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# **State Policies on Principal Evaluation:** Trends in a Changing Landscape

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TQ Center Policy-to-Practice Brief



## **State Policies on Principal Evaluation: Trends in a Changing Landscape**

The recent wave of education reform initiatives has resulted in new principal evaluation legislation in the past few years. This policy brief describes the trends in recently passed principal evaluation legislation, with a focus on implementation timelines and pilot programs.

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# CONTENTS

- Introduction . . . . . 1
- The Changing Legislative Landscape . . . . . 3
- Implementation Timelines and Piloting. . . . . 5
- Local Control and Discretion in System Design. . . . . 7
- Essential Components of a Principal Evaluation System Design. . . . . 8
- Selecting and Training Evaluators . . . . . 8
- Data Integrity and Transparency. . . . . 9
- Using Principal Evaluation Results: Personnel Decisions . . . . . 10
- Evaluating the System . . . . . 12
- Conclusion. . . . . 13
- References . . . . . 14

# INTRODUCTION

For the past 20 years, education leaders have sought to increase principal accountability and support as one mechanism for assuring that our students and teachers have the principals that they deserve. State and district accountability policies have focused intently on student outcomes, particularly standardized student test scores, to evaluate educator performance in a school. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, for example, encouraged states and districts to evaluate school performance by monitoring student test scores, which has resulted in the removal of principals or provision of additional supports to encourage better leadership and school performance when student performance was persistently poor. Federal school reform policies and initiatives, such as School Improvement Grants (SIG) and Race to the Top (RTTT), have further incentivized evaluations of individual educators, including principals, on the basis of student performance.

National attention on principal effectiveness is warranted. Strong school leadership, in the form of an effective principal, is essential for cultivating high-performing schools, attracting and retaining high-quality teaching staff, and building community support for education efforts (Clifford, Behrstock-Sherratt, & Feters, 2012). Although many factors contribute to student learning, leadership is the second most powerful school-level factor in student learning (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Horng, Klasick, & Loeb, 2010). Principal evaluation systems that clearly identify effective principals and provide performance-based feedback to promote improvement can help to ensure that all students attend schools that can truly help them achieve.

This brief describes a new wave of state legislation, which emphasizes individual principal accountability as part of a broader educator talent-management strategy. The brief provides a snapshot of new state-level policy on principal evaluation and describes reasons for policy change as represented in state policy language and trends in policy content. These descriptions are drawn from the National Comprehensive Center on Teacher Quality's *State Principal Evaluation Policy* database (<http://resource.tqsource.org/StateEvalDB>).<sup>1</sup> The thematic analysis was informed by the guidelines for principal evaluation policy implementation, as described by Clifford, Hansen, and Wraight (2012). The state-level data analyzed was limited to the states that have won RTTT funds in rounds one, two, and three, with the exception of Hawaii, which has yet to develop its principal evaluation system. As early implementers of updated principal evaluation policies, states that have won RTTT funds tend to have more data on their evaluation systems and be further along in implementing their principal evaluation systems than other states, at least partially because of the federally monitored timelines. In addition, these states have served as models of challenges that can arise in implementing principal evaluation systems and, in many cases, have identified possible solutions to these challenges.

The principal evaluation policy landscape is changing. Buoyed by federal incentive programs, states are passing legislation and are redesigning principal performance evaluation systems. The evaluation of principal performance is the procedure that school districts use to determine how well principals are performing their work and the effects of that work on teaching and learning.

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<sup>1</sup> The *State Principal Evaluation Policy* database was developed by collecting publicly available information on state-level principal evaluation policies via state department of education resources, RTTT documents, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility requests, and other relevant documents.

The process can involve measurement of the quality of principals' leadership practices and the impact of leadership practices on school conditions, school culture, instructional quality, and student achievement (Clifford, Hansen, & Wraight, 2012; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Research and federal policy encourage states to redesign principal performance evaluation methods to reflect contemporary standards of professional practice and to use multiple measures—including student performance—to gauge principal effectiveness. Professional organizations such as the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), and the American Federation of School Administrators emphasize the importance of fair, consistent, and accurate performance evaluation systems. It is imperative that these systems provide all principals useful feedback that supports professional growth and provides districts and states with high-quality information about the principal workforce (NAESP & NASSP, forthcoming). Federal legislation and professional associations also highlight the need for advanced principal professional learning programs and the use of performance evaluation results to inform high-stakes decisions on employment, advancement, and compensation.

