



PRINCIPLES *for* TEACHER SUPPORT *and* EVALUATION SYSTEMS

INTRODUCTION

Teachers matter a great deal. They inspire, educate, and open doors to opportunity. They are the most important school-based factor in ensuring students are prepared to succeed and fulfill their dreams. States have an important role to play in making sure teachers have the support they need to fulfill their increasingly complex roles.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO or the Council) is guided by an overarching aspiration which is to ensure that all students—regardless of background—are prepared for success in college, careers, and life. Therefore, the Council is committed to supporting states in attracting, preparing, developing, and retaining educators to positively impact student learning. An effective teacher support and evaluation system serves as both a strategy and a metric of progress, and is therefore critical to ensuring equitable access to excellent teaching for each student. Teacher support and evaluation systems should strike a productive balance between support and accountability, and should be designed to be continuously improved and evolve over time.

The principles outlined here focus on developing teachers through support and evaluation systems. These principles are intended as a guide for state chiefs and their teams; the application of the principles will vary based on state contexts. The Council will assist states as they continue to develop and refine these systems.

CCSSO developed these principles in collaboration with stakeholders and building on a literature review. Stakeholders included chiefs, deputies, partner organizations, the CCSSO National and State Collaboration for Educator Effectiveness, and the CCSSO Educator Engagement Panel consisting of educators recognized for their exemplary practice and advocacy for students.

THE PRINCIPLES



Integrate teacher support and evaluation into broader efforts to develop teaching practice and improve student learning.

- A. Regularly communicate the purpose of teacher support and evaluation.** The purpose of teacher support and evaluation should be well defined and clearly communicated to all stakeholders. Responsibility for enacting teacher support and evaluation systems is shared across state, district, and school levels, so it is essential for state leaders to establish and reinforce a clear purpose to guide design and implementation decisions.
- B. Build teacher support and evaluation systems on clearly articulated standards for effective teaching practice.** A clear vision of effective teaching practice should be the foundation of teacher support and evaluation. This vision of teaching practice

should be based on standards for professional teaching practice adopted in each state, and should establish a common language of practice among educators. Examples include the [InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards](#) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' standards for accomplished teaching.

- C. Connect teacher support and evaluation to all components of talent management, from preparation to career advancement.** The expectations embedded in teacher support and evaluation systems should inform every component of the talent development system including preparation, hiring, induction, and retention. Results should inform individual coaching, professional learning, assignment, tenure, career advancement, and teacher leadership opportunities. Principal evaluations should explicitly address their responsibility to support and evaluate teachers.
- D. Align support and evaluation processes to student standards, curricula, and assessments.** All processes and tools should create an integrated package that enhances student learning. Teacher support and evaluation systems can help formalize instructional shifts necessary for more challenging standards. The feedback and support teachers receive should connect directly to the standards and curricula to which they are teaching and the needs of students. Likewise, student assessments should measure content teachers are expected to teach, and assessment results should inform appraisals of teaching practice.
- E. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of states, districts, and schools with regard to teacher support and evaluation systems.** States are responsible for establishing the underlying standards on which teacher evaluation is based, and for the overall quality of the evaluation system. In addition, most states are well positioned to establish model systems and/or system components; vet and recommend tools and resources to support local implementation; establish mechanisms for collecting, analyzing, and providing necessary data; identify promising practices across districts and schools; and ensure that high-quality design and implementation is maintained across the state. State leaders should clearly articulate their roles to district and school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders. District and school leaders should clearly understand their responsibilities, and what to expect from the state.

Drive continuous improvement of teaching practice.

- A. Ensure support and evaluation is an ongoing process of providing teachers with frequent, action-oriented feedback connected to professional learning resources.** Support and evaluation systems should include opportunities for teachers to receive regular feedback and demonstrate growth over time based on that feedback. States and districts should build a structure for determining the impact of feedback into the support and evaluation cycle.

- B. Create structures for teachers to work in teams with school leaders to collaboratively set goals, create and/or select measures, and reflect on the progress towards goals.** Collaborative structures lead to positive impacts on student learning and school culture. Time, processes (e.g., inquiry cycles, or protocols for examining student work), and training should be built into the system. School, district, and state leaders can all play a role in advancing solutions to reallocate time and staff to allow for more effective professional learning and collaboration.
- C. Build the skills of leaders to effectively implement teacher support and evaluation.** Principals and other leaders should have access to training and resources to assess practice, distinguish between various levels of performance, provide feedback, connect feedback to resources, and ensure follow-up. They should also be able to provide constructive feedback that directly addresses areas of weak performance and effectively position strong teachers to support their peers and impact more students. Further, leaders benefit from additional training in change management as part of a continuous improvement process.
- D. Differentiate and tailor support and evaluation based on challenges teachers face in meeting the needs of students.** All teachers should receive regular feedback to improve their practice; struggling teachers should also understand the urgency to improve their practice. States should design teacher support and evaluation systems first and foremost to meet teachers' needs for feedback and growth. While high-stakes personnel decisions are not necessary for every teacher every year, support and evaluation may be used to meet the ongoing needs of students by providing feedback to teachers; driving professional learning activities; informing staff assignments; and contributing to decisions regarding promotion, teacher leadership, compensation, and tenure.



Ensure the system is fair, credible, and transparent.

- A. Engage educators in the development of the support and evaluation systems and in its continuous improvement.** Teachers and leaders should be involved in developing support and evaluation systems that are effective and accepted by the field. The systems should be set up to improve over time, in part through feedback loops from the field.
- B. Use multiple, high-quality measures to create a comprehensive view of teaching practice, and balance those measures with professional judgment when assigning summative ratings.** All measures of effective teaching should be valid and reliable. The measures should include evidence of student learning and observations of teaching practice. Other measures may include professionalism (e.g., contributions to the effectiveness of their peers and

leaders, and/or engaging with parents), student feedback, and students' social-emotional development. Teachers' investment in their own learning and improvement, as well as their professional collaboration with peers, may also figure into their evaluations. Evaluators should exercise professional judgment on a body of evidence when determining summative ratings.

- C. Ensure consistency and accuracy of evaluation data.** States play a critical role in ensuring the integrity of support and evaluation systems and should regularly examine data quality, system design, and implementation. States should also examine data that is *not* connected to support and evaluation systems to ensure evaluation results are broadly correlated with other important system outcomes (e.g., attendance, graduation rates, drop outs, and disciplinary data) and do not result in unintended negative consequences.

CONCLUSION

CCSSO recommends that states assess their current teacher support and evaluation systems against these principles, and use them to refine their systems. These systems can advance student learning by providing teachers with meaningful feedback on their practice, and fostering teachers' professional growth and development. The systems can also serve a screening function for talent management processes. The Council will work with interested states to refine their systems to realize these principles.



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