Intensifying Implementation Support

An Interactive Guide to Successful Teacher Evaluation for Professional Growth

Center on
GREAT TEACHERS & **LEADERS**

at American Institutes for Research

nea NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

How to Use This Interactive Guide

Intensifying Implementation Support: An Interactive Guide to Successful Teacher Evaluation for Professional Growth is an interactive tool designed to guide teachers and teacher leaders in examining five common challenges during the implementation of a teacher evaluation system. The five challenges are time, communication and stakeholder engagement, educator development and support, alignment with other initiatives, and data availability and support. These challenges are presented through the lens of common components of teacher evaluation: teaching practice, student growth in tested and nontested subjects, and summative ratings.

The guide's contents page and section divider pages are completely interactive. Users may click on a selected entry to navigate directly to that page of the guide. In addition, users also can use the toolbar at the right side of each page to navigate to respective sections. Finally, users can turn "pages" by clicking on the forward (>) and backward (<) arrows next to each page number.

To get started, teachers should take the Self-Assessment on page 10. This assessment will help each teacher prioritize by identifying two of the five challenges to focus on initially. (The remaining challenges can be revisited at a later time.) Through its interactive approach, the guide provides a means for teachers to identify specific elements of each component, determine practical strategies, and quickly identify online tools that support the refinement of teacher evaluation implementation. These tools include state and district resources and anecdotes as well as resources from education organizations. In addition, each section provides guiding questions that teachers can use to guide their refinement process.

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Introduction

Teacher evaluation—and the overall understanding of it by all stakeholders—continues to evolve. Previous teacher evaluation systems varied greatly in their purpose, rigor, instruments, professional learning opportunities, and feedback. During the last decade, however, educators and policymakers have recognized that evaluation systems can provide an opportunity to do much more than rate, score, or rank teachers. This realization has led most states to design and implement a revised teacher evaluation system. These revised systems have shifted the focus to building a teacher evaluation system that differentiates teacher performance, provides support and development opportunities, and ensures that students have access to the most effective teachers. Although many of these revised evaluation systems initially were designed and implemented in response to federal requirements, their impact has been mixed. These new systems show real progress for continued change, but they also are in need of refinement.

As part of this refinement process, current implementation of new teacher evaluation systems must consider the following five challenges (not listed in priority):

- Time
- Communication and stakeholder engagement
- Educator development and support
- Alignment with other initiatives
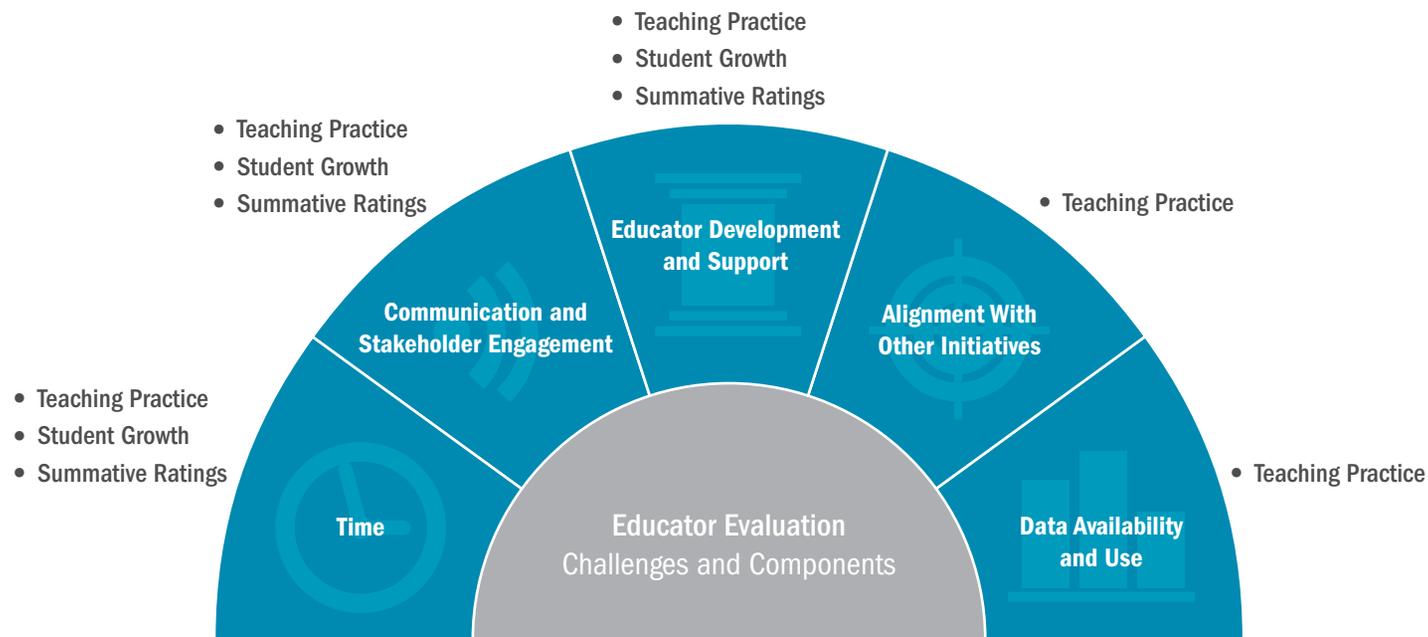- Data availability and use

These challenges, although broad in scope, encompass many common aspects that states and districts are struggling to confront. The goal is to realize the promise of such a comprehensive shift in assessing teaching practice.

Purpose of This Guide

As states and districts continue to refine their teacher evaluation systems, many are engaging teachers and teacher leaders in identifying challenges and solutions that will make the process more transparent, meaningful, and effective. To support this refinement process, teachers are in need of practical, research- and evidence-based information to quickly and easily address the five challenges: time, communication and stakeholder engagement, educator development and support, alignment with other initiatives, and data availability and use.

Intensifying Implementation Support: An Interactive Guide to Successful Teacher Evaluation for Professional Growth provides practitioners with information that can be used to refine teacher evaluation implementation. This guide is structured around the five common challenges and presented through the lens of three common components of teacher evaluation: teaching practice, student growth in tested and nontested subjects, and summative ratings. Figure 1 illustrates these challenges and components.

Figure 1. Implementation Challenges and Components of a Teacher Evaluation System

- Teaching Practice
- Student Growth
- Summative Ratings

- Teaching Practice
- Student Growth
- Summative Ratings

Educator Development and Support

- Teaching Practice

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Intended Audience

The intended audience for this guide is primarily teachers (including classroom and nonclassroom teachers) and teacher leaders who are working to support the implementation and refinement of teacher evaluation in their district or state or who wish to advocate for changes at the district and state levels. In addition, this guide is a helpful resource for state-, district-, and school-level leadership teams that are charged with determining refinement opportunities for teacher evaluation implementation. Further, this guide can be used to build capacity and initial support for low-performing schools that struggle with implementation of an evaluation system.

Note: This guide does not specifically single out special education teachers, teachers of English learner students, early childhood teachers, or career and technical education teachers; however, where applicable, examples that highlight nuances in teacher evaluation systems for these specific groups are included.

Getting Started in Using This Guide

To get started, each user should complete in the Self-Assessment on . Because the five challenges are complex, it is important to make the refinement process manageable. To that end, the Self-Assessment will help the user prioritize by identifying two of the five challenges to focus on initially, leaving the other challenges to be revisited at a later time.

This guide does not have to be read cover to cover. Instead, the interactive nature of the guide provides a way for practitioners to identify their needs, navigate to practical strategies, and quickly identify resources that support the refinement of teacher evaluation implementation. The contents page, section divider pages, and toolbar at the right of each page allow the user to click through the guide, targeting the topics that are most applicable. Each section also provides users with guiding questions to focus their refinement process. The examples included in this guide are state and district resources and anecdotes as well as resources from educational organizations. These online tools and resources are available as quick links.

Why This Guide Now?

Although many examples of high-quality teacher evaluation systems have been in use around the nation, the majority of prior evaluation systems were focused solely on observation, and not all of the instruments and processes used were designed to promote good teaching. Some of the observation instruments were rudimentary checklists while others simply failed to differentiate among teaching effectiveness.

During the last several years, there have been many attempts to improve the quality of teaching and learning. More recently, through funding opportunities such as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the Race to the Top competition, the federal government has encouraged states and districts to develop rigorous evaluation systems for use in high-stakes decisions, resulting in a national urgency to create and implement comprehensive, strategic systems for evaluating teacher performance that identify, support, and develop teacher effectiveness and promote student growth (Goe, Holdheide, & Miller, 2014).