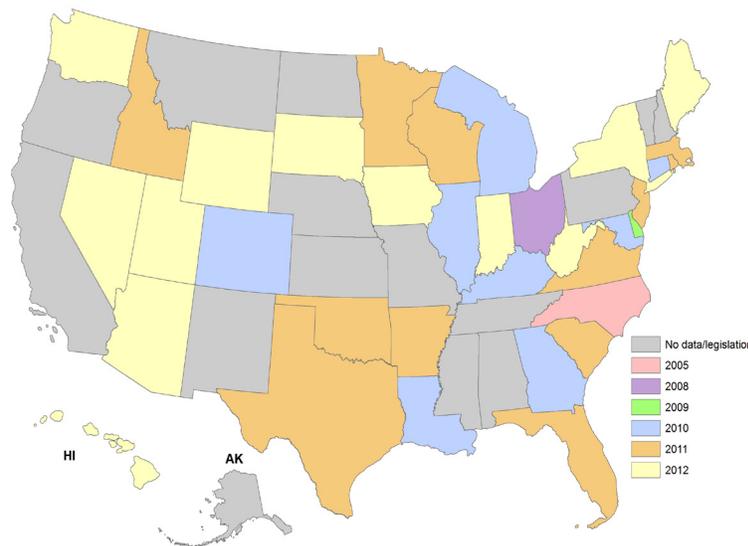
Principal performance evaluation is not new to state policy. Through law or administrative rule, states commonly have required school districts to evaluate all principals. Before recent federal school policy reforms were implemented, state-level policy typically allowed school districts to develop their own systems for principal evaluation. As a result, the state-level systems from the last several years have been a patchwork of standards and measures, which is challenging as states design strategies to develop and support leadership talent.

Research on implementing principal evaluation policy suggests that the patchwork of systems is not serving principals well either. Although many school districts have strong evaluation systems in place, school districts vary in their capacity to enact comprehensive principal evaluation systems. Traditional principal performance evaluation is not routine and systematic, and evaluations are not comprehensive or informed by valid measures, nor are they aligned with contemporary professional standards (Clifford & Ross, 2011; Davis, Kearney, Sanders, Thomas, & Leon, 2011). Furthermore, principals view existing evaluation systems as providing little valuable feedback with which to improve their practice or cues on how to improve school conditions.

# THE CHANGING LEGISLATIVE LANDSCAPE

Since 2005, our national policy review indicates that 34 of the 35 states<sup>2</sup> that passed legislation requiring district adoption of new principal evaluation systems passed legislation after the introduction of RTTT in 2009. This represents a rate of at least eight states per year in 2010, 2011, and 2012. Figure 1 illustrates when principal evaluation reform legislation was passed. State policymakers may begin new principal evaluation policies for multiple reasons, including improving student achievement, raising educator accountability, and facilitating principal professional growth. Although policy documents provide some insight into the goals of state policy changes, state RTTT applications describe state histories and goals. This review indicates the prevalence of these goals across states.

**Figure 1. Legislation years of principal evaluation system.**



Although RTTT states have outlined numerous rationales, priorities, and objectives for implementing principal evaluation systems in guidance documents, legislation, and especially in their RTTT applications, the legislation that states have passed currently mandating principal evaluation reform rarely explicitly includes the goals or purposes of the evaluation system. Of the 19 states that have won RTTT funds (see Table 1), state legislation identifies professional growth as a goal in five states and student growth as a goal in five states. Only two states (Massachusetts and New Jersey) identify both. Legislation on principal evaluation usually describes the domains or components of the system and their weighting, however. Although state legislation does not go into detail about the goals and purposes of principal evaluation systems, state guidance documents, RTTT materials, and ESEA flexibility requests often go into great detail on the goals and purposes. About half of the RTTT states explicitly included either student achievement (9) or professional growth (12) as goals in nonregulatory guidance documents; accountability is less common (5).

<sup>2</sup> In this analysis, we are counting the District of Columbia as a state for simplicity.

