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Contact  
Nicole Gerber  
National Council on Teacher Quality  
[ngerber@nctq.org](mailto:ngerber@nctq.org)  
(202) 393-0020 ext. 712

## TENNESSEE'S 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 Tennessee's teacher evaluation system 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 features and outcomes of Tennessee's teacher evaluation system include:**

- Tennessee's teacher evaluation system—Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM)—is fully integrated into its teacher preparation, licensure, support, and dismissal systems.
- Teachers earning highly effective ratings in Tennessee are generally retained at a higher rate than less effective teachers.
- Between the 2014-15 and 2016-17 school years, an increasing number of Tennessee school districts saw the highest levels of student growth on state assessments.
- Nearly three-fourths of Tennessee's teachers believe the teacher evaluation process used at their school has led to improvements in their teaching and researchers have found that teachers in the state are improving at a faster rate, with growth that is "much more rapid and sustained" since the implementation of its new evaluation system.

"We have a foundational belief that every student deserves an effective teacher supported by an effective principal every single year. Having a strong, meaningful evaluation system has been a critical part of making that happen," said Dr. Candice McQueen, Tennessee's Commissioner of Education. "Our evaluation model has developed the capacity of teachers to improve, put student growth at the center of our work, and established an expectation of continuous improvement. Even better: it's working. Our teachers are getting better, faster, because of evaluation. Our educator survey has found that the vast majority of teachers agree that teaching and learning has improved because our evaluation system. That means more students are getting a better education than they ever have in Tennessee."

Tennessee's teacher 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 some using as many as five to seven. 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. 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 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."

Ultimately, well-designed and well-implemented teacher evaluation systems help all teachers improve.

"Tennessee 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](http://www.nctq.org).*