DEFINITION OF TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders defines *effective teachers* as follows:

"Effective teachers have high expectations for all students and help students learn, as measured by value-added or other test-based growth measures, or by alternative measures."

"Effective teachers contribute to positive academic, attitudinal, and social outcomes for students such as regular attendance, on-time promotion to the next grade, on-time graduation, self-efficacy, and cooperative behavior."

"Effective teachers use diverse resources to plan and structure engaging learning opportunities; monitor student progress formatively, adapting instruction as needed; and evaluate learning using multiple sources of evidence."

"Effective teachers contribute to the development of classrooms and schools that value diversity and civic-mindedness."

"Effective teachers collaborate with other teachers, administrators, parents, and education professionals to ensure student success, particularly the success of students with special needs and those at high risk for failure" (Goe, Bell, & Little, 2008, p. 8).

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Contemporary thinking in the field holds that teacher evaluation should not be treated as a stand-alone process, but rather as part of a comprehensive approach to improving teaching and learning (Lasagna, Laine, & Behrstock-Sherratt, 2011). Similarly, the National Education Association, in collaboration with six other education organizations, states that "teacher evaluation systems must be part of a holistic education system that supports and informs the teaching and learning process. A robust evaluation system recognizes evidence of teachers' instructional excellence, their contributions to student learning, and their impact on the school, community, and profession as a whole. In addition, a comprehensive evaluation system should include a professional growth framework that is linked to high-quality professional development" (National Education Association et al., 2013, p. 6).

Many states and districts were given little time to respond to this call to build comprehensive evaluation systems. Further, these systems often were implemented before there were opportunities to test the components and make adjustments before full implementation. For these reasons, states and districts often are struggling to implement high-quality evaluation systems. This situation is further exacerbated in smaller, rural, and low-performing districts that lack the capacity to implement the new evaluation system smoothly or use the evaluation system to support teacher growth and effectiveness.

Yet recent research has shown that teacher evaluation systems that are implemented with fidelity can have a meaningful impact on student learning (Kane, Kerr, & Pianta, 2014, Kane, McCaffrey, & Staiger, 2010). It is now up to educators and those who support them to take the lead in identifying ways in which to adjust evaluation systems to ensure that they help all teachers grow and develop their instructional knowledge and skills.

> "Teacher evaluation systems must be part of a holistic education system that supports the teaching and learning process. A robust evaluation system recognizes evidence of teachers' instructional excellence, their contributions to student learning, and their impact on the school, community, and profession as a whole. In addition, a comprehensive evaluation system should include a professional growth framework that is linked to high-quality professional development."
>
> —*National Education Association et al., 2013, p. 6*

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Self-Assessment

Instructions

1. For each entry below, indicate your level of agreement by assigning points according to the following scale:
   1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree.

____ A) After a conference with my evaluator, I have an actionable plan that was made collaboratively on how I can make adjustments to my teaching practice.

____ B) At the beginning of the school year, I have access to the data and/or individuals who can assist me in identifying students' learning needs.

____ C) The connection between school or district improvement initiatives is clear.

____ D) During my work day, I have all the time I need to do my work at the highest level of quality.

____ E) Communication about teacher evaluation is transparent and easily accessible.

____ A) Professional development options are individualized to my level of experience, knowledge, and skill.

____ B) I have the data I need to set professional goals.

____ C) Implementing college and career readiness standards has helped me become a better teacher.

____ D) I receive timely feedback from qualified and trained observers in addition to my principal.

____ E) In my district, stakeholders are invited to participate in providing feedback on the development or implementation of the teacher evaluation system.

____ A) I trust my evaluator to assess my level of performance.

____ B) I regularly collaborate with my colleagues by looking at student data.

____ C) The offered professional development is aligned to the teacher observation framework.

____ D) In my district, students spend the right amount of time taking assessments.

____ E) In my district, teacher input is requested (through surveys, focus groups, or other means) to inform decisions that directly impact them.

____ A) I have enough opportunities to take instructional risks and receive feedback.

____ B) I can access my observation information and student growth scores electronically.

____ C) The teacher evaluation system has added additional work but with the right resources of time and materials to complete the work.

____ D) I am able to demonstrate evidence of performance on most areas of the teacher observation framework in one observation.

____ E) When a policy is not working in my district, teachers feel empowered to advocate for change.

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2. After you have assigned a rating for each entry, tally up the points for each letter. The letter with the lowest score indicates the greatest challenge for your school or district. For this Self-Assessment, the letters relate to the following challenges:

_____ (A) Educator development and support

_____ (B) Data availability and use

_____ (C) Alignment with other initiatives

_____ (D) Time

_____ (E) Communication and stakeholder engagement

3. Use the two lowest scores to determine your two greatest challenges.

4. Read the sections of this guide that relate to your two challenges. Those sections provide information for meeting those two challenges and finding opportunities for refinement by focusing on specific components and elements.

5. As time allows, read the sections of this guide that relate to your remaining three challenges.

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Challenge 1
Time

Lack of time can impede implementation of any new initiative, especially one as complex as a new teacher evaluation system. In many cases, there is not enough time to meet all the requirements of the initiative—let alone do them well. With the large number of new initiatives being added to teachers' plates, there is little being taken away to make room for the new work. In addition, education initiatives often are built around traditional timelines that do not necessarily reflect the reality of the field and can cause timing roadblocks that counteract the purpose.

Component A
Teaching Practice

This section explores the time challenge from the teaching practice perspective. The elements of the teaching practice component of teacher evaluation systems will vary widely across the country. Following are possible elements (observation process, artifact collection and submission); suggested strategies; examples from the field; and guiding questions.

> RESEARCH SAYS...
>
> "For classroom observations to be reliable, meaningful opportunities for teachers' professional learning, each teacher should receive "two to three annual classroom observations, with at least one of those observations being conducted by a trained observer from outside the teacher's school" (Whitehurst, Chingos, & Lindquist, 2014).

Element A1
Observation Process

Strategies

To make the observation process more manageable, consider the following strategies:

- Differentiate evaluation requirements for teachers based on (1) years of experience; (2) experience in teaching a new grade level, course, or subject; and/or (3) prior performance results.

- Limit the number of observed domains or competencies per observation.

- Use multiple qualified and trained observers (inside or outside of the school) beyond the school principal.

- Observe lessons through video recording to save time and possibly other expenses.

- Acknowledge the added responsibilities for principals and redistribute other principal tasks.

Examples

State Tool:

- Washington: Time-Saving Strategies for Principals

Education Organization Resources:

- Center on Great Teachers and Leaders: Lacking Capacity? How to Work Smart in Teacher Evaluation

- Education First: Strategies for Successful Classroom Observations

- TNTP: Fixing Classroom Observations

- Education Next: Getting Classroom Observations Right

State and District Anecdotes:

As early implementers, Tennessee and Washington, D.C., have made adjustments to the number of required classroom observations. Tennessee, for example, decreased the number of annual observations required, from two to one while Washington, D.C., decreased the number of observations required, particularly for those teachers who were rated high-performing, from five to three. Washington, D.C.'s revisions are indicated in its Key Changes to IMPACT.

In New Hampshire, 15 districts designed and piloted a new teacher evaluation system. One feature of some districts included "tracking" teachers' performance to differentiate the number of observations each year. Some districts included short walk-throughs to lessen the paperwork and time burden of the observation process. More information about the pilots can be found in Appendix C of Redesigning Teacher Evaluation.

Element A2
Artifact Collection and Submission

Strategies

To ensure that the artifact collection and submission process remains focused on high-leverage artifacts and does not turn into a compliance activity resulting in binders of information, consider the following strategies:

- Directly connect the professional and student learning goals to the artifacts that will be collected.
- Focus only on a limited and specified number of artifacts over a period of time.

Examples

State Tools and Resources:

- Maine: Maine Schools for Excellence: Teacher-Led Evidence Collection Form
- Other states require artifact analysis as a separate measure in the teacher evaluation system. In Iowa, teachers can provide evidence of practice, including artifacts. Iowa's comprehensive list of Model Evidence provides options and ideas for evidence.

Guiding Questions Related to Teaching Practice

Teachers and teacher leaders can use the following guiding questions as they discuss how to design, advocate for, or make refinements to their current evaluation system. In the following chart, teams and individuals may determine the Responses and Possible Next Steps based on their current system. Note that filling in the chart is optional. What is essential is to use each guiding question for a robust discussion. An example has been provided.