**Table 1. States Receiving RTTT Funds and Their Initiatives**

State Name	Student Growth		Professional Growth		Accountability	
	Legislation	Guidance	Legislation	Guidance	Legislation	Guidance
<b>Round 1 Winners</b>						
Delaware		X	X	X		
Tennessee		X				X
<b>Round 2 Winners</b>						
District of Columbia						X
Florida	X	X				
Georgia		X		X		
Hawaii	X					
Maryland	X					
Massachusetts		X	X	X		X
New York		X		X		
North Carolina	X			X		
Ohio						
Rhode Island				X		
<b>Round 3 Winners</b>						
Arizona <sup>a</sup>		X	X	X		X
Colorado <sup>b</sup>			X	X		X
Illinois <sup>c</sup>						
Kentucky <sup>d</sup>				X		
Louisiana <sup>e</sup>		X				
New Jersey <sup>f</sup>	X	X	X	X		
Pennsylvania <sup>g</sup>						

<sup>a</sup> Won RTTT funds for initiative C2: Accessing and Using State Data.

<sup>b</sup> Won RTTT funds for initiative D2: Improving Teacher and Principal Effectiveness.

<sup>c</sup> Won RTTT funds for initiatives C3: Using Data to Improve Instruction, D2: Improving Teacher and Principal Effectiveness, and D3: Ensuring Equitable Distribution of Effective Teachers and Principals.

<sup>d</sup> Won RTTT funds for initiative C3: Using Data to Improve Instruction.

<sup>e</sup> Won RTTT funds for initiatives C3: Using Data to Improve Instruction, D2: Improving Teacher and Principal Effectiveness, and D3: Ensuring Equitable Distribution of Effective Teachers and Principals.

<sup>f</sup> Won RTTT funds for initiatives C3: Using Data to Improve Instruction and D2: Improving Teacher and Principal Effectiveness.

<sup>g</sup> Won RTTT funds for Initiatives C2: Accessing and Using State Data and D2: Improving Teacher and Principal Effectiveness.

## IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINES AND PILOTING

All legislation or administrative rules that were reviewed for this brief provide a date by which the newly designed principal evaluation system must be implemented (Figure 2). A few winners of RTTT grants, notably Delaware, the District of Columbia, North Carolina, and Tennessee, have already fully implemented their principal evaluation systems. A majority of the states that have passed legislation (15) mandate the full implementation of most or all aspects of the new principal evaluation systems in the 2012–13 school year, and seven will be required to implement new systems in the 2013–14 school year.

A comparison between date of passage and the required implementation date indicates that states, on average, allow two years between passage and statewide implementation. Five states require redesign and implementation occur in one year’s time, six states require implementation within one year, and three states provide for four or more years between passage of legislation and implementation. Challenges in implementation and the sheer scope of work involved in implementing an effective principal evaluation model while incorporating stakeholder approval and engagement may affect states’ timelines for implementing reforms: for example, Arizona amended legislation in spring 2012, pushing back the required implementation of the evaluation system from 2012–13 to 2013–14.

Nine states have planned at least one pilot or field-testing year into their implementation timeline, three of which have planned two years of pilot or field testing. Louisiana, for example, had two pilot phases included in its implementation plan: the first pilot was conducted in 20 districts during the 2010–11 school year, and the second pilot was conducted statewide, with adjustments to be made from evaluation results and feedback in the 2012–13 school year, when the system will be fully implemented statewide. Rhode Island took a different approach by gradually implementing certain components of the evaluation system during the 2011–12 school year instead of piloting. During gradual implementation, Rhode Island reduced the implementation burden on principals and evaluators by reducing the number of required conferences and professional growth goals. In addition, student growth scores were not included in the first year and evaluation results were used only for professional growth rather than high-stakes decisions, such as dismissal. Rhode Island will fully implement its system in the 2012–13 school year. The inclusion of a pilot year(s) gives states more time to adjust their evaluation systems and make modifications to their system on the basis of feedback from participants, responses to implementation challenges, or other lessons learned.

Table 2 summarizes implementation timelines for each state, including which states included a pilot year(s), when statewide implementation is expected, and when evaluation results will inform high-stakes decision making.

