

Designing and Implementing Teacher Performance Management Systems: Pitfalls and Possibilities

By Ross Wiener and Ariel Jacobs

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Background

Ambitious reforms are reshaping teacher evaluation and performance management. Old bargains that were once considered untouchable are being overhauled at an unprecedented pace and scale. Even with general budgets on the decline, federal incentives and philanthropic investments are fueling ambitious activity on this agenda.

The prize, however, is not developing better evaluations, but increasing teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Realizing these goals requires a comprehensive performance management system in which evaluation is one part of a bigger picture.

As new performance-management-related policies go from idea to implementation, policy makers and education leaders will be called upon to flesh-out what are still broad principles in many areas. This represents a significant inflection point for the teaching profession and the management of public school systems. Early decisions will determine whether the new evaluations form the basis of a new, more productive way of working in public education, or yet another policy pronouncement with little impact on outcomes.

In July 2010, a diverse group of stakeholders – senior leaders from districts, states, and the federal government; union leaders from both the AFT and NEA; technical assistance providers, social entrepreneurs, and scholars – gathered in Aspen, Colorado to work on these issues. The workshop focused on designing and implementing teacher performance management systems.

The premise of the workshop was that evaluation systems are a means, not an end. To reinvent teacher evaluation in service of increasing teach-

er effectiveness, public school systems need to address an inter-dependent set of responsibilities.

Responsibilities include: setting clear expectations and measures of performance; establishing structures and processes for conducting meaningful evaluations and acting on the information that is produced; developing a continuous-improvement process that gives developmental guidance to teachers and assesses the efficacy of that assistance; and implementing systemic reforms that refashion other aspects of the organization to support this work (e.g., data/IT, HR, curriculum and instruction).

What is Performance Management?

Performance Management is the use of measures/metrics to assess achievement and progress against a set of goals, and to use the information to increase the effectiveness of employees and the organization as a whole.

A performance management system enables overall goals to be broken down into discrete goals for departments, teams, and individual employees. In addition, data from performance management systems enables organizations to challenge the content and effectiveness of the strategies that have been selected to improve performance.¹

What follows is a discussion of key themes and takeaways from the workshop.

This primer is intended as a resource for state and district leaders who are tackling the teacher effectiveness agenda.

Principles of a Comprehensive Performance Management System

- 1 VISION AND EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE GUIDE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION.**
- 2 MEASURES AND METRICS MATCH GOALS AND PURPOSES OF THE SYSTEM.**
- 3 RESPONSIBILITY AND RISK RUN UP INTO THE SYSTEM, NOT JUST DOWN INTO THE CLASSROOM.**
- 4 EDUCATIONAL AND POLITICAL LEADERS COMMIT TO COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION.**
- 5 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IS MODELED THROUGHOUT THE SYSTEM.**
- 6 EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS IMPLICATES EVERY BOX ON THE ORG. CHART.**

Principle 1

Vision and Educational Purpose Guide Design and Implementation

A deliberate focus on determining the goals and priorities for performance management is essential and should not be short-changed in favor of urgency. A clear statement of goals and expected outcomes throughout the district – from classrooms and schools up to the executive team and the superintendent – is necessary to help each employee draw a direct connection between her work and meeting district goals. **There is a big risk that new systems will not produce desired outcomes if the goals aren't clearly articulated and reflected in initial design decisions.**

One workshop participant stated, “We have to be really clear with what we want the system to do and value. [We have to] be careful to bring the right people into the system to help us do it the right way.” Another said that he thought that “teacher evaluation was a thing that was discrete, but now you can't work on this in isolation without a larger improvement strategy.”

Evaluation systems are a critical component of performance management because evaluations provide the signals and underlying information that drive other aspects of performance management. Evaluations can serve multiple purposes: from assigning ratings to teachers for personnel decisions; to identifying areas of strength as well as areas in need of improvement; to engaging teachers and their supervisors/coaches in reflecting on practices and outcomes, and identifying goals and strategies for improvement. These purposes reflect a continuum; that is, a system can't support a developmental process if areas of strength and weakness aren't identified, and areas of strength and weakness cannot be identified without rating performance.

At a bare minimum, evaluation systems must signal that some teachers are outstanding, some need to improve, and some need to leave the classroom. Successfully sorting teachers into performance categories would mark an

Teacher Evaluation Systems: Why Invest in Development? Why Not Just Get Rid of the Bad Teachers?