Example

Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
How can we integrate evaluation components into other planned learning and activities?	• Offer no-stakes peer observation and feedback during planning and preparation sessions. • Align the dimensions or components of the framework to related professional learning sessions.	• Strategically schedule preparation periods for grade- or subject-alike teachers. • Collaborate with stakeholders to develop a crosswalk of the observation tool and learning standards for all subjects.
1. How can we integrate evaluation components into other planned learning and activities?		

Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
2. What resources or guidance can we provide to support structures that better distribute responsibilities?		
3. How can we improve the efficiency of the artifact collection and submission process?		

Component B
Student Growth in Tested and Nontested Subjects

Time challenges are also a significant concern for measuring student growth in tested and nontested subjects as part of teacher evaluation. In many states and districts, the student learning objective (SLO)[1] process is used to measure growth for both tested and nontested subjects. For tested subjects, the assessments used to determine student growth or achievement scores will be standardized assessments. For nontested subjects, assessments may be created or purchased by states and districts. Following are possible elements (standardized assessments, teacher- or district-created assessments, SLO process); suggested strategies; examples from the field; and guiding questions.

RESEARCH SAYS...

Teachers who set rigorous objectives for their students often realize greater improvements in student performance (Hamilton et al., 2009).

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[1] Student learning objectives "are content- and grade/course-specific measurable learning objectives that can be used to document student learning over a defined period of time" (Marion, DePascale, Domaleski, Gong, & Diaz-Billelo, 2012, p. 1).

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Element B1
Standardized Assessments

Strategies

Teachers administer many assessments during the year, and states and districts require the use of standardized tests for some subjects and grade levels. To ensure that time is effectively used for instruction and assessment, consider the following strategies:

- Use one assessment for multiple purposes.
- Conduct an inventory of the assessments already in use across a state or district to identify areas of overlap or for consolidation.
- Identify a cross-district team to determine curriculum and assessment alignment.

Examples

State Tool:

- Illinois: Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts
- Colorado: Guidance: Timing and Use of State Summative Assessments in Educator Evaluations

Education Organization Resources:

- Council of Great City Schools: Implementing Common Core Assessments: Challenges and Recommendations

Element B2
Teacher- or District-Created Assessments

Strategies

To decrease the time for assessment development, consider the following strategies:

- Identify and select commercially available assessments aligned to curriculum and standards.
- Provide time (through collaborative planning time) for teachers to create assessments.
- Over time, collect sample assessments and create an "assessment bank" of assessments that have been vetted and deemed appropriate.

Examples

State Tools and Resources:

- Colorado: Resource Bank: Assessments
- Illinois: Assessment website

Education Organization Resources:

- Assessment Technology Incorporated: Building Reliable and Valid Benchmark Assessments
- Testing and Evaluation Services, University of Wisconsin: Handbook on Test Development

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Element B3
SLO Process

Strategies

The SLO process is a rigorous goal-setting process that guides teachers in developing goals closely tied to learning standards. Because the process is rigorous, it also is thorough. Consider the following strategies:

- Make the process manageable by embedding it with other related activities (e.g., data-driven instruction, observation conferencing).
- Develop a wealth of resources and materials to support the process.
- Allow teachers to create SLOs in teams or at the school level.
- Build school-level SLO resource teams who are trained to support teachers in the process by reviewing and approving SLOs and checking in on progress.

Examples

State Tools and Resources:
- Rhode Island: Resources for Student Learning Objectives
- Ohio: Resources for Student Learning Objectives
- New Jersey: Resources for Student Growth Objectives

Education Organization Resources:
- Center on Great Teachers and Leaders: SLO Resource Library and SLO Professional Learning Module

State Anecdote
- In New Hampshire, several pilot districts implementing SLOs allowed for team or schoolwide SLOs. See Redesigning Teacher Evaluation: Lessons From a Pilot Implementation.

Guiding Questions Related to Student Growth

Teachers and teacher leaders can use the following guiding questions as they discuss how to design, advocate for, or make refinements to their current evaluation system. In the following chart, teams and individuals may determine the Responses and Possible Next Steps based on their current system. Note that filling in the chart is optional. What is essential is to use each guiding question for a robust discussion. An example has been provided.

Example

Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
If using SLOs (or similar process): How will we collect feedback on the time it takes to complete an SLO? How will we revise the process based on feedback?	• We don't collect feedback. • We could issue a survey or collect anecdotal information.	• Develop a quick survey or questions to ask teachers about SLOs. Based on their responses, we might consider the following: • Develop a webinar on shortcuts to SLO development. • Provide a professional learning community guide on developing SLOs collaboratively.
1. What assessments already are being administered, and how much time do they take? Are there ways to reduce time or make testing processes more efficient?		
2. What assessments are available for teachers of nontested subjects? How can we support the development of high-quality assessments with limited time?		
3. If using SLOs (or similar process): How will we collect feedback on the time it takes to complete an SLO? How will we revise the process based on feedback?		

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Component C
Summative Ratings

This section considers the timing of summative ratings, which sometimes can be problematic. In many cases, student data are not available within the timeline of a typical summative rating cycle. This lack of availability can hinder the timely reporting of results and providing feedback to teachers. Following are one possible element (cycle of ratings and feedback), suggested strategies, examples from the field, and guiding questions.

RESEARCH SAYS...

Feedback that is too immediate can cause the learner to become too dependent on the feedback (Bangert-Drowns, Kulik, Kulik, & Morgan, 1991). However, timely, not necessarily immediate, feedback can be an effective lever for reflecting and adjusting practice (Wiggins, 2012).

Element C1
Cycle of Ratings and Feedback

Strategies	Examples
In many places, it is difficult to get student test score results in time to factor into end-of-year summative ratings. However, there are a few ways to still provide timely feedback, regardless of the testing timeline: • Require the summative rating conversation to take place at the end of the instructional period, regardless of whether the student scores are available or not. • Devise a timeline that takes into account the student testing cycle.	**State and District Anecdote:** • Zionsville (Indiana) School District's Proposed Timeline for the Annual Evaluation Process provides information on how schools can continue to provide timely feedback without all components of the summative score available by the end of the year. • In Oklahoma, summative score reports have a one-year lag because of value-added timeline restrictions. However, approximately 75 percent of teachers who do not receive a value-added score will write SLOs. Because a majority of the assessment data for the SLOs will be available by the end of the year, the state encourages districts to host summative conferences and include as much data and evidence as possible to provide robust and timely feedback. Summative reports are provided when they are ready the following year.

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Guiding Questions Related to Summative Ratings

Teachers and teacher leaders can use the following guiding questions as they discuss how to design, advocate for, or make refinements to their current evaluation system. In the following chart, teams and individuals may determine the Responses and Possible Next Steps based on their current system. Note that filling in the chart is optional. What is essential is to use each guiding question for a robust discussion. An example has been provided.

Example

Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
What type of guidance can we provide that will allow timely feedback even if all the results are not available?	● No guidance currently exists.	● Review assessment timelines and then provide guidance on how to stagger conference and feedback sessions in a timely manner.
1. What type of guidance can we provide that will allow timely feedback even if all the results are not available?		
2. Does our system encourage feedback conversations that are timely and provide actionable feedback on multiple measures?		

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Challenge 2
Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

The success of new initiatives relies on the expertise and experiences of the teachers who will be directly impacted by the initiative. Their daily classroom practice experience is invaluable in determining what will work, what barriers exist, and what types of support and resources will be required. Teacher communication and engagement are essential for supporting the evaluation system design and development. In addition, the engagement of other stakeholders (teachers, principals, administrators, district staff, community members, students, collective bargaining units or associations, and education organizations) also plays a large role in successful implementation.

A national scan found that all states either legislatively required stakeholder engagement or included it as part of their process, even if it was not included in the original legislation for developing a teacher evaluation system (Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, 2013). More specifically, a recent study conducted in 15 New Hampshire districts points to correlation between the three districts with the highest average implementation fidelity and stakeholder support and the highest means on the survey for fairness/compliance and support of desired implementation outcomes (Riordan, Lacireno-Paquet, Shakman, Bocala, & Chang, 2015). This research is young and includes a small number of districts; however, there is promise that stakeholder engagement is more than just good practice.

Component A
Teaching Practice

This section explores the challenge of communicating and engaging stakeholders in decisions and expectations of the teaching practice component of the evaluation system. Even though teachers are relatively familiar with the teaching practice component, it is important that all stakeholders fully understand the nuances and changes in the revised evaluation system. Following are possible elements (communication, stakeholder engagement); suggested strategies; examples from the field; and guiding questions.

