications was observations of teacher performance in the classroom. Evaluation of a teacher’s performance can be completed by various raters (e.g., principals, other knowledgeable educators, or peers).

Student Growth Measures

The U.S. Department of Education (2009) provides the following definition of *student growth*:

Student growth means the change in student achievement (as defined in this notice) for an individual student between two or more points in time. (p. 14)

In this notice, *student achievement* is defined as follows:

(a) For tested grades and subjects: (1) a student’s score on the state’s assessments under the ESEA; and, as appropriate, (2) other measures of student learning, such as those described in paragraph (b) of this definition, provided they are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

(b) For non-tested grades and subjects: alternative measures of student learning and performance such as student scores on pre-tests and end-of-course tests; student performance on English language proficiency assessments; and other measures of student achievement that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms. (p. 14)

Source: *Race to the Top Program: Executive Summary* (U.S. Department of Education, 2009)

These raters can observe a teacher's classroom performance, either during class time or via video recordings, using both formative and summative rubrics based on specified core objectives. Many states mentioned the following core objectives for teacher observations:

- Demonstrating content knowledge or understanding (5 states)
- Facilitating student learning or communicating with students (4 states)
- Reflecting on their practice (4 states)
- Demonstrating leadership (3 states)
- Demonstrating organizational and classroom management skills (3 states)
- Establishing a respectful environment for a diverse population of students (2 states)

Several states also indicated using the following frameworks as a basis for developing rubrics for teacher evaluation:

- **Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching** (8 states)
<http://www.danielsongroup.org/theframeteach.htm>
- **TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Achievement** (3 states)
<http://www.tapsystem.org>
- **The University of Virginia's Teaching Performance Record** (2 states)
<http://tpr.casenex.com/content/index.php>
- **The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Measures of Effective Teaching** (1 state)
<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/united-states/Pages/measures-of-effective-teaching-fact-sheet.aspx>
- **The New Teacher Center's Formative Assessment System** (1 state)
http://www.newteachercenter.org/formative_assessment.php
- **Educational Leadership Policy Standards from the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium** (1 state)
<http://www.ccsso.org/Publications/Download.cfm?Filename=ISLLC%202008%20final.pdf>

Value-Added Measures

Goe (2008) provides the following definition of *value-added measures*:

A value-added measure is the "contribution of various factors toward growth in student achievement" (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2003, p. 38). According to leading researchers in the field, value-added models can be thought of as "a collection of complex statistical techniques that use multiple years of students' test score data to estimate the effects of individual schools or teachers" (McCaffrey, Lockwood, Koretz, & Hamilton, 2003, p. xi). There are two main ways in which value-added models are used in practice. The first is to evaluate schools for accountability purposes, and the second is to evaluate teachers in terms of their effectiveness relative to other teachers. (p. 8)

Source: Using Value-Added Models to Identify and Support Highly Effective Teachers (Goe, 2008)

Analysis of Teacher Artifacts or Portfolios

Some states also included a review of classroom artifacts or portfolios submitted by the teacher as a component to their teacher evaluation plans. The documents for review included the following:

- Teacher planning, instructional, and assessment artifacts (6 states)
- Teacher self-reflection portfolios (5 states)
- Examples of student work (3 states)

Other Measures

Some states also included a variety of other measures for evaluating teacher performance. For example, six states included provisions for peer review and feedback. Five states indicated that student reflections and feedback also would be a part of teacher evaluation systems. Further, one state included teacher participation in professional development activities as a part of the performance evaluation. Finally, one state included provisions that followed up on teacher adaptation of classroom practices in response to feedback from both formal and informal observations.

See Appendix A for a list of resources for evaluating teacher performance.

EXAMPLES OF STATES WITH PROPOSED TEACHER EVALUATION REFORMS

The Great Teachers and Leaders section of the Race to the Top application accounted for 28 percent of total available points—more than any of the other sections (see Appendix B). The points available under Great Teachers and Leaders were divided into five sections and additional subsections. State proposals for three of these subsections—developing evaluation systems, conducting annual evaluations, and using evaluations to inform key decisions—are highlighted below.

Learning Point Associates ranked the top four states, based on their scores for each of the three subsections and then chose the states that ranked in the top four of two or more of the subsections. Those states are Georgia, Louisiana, Rhode Island, and Tennessee. One commonality between all four states is the emphasis on stakeholder groups that will meet to discuss the design and implementation of educator evaluation systems.

Georgia

During the past few years, the state of Georgia has researched and developed a teacher evaluation system, which currently is in the pilot phase of implementation. The plan establishes a vertically aligned systemwide approach, creating both accountability and supports across the entire educator spectrum: teachers, principals, districts (superintendents and school boards), and educator preparation programs. In its Race to the Top application, Georgia clearly delineated the roles for each level of school leadership:

- **State leaders** are responsible for developing and implementing policies (e.g., standards and assessments, educator certification requirements); monitoring student achievement across districts; and providing technical assistance, funding, and professional development to districts.
- **District leaders** are accountable for implementing the state and other district policies, improving student achievement across district schools, and providing support to school leaders.
- **School leaders** provide instructional leadership, manage school operations, evaluate teachers, and are responsible for schoolwide performance. They also are responsible for making sure that teachers have appropriate professional development and other instructional support.
- **Teachers** provide instruction to students—teaching to the Georgia Performance Standards and using data to modify instruction—and are responsible for student learning and achievement.