**Table 2. Summary of Principal Evaluation System Timelines by State**

State	Pilot, Field Testing, or Gradual Implementation	Statewide Implementation	Incorporation of High-Stakes Decisions
<b>Arizona</b>	May 2012	2012-13 <sup>a</sup>	Not specified
<b>Colorado</b>	2011-12: Development and beta testing 2012-13: Validation study in pilot districts	2013-14: Monitoring of pilot sites and statewide rollout 2014-15: Full statewide implementation	2015-16
<b>Delaware</b>	2005-06	2008-09 <sup>c</sup>	Not specified
<b>District of Columbia</b>	N/A	2010-11 <sup>b</sup>	2010-11
<b>Florida</b>	N/A	2011-12	2014-15
<b>Georgia</b>	January 2012-May 2012	2012-13: RTTT districts only 2014-15: All districts	Not specified
<b>Hawaii</b>	TBD	2014-15	TBD
<b>Illinois</b>	N/A	2012-16 <sup>d</sup>	Not specified
<b>Kentucky</b>	2013-14	2014-15 <sup>e</sup>	Spring 2015
<b>Louisiana</b>	2010-11: Pilot in 20 districts 2011-12: Statewide pilot	2012-13	2012-13
<b>Maryland</b>	2011-12	2012-13	2012-13
<b>Massachusetts</b>	2011-12: In 34 Level 4 schools, Chelsea High School, and in 11 districts and 4 collaboratives as “early adopter” sites 2012-13: RTTT districts	2013-14	2013-14
<b>New Jersey</b>	2012-13	2013-14 <sup>f</sup>	2013-14
<b>New York</b>	N/A	2011-12	2011-12
<b>North Carolina</b>	2008-09 2009-10: Evaluation instruments for assistant principals	2010-11 2011-12: Student growth measures to be incorporated	2011-12
<b>Ohio</b>	2008-09	2009-10 <sup>g</sup>	2014-15
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Rhode Island</b>	2011-12: Early adopter and gradual implementation	2012-13	2012-13 school year 2013-14: Student growth scores will be included
<b>Tennessee</b>	N/A	2011-12	Not specified

<sup>a</sup> School district governing boards or a charter school governing body can choose to postpone the implementation of the required teacher and principal evaluation until the 2013-14 school year if a majority of the board votes to postpone at a public meeting and adopts a plan for implementation in the 2013-14 school year.

<sup>b</sup> 2010-11 revisions to IMPACT now allows the evaluation system to extend to principals and includes a leadership framework assessment as well as clear performance expectations.

<sup>c</sup> Changes to the system were made in 2010, but these revisions have yet to be fully implemented.

<sup>d</sup> All principals must be evaluated every year by trained and prequalified evaluators starting in 2012-13, but each district will fully phase in the new evaluation system between 2012 and 2016.

<sup>e</sup> By state law, the state regulations on evaluation went into effect July 2010; however, the state has yet to pass the legislation (KY House Bill 40; <http://legiscan.com/gaits/view/346280>) updating the evaluation system.

<sup>f</sup> By state law, the state regulations on evaluation were to go into effect in the 2012-13 school year, but the state will not implement the evaluation system until 2013-14.

<sup>g</sup> By state law, the state regulations on evaluation were to go into effect in 2008, but the state did not implement the principal evaluation system until 2009-10.

# LOCAL CONTROL AND DISCRETION IN SYSTEM DESIGN

As with implementation timelines, states vary on how much control, discretion, and responsibility states provide to school districts for principal evaluation design and implementation. Among the RTTT states, four states mandate statewide systems, four states mandate the implementation of a state-developed system with local control granted over some components of the system, and 10 states mandate a minimum framework on which districts may base their own models. In the boxes are three examples from states, each example highlighting different degrees of district discretion and control.

## Delaware

The Delaware Performance Appraisal System for Administrators (DPAS II) was created through state educator evaluation reform legislation and was to be implemented for all public and charter schools within the state starting in the 2008–09 school year. The Delaware Administrative Standards provided the framework for the system’s development, and the statewide system is composed of five components: (1) vision and goals, (2) culture of learning, (3) management, (4) professional responsibilities, and (5) student improvement. DPAS II uses multiple rating categories to determine effectiveness, and student growth is a critical component in the evaluation of a principal. Although the state allows districts to develop their own evaluation systems, they must meet strict state requirements and have the same rigor as the DPAS II system. No district in Delaware has chosen to develop its own evaluation system, and therefore all districts are using the state-created DPAS II system.

## Maryland

The use of Maryland’s state-developed principal evaluation system is mandated for all school districts within the state. Local education agencies (LEAs) have some flexibility, however. Maryland’s system emphasizes professional development, with qualitative measures of professional practice accounting for 50 percent of a principal’s evaluation and quantitative measures accounting for the remaining 50 percent (30 percent state growth measures and 20 percent local growth measures). The state provides flexibility in allowing LEAs to add local priorities to the eight outcomes contained in the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework, on which the qualitative measures are based, and to choose local growth measures from a menu of items. The menu of growth measures will not be available until the conclusion of the pilot.