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Element A1
Communication

Strategies

Communicating must be done at the beginning, throughout implementation, and when the evaluation system is revisited. Consider the following strategies:

- Develop a solid communication plan. If implementation results in confusion or lack of understanding, revisit the communication and professional learning opportunities to correct misinformation quickly.
- Identify and use "communication ambassadors" (e.g., teachers who are designated to help inform staff, pass along feedback, and answer questions about the evaluation system).

Examples

State Tools and Resources:

- Wisconsin: Communication Strategies and Pitfalls
- Colorado: Educator Effectiveness Communication Toolkit
- Washington: Capturing the Learning Points (series of communications created for the field)

Education Organization Resources:

- National School Public Relations Association: Strategic Communication Action Plan
- Hope Street Group: Create a Communications Campaign
- Council of Great City Schools: Communications Resources for Implementing New Systems for Teacher Development and Evaluation
- Reform Support Network: Educator Evaluation Communications Toolkit
- National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality: Lessons Learned on Communication and Engagement for Educator Evaluation (case study)
- Data Quality Campaign: Tools for Communicating the Data Message

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Element A2
Stakeholder Engagement

Strategies

Stakeholder engagement can be used in a variety of activities, depending on the role of the stakeholder groups. And, similar to communication, engaging stakeholders can occur at any point in the process. Consider engaging stakeholders in the following ways:

- To pilot and test new systems before whole-scale implementation.
- To support the decision-making process.
- To advise and provide input and feedback.

Examples

State Tools and Resources:

- In Illinois, the Performance Evaluation Reform Act requires that evaluation systems are designed and decided by a "joint committee" with equal district and bargaining representatives. In addition, the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council is required to provide guidance and support to districts across the state through 2017. See the Illinois Performance Evaluation Advisory Council's website.

- Alaska and Connecticut surveyed schools and used the feedback gleaned from these surveys to guide their respective advisory council's development of new regulations (Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, 2013).

- In Tennessee and Washington, D.C., stakeholders were used for feedback and revision purposes, specifically to revise the teaching practice component (lowering the number of required observations).

- In Arizona, stakeholders were included in the state's Model Educator Evaluation Process pilot.

- Wisconsin spent time piloting its evaluation system and publicly engaged stakeholders for ongoing feedback to improve the system. See the District Readiness Tool to Guide Implementation Planning.

- In Hawaii, Teacher Leader Working Groups were convened to collect feedback. These groups made recommendations on many topics, including classroom observations. In the summary for Improving Hawaii's Educator Effectiveness System, these groups also provided communication on what stakeholders reported and how the feedback would be incorporated.

Education Organization Resource:

Public Agenda and American Institutes for Research: Everyone at the Table (in-depth guidance on engaging teachers in the redesign of an evaluation system; includes tools, templates, videos, and a moderator's guide)

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Guiding Questions Related to Teaching Practice

Teachers and teacher leaders can use the following guiding questions as they discuss how to design, advocate for, or make refinements to their current evaluation system. In the following chart, teams and individuals may determine the Responses and Possible Next Steps based on their current system. Note that filling in the chart is optional. What is essential is to use each guiding question for a robust discussion. An example has been provided.

Example

Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
Do we have a communication plan? If so, are we using it? Is it working? How do we know?	• We drafted a communication plan back when we started to design our evaluation system. • Based on the amount of questions that are still asked, we need to revisit it.	• Revisit communication plan. • Seek input from stakeholders about where they get information. • Revise plan and communication strategy based on input from stakeholders.
1. Do we have a communication plan? If so, are we using it? Is it working? How do we know?		
2. What methods of communication do we employ?		
3. How frequently is communication shared?		

Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
4. How are stakeholders identified for engagement and by whom?"		
5. How can we engage stakeholders in developing and supporting professional learning?		
6. How are stakeholders engaged in helping inform human capital decisions and policies?		
7. What two-way feedback process do we have to engage stakeholders throughout the entire process, including annual reviews and refinements of the teaching practice measure?		

Component B
Student Growth in Tested and Nontested Subjects

Communication and stakeholder engagmeent challenges are also a significant concern when measuring student growth in tested and nontested subjects as part of teacher evaluation. The measurement models for calculating student growth using standardized assessments will vary across the country and may include value-added measurement (VAM), student growth percentiles (SGPs), or SLOs. Following are possible elements (methodology, assessments, attribution, SLO process); suggested strategies; examples from the field; and guiding questions.

Element B1
Methodology

Strategies

The three main methodologies for measuring student growth are VAM, SGPs, and SLOs. Consider the following strategies:

- Provide opportunities for stakeholders to learn about these methodologies and discuss the pros and cons. This approach will support a shared understanding while building confidence and trust in the chosen methodology.

- Engage stakeholders in "piloting" the measure for an identified amount of time. Allow time for the refinement of process and resources. The goal is to yield scientifically sound data that informs and improves the teaching and learning process prior to using any results in high-stakes personnel decisions.

- Communicate what was decided and how it was decided.

- Convene groups of teachers to identify the appropriate types of student assessments and also to ensure that these assessments are high quality, are aligned to the standards, and provide opportunity for students to demonstrate growth.

To ensure that teachers understand how VAM or SGP methodology works, consider the following strategies:

- Develop high-quality online resources and materials with clear, transparent information.

- Develop a video that explains the process.

Examples

State Resources:

- In Florida, the Student Growth Implementation Committee engaged in a process to determine the student growth methodology that would be included.

- In Louisiana, the teacher evaluation committee (composed of a variety of stakeholders) writes an annual recommendation report on the value-added model used during the three-year pilot (Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, 2013). In addition, Louisiana's Teacher Evaluation Overview provides information on how the American Federation of Teachers was engaged in informing legislation as it related to the use of VAM.

- In Hawaii, Teacher Leader Working Groups were convened to collect feedback. These groups made recommendations on many topics, including SGPs. The summary of Improving Hawaii's Educator Effectiveness System indicates the refinements that were made as a result of this feedback.

- In Massachusetts, districts determine the measures they will use to establish student growth. These measures are known as district-determined measures (DDMs) and are used in conjunction with SGPs. The state provides implementation briefs that target guidance for questions on implementation of the DDMs.

State Anecdotes:

- In North Carolina, teachers must have three years of value-added results in order to have value-added measures included in their evaluations. Teachers and principals can see these scores each year, but they do not "count" toward a teacher's evaluation until there are three years of scores. This approach promotes a focus on trends over time, rather than making claims about a single year's results.

- Delaware piloted and evaluated its system and has continued to evaluate it every year of implementation, per regulations. The evaluation reports include specific recommendations based on feedback from stakeholders (Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, 2013).

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Element B2
Student Assessments

Strategies	**Examples**

Strategies

Assessments for the purposes of measuring student growth can range from performance tasks to paper-and-pencil tests. Important considerations for identifying the right type of assessment include the following:

- Is the assessment high quality?
- Is the assessment aligned to the standards that will be taught?
- Will the assessment provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate growth?

Convening groups of teachers contributes a high level of expertise and ownership to the identification and use of student assessments for high-stakes purposes.

Examples

District Resource:

- Chicago Public Schools: Frequently asked questions (FAQ) for Performance Tasks. The FAQ explains the process in which the district collaboratively developed assessments for nontested subjects.

State Anecdote:

- In Indiana, SLOs are used to measure nontested subjects. The Indiana Department of Education convened several working groups of educators to recommend appropriate assessments for various nontested subjects.

Element B3
Attribution*

Strategies

Accurate attribution of students to teachers is important to the implementation success of value-added or student growth methodologies. Consider the following strategies:

- Engage stakeholders in determining teacher attribution decisions.
- Provide teachers with clear communication about the student attribution decisions and process (e.g., roster verification) that will be used.

Examples

State Resources:

- Arizona: Teacher Roster Verification Quick Guide
- Rhode Island: User's Guide to Roster Verification
- New Jersey: Roster Verification Guide

Education Organization Resource:

- American Institutes for Research: Determining Attribution: Holding Teachers Accountable for Student Growth

* Attribution refers to the process of linking students to the teachers who have taught them as a means of assessing teachers' contributions to student learning.

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Element B4
SLO Process

Strategies

Across the country, SLO systems vary widely because of a number of variables, including district comparability. Consider the following strategies:

- Include teachers in the design and development of the SLO process.

- Communicate clearly about SLO expectations and any professional learning opportunities and resources that are offered to the field (e.g., websites, town halls, webinars).

Examples

State and District Resources:

- In Hawaii, Teacher Leader Working Groups were convened to collect feedback. These groups made recommendations on many topics, including student learning objectives. The summary of Improving Hawaii's Educator Effectiveness System indicates the refinements that were made as a result of this feedback.

