



An examination of performance-based teacher evaluation systems in five states





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Summary

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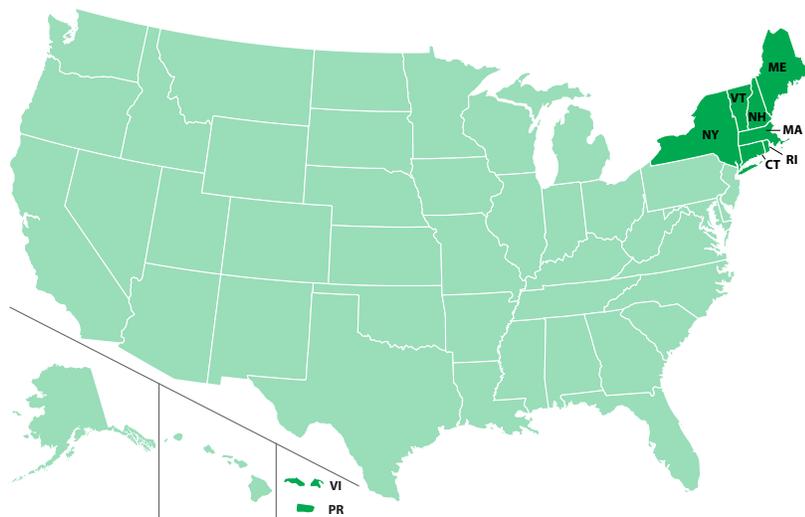
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This study of performance-based teacher evaluation systems in the five states that had implemented statewide systems as of 2010/11 finds considerable variation among them. However, all five states' systems include observations, self-assessments, and multiple rating categories. In addition, the evaluation rubrics in each state reflect most of the teaching standards set out by the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium.

A combination of research and federal and state interest in measuring teacher effectiveness has galvanized support for reform of teacher evaluation systems. A number of researchers have called for multiple measures of teacher effectiveness, greater differentiation among teachers, and stronger connections to outcomes for students (Toch and Rothman 2008; Gordon, Kane, and Staiger 2006; Hene-man et al. 2006). The application guidelines for the 2009 Race to the Top federal grant competition called for states to develop systems that evaluate teacher effectiveness using multiple rating categories, not the traditional binary rating of satisfactory to unsatisfactory, and to take into account data on student growth (U.S. Department of Education 2009). In response to this new policy direction, many states' Race to the Top grant proposals provided plans for changes to their teacher evaluation systems.

This study reports on performance-based teacher evaluation systems in five states that have implemented such systems. It investigates two primary research questions:

- What are the key characteristics of state-level performance-based teacher evaluation systems in the study states?
- How do state teacher evaluation measures, the teaching standards the evaluations are designed to measure, and rating categories differ across states that have implemented statewide systems?

To answer these questions, the study team reviewed state education agency websites and publicly available documents for all 50 states to identify states whose performance-based teacher evaluation systems met the following criteria:

- Was required for practicing general educators.
- Was operational statewide as of the 2010/11 school year.
- Included multiple rating categories.
- Used multiple measures of teacher effectiveness, such as observations, self-assessments, and professional growth plans.

Five states (Delaware, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas) met these criteria. Key study findings include the following:

- Of the five states that met the criteria, three have new systems (1–3 years old), and two have systems that are more than 10 years old.
- One state (Georgia) requires full annual evaluations for all teachers. In the other states, evaluations are annual for teachers whom the state defines as novice and less frequent or less comprehensive for more experienced teachers.
- All five states include self-assessments and observations of classroom teaching as part of teacher assessment. States differ in who conducts the observations, how often evaluations are conducted, and what scoring parameters are used.
- In each of the five states, teacher evaluation rubrics and scoring forms reflect most or all of the 10 teaching standards set forth by the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC). These standards relate to teachers' understanding of how students learn, content knowledge, instructional practice, and professional responsibilities. All 10 standards are reflected in the teacher evaluation rubrics in North Carolina and Texas, 9 are reflected in Georgia, and 8 are reflected in Delaware and Tennessee. One InTASC standard—specifying that teachers demonstrate an understanding of how students learn—is absent in two states' evaluation rubrics (Georgia and Tennessee).
- States differ in the number of rating categories used and how they compute scores and determine passing scores.

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