Georgia plans to create a Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM), a Leader Effectiveness Measure (LEM), and a District Effectiveness Measure (DEM). The TEM and LEM have four key components:

- Qualitative, rubric-based evaluation tool with multiple rating categories, based on a number of inputs, using the Classroom Analysis of State Standards (CLASS) Keys teacher evaluation system as a base model.
- Value-added score, which measures the effect of a teacher or school (leader) on student learning. Only teachers in tested subject areas will receive value-added scores.
- Reduction of the student achievement gap at the classroom/student level (for teachers) and at the school level (for principals).
- Other quantitative measures, to be developed, tested, and evaluated by the state in collaboration with participating local education agencies.

Online Resources

Classroom Analysis of State Standards (CLASS) Keys

<http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/DMGetDocument.aspx/CK%20Standards%204-30-09.pdf?p=6CC6799F8C1371F60C8684DFDC96C1C9E173A927D7D04E1B1E862FC762CCF7F9&Type=D>

Georgia Department of Education: Teacher and Leader Quality

http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/tss_teacher.aspx

Louisiana

Louisiana proposes to develop and implement a Comprehensive Performance Management System (CPMS) for teacher evaluation. The predominant factor in the proposed evaluation design is evidence of student achievement (50 percent based on value-added data). The state also proposes the design and implementation of new assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards in grades and subjects not currently tested. The remaining evaluation data would come from variables such as the following:

- Performance rubrics
- External evaluations
- 360-degree feedback
- Learning environment index, which identifies impediments to the development of effective teachers

Louisiana proposes to use the data gained from the CPMS to enhance the state's current induction system, the Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program. The state also proposes to improve the Professional Learning Networks to enhance the ability of teachers to use data for improving student performance and to support the facilitation of peer networks. Further, all local education agencies that agree to participate would have to ensure that they use the link between educators and student outcomes to inform all human capital decisions, including professional development, tenure, promotion and additional responsibilities, retention and release, and a shift to performance-based compensation.

Online Resources

Common Core State Standards Initiative

<http://www.corestandards.org/>

Louisiana Teacher Assistance and Assessment Program

<http://www.doe.state.la.us/ldc/pd/623.html>

Press Release Describing the CPMS and Professional Learning Networks

http://www.newteachercenter.org/formative_assessment.php

Rhode Island

Rhode Island is in the process of developing a statewide model to measure value-added growth for each individual student, which will be fully operational by the 2013–14 school year. In December 2009, the state developed and adopted the Rhode Island Educator Evaluation System Standards. A work group is currently designing an evaluation rubric. To comply with the state standards, each district-based educator evaluation system must either:

- Adopt the state-provided educator evaluation system: the Rhode Island Model Evaluation.

OR

- Adapt its own educator evaluation system, which must meet state standards including being based primarily on student growth and achievement.

Further, in implementing an evaluation system, each district must:

- Ensure fairness, accuracy, and consistency of educator ratings.
- Engage principals and teachers in ongoing evaluation system development.
- Use evaluation results to inform key human capital decisions.

Online Resources

Rhode Island Educator Evaluation System Standards

http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/DOCS/General_Documents/PDF/Educator%20Evaluation%20Standards%20Posted.pdf

Working Draft of Rubric for the Evaluation System Standards

http://www.ride.ri.gov/educatorquality/DOCS/General_Documents/PDF/Educator%20Evaluation%20Rubric%20final%20posted%202%2024%2010.pdf

Tennessee

Tennessee—which won a grant (along with Delaware) in Phase 1 of the Race to the Top competition—already has a long-standing student growth model (the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System) as well as district-based programs (the TAP System in Knoxville, the Benwood Initiative in Chattanooga, the Teacher Effectiveness Initiative in Memphis, and the Effective Practice Incentive Community in Memphis) that evaluate teachers based on multiple measures, including student growth. Tennessee proposes to take these current practices to scale. The state evaluation model will include, at the very least, the following components:

- Objective student achievement data
- Student growth measures
- Other measures
- Review of prior evaluations
- Personal conferences to include discussion of teacher strengths, weaknesses, and remediation
- Relative to teachers: classroom or position observation followed by written assessment

Online Resources

Promising Practices: Benwood Initiative

<http://www.tennesseescore.org/index.cfm?Page=BenwoodInitiative>

Promising Practices: Effective Practice Incentive Community

<http://www.tennesseescore.org/index.cfm?Page=EffectivePractice>

TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Achievement

<http://www.tapsystem.org/>

Teacher Effectiveness Initiative

<http://www.mcsk12.net/tei/>

Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System

http://www.tn.gov/education/assessment/test_results.shtml

CONCLUSION

All observations made in this report come solely from information presented by the states in their Race to the Top applications. Consequently, there are limitations to what this report can conclude. With that caveat, there are some final thoughts that emerged when Learning Point Associates took a closer look at the educator effectiveness measures proposed by the 41 applications. The information found in the applications is valuable and can be used by states to learn from the plans and work being done in other states.