- Ohio, Connecticut, Colorado, Austin, Texas, and New York have communicated about SLOs through a variety of resources on their websites.

- In several Maine districts, teams of teachers and administrators were brought together to design the SLO process and template. They continue to meet regularly to refine and revise the system over time. The Maine Schools for Excellence: SLO Framework provides an overview of the process.

- The National Education Association's nine-state SLO Consortium includes states that are currently designing, developing, and implementing new SLO systems to influence teacher use of assessment and data literacy to impact student learning. Each year, the SLO Consortium meets for an annual SLO summit, where SLO leaders from American Institutes for Research lead stakeholders through sessions aimed at building content knowledge, fostering critical decision making, and promoting collaboration among and between state leaders based on continuous improvement through sharing of resources and lessons learned. The group was initiated in 2013 and meets regularly through a virtual community of practice. The group will continue to meet both in-person and virtually through NEA-supported grants through 2017.

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Guiding Questions Related to Student Growth

Teachers and teacher leaders can use the following guiding questions as they discuss how to design, advocate for, or make refinements to their current evaluation system through communication and stakeholder engagement. In the following chart, teams and individuals may determine the Responses and Possible Next Steps based on their current system. Note that filling in the chart is optional. What is essential is to use each guiding question for a robust discussion. An example has been provided.

Example

Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
Is there a way to pilot or test the use of student growth measures in order to gather data about their technical quality? How can these data be presented to relevant stakeholders?	• While new assessments are being piloted, all teachers will receive growth scores, but the scores will not be calculated into summative ratings.	• Review legislation to confirm that the change is allowable. • Determine what local policies need to be updated to reflect that change. • Check in with stakeholders to share strategy and implications.
1. What processes are in place to engage stakeholders in an annual review and refinement of the student growth measure?		
2. How do we strategically communicate about the tested and nontested growth methodologies?		
3. How do we engage stakeholders in the selection or identification of assessments?		

Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
4. Is there a way to pilot or test the use of student growth measures in order to gather data about their technical quality? How can these data be presented to relevant stakeholders?		

Component C
Summative Ratings

This section indicates that providing clear and transparent information about summative ratings goes a long way in establishing trust and ensuring an understanding of how summative ratings are calculated and used. Following are one element (calculation of multiple measures), suggested strategies, examples from the field, and guiding questions.

Element C1
Calculation of Multiple Measures

Strategies

Combining multiple measures into one summative rating can take on a variety of approaches (numerical, profile, and holistic). Consider the following strategies:

- Work in collaboration with stakeholders to model and explore approaches for rolling the measures into one score.
- Develop step-by-step, transparent communication about the process.
- Consider using data from the pilot or implementation year to examine the distribution of scores and set appropriate score points for levels (such as *proficient* or *distinguished*).
- Communicate how the results will be used (and not be used).

Examples

State Resources:

- Illinois provides guidance to districts on approaches to creating a summative rating.
- Ohio, New Jersey, and Massachusetts provide step-by-step instructions about the summative rating process.

Education Organization Resources:

- American Institutes for Research: Creating Summative Educator Effectiveness Scores (provides information on combining measures to calculate summative scores)
- American Institutes for Research: Combining Multiple Performance Measures (indicates that calculation methods, especially rounding, can significantly bias ratings)

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Guiding Questions Related to Summative Ratings

Teachers and teacher leaders can use the following guiding questions as they discuss how to design, advocate for, or make refinements to their current evaluation system through the use of summative ratings. In the following chart, teams and individuals may determine the Responses and Possible Next Steps based on their current system. Note that filling in the chart is optional. What is essential is to use each guiding question for a robust discussion. An example has been provided.

Example

Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
How do we currently share information about how summative scores are calculated? Is the information clear? How do we know?	• We have a one-pager. • Instructions are included in the handbook. • There are usually a lot of questions about the scoring process at the end of the year.	• Review the process for clarity. • Develop step-by-step instructions. • Share the instructions with stakeholders and solicit feedback. • Revise the instructions based on the feedback. • Share broadly, and ask stakeholder groups to share with their respective audience(s). • Include reminders in an end-of-year newsletter and any in-person events.
1. Was the summative scoring process decided with stakeholder input?		
2. How can we engage stakeholders in exploring multiple approaches for summative scoring?		

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Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
3. How do we currently share information about how summative scores are calculated? Is the information clear? How do we know?		
4. What will summative rating scores be used for? What will they not be used for?		

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Challenge 3
Educator Development and Support

One of the goals of teacher evaluation reform is to develop and support the teaching workforce by identifying teacher needs and providing targeted professional learning. To effectively achieve this goal, several strategies can be used.

First, teachers need to know and understand how the evaluation system works. Trust and confidence in a system is hard to achieve without a thorough comprehension of how the system is designed, implemented, and used.

Second, teachers need to understand that a new evaluation system comes with a shift in expectations and responsibilities. Both teachers and evaluators need opportunities to understand and explore these new expectations and responsibilities. Providing multiple ways for teachers to learn about the components of the evaluation system itself and the responsibilities for implementing the system are critical to building their skills and knowledge as effective educators. Teachers and evaluators need opportunities to engage with and learn about all of the instruments, processes, and reporting mechanisms used in the evaluation system.

Third, teachers need to have confidence in the skills and knowledge of the evaluators who are assessing their practice and supporting their development. A rigorous evaluation system demands a shift in the role of evaluators—requiring them to accurately and consistently assess teaching practice, communicate the results of that assessment, and help teachers plan for professional learning based on the data. Teachers deserve feedback and support from

DISTRICT SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR EVALUATOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Can your evaluators:

☐ Manage time and technology to efficiently complete the process?

☐ Identify common sources of bias and strategies for minimizing subjectivity in the evaluation process?

☐ Understand the educational philosophy and research base of the framework?

☐ Understand the logic for each performance level and scale in the framework?

☐ Understand the framework structure and the core performance behaviors included in each dimension?

☐ Explain the scoring rationale at different levels of performance for each component?

☐ Consistently and accurately score short and long observations across multiple dimensions of practice?

☐ Demonstrate their skills with a coach or within a professional learning community?

☐ Continuously learn how to improve on and maintain accuracy of scoring?

☐ Coach educators and provide feedback for educators at varied levels of performance?

☐ Analyze nonobservation evidence (e.g., artifact review or student or staff surveys)?

☐ Understand and analyze student growth data and measures?

☐ Combine multiple measures through a summative scoring process?

☐ Guide the creation of professional development plans?

Source: American Institutes for Research (2014, p. 3)

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someone who has the skills and knowledge to guide them through a professional growth process that improves instructional practice and student outcomes.

Last, teachers and evaluators need the structures to be able to build their skills and knowledge efficiently and effortlessly. Historically, learning opportunities have focused too much on one-shot professional development with little to no time for job-embedded practice, reflection, and continuous feedback. Also, a lack of infrastructure and data has hindered monitoring or tracking of information to inform professional learning. In addition, evaluators and administrators require ongoing professional learning opportunities and time to authentically provide feedback that will grow and develop teachers. Traditionally, the role of an administrator was to observe teachers and evaluate their performance according to a provided checklist. As the standards of teacher performance evolve, so must the skills and knowledge of the individuals who are in roles to review teacher performance. (See "District Self-Assessment for Evaluator Professional Learning" on page 36.)

Component A
Teaching Practice

This section explores the level of skills, knowledge, and infrastructures that are needed to support teachers' deep understanding and application of the teaching practice component of the evaluation system. Even for experienced teachers who have attended professional learning activities for many years, a new evaluation system with with significant shifts in instructional expectations takes time to learn and master. Following are possible elements (teacher professional learning opportunities, professional learning structures); suggested strategies; examples from the field; and guiding questions.

RESEARCH SAYS...

Professional learning that is job-embedded produces enduring effects when the learning is matched to the school curriculum, state standards, and assessment of student learning; is compatible with daily school operations; and is framed to address the particular instructional needs of a teacher's given assignment (Blank & de la Alas, 2009; Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009).

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Element A1
Teacher and Professional Learning

Strategies	Examples

Strategies

To support learning about the teacher evaluation system and expectations (job-embedded or otherwise), consider the following strategies:

- Develop print resources that allow teachers to develop a common understanding of expectations and the tools used to evaluate their own performance.
- Identify or develop video libraries with examples of proficient teaching.
- Identify or develop online professional learning modules that provide teachers with the knowledge they need and the flexibility to learn it and apply it to their own settings.