If firing the worst teachers and rewarding the best were the ultimate goals of evaluation, then simple rating systems might be adequate. Indeed, some experts recommend these as the best strategies for improving the overall effectiveness of the teacher workforce.³

Relying primarily on hiring and firing is an inadequate strategy for increasing teacher effectiveness. Principals traditionally don't dismiss any teachers for poor performance, and current HR departments are incapable of timely, efficient dismissals of the few teachers whose dismissal is sought. There are approximately 3.5 million teachers in public schools and it is estimated that between 900,000-1 million will retire in the next 10-15 years.⁴ So scale is a huge challenge. If every district dismissed the bottom 5% of its teachers, public schools would need approxi-

mately 175,000 more new teachers annually – in addition to unrelated needs caused by retirement and other attrition. Recruitment efforts would need to produce hundreds of thousands of additional new educators (and better ones) over the current supply from alternate and traditional routes combined.

Presumably, part of the theory in using an aggressive “de-selection” strategy is that employees will exert greater effort to avoid the sanctions and reap the rewards. This could have the opposite effect if teachers don't know how to meet the expectations. If new evaluation systems are focused inordinately on removing low performers without commensurate attention to developing the talents of teachers in the middle range of effectiveness, teachers are less likely to improve.

improvement over traditional teacher evaluation systems, under which virtually all teachers are rated satisfactory in a *pro forma* process.² Current evaluation results are disconnected from the learning outcomes for students and schools, condoning poor performance and ignoring the contributions of the most effective teachers.

But it would be a mistake to think that rating teachers will, in and of itself, help to improve their practices or results. Arraying teachers along a continuum of effectiveness is necessary but not sufficient. To find, develop, and retain the most effective teachers, evaluations need to be complemented by other critical elements of a comprehensive, inter-dependent set of strategies.

Principle 2

Measures and Metrics Match Goals and Purposes of the System

The information demands of a teacher performance management system are profoundly different than the information that is currently produced in most teacher evaluations. “Although studies have shown that certain teachers are more effective than others, research has yet to explain what it is that effective teachers do to raise student achievement.”⁵ When deciding what measures and metrics will be used in new systems, designers should weigh the advantages and limitations of various data sources and ensure that useful information is provided to support and evaluate all aspects of performance management.

Districts need to determine what information about teaching performance they want, audit the information they have, and make decisions about how they will combine data sources to support teacher evaluation and performance management. Debates regarding “multiple measures” of teacher performance often are framed in terms of objective vs. subjective / rigorous vs. soft measures, but these terms obscure the strengths and trade-offs inherent in any single source of information for evaluating a teacher’s performance. Most evaluations will include a combination of measures from multiple sources: observations of practice, student learning gains, and additional indicators of teachers’ performance.

As one workshop participant noted, “some districts think that scorecards are performance management.” Another remarked that accountability and quantifying teacher effectiveness so the lowest performers could be dismissed were consuming an inordinate share of the focus in developing new systems: “This stuff is trivial compared to the benefits of the developmental. It’s way more important than any kind of ranking [or] compensation plan.”

Every data source for evaluation and performance management should be assessed in the context of alternatives and trade-offs. **Creating information that is credible and useful for developing teacher effectiveness should be treated as important priorities alongside technical concerns like validity and reliability.**

Observations

Observations of teachers’ classroom practice will likely remain mainstays of teacher evaluations, but must become more rigorous and more useful than the traditional, check-the-box observations. Current systems often require only one evaluation a year, or every few years for tenured teachers. High-performing organizations invest more time in assessing performance and giving feedback to professional employees.

Merely adding more observations or adopting new teaching standards won't improve performance. System leaders need to grapple with the challenge of creating clear, commonly understood expectations among teachers and evaluators alike. First, explicit performance standards need to be developed or re-introduced; in many districts, formal frameworks for teacher performance have been adopted but implemented without rigorous training or adequate attention to inter-rater reliability. Images of satisfactory and exemplary performance (e.g., videos of classroom practice, annotated student work) can help make the standards more accessible. Hillsborough County reported that online videos of exemplary practice were an important resource for teachers learning about the district's expectations and they are exploring new communication strategies with social networking.

