

# EDUCATOR EVALUATION

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“The [Oregon Education] Association advocates for the active assessment of all teachers through regular and comprehensive evaluation procedures.”

--OEA Resolution V.14

“The Oregon Education Association believes evaluations should be fair and objective for all school employees. Evaluations should be conducted improve the quality of instructions and environment offered to students based on written criteria, and following the procedures mutually developed by, and acceptable to, the association and the governing board in compliance with state law.”

--OEA Resolution V.22

The fundamental goal of all teacher evaluation should be to improve teaching and learning. This means giving all teachers opportunities to grow professionally while providing assistance to them in determining targets and planning strategies to achieve them. Fundamentally, this requires support, resources, and time (for observation, analysis and collaboration). It also requires developing a professional culture where mentors, team members, colleagues, or expert teachers are utilized to promote professional learning and collaboration. This approach is reinforced through targeted, sustained, job-embedded professional development

Appropriate evaluation can help lift up professional conversation and collaboration to create a safe environment to focus on achievement for students. Effective evaluation does not happen through the act of taking snapshots in time, but through an ongoing process that is flexible, developmental and focused on quality instruction.

Too often, the fundamental missing element for evaluation is time--time to perform effective observations and time for in-depth professional conversation and collaboration. The second necessary element is a well-trained administrator with the experience, expertise and time to observe and facilitate a robust evaluation process. The third necessary element is fostering a culture within a school or school district to promote professional growth that transcends the evaluation process.

Teaching is a complex clinical practice. It is the one profession that teaches all other professions. It is very difficult to break down into component parts. Therefore, integrated, validated and credible evaluation processes are critical to fostering student success. These can be achieved by:

- **Creating integrated systems** that link evaluation procedures to curricular standards, professional development activities, targeted support, and human capital decisions.

- **Using validated evaluation measures** based on widely accepted standards of teaching that attempt to capture a range of teaching behaviors and use multiple methods and evaluators.
- **Establishing credibility** that involves multiple stakeholders in the design, development, implementation and revision of the system and make procedures meaningful and transparent to all involved.

Useful evaluation includes multiple forms of student data. This includes local/district achievement tests, student work and evidence of student growth, teacher/principal-developed learning goals, and teacher-generated information about student growth and goals. Formative and summative student assessments should be used alongside assessments of effective engagement, critical thinking, and/or self-efficacy.

Student learning data should be used only in a Formative Assessment Process, in which case teachers can be rated or given a metric of effectiveness based on both practice and student learning data. Teachers can be given useful feedback related to their practice, skills, and knowledge, and individualized professional development and support based on this feedback. Teachers can then be later evaluated based on the growth and/or improvement of their practice, skills, and knowledge –not student learning data.

In Oregon, there are many examples of effective evaluation systems. Local education association leaders have worked hand-in-hand with the district and community partners to develop them. The goals of these programs are to promote effective performance and support individual professional growth for all staff. This effort not only reflects the philosophy and high expectations of the community and school district staff, it is deeply rooted in the research and field experience of effective practitioners.

## TALKING POINTS

- Students enrolled in our public schools deserve competent, caring, and effective teachers. Every day, dedicated education professionals enter classrooms across Oregon intent on doing their best to make sure students succeed.
- The central principle of any teacher assessment system must be to improve knowledge, skills and classroom practice of professional educators with the ultimate goal of enhancing student learning. The ‘reward and punish’ philosophy of many administrators and policymakers is wrong. It excludes teachers from the process and does little to improve classroom learning or further the profession.
- Comprehensive assessment, evaluation and professional development systems should be designed in tandem with the goal of improving the knowledge, skills and effectiveness of the teacher workforce. This requires a sustained social, political and financial commitment.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*Teacher Evaluation and Assessment: The NEA Framework*

<http://www.nea.org/home/41858.htm>