Professional development on teacher evaluation and ways to improve instructional effectiveness is being conducted in schools and districts across the country. Consider the following strategies:

- Restructure time to allow for job-embedded opportunities.
- Support collaborative, in-school learning (e.g., peer observation, professional learning communities).
- Ensure that job-embedded professional development is well structured and carried out effectively.
- Promote a climate of trust and risk-taking.

Examples

State Resources (Professional Teaching Standards and Observation Tool Crosswalks):

- Oklahoma: InTASC Crosswalk with two evaluation models: Marzano and Tulsa
- Pennsylvania: Crosswalk of Danielson Framework With Pennsylvania and Other Early Childhood Teacher Standards

State and District Resources (Observation Tools):

- Chicago Public Schools: Framework for Teaching: Companion Guide
- Chicago Public Schools: Framework for Teaching: Arts Addendum
- Maine: Maine Schools for Excellence: Teacher Evaluation and Professional Growth Rubric: Companion Guide
- Kentucky: Teacher evaluation document based on the Framework for Teaching

Online Resources (Video Libraries):

- Success at the Core
- Teaching Channel
- Edutopia
- Teachers Network

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Strategies

The consistency of the teacher evaluation process depends not only on high-quality tools and processes but also on the professional learning opportunities and understanding of the evaluators who use and apply them. To ensure teacher confidence in evaluator skills, consider the following strategies:

- Assess how current approaches to professional learning for school and district leaders may need to shift in tandem to best prepare school and district leaders to serve as fair and consistent evaluators as well as effective coaches. (See "District Self-Assessment for Evaluator Professional Learning" on page 36.) Restructure professional learning to transition from single-shot professional learning to ongoing, integrated professional learning.

- Start with initial professional learning opportunities to introduce the role and shifts required. This work can be useful for building trust and confidence in administrators' abilities from the start.

- Provide ongoing professional learning opportunities in which the evaluators practice, receive feedback, and have the space to continually improve. This approach can result in significant improvements for teachers and students.

Examples

State Resources (Models and Professional Learning Modules):

- Maine: State Teacher Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth Models (includes process and templates)

- Massachusetts: Training Modules to Support Implementation of Educator Evaluation

- Washington: Teacher and Principal Evaluation Modules

- New Hampshire: Redesigning Teacher Evaluation (evaluators in pilot districts reported that initial professional learning was helpful but would have appreciated ongoing support throughout implementation)

- Ohio: Credentialed Evaluators (initial certification and ongoing "calibration" professional learning opportunities for evaluators)

- Illinois: Announcements (initial certification of evaluators)

Online Resources (Instructional and Content-Area Modules):

- Kalamazoo Area (Michigan) Algebra Project: Module on Differentiation in Algebra

- Edutopia: Module on Project-Based Learning

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Strategies	**Examples**

Education Organization Resources:

- National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center, and NSDC: Job-Embedded Professional Development

- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation: Teachers Know Best: Teachers' Views on Professional Development (including job-embedded professional development)

- National Association of Elementary School Principals and National Association of Secondary School Principals: Supporting Principals in Implementation Teacher Evaluation Systems (includes seven recommendations for preparing principals to effectively evaluate teachers)

- Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching: Strategies for Enhancing the Impact of Post-Observation Feedback for Teachers (helpful for both evaluators and teachers)

- Center on Great Teachers and Leaders: Professional Learning Module on Preparing Educators for Evaluation and Feedback

- Learning Forward: The Art of Feedback

Research Study:

- Shaping Professional Development to Promote the Diffusion of Instructional Expertise Among Teachers (examines how collaboration and high-quality professional development can promote effective teaching)

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Element A2
Professional Learning Structures

Strategies

There are several ways to ensure sufficient time and support for ongoing, job-embedded professional learning:

- Schedule common "prep" or planning time.
- Carve out time for "mini-lessons" during meetings.
- To reserve more meeting time for collaborative learning, deal with announcements or "administrivia" through e-mail.
- Distribute (or share) leadership responsibilities to help ensure better support for individual teacher learning.
- Use parents, community members, and retired educators as volunteers to help free up teacher time for learning.
- Allocate funds to encourage collaborative activities (such as lesson studies, data analysis, or professional reflection).
- Provide access to high-quality online learning opportunities matched to teacher needs.
- Use substitute teachers strategically to help free up teacher time for learning.
- Use computer lab time to engage students in learning activities while freeing teachers to pursue collaborative learning.

Examples

Education Organization Resources:

- Educational Resource Services: School Design: Leveraging Talent, Time, and Money (includes a self-assessment and guidance on how districts and schools can think about restructuring to support teaching and learning)
- Learning Forward: Evaluations Serve as Pathways for Professional Growth
- National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality: High-Quality Professional Development for All Teachers: Effectively Allocating Resources
- National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality: Generating Teaching Effectiveness: The Role of Job-Embedded Professional Learning in Teacher Evaluation
- National Education Association: NEA Teacher Evaluation and Accountability Toolkit

Guiding Questions Related to Teaching Practice

Teachers and teacher leaders can use the following guiding questions as they discuss how to design, advocate for, or make refinements to their current evaluation system. In the following chart, teams and individuals may determine the Responses and Possible Next Steps based on their current system. Note that filling in the chart is optional. What is essential is to use each guiding question for a robust discussion. An example has been provided.

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Example

Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
Does the professional learning include opportunities to apply learning, receive feedback, and adjust practice?	• The majority of professional development offered is one-shot. • Teachers are expected to apply what they learned, but there is no accountability or follow-up. • The feedback received by teachers is general and not usually specific to the professional development.	• Review professional development offerings and determine if there are ways to extend learning into everyday practice. • Using data to determine the content, develop and pilot one professional development "module" that includes application, feedback, and adjustment.
1. Are the structures in place for job-embedded professional learning? If so, what does such learning look like in our district? If not, what structures can be adjusted?		
2. Does the professional learning include opportunities to apply learning, receive feedback, and adjust practice?		
3. Have we created a variety of resources to support deeper understanding and application to expectations?		
4. What funding is available for professional learning, and how is it currently used?		

Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
5. How do we currently determine the impact of professional learning efforts?		

Component B
Student Growth in Tested and Nontested Subjects

Skills, knowledge, and structural challenges are also a significant concern when measuring student growth in tested and nontested subjects as part of teacher evaluation. Following are possible elements (attribution and scores, methodology, and assessment of student growth); suggested strategies; examples from the field; and guiding questions.

Element B1
Attribution and Scores

Strategies

To ensure that teachers are accurately linked to the students they teach, consider the following strategies:

- Develop a system that enables teachers to see lists of students to whom they will be linked for measures of academic growth (sometimes called "roster verification" systems) and to make adjustments as needed.

- Develop an easily accessible, user-friendly approach to distributing scores that enables teachers to view their value-added scores or student growth percentiles as soon as they are available. Such an approach may include online reporting or paper distribution of reports.

- Develop a system for responding to questions from teachers. Such a system could include an e-mail address monitored regularly, a phone number or help desk staffed by knowledgeable individuals, or "office hours" where teachers can bring questions or concerns.

Examples

State Anecdotes:

- Rhode Island set up a help desk to provide teachers an opportunity to request help.

- New Jersey set up a call-in Help Lines to support teachers as they entered course verification information into their system.

- Oklahoma collaborated with its state customer service desk to ensure that calls regarding roster verification were directed quickly and accurately within the department.

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Element B2
Methodology

Strategies

The three methodologies for measuring student growth are value-added measurement (VAM), student growth percentiles (SGPs), and student learning objectives (SLOs). To ensure that teachers understand how each method works, consider the following strategies:

- Develop high-quality online resources and materials with clear, transparent information.
- Develop a video that explains the process.

Teachers are familiar with setting learning goals and targets, but an SLO is a formalized process that takes time to learn and understand. Consider the following strategies:

- Provide professional development activities about the process, its connection to work already being done, and the necessity for good assessments.
- Offer these activities early in the school year and often enough for teachers to receive the guidance and support they need to ensure that high-quality, rigorous SLOs are developed and approved.
- Provide opportunities for teachers and those who support them to work together to develop and give and receive feedback on SLOs.
- Developing a wealth of resources, materials, templates, and examples to support SLO development and implementation in schools.