Alongside setting clear expectations, districts need to train principals and their supervisors on how to conduct performance reviews that use observations as the basis for providing direct, constructive guidance on teaching practice. In addition to an up-front investment in building capacity, there is an ongoing need to “norm” evaluators against teaching standards and against each other, which puts demands on the analytic and training capacity of the central office, and requires coordination with information technology (IT) systems.

Value-Added Estimates in Teacher Evaluation – A Work in Progress

Value-added systems analyze longitudinal test-score data to estimate individual teachers' contributions to student learning. By using the same tests that all students take and basing effectiveness ratings on the results achieved by teachers with similar students in prior years, value-added estimates are purposely designed to be fair to teachers.

Connecting student test-score gains to individual teachers and applying the data to individual evaluations is nascent work. Value-added holds great promise and ought to be used where available, but using these data presents meth-

odological and practical challenges that demand attention. For example, the quality of value-added data is inextricably linked to the quality of the standardized tests on which it is based. Measurement error is a particular problem with students at the high and low ends of the achievement spectrum, especially under NCLB-mandated tests that were designed to focus on proficiency determinations and, by regulation, cannot include out-of-grade material. Matching individual students to teachers and accounting for mobility within and across schools is a significant challenge. In addition, there may be controls on the data that are appropriate for research or program evaluation that are not as useful in creating individual teacher effectiveness ratings. For example, many value-added models control for race and ethnicity. System leaders need to understand the limits of value-added data, engage technical experts as well as practitioners in weighing the options, and determine what's appropriate for the purposes they need to serve.

There is no scientific formula for how much to weigh student test-score gains in assessing teacher performance. In some conversations, the weight to be placed on value-added data in individual teacher evaluations – 20%, 35%, 50% – becomes a proxy for whether reforms are bold and aggressive enough. These proposals assume a formulaic approach to evaluations where multiple measures are assigned points and tallied up to reveal a teacher's rating, rather than a system in which supervisors apply professional judgment to a body of evidence. In an online commentary, Rick Hess of the American Enterprise Institute noted that “the impatient rush to ‘fix’ teacher quality in one furious burst of legislating amounts to troubling overreach; it is a case of putting the cart before the horse.”⁶

What can get lost is consideration of what evidence of student learning is needed to guide the development of effective teachers. Value-added data, for example, can help to identify the most and least effective teachers in terms of student test-score gains, but these data are not very helpful for elucidating why certain teachers excelled or struggled and what teachers should do to improve.

Examples of Weighting Student Learning in Teacher Evaluation⁷

| State | % Value-Added Assessment System | % other measures (such as reading assessments, college entrance tests, end-of-year subject tests, and AP tests) | % student learning in annual teacher evaluation |
|--------------|---|---|---|
| New York | 20 (when Regents approve Value-Added Assessment for all teachers, weight increases to 25%) | 20 (when Regents approve Value-Added Assessment for all teachers, weight decreases to 15%) | 40 |
| Rhode Island | 40-51 (phased in from 2011-2014) | | 40-51 |
| Tennessee | 35 | 15 | 50 |

Value-added data is not available for most teachers or most subjects because it is limited to grades and subjects where there are standardized tests in multiple years. In a typical district, value-added data can be generated for 20-35 percent of teachers – teachers in fourth through eighth grade in reading and math. Evaluating teaching of other subjects in elementary school, and teachers of all subjects in other grades, will require additional measures – and more time to gather valid data.

Additional Measures of Student Learning

Value-added, where it is available, is one source of evidence on teacher effectiveness but other sources of data should also be considered. For evaluations to contribute to building teacher effectiveness and not merely identify effective practice when it occurs, then one important goal of the measures and metrics used in evaluation must be to support collaboration between teachers and supervisors toward improving practice. Some of the most important work might come from conversations about the discrepancies between common assessment data and teachers' own evaluations of student performance against standards. Where teachers are setting expectations below standards, evaluations need a mechanism for identifying this problem.

Results on interim/benchmark assessments, classroom assignments, and longer-term student projects all are sources of information on student learning. Including some or all of these measures

can support conversations that seek to closely align teachers' assignments with standards and expectations. Issues like coverage/pacing and quality/rigor of teachers' assignments are critically important to improving practice, but these issues might not be adequately illuminated by value-added data or intermittent classroom observations.

