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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS' STRONG TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM GOES HAND-IN-HAND WITH IMPROVED TEACHER QUALITY

RECENT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE TEACHER EVALUATIONS YIELD MULTIPLE BENEFITS, INCLUDING RETAINING MORE EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

Washington, D.C. -- Analysis from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) finds tangible evidence that the teacher evaluation system in District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) is coinciding with real and measurable benefits for students and teachers alike.

In [*Making a Difference: Six Places Where Teacher Evaluation Systems are Getting Results*](#), NCTQ examines evidence of the impact of teacher evaluation in six places (four districts and two states) that have stayed the course in developing and implementing improved teacher evaluation systems: **Dallas Independent School District, Denver Public Schools, District of Columbia Public Schools, Newark Public Schools, New Mexico, and Tennessee.**

"Our analysis suggests that moving forward with teacher evaluation systems presents students and teachers with a huge opportunity," commented Kate Walsh, President of the National Council on Teacher Quality.

Notable outcomes of DCPS's IMPACT teacher evaluation system include:

- DCPS reports retaining 92 percent of the district's effective and highly effective teachers, while low-performing teachers are three times more likely to leave the district.
- On average, teachers who leave DCPS since the implementation of the new evaluation system are replaced by more effective teachers.
- Teachers show signs of improving under the evaluation system. Lower-performing teachers who stayed in DCPS but were facing threat of dismissal due to a low evaluation rating improved their performance on average, while higher-performing teachers who were near the cut point for a financial incentive also improved.
- Since 2009, DCPS students have made significant gains on the NAEP assessment in 4th and 8th grade math and reading. The white-black student achievement gap has also decreased in 4th grade math and reading since 2009. Note that these gains cannot be tied directly to the evaluation system without a controlled study.

"Through IMPACT, our rigorous teacher evaluation system, and LEAP, our targeted professional development program, DCPS recruits, develops, and retains the best educators and school leaders in the country," said Interim DCPS Chancellor Amanda Alexander. "As we move closer toward reducing the opportunity gap and ensuring every student can reach their full potential, DCPS will continue to focus on ensuring we have high-quality educators in every school."

District of Columbia Public Schools' evaluation system, like the other five systems featured in this study, has achieved a more meaningful and realistic measure of the distribution of teacher talent than such systems have done historically, when virtually all teachers received the same rating.

To achieve the level of differentiation that these six systems have, a number of factors appear necessary. Each of them annually evaluates *all* teachers using both objective and subjective measures, as opposed to exempting large numbers of teachers from yearly evaluation, only using subjective measures, or not giving significant weight to student learning. Each employs at least three rating categories, with DCPS using five. Each also ties the professional development a teacher should pursue to her evaluation results, as opposed to giving teachers open-ended choices not directly targeted toward their professional needs.

Perhaps most significantly, each of these six systems to some degree links a teacher's evaluation results to opportunities to earn additional compensation. For example, teachers in DCPS can earn up to \$25,000 in bonuses annually if they earn the highest of five ratings, teach in a targeted high-poverty school, and meet other criteria. DCPS teachers who consistently earn high ratings can also advance more quickly up the salary schedule; the maximum available annual compensation is \$139,126 (base salary of \$114,126, plus up to \$25,000 in bonuses based on teaching assignment) with at least nine years of experience.

In addition to attaching consequences to the results of an evaluation, each place has made a genuine commitment on the part of school system leadership to implement the new systems with fidelity, even as five of the featured locales in our study, including DCPS, survived turnovers in leadership

"The buy-in among school leadership was real and perhaps unique," continued Walsh. "And the commitment to continuous improvement among the districts and states highlighted here stands out. None of these systems were perfect out of the gate; system leaders recognized this and worked continuously to enhance system design, implementation, and use."

These new systems have made a clear impact, which is apparent in the school districts profiled here. They have been able to retain strong teachers while increasing the rate of weaker teachers who choose to leave.

"District of Columbia Public Schools serves as a powerful testament that effective evaluation policies and practices are likely leading to improvements in the overall quality of a teacher workforce," concluded Walsh.

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Read the report at: <https://www.nctq.org/publications/Making-a-Difference>

To schedule an interview with NCTQ, please contact Nicole Gerber at (202) 393-0020 ext. 712.

About the National Council on Teacher Quality:

The National Council on Teacher Quality is a nonpartisan research and policy group committed to modernizing the teaching profession and based on the belief that all children deserve effective teachers. We recognize that it is not teachers who bear responsibility for their profession's many challenges, but the institutions with the greatest authority and influence over teachers. More information about NCTQ can be found on our website, www.nctq.org.