Examples

State Resources:

Wisconsin: Analogy of value-added measurement (developed by the University of Wisconsin's Value Added Research Center)

Georgia: Video to explain the student growth model and its use in the evaluation system

Rhode Island, Ohio, Connecticut, Colorado, Georgia, Wisconsin and New York: Resources on student learning objectives

Austin (Texas) Independent School District: Video on SLOs

Education Organization Resource:

Center on Great Teachers and Leaders: Introduction to Student Learning Objectives. This professional learning module can be adapted by states or districts. In addition, supplemental modules on Scoring SLOs and on SLOs for Teachers of Career and Technical Education also are available for use by states and districts.

Element B3
High-Quality Assessments for SLOs

Strategies	Examples
Although teachers understand the concept and purposes of assessment, most are not assessment experts. To build teachers' assessment knowledge, consider the following strategies: • Build teachers' skills and knowledge to produce high-quality classroom assessments. • Develop guidance on how to develop or assess the quality of an assessment. • Offer professional development on assessment literacy. • Provide opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively in developing and/or evaluating assessments.	**State Resources:** • Ohio: How to Design and Select Quality Assessments • Colorado: Resource Bank: Assessments. Groups of educators used a rubric to review the quality of assessments that are aligned to Colorado standards. The assessments in the bank are for most grades and subjects, with ratings and comments by teachers. **Education Organization Resources:** • Learning Forward: Building Professional Development to Support New Student Assessment Systems • Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education: Criteria on High-Quality Assessment

Element B4
Structures

Strategies	Examples
An infrastructure to support the use of SGPs, VAMs, or SLOs will support the efficient inclusion and use of information. Consider the following strategies: • Design a user-friendly data system to ensure that information related to the methodology is easily documented and accessible to teachers year-round. • To ensure accurate student-to-teacher linkage data, include the ability to make student and teacher assignments as part of the infrastructure. • Provide clear instructions and guidance on how to complete roster verification. • Develop a system of checks and audits to ensure that data are accurate over time. • Develop an item bank or system that enables teachers to share assessment tasks.	**State and District Resources and Tools:** • Arizona: Teacher Roster Verification Quick Guide • Rhode Island: Roster Verification User's Guide • New Jersey: Course Roster Verification (one-page guide) • Austin (Texas) Independent School District: SLO Database Entry Instructions (user's guide) • Colorado: Resource Bank: Assessments (example of an item bank or system for housing and sharing assessments) • Kentucky: Teacher-Student Data Links (resources include professional learning opportunities manuals and videos) • Delaware: External Measures Approved for Core Content Areas

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Guiding Questions Related to Student Growth in Tested and Nontested Subjects

Teachers and teacher leaders can use the following guiding questions as they discuss how to design, advocate for, or make refinements to their current evaluation system. In the following chart, teams and individuals may determine the Responses and Possible Next Steps based on their current system. Note that filling in the chart is optional. What is essential is to use each guiding question for a robust discussion. An example has been provided.

Example

Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
What methods have we developed to build knowledge and understanding of the methodology?	• We created and posted a one-pager on SGPs. • We included an overview at each professional learning opportunities session.	• Review our materials and include more substantive information • Provide links to a variety of SGP resources
1. How do we ensure the accuracy of teacher attribution?		
2. What resources have we developed to build knowledge and understanding of the methodology?		
3. How do we provide easily accessible information and scores?		

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Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
4. What system do we have in place to respond to teacher questions or concerns?		
5. When and how often is SLO professional development offered? Do these offerings this align with pre- and post-assessment windows?		
6. What types of resources do we have available for teachers to use when working on SLOs?		
7. What systems do we have in place for submission and tracking of SLOs?		

Component C
Summative Ratings

This section emphasizes the importance of having teachers develop awareness and understanding of the summative ratings process as well as the appropriate data systems. This approach supports efficient and easily accessible information, provides clarity on the process, and provides teachers with the time to focus on analyzing and applying the results most effectively. Following are possible elements (summative ratings process and data systems); suggested strategies; examples from the field; and guiding questions.

Element C1
Summative Ratings Process

Strategies	Examples
To ensure accurate understanding and use of the summative rating process, consider the following strategies:	**State Resources and Tools:**

Strategies

To ensure accurate understanding and use of the summative rating process, consider the following strategies:

- Provide information and/or professional learning opportunities on what to collect and include in the calculation of summative ratings.
- Provide professional learning opportunities to teachers on the summative rating process.
- Provide opportunities for users to demonstrate their understanding through simulated activities, videos, or samples.

Examples

State Resources and Tools:

- Illinois: Guidance on Creating a Summative Rating in Teacher Evaluation Systems
- Ohio, New Jersey, and Massachusetts provide step-by-step instructions about the summative rating process.
- Arizona: Rating Tables and Spreadsheets

Element C2
Data Systems

Strategies

User-friendly electronic systems for collecting and calculating summative scores are ideal. However, if such a system does not exist, consider the following strategies:

- Develop a system to input and store all evaluation data.
- Develop the capacity to generate electronic and print results.
- In systems using complex weighted formulas, create "calculators" into which evaluators can input scores to accurately determine a summative score.

Examples

State Resources and Tools:

- Tennessee: Summative Rating Data System
- New Jersey: Teacher Evaluation Scoring Calculator (which teachers can use to calculate their summative scores)

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Guiding Questions for Summative Ratings

Teachers and teacher leaders can use the following guiding questions as they discuss how to design, advocate for, or make refinements to their current evaluation system. In the following chart, teams and individuals may determine the Responses and Possible Next Steps based on their current system. Note that filling in the chart is optional. What is essential is to use each guiding question for a robust discussion. An example has been provided.

Example

Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
What system is in place to collect and calculate summative ratings? Is this system easy to use? Do teachers know how the system works? How can we make this system more effective and user-friendly?	• Administrators use the provided electronic template. • Step-by-step instructions are provided on how to enter information.	• Automate the template to calculate and save the information. • Look into purchasing a data collection system. • Identify a way to share all information electronically (e.g., Google Docs, DropBox).
1. How do we currently teach teachers about the summative rating process? How can we ensure that they understand the process?		
2. What system is in place to collect and calculate summative ratings? Is this system easy to use? Do teachers know how the system works? How can we make this system more effective and user-friendly?		

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Challenge 4
Alignment With Other Initiatives

Teacher evaluation is one of many important initiatives being implemented across the country. In addition, most states are engaged in implementing college and career readiness standards, early childhood reforms, multi-tiered systems of support, high school dropout prevention, and behavioral and prosocial skill development—to name a few. With so many initiatives, teachers may feel overwhelmed and unsure of how all these priorities are connected. Compounded by "siloed" work within departments, teachers often hear mixed messages about priorities and may not see the connectedness of initiatives. Ultimately, if all initiatives have the same goal—to prepare students to be college and career ready—all initiatives should be aligned. Unfortunately, such alignment is not often achieved. Alignment work takes collaboration, time, and a shared understanding of the multiple ways in which to achieve the goal. This challenge is explored through the teaching practice component exclusively.

> ### RESEARCH SAYS...
>
> "While the focus on teacher effectiveness must be centered on improving student learning, a complex evaluation system must focus on improving the expertise of the teacher across an entire system and provide clear mechanisms for teachers to improve their instruction. A well-articulated knowledge base is a prerequisite for developing expertise in any systematic way" (Schooling, Toth, & Marzano, 2013, p. 1).

Component A
Teaching Practice

This section explores the alignment of the teaching practice component with work that already is taking place in schools, districts, and states. Following are possible elements (professional goal setting, professional development, and the observation process); suggested strategies; examples of how this alignment is being successfully implemented in the field; and guiding questions.

Element A1
Professional Goal Setting

Strategies	Examples
To make professional goal setting meaningful and aligned with other components, consider the following strategies: • Encourage the alignment of professional goals to student learning as well as school, district, and/or state goals. • Offer professional growth opportunities that are aligned to school, district, and/or state goals. • Provide examples of how professional goal setting can be connected through teaching and learning standards.	**State Resource:** • Maine: Maine Schools for Excellence: Student Learning Objectives Handbook (aligns SLOs with professional development goals)

Element A2
Professional Learning and Development

Strategies	Examples

Strategies

Professional learning and development provide the most opportunities to support adjustments to teaching and learning. When aligning professional learning to teacher evaluation, consider the following strategies:

- Identify points of integration or alignment across all professional development offerings.
- Provide opportunities for teachers to make connections during professional development.