## Florida

Florida has made districts responsible for developing their own evaluation systems, all districts having submitted a principal evaluation system before June 1, 2011. According to the Student Success Act, evaluation systems must be based on research and sound education principles. Principal evaluations must be 50 percent based on the performance of students, with instructional leadership and professional job responsibilities making up the remaining 50 percent.

## ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF A PRINCIPAL EVALUATION SYSTEM DESIGN

In April 2012, the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality released *A Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Principal Evaluation Systems* (Clifford, Hansen, & Wraight, 2012), which outlines eight essential components of the principal evaluation system design process. Each of these components is critical to system design, but components five through eight apply more directly to implementation phases and their challenges because they describe the use of results over time. They are as follows: Selecting and Training Evaluators, Ensuring Data Integrity and Transparency, Using Principal Evaluation Results, and Evaluating the System. In this section we will use these four components as a framework in which to further examine implementation of principal evaluation systems within RTTT states.

### SELECTING AND TRAINING EVALUATORS

The selection and training of evaluators is critical to successful implementation of a principal evaluation system. Evaluators are in part responsible for ensuring that “evaluation procedures are followed, data are collected with integrity, information is properly interpreted, and actionable feedback is provided” (Clifford, Hansen, & Wraight, 2012). In order for evaluators to have the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct evaluations properly and consistently, and therefore for the evaluation system to have merit, evaluators need to be well trained and provided with ongoing support.

States are in very different stages of implementation when it comes to selecting and training evaluators. Two states are highlighted here as examples of the variation in approaches to evaluator selection and training.

#### Ohio

The Ohio Department of Education oversees all training and credentialing of evaluators. The state provides guidance on observing behaviors such as facilitating meetings, leading professional development, meeting with parents, participating in individualized education program meetings, and leading postobservation teacher evaluation conferences. In addition, the state also provides retraining to evaluators and monitors interrater reliability and validity of scores.

<sup>10</sup> The components of *A Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Principal Evaluation Systems* are (1) Evaluation System Goals; (2) Stakeholder Investment and Communication Plan; (3) Selecting Measures; (4) Structure of the Evaluation System; (5) Selecting and Training Evaluators; (6) Ensuring Data Integrity and Transparency; (7) Using Principal Evaluation Results; and (8) Evaluating the System.

### Illinois

Illinois requires that principals be evaluated by the district superintendent, the superintendent's designee, or an individual appointed by the school board holding an appropriate administrative certificate. The state developed a mandatory train-the-trainer system to identify evaluators and provide training to district leaders on how to train evaluators. These district leaders are then responsible for developing and implementing a district-level prequalification training. The state requires school districts that offer their own evaluator retraining programs to ensure that evaluators are retrained at least once during each of their five-year certificate or licensure renewal cycles and that the trainings cover a minimum set of requirements, including procedures for determining levels of proficiency and using evaluation rubrics. After the district-level training, all evaluators must pass a state-developed assessment. An evaluator who fails the assessment must participate in the state-developed prequalification program before taking the assessment a second time. In addition, the state will provide retraining resources online as the system is rolled out statewide.

## DATA INTEGRITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Evaluation data is at the center of principal evaluation systems, including informing conclusions about principal performance, next steps for professional development, and high-stakes personnel decisions. For these reasons, data infrastructures are essential to principal evaluation systems. Data systems are critical in ensuring that evaluation data is of high quality and available to stakeholders; likewise, having access to and engagement with the data may help school and district leaders better understand and feel connected to system implementation. Our scan revealed that 11 states have a data infrastructure in place that allows for the linkage of principal performance data to individual teacher data and individual teacher data to student-level data; four states are developing their data systems. Following are brief profiles of two states with well-established data systems.

### Tennessee

In Tennessee, the state has made clear decisions about how principal evaluation results are shared: value-added data currently are available to all educators and reported at the school and system levels, performance evaluation scores are part of a principal's confidential personnel file, and only aggregated scores are reported publicly. Tennessee also has developed support for principals in improving leadership practice through teacher support: the state has committed to training every principal in the use of value-added data, and in 2010-12, the state partnered with the SAS Institute and Batelle for Kids to create online supports, opportunities to provide face-to-face assistance, and a data dashboard to help facilitate the use of data at the LEA and classroom levels. The state created 33 online learning modules about how student achievement data can be used to improve instruction. In addition, the state hired regional value-added specialists to provide in-person assistance and support in how to use data to inform instruction and decision making.