As the preliminary report pointed out, and the additional analysis conducted by Learning Point Associates further identified, there is a continuum of state preparedness to implement Race to the Top criteria regarding teacher evaluation. This continuum is particularly prevalent in state readiness to measure student growth and thus link student performance to teacher performance. Further, states are starting to think about other quantitative measures (other than student achievement on state standardized tests), which can be used to evaluate teachers of students in untested grades and subject areas. Although states already have established teacher evaluation rubrics, the Race to the Top application emphasized reforms. Rather than starting with a blank slate in this case, it was a common trend among states to look to already established models of teacher evaluation for customizing at the state education agency and local education agency levels.

In some cases, the proposed work was contingent upon new legislation or updates to current law, passed by the states in order to meet the Race to the Top requirements. Learning Point Associates also conducted research on new legislation passed by states that relates to the Great Teachers and Leaders priorities under Race to the Top. For additional information, please refer to the report titled *State Legislation: Emerging Trends Reflected in the State Phase 1 Race to the Top Applications*.

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APPENDIX A

Resources for Evaluating Teacher Performance

The following resources are available through the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality.

Guide to Teacher Evaluation Products

<http://www3.learningpt.org/tqsource/GEP/>

This online guide provides detailed descriptions of more than 75 teacher evaluation tools that currently are implemented and tested in districts and states throughout the country. Details for each tool include research and resources; information on the teacher and student populations assessed; and costs, contact information, and technical support offered.

The information was gathered through a scan of teacher evaluation literature and through conversations with multiple state education agency personnel, evaluation developers, universities, and nonprofit organizations that focus on issues of teacher quality and evaluation. This list provides the most current offerings to date and will continue to be revised and updated as new evaluation methods and products are developed.

A Practical Guide to Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness

<http://www.tqsource.org/publications/practicalGuide.pdf>

This guide provides guidance to states and districts as they consider which measures to use for evaluating teacher effectiveness.

Methods of Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness

http://www.tqsource.org/publications/RestoPractice_EvaluatingTeacherEffectiveness.pdf

This brief is intended to help regional centers and state policymakers as they consider evaluation methods to clarify policy, develop new strategies, identify effective teachers, or guide and support districts in selecting and using appropriate evaluation methods for various purposes.

Approaches to Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness: A Research Synthesis

<http://www.tqsource.org/publications/EvaluatingTeachEffectiveness.pdf>

This research synthesis examines how teacher effectiveness currently is measured. It provides practical guidance for evaluating teacher effectiveness beyond teachers' contribution to student achievement gains—including how teachers impact classrooms, schools, and their colleagues as well as how they contribute to other important outcomes for students.

Using Value-Added Models to Identify and Support Highly Effective Teachers

<http://www2.tqsource.org/strategies/het/UsingValueAddedModels.pdf>

This Key Issue offers tools, tips, and strategies for using longitudinal statistical information to explore teacher effectiveness.

APPENDIX B

Selection Criteria in the Race to the Top Application

Selection Criteria

A. State Success Factors (125 points)

- (A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEAs' participation in it (65 points)
- (A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans (30 points)
- (A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps (30 points)

B. Standards and Assessments (70 points)

- (B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards (40 points)
- (B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments (10 points)
- (B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments (20 points)

C. Data Systems to Support Instruction (47 points)

- (C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system (24 points)
- (C)(2) Accessing and using State data (5 points)
- (C)(3) Using data to improve instruction (18 points)

D. Great Teachers and Leaders (138 points)

- (D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals (21 points)
- (D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance (58 points)
- (D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals (25 points)
- (D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs (14 points)
- (D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals (20 points)

E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools (50 points)

- (E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs (10 points)
- (E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools (40 points)

F. General Selection Criteria (55 points)

- (F)(1) Making education funding a priority (10 points)
- (F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charters and other innovative schools (40 points)
- (F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions (5 points)

Source: *Race to the Top Program: Executive Summary* (U.S. Department of Education, 2009, p. 2)

About Learning Point Associates

Learning Point Associates is a nonprofit education consulting organization with 25 years of direct experience working with and for educators and policymakers across the country to transform education systems and student learning. Our vision is an education system that works for all learners, and our mission is to deliver the knowledge, strategies, and results so educators will make research-based decisions that produce sustained improvements throughout the education system.

Learning Point Associates manages a diversified portfolio of work ranging from direct consulting assignments to major federal contracts and grants. Since 1984, Learning Point Associates has operated the regional educational laboratory serving the Midwest—initially known as the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory® (NCREL®) and now known as REL Midwest. Learning Point Associates also operates the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, National Charter School Resource Center, Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center, and Great Lakes West Comprehensive Center.