Judgment Matters

There is legitimate disappointment with principals' and teachers' inability or unwillingness to honestly assess performance, which has led to the "Widget Effect."⁸ This **frustration could lead to policies that strengthen professional judgment regarding teachers' performance, or could lead to policies that seek to displace professional judgment and rely more heavily on value-added estimates for measuring teachers' effectiveness.**

Developing teachers' and their supervisors' ability to calibrate their performance expectations against standards should be an important priority, which might demand evidence of student-learning gains that can be compared to value-added test-score data. Performance review conversations between a teacher and principal should look closely at the alignment of achievement data and classroom practices. While value-added data can bring important rigor and comparability to the process of evaluation, other sources can provide more granular information for improving teaching and learning.

For this work to take root and to support improved practice, principals and other evaluators will need professional development, and school systems need to establish processes for monitoring the results. Districts must protect the integrity of the process by auditing schools where supervisor ratings – either on assessments of student learning or in observations of practice – appear inflated when compared to value-added results.

Creating the right measures and metrics for evaluating teacher effectiveness is a wide open field. There is no one “best” system, and neither standardized statistical approaches nor the use of professional judgment provide adequate information in isolation. Educators and policymakers must define the needs of the system and leverage technical expertise to construct the most useful and credible measures.

Principle 3

Responsibility and Risk Run Up into the System, Not Just Down into the Classroom

Teachers cannot be expected to bear the risk – or the accountability for results – on their own. In the private sector, performance management does not focus primarily on the front-line employees. Other actors within the system who are responsible for establishing the conditions for success are held accountable for playing their part, as well as the overall results in their sphere of influence.

Performance Management Should Apply to All, Not Just Teachers.

A participant highlighted the “importance of shared accountability at all levels.” While another asked, “Is what I’m accountable for in the best interest for you to achieve your goals?... Central office is only successful when teachers are successful.”

In the public education context, this means that performance expectations and evaluations for principals and their supervisors need as much or more attention as those for teachers. This does not imply that teachers are not accountable for their own performance, or that low performance is excused by inadequate support from supervisors. If systems are serious about improving

performance at scale, however, leadership development, evaluation, and accountability will be top priorities alongside the focus on teachers.

Principal performance needs to be measured against student learning gains, just like teachers. And just like teachers, there is a need for information in addition to value-added achievement gains to build the capacity of principals to manage their schools for improvement.

Principal supervisors have to be able to assess whether principals can discern problems of practice through observations of teachers, effectively manage professional development, facilitate adult learning – and retain the most highly effective teachers while terminating teachers with unacceptably low performance. In addition to technical competence, principals are responsible for the culture of the school and for creating/maintaining an environment of trust and mutual respect, which is essential for sustained school improvement.⁹ Yet the developmental focus in principal evaluations is comparable to the record on teacher evaluations. Clear standards and tools for supervising principals and guiding their professional growth need to be developed, similar to what’s needed for teachers.¹⁰

Capacity for this responsibility needs to be developed in school districts and/or their partners. In many districts, one person is expected to directly supervise 25 principals or more (along with other responsibilities), making meaningful supervision and individualized development nearly impossible. Just as it is important for schools to provide time for intentional teacher collaboration and professional development, it is equally important for the system to provide

intentional and directed mentoring, training, and support to school leaders and central office staff. This requires tradeoffs in time and resources to allow for meaningful leadership development. System leaders need to analyze work load and scheduling constraints to ensure that principals and central office staff can reasonably be expected to implement against the new expectations.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools: Modeling Performance Management from the Top

"In an organization focused on continuous improvement, it's a race that's never won. Every time we get close to answering a question, we have more questions and thoughts."

– Robert Avossa,
Chief Accountability Officer, CMS

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Superintendent (CMS) Pete Gorman has implemented a systems approach to drive accountability, pairing strong support for school-based professionals with performance and accountability measurements for executive-level employees. Underlying this theory is the philosophy that everything done, in all parts of the system, must support the schoolhouse. Principals and zone superintendents monitor progress using a data portal and CMS employs a value-added model, but these systems are decision-support tools and are not currently tied to compensation or high-stakes decisions. While school-based professionals use the data tools and become comfortable assessing their own practice and making changes according to the data, the CMS executive team is in the process of modeling performance contracts.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education works with Superintendent Pete Gorman to set annual goals tied to improvement at the school-level. Every member of the superintendent's executive team creates a list of five "critical disparities" against which each goal is set. Each goal illustrates how that individual will be held accountable for addressing identified "critical disparities." The executive team member is then evaluated based on their ability to meet goals.