### District of Columbia

In the District of Columbia., evaluation data can be aggregated or disaggregated to depict results at state, district, and building levels. Currently, the state has not provided training to administrators to use the evaluation data to improve leadership practice but plans to allow teachers and administrators access to pertinent evaluation data through the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data Warehouse, which is currently being updated to meet the requirements of the evaluation system. In addition, the district plans to maintain a website with public access to aggregate data and has released a report with aggregate evaluation data from the 2010–11 school year. The Longitudinal Education Data Warehouse has an internal validation system that is used to correct errors.

## USING PRINCIPAL EVALUATION RESULTS: PERSONNEL DECISIONS

Decisions about how evaluation data will be used have implications for data infrastructure and reporting and will affect the degree to which the evaluation system provides principals with feedback, supports learning, facilitates preservice and inservice programming, and informs personnel decisions (Clifford, Hansen, & Wraight, 2012). States must decide who will be given access to principal evaluation data, develop decision rules for human resources actions, and determine how to clearly communicate to principals how the evaluation data will be used.

Many RTTT states intend evaluation results to be used in personnel decisions, primarily dismissal. Specifically, 13 states have mandated, recommended, or allowed the use of principal evaluation data in personnel decisions. Only a few states, however, explicitly mandate that evaluation results lead to accountability, including dismissal for poor performance (four states) or increases in compensation for excellent performance (three states).

Although accountability is not the main focus of all the evaluation systems and many states provide substantial support and assistance to struggling principals, it is clear that states have included accountability as an important component, in that many states already have determined the consequences for poor evaluation scores before seeing the data on current principal effectiveness. States also have anticipated that professional learning will need to stem from more than an evaluation rating: Professional learning and goal setting also have been mandated in six states. The extent to which professional learning is integral to the system or embedded in the evaluation varies among these six states. Rhode Island's model system includes a cycle of continuous goal setting through conferences with the evaluator, formative feedback, and assistance plans for struggling principals. The District of Columbia's IMPACT system has ongoing formative feedback cycles. Colorado does not have the in-depth formative feedback in its model system that Rhode Island and the District of Columbia have but instead links evaluation results to professional development opportunities. Although professional learning is a clearly defined goal of evaluation systems, most RTTT states recommend rather than mandate professional learning plans or goal-setting cycles or allow districts to determine how they will support principal practice.

The following box juxtaposes Rhode Island and Arizona as contrasting examples of how principal evaluation data are used.

### Rhode Island

The state of Rhode Island mandates the use of principal evaluation data in personnel decisions. The state mandates that the evaluation system include a cycle of performance analysis, professional goal setting, professional development based on performance, and performance improvement based on growth plans. The state also mandates that principals receive performance feedback, recommendations for growth, and opportunities for self-reflection. During the evaluation process, the evaluator and principal use the evaluation results to map progress toward goals on the growth plan, and to develop goals for the following year. Principals rated as developing or ineffective are placed on an improvement plan for at least one year before termination is considered. The state recommends that districts dismiss principals who have received ineffective ratings two years in a row. Principals who receive ineffective ratings for five consecutive years lose their certification and may no longer serve as a principal in the state.

### Arizona

Currently, the state does not mandate, recommend, or allow evaluation results to be used to inform personnel decisions, but the state initially planned to develop and issue guidelines for LEAs on how to use evaluation results to inform personnel decisions by 2012–13, as outlined in the state’s second-round RTTT application. Arizona won round three RTTT funds but did not apply for round three funding of its Great Teachers and Leaders plan; therefore, it is unclear whether the state plans to pass legislation authorizing the use of evaluation results in personnel decisions in the future. The state does, however, plan to offer incentives that are based on evaluations. Arizona law requires the state board of education to adopt and implement a policy offering incentives to principals in the two highest performance classifications (highly effective and effective), which may include multiyear contracts or additional compensation for working at low-performing schools, and describing transfer and contract processes for principals performing in the lowest two classifications (developing and ineffective). The Arizona Framework for Measuring Educator Effectiveness recommends that LEAs develop and provide professional development on Arizona’s Professional Administrative Standards and the evaluation process. The state board of education is required to describe how professional development opportunities align with principal evaluations by school year 2013–14.

