

Evaluating and Developing Effective Teachers and Leaders

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How should teachers and leaders be evaluated? Laurie invited participants to examine the strengths and shortfalls in professional evaluation practices and weigh in on teacher performance measures. Discussion centered on three themes: how to recognize effective teaching; multiple uses for student data; and valid uses of student performance data in teacher evaluation.

Participants agreed that the elements of effective teaching are interconnected. They characterized effective classrooms as places where:

- Teachers hold high expectations for all students, are effective classroom managers, and can identify student work that demonstrates high standards.
- All students are engaged and working—although perhaps at different levels.
- Instruction is differentiated and students have choices about how they demonstrate their depth of knowledge.

They saw student data as functioning both to improve and differentiate instruction and as valid information to use in teacher evaluation. More specifically, characteristics of effective data use include:

- Formative student assessment results inform how and what teachers teach.
- Ongoing formal and informal student assessments show teachers where each student is on the learning continuum and show students what they need to learn.
- Data are used to align curriculum and set instructional targets.
- Multiple measures and years of data, not a single high-stakes test, are the most comprehensive way to assess student performance.
- Teachers analyze student data best in supportive, collaborative teams; ownership of student outcomes is shared.

Meaningful supports for teachers in the use of data include:

- Pre- and in-service training and preparation in using student assessment data to tailor instruction.
- Adequate time is available for teachers to analyze student data.
- Multiple measures (triangulated data) enhance the accuracy of judgments.
- Data systems and technology track individuals and groups of students over time.
- Data are not collected solely for struggling students but also pinpoint instructional needs for those who are accelerated or leveling off.
- If teacher performance is to be judged by student performance, resources and time must be allocated to ensure that teachers can use informal and formal assessments effectively.
- Teacher evaluations employ district teams to ensure a uniform process that takes unique circumstances into account.
- Student performance data are only part of determining a teacher's worth.