They are required to set goals at the beginning of the year, provide a formal progress report at mid-year, and receive a formal performance evaluation at the end of each school year.

When the CMS executive staff initially applied the evaluation system, they found disparities across teams. This led the executive staff to develop a common lens and approach for using artifacts and evidence of outcomes for evaluating direct reports. Conscious of the tradition that almost all employees received at- or above- average ratings, the staff developed a common understanding that all CMS employees have room to grow. CMS leaders believe that this common language around outcomes and a shared organizational culture focused on growth empowers supervisors to have the courage to hold honest conversations regarding employees' performance against goals.

The performance contract process currently applies only to the superintendent and his executive staff. Over time, CMS plans to cascade the same system down through area superintendents, principals, assistant principals, and ultimately to teachers. The CMS executive team believes that modeling performance-based accountability should affect senior staff and central office staff first. Simultaneously, CMS is supporting the school-based staff in setting goals, using data, and monitoring progress. By modeling at the senior level and building capacity at the school sites, CMS leaders hope to find the right balance between pressure, transparency, and support that will ultimately lead to system-wide improvements demonstrated at the school-level.

Districts and states increasingly are turning to outside organizations to augment capacity in the human capital arena; performance management needs to extend to external organizations too. Public and philanthropic investments to support teacher effectiveness efforts have increased dramatically in a short time, and there are lots of for-profit and non-profit consultants/technical assistance providers competing for the money. Districts and states should explore ways to create accountability for each actor with responsibility for improving teacher performance, including external partners who are hired to augment the public systems' capacity.

Some observers have proposed the use of performance contracts for educational service providers.¹¹ For instance, a firm that is contracted to assist teachers in improving math instruction would earn part of its compensation based on whether participating teachers become more effective math teachers. In the absence of accountability measures for these increasingly prominent partners, the system is designed to under-perform.

Principle 4

Educational and Political Leaders Commit to Communication and Collaboration

The context for overhauling evaluation policies will be set by leaders of public school systems and leaders from within the teaching profession. If adversarial negotiations and positional bargaining are the principal modes of joint work on new systems, then opportunities for deep collaboration will be squandered.

System leaders and teacher leaders that adopt a problem-solving orientation to the development and implementation of new evaluation/accountability/performance management systems may find they can make more progress, more quickly. Several states and districts have experimented with new approaches to collaborative work, and the early results are encouraging. Colorado, Illinois, and Tennessee, for example, enacted laws that established the broad contours of new evaluation policies and formed committees of leading educators and administrators to devise the specifics. Districts like New Haven and Baltimore have also adopted this approach. These new approaches set deadlines and create a backstop for resolving contentious issues, providing time and strong incentives for stakeholders to work toward solutions.

In Delaware, years of productive collaboration between political and education leaders created a foundation for the state's winning Race to the Top plan. Long before Race to the Top was proposed, Delaware Governor Jack Markell and Delaware State Education Association (DSEA) President Diane Donohue visited more than 25 schools together, meeting with teachers and discussing the state's public education system and ideas for improving it. This consultative process created a shared understanding of concerns and priorities that contributed to the substance of Delaware's application and also allowed educators to have an ownership stake in the state's agenda. Donohue credits Governor Markell's commitment to clear communication around his Education Strategic Plan, his ability to find commonalities among all stakeholders, and a clear focus on student needs over adult preferences as keys to successfully garnering support from all 19 DSEA local affiliate presidents, all school boards, and all superintendents for the Race to the Top application.

Top-down management and a "take it or leave it" approach to new initiatives are not hallmarks of professions that encourage either innovation

or outstanding performance. Likewise, educators have to abandon some of the tenets of past bargains – most significantly, that evaluation, assignment, and job security are divorced from performance on the job.

As one workshop participant stated, both unions and system leaders have an opportunity – and an obligation – to tap into “teachers’ best hopes instead of their worst fears.” Open communication and meaningful collaboration will test leaders on the management side and within the teaching profession. Working in these ways also makes sustained, positive change more likely.

Principle 5

Continuous Improvement is Modeled Throughout the System

Teachers are appropriately being forced to change practice through continuous improvement processes in their classrooms and with their peers (often characterized as professional learning communities). For this to succeed, the systems in which teachers work also need to embrace continuous improvement.