## EVALUATING THE SYSTEM

To date, there is little research on the effectiveness and impact of principal evaluation systems. The influx of principal evaluation system reform and development, in large part because of federal grant programs, has created an opportunity to add to the evidence base on principal evaluation. In addition, research and evaluation of these systems will provide states with the opportunity to make improvements to their systems as they mature. Unfortunately, many states' system evaluation plans are still in their infancy. Highlighted are two states that have planned for an evaluation of their principal evaluation systems.

### North Carolina

North Carolina's Consortium for Educational Research and Evaluation will complete three evaluations and reports on the evaluation of teacher and principal effectiveness. The consortium has already released a reliability analysis of multiple value-added models and intends on releasing two evaluations, one preliminary evaluation in 2013, and a final evaluation in 2014. The Consortium for Educational Research and Evaluation also will release an evaluation of the state's implementation of the RTTT grant.

### New Jersey

New Jersey plans to evaluate the fairness, reliability, and validity of its measures of effective educator performance, and examine the impact of the evaluation system on student learning and instructional practice. The New Jersey State Department of Education will evaluate the pilot sites in the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years and will collect information from sample LEAs once the evaluation system is implemented full scale in 2013-14. The department will be collecting this information, and monitoring and analyzing data to inform correlation. The department has contracted with an external researcher as well as a nationally recognized technical assistance provider to assist with this process in preparation for statewide rollout. New Jersey also plans to enhance its state longitudinal data system, NJ SMART, and develop a Web-based instructional-improvement system.

## CONCLUSION

State principal evaluation legislation is rapidly changing and holds potential for dramatically increasing the level and quality of feedback to school leaders. This policy review indicates that 34 states have passed legislation on principal legislation since the introduction of the RTTT competition in 2009.

The review indicates that a majority of RTTT states include student growth data and community feedback as significant components of the evaluation system. There is variety, however, in how states define the goals and outcomes of the evaluation system as well as how states determine the degree of district and state control and responsibility. Most of these states plan to implement their evaluation systems in the next three years, after pilot programs or gradual implementation plans; however, there is significant variation in how states have approached and planned evaluator training and system quality oversight.

As described in *A Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Principal Evaluation Systems* (Clifford, Hansen, & Wraight, 2012), the successful implementation and continued importance of principal evaluation systems is highly dependent on the “quality of training and support provided to evaluators,” (p. 47) data integrity and transparency, data reporting procedures, and the legal defensibility of the system. Although regional and local differences may necessitate differences in how training, data use, and system evaluation occur, it is critical that states devote significant time and resources to these components to ensure the strength and fidelity of these systems.

Implementing these principal evaluation systems with fidelity and with consideration for all stakeholders will be a major challenge in most states, testing the capacity of the states’ departments of education and district-level support systems. Whether conducted by districts or at the state level, evaluator selection and training are crucial to fidelity of implementation and stakeholder buy-in during the first few years of system implementation. States may benefit from networking with each other and through regional comprehensive centers to share best practices and potential solutions to common issues, such as gathering growth data. Although implementation of these systems is challenging, states can work to ensure that the evaluation systems are fair and meaningful by adjusting the system according to stakeholder feedback throughout both the pilot years and the first years of implementation.

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## ABOUT THE NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE CENTER FOR TEACHER QUALITY

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (TQ Center) was created to serve as the national resource to which the regional comprehensive centers, states, and other education stakeholders turn for strengthening the quality of teaching—especially in high-poverty, low-performing, and hard-to-staff schools—and for finding guidance in addressing specific needs, thereby ensuring that highly qualified teachers are serving students with special needs.

The TQ Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and is a collaborative effort of ETS, Learning Point Associates, and Vanderbilt University. Integral to the TQ Center's charge is the provision of timely and relevant resources to build the capacity of regional comprehensive centers and states to effectively implement state policy and practice by ensuring that all teachers meet the federal teacher requirements of the current provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act.

The TQ Center is part of the U.S. Department of Education's Comprehensive Centers program, which includes 16 regional comprehensive centers that provide technical assistance to states within a specified boundary and five content centers that provide expert assistance to benefit states and districts nationwide on key issues related to current provisions of ESEA.



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