Examples

Education Organization Resources:

- Center on Great Teachers and Leaders: Creating Coherence: Common Core State Standards, Teacher Evaluation, and Professional Learning (brief)
- Center on Great Teachers and Leaders: Creating Coherence: Connecting Teacher Evaluation and Support Systems to the Common Core (professional learning module, available for use by states, districts, and schools)
- Center on Great Teachers and Leaders: A Framework for Coherence : College and Career Readiness Standards, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, and Educator Effectiveness (brief)
- Learning Forward: Professional Learning Drives Common Core and Educator Evaluation

District Anecdote:

- In Arizona's Higley Unified School District, a district team looked at professional development offerings and aligned each offering to the teacher evaluation framework indicators. At the beginning of each professional development session, they provided an opportunity for teachers to self-assess on the indicators, which built teachers' knowledge and understanding of how the system aligns.

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Element A3
Observation Process

Strategies	Examples

Expectations for teachers have changed significantly because of new observation tools and college and career readiness standards and assessments. To support a deeper understanding of how the new expectations align, consider the following strategies:

- Create crosswalks of the former and new standards, or discuss crosswalks that already have been done for most observation systems.

- Provide opportunities for teachers to make connections between old and new expectations.

- Allow teachers adequate time to make the required shifts through the observation and feedback process.

State Resources:

- Oklahoma Department of Education: InTASC Crosswalk with two evaluation models: Marzano and Tulsa

- Pennsylvania: Crosswalk of Danielson Framework With Pennsylvania and Other Early Childhood Teacher Standards

Education Organization Resources:

- Center on Great Teachers and Leaders: Creating Coherence: Common Core State Standards, Teacher Evaluation, and Professional Learning (brief)

- Center on Great Teachers and Leaders: Creating Coherence: Connecting Teacher Evaluation and Support Systems to the Common Core (professional learning module, available for use by states, districts, and schools)

- Center on Great Teachers and Leaders: Social and Emotional Learning in the Daily Life of Classrooms (professional learning module supporting integration of teacher evaluation, social and emotional learning, and the Common Core)

Guiding Questions for Teaching Practice

Teachers and teacher leaders can use the following guiding questions as they discuss how to design, advocate for, or make refinements to their current evaluation system. In the following chart, teams and individuals may determine the Responses and Possible Next Steps based on their current system. Note that filling in the chart is optional. What is essential is to use each guiding question for a robust discussion. An example has been provided.

Example

Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
Do we have a process for aligning professional learning to teacher evaluation?	• No, professional development is aligned with initiatives but not necessarily with teacher expectations.	• Work through the offered professional learning, and identify points of alignment with the teacher evaluation expectations.
1. How can we encourage and support teachers to set professional goals aligned with student learning while keeping in mind school, district, or state goals?		
2. Do we have a process for aligning professional learning to teacher evaluation?		
3. How is the observation and feedback cycle being used to identify shifts and adjustments to teaching practice?		
4. How are we helping teachers see the alignment to student assessment and teaching practice?		

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Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
5. How can accomplished teachers be used to support the professional learning of their novice and underperforming colleagues?		

ALIGNMENT AND STUDENT GROWTH IN TESTED AND NONTESTED SUBJECTS

1. The majority of alignment work within teacher evaluation systems falls within the teaching practice component. However, there are some special considerations to make when thinking about student growth and alignment. The first option is the most critical.

   Student assessments used in tested and nontested subjects should align with the standards and course content being assessed, and those results should be applied to teacher evaluation. For example, a geometry teacher should be evaluated on the basis of her students' growth in geometry—not on their overall performance on a generic mathematics assessment.

2. Teachers should be given the guidance and opportunity to make connections between student growth results; teaching practice; and other school, district, or state initiatives. For example, a school's initiative may be to build college and career readiness in students, including higher-order thinking skills. But student assessment data may demonstrate low student scores on the higher-order questions, and observation evidence may demonstrate a lack of higher-order thinking in instruction. This information can be used to create a collaborative action plan to have teachers include more higher-order thinking skills in instruction.

3. Data from the student growth component can be used to identify specific improvement initiatives or other areas of focus. For example, data may show that students met their goals at higher rates in English than in mathematics. This type of result could initiate a schoolwide focus on mathematics integration and instructional priority for the following school year.

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Data Availability and Use

Teacher evaluation systems require data to be available for use in goal setting, reflection, feedback conversations, summative ratings, and strategic human capital planning. These uses assume that the right data are available at the right time. In reality, however, states and districts often struggle because their data collection systems may lack the sophistication needed to collect, analyze, and use results effectively. In states and districts that do have adequate data collection systems, the expectation has been that the user knows how to appropriately use the data to inform professional learning, make staffing decisions, and in some cases determine incentives.

Understanding how to use data on teaching practice (using observation results), student growth (using assessment results and other evidence of student learning), and other data applications (such as student perception surveys, artifacts of practice, or teaching portfolios) is as important as making the data accessible. One of the purposes of developing more rigorous evaluation systems is to help teachers grow and develop by enabling them to identify specific areas of growth and providing targeted support based on the needs identified. By providing targeted opportunities that are specifically aligned with expectations and results, states and districts can begin to understand the direct impact of professional learning on teaching and learning. This challenge is explored through the teaching practice component exclusively.

Component A
Teaching Practice

This section explores the challenge of data availability and use from the teaching practice perspective. Following are possible elements (access to data and information for collaboration, access to aggregated results); suggested strategies; examples from the field; and guiding questions.

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Element A1
Access to Data and Information for Collaboration

Strategies

To monitor and track progress, set professional goals, and determine areas of growth, teachers need access to data and information for collaboration. Consider the following strategies:

- Develop a system that allows teachers to input and retrieve data aligned to the teaching practice framework.

- Develop a system to recommend professional learning opportunities aligned with teacher needs.

- Develop a system that encourages teachers to share (formally or informally) what they have learned and how they are using that learning to improve their instruction.

- Provide professional learning opportunities on using the system and reading the reports that are generated.

- Provide collaborative structures and opportunities for teachers to use data together.

Examples

State Resources and Tools:

- Massachusetts: District Data Team Toolkit

- Washington: District and School Data Team Toolkit

- Ohio: Acting on Data: How Ohio TIF Districts Are Using Value-Added to Accelerate Student Learning

Education Organization Resources:

- Data Quality Campaign: Teacher Data Literacy: It's About Time

- Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching: Developing an Effective Teacher Feedback System (brief on supporting early career teachers, specifically through feedback conversations)

- Vanderbilt University's Peabody College: "Not Just a Gotcha": Principals' Use of Teacher Effectiveness Data for Talent Management Decisions (brief describing how to use data to identify professional learning and track progress and improvement over time)

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Access to Aggregated Results

Strategies	**Examples**

To use aggregated evaluation results for decision making, consider the following strategies:

- Engage stakeholders in identifying appropriate data to aggregate.
- Provide aggregate results (by competency or student learning skills) to teachers and evaluators to determine appropriate follow-up supports.
- Provide time for teachers to learn how to use the data for talent decisions.

For a more global look at the teacher evaluation system as a whole, it is important to use the available data to inform continuous improvement of the system.

Education Organization Resources:

- Gates Foundation: Using Data and Technology to Support Teachers and Improve Learning
- Vanderbilt University's Peabody College: Timelines of Talent Management Decisions and Teacher Effectiveness Data Availability
- Vanderbilt University's Peabody College: Using Teacher Effectiveness Data for Information-Rich Hiring
- Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching: Evaluating Teachers More Strategically: Using Performance Results to Streamline Evaluation Systems

Guiding Questions for Teaching Practice

Teachers and teacher leaders can use the following guiding questions as they discuss how to design, advocate for, or make refinements to their current evaluation system. In the following chart, teams and individuals may determine the Responses and Possible Next Steps based on their current system. Note that filling in the chart is optional. What is essential is to use each guiding question for a robust discussion. An example has been provided.

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Example

Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
Does our current evaluation system allow professional development to be assigned based on each teacher's evaluation results? How is professional learning participation determined? How is it tracked?	● Our current evaluation system does not allow assigning of professional learning to teachers. ● Principals can suggest professional learning for teachers. ● There is no way to track participation in learning.	● Determine system capabilities for assigning professional learning. ● Align professional learning opportunities with teacher competencies for easy assignment.
1. To which data do teachers currently have access? Are these data user-friendly? Does the information provide insight on areas for teacher improvement?		
2. Does our current evaluation system allow professional development to be assigned based on each teacher's evaluation results? How is professional learning participation determined? How is it tracked?		
3. Do school administrators and teachers have the skills to analyze data to support reflection and growth? To make talent management decisions?		
4. How do we currently use evaluation results to make adjustments to the teacher evaluation system? What else could we do?		

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Guiding Questions	Responses	Possible Next Steps
5. Is there a need to differentiate teaching practice, student growth, and summative ratings in analysis or decision making?		

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