Schools and districts need to become learning organizations. This is an internal challenge for many systems, and the challenge is complicated by the many layers of governance – from federal to state policy, schools boards and central office administrators, to individual schools and classrooms. Structures need to be created that

encourage learning from experience and making mid-course corrections in low-stakes ways.

Modeling continuous improvement involves putting in place structures and processes for elevating and addressing concerns from the front lines, but it is also about establishing a culture. School systems have to become open to change that comes from internal learning.

Policy innovations won’t always work properly right out of the gate – that’s part of the nature of innovation – and system leaders need to encourage employees to surface concerns so they can be addressed. Additionally, the system must have mechanisms in place to act on good ideas.

Hillsborough County Public Schools: Business Process Improvement Plan

Hillsborough County, Florida has been blessed with stable leadership for a long time; the current superintendent, MaryEllen Elia, is in her 6th year and is the fourth superintendent in the last four decades. But this stability has not made the system static – far from it. One of the systems’ strengths is an orientation toward continuous improvement that permeates the central office ethos and structure.

One hallmark of the district’s commitment to continuous improvement is the Business Process Improvement Committee. This group was established to consider suggestions and complaints regarding the district’s operations – and to propose improved solutions.

Union and central office leadership meet regularly to discuss issues that have been raised by classroom teachers. Long ago, these meetings were expanded from just the superintendent and union

president to include more central office staff. This facilitates efficiency and direct responses when concerns are raised.

The commitment has paid off in terms of trust and flexibility in pursuing the district’s agenda. When most districts refused to participate in Florida’s state-level performance pay initiatives because of perceived flaws in the policies, Hillsborough district and union leaders found ways to acknowledge the problems, commit to working on them, and still get the money – millions of dollars a year – to classroom teachers. Because the union trusted the district leadership, a trust built over years of meaningful, responsive collaborations, there was a willingness to try approaches that other districts rejected. These experiences allowed district and union leaders to collaborate in designing the next generation of teacher effectiveness work, helping to secure a \$100 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in 2009.

Employees learn whether the system is serious about continuous improvement by observing how the system operates; Is there a pre-established process for raising concerns? Are concerns heard

in good faith and addressed? Are employees and advocates who articulate concerns valued for providing insights, or branded as disloyal to reforms?

Principle 6

Educator Effectiveness Implicates Every Box on the Org. Chart

Public education is an initiative-driven sector in need of systemic, integrated improvement strategies. Many worthwhile reforms have been unsuccessful because they were implemented in isolation. When other, related practices didn't change, the impact of the reforms was undermined and, ultimately, educators and policymakers lost faith in the power of the original reform . . . and moved on to the next "flavor of the month."

A workshop participant observed that we need to "rethink how we bring people together. If the system matters, how can we model solutions that solve the problem?"

For performance management to drive improvements in teaching and learning, all of a school system's energies and operations need to be

organized around improving educator effectiveness. Some of the requisite changes are obvious: professional development must respond directly to the areas identified in teachers' evaluations rather than provided indiscriminately to large groups of teachers without regard to individual needs. And data systems need to connect professional development activities with changes in participating teachers' performance over time to assess the efficacy of various resources and combinations. Finance systems also need to be integrated with other data so that return on investment can be measured. **Siloed systems undermine efforts to coordinate and manage systemic change.**

Conclusion

Performance management cannot solely focus on teacher evaluations. Rigorous evaluation is one piece of a complex puzzle that must also include clearly articulated goals and vision, metrics for measuring student learning and capacity to transform lessons from data into effective classroom practices, shared risk through every level in the district, communication and collaboration, and continuous improvement must be modeled at the highest system level. Improving student learning on the school level is unlikely to succeed without reassessing the system in which schools operate. If an executive team and central office cannot demonstrate continuous

improvement, it is much less likely to develop among teachers and principals.

There is no dispute that effective teachers lead to increases in student achievement. There is, however, a lot we don't know about using more rigorous evaluations to improve and increase teacher effectiveness. And what we don't know can hurt us, if policies lock-in certain approaches without strong evidence of what works.

The challenge for policymakers is to reflect the urgency of upending the status quo without creating a new orthodoxy to replace it.

Endnotes

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Appendix A

This paper was informed by conversations at the Aspen Education Program 2010 Summer Workshop, “Designing and Implementing Teacher Performance Management Systems: Implications for Practice and Policy” and does not represent individual opinions of the participants or their organizations.

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