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# THE WIDGET EFFECT

Our National Failure to Acknowledge and Act on Differences in Teacher Effectiveness



The New Teacher Project

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02 | FOREWORD

03 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

09 | THE PROBLEM:  
Teachers as  
Interchangeable Parts

10 | CHARACTERISTICS:  
The Widget Effect In  
Teacher Evaluation

19 | FLAWS  
In Evaluation Practice

24 | POLICY IMPLICATIONS  
Of the Widget Effect

26 | RECOMMENDATIONS:  
Reversing the Widget Effect

31 | END NOTES

33 | METHODOLOGY

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Finally, we thank each of the approximately 15,000 teachers and 1,300 administrators who dedicated time to completing our surveys. Your opinions and thoughts continue to inspire us to work to ensure that each and every student has access to outstanding teachers.

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“There are at least ‘several hundred’ incompetents now in the school system [says the superintendent]. Other observers think there are several thousands, while still others insist that ‘several’ would be nearer the mark. Whether these incompetents were unfit to teach at any time, or have been rendered unfit by the passing years, is a matter of opinion. The question is, why are they allowed to remain?”<sup>1</sup>

*So wrote The New York Times—in 1936.*

In the 73 years since, we have made little progress toward answering the question of why poor instruction in our schools goes unaddressed. The question has been the subject of vigorous discussion, but most commentary has attempted to answer it by debating the failure of school districts to dismiss teachers who perform poorly.

The contours of this debate are well-known. One side claims that teacher tenure and due process protections render dismissal a practical impossibility, shielding ineffective teachers from removal in all but the most egregious instances. The other argues that the process provides only minimal protection against arbitrary or discriminatory dismissal, but that administrators fail to document poor performance adequately and refuse to provide struggling teachers with sufficient support. For decades these positions have remained largely unchanged.

The established arguments, however, fail to recognize that the challenge of addressing performance in the teaching profession goes far beyond the issue of dismissal. In fact, as this report illustrates, school districts fail to acknowledge or act on differences in teacher performance almost entirely. When it comes to officially appraising performance and supporting improvement, a culture of indifference about the quality of instruction in each classroom dominates.

Our research confirms what is by now common knowledge: tenured teachers are identified as ineffective and dismissed from employment with exceptional infrequency. While an important finding in its own right, we have come to understand that infrequent teacher dismissals are in fact just one symptom of a larger, more fundamental crisis—the inability of our schools to assess instructional performance accurately or to act on this information in meaningful ways.

This inability not only keeps schools from dismissing consistently poor performers, but also prevents them from recognizing excellence among top-performers or supporting growth among the broad plurality of hard-working teachers who operate in the middle of the performance spectrum. Instead, school districts default to treating all teachers as essentially the same, both in terms of effectiveness and need for development.

Of course, as teachers themselves are acutely aware, they are not at all the same. Just like professionals in other fields, teachers vary. They boast individual skills, competencies and talents. They generate different responses and levels of growth from students.

In a knowledge-based economy that makes education more important than ever, teachers matter more than ever. This report is a call to action—to policymakers, district and school leaders and to teachers and their representatives—to address our national failure to acknowledge and act on differences in teacher effectiveness once and for all. To do this, school districts must begin to distinguish great from good, good from fair, and fair from poor. Effective teaching must be recognized; ineffective teaching must be addressed.

Recently, President Obama spoke in bold terms about improving teacher effectiveness in just this way, saying, “If a teacher is given a chance or two chances or three chances but still does not improve, there is no excuse for that person to continue teaching. I reject a system that rewards failure and protects a person from its consequences. The stakes are too high. We can afford nothing but the best when it comes to our children’s teachers and the schools where they teach.”<sup>2</sup> We could not agree more. It is our hope that the recommendations contained in this report will outline a path to a better future for the profession.

A teacher's effectiveness—the most important factor for schools in improving student achievement—is not measured, recorded, or used to inform decision-making in any meaningful way.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Suppose you are a parent determined to make sure your child gets the best possible education. You understand intuitively what an ample body of research proves: that your child's education depends to a large extent on the quality of her teachers. Consequently, as you begin considering local public schools, you focus on a basic question: who are the best teachers, and where do they teach?

The question is simple enough. There's just one problem—except for word of mouth from other parents, no one can tell you the answers.

In fact, you would be dismayed to discover that not only can no one tell you which teachers are most effective, they also cannot say which are the least effective or which fall in between. Were you to examine the district's teacher evaluation records yourself, you would find that, on paper, *almost every* teacher is a great teacher, even at schools where the chance of a student succeeding academically amounts to a coin toss, at best.

In short, the school district would ask you to trust that it can provide your child a quality education, even though it cannot honestly tell you whether it is providing her a quality teacher.

This is the reality for our public school districts nationwide. Put simply, they fail to distinguish great teaching from good, good from fair, and fair from poor. A teacher's effectiveness—the most important factor for schools in improving student achievement—is not measured, recorded, or used to inform decision-making in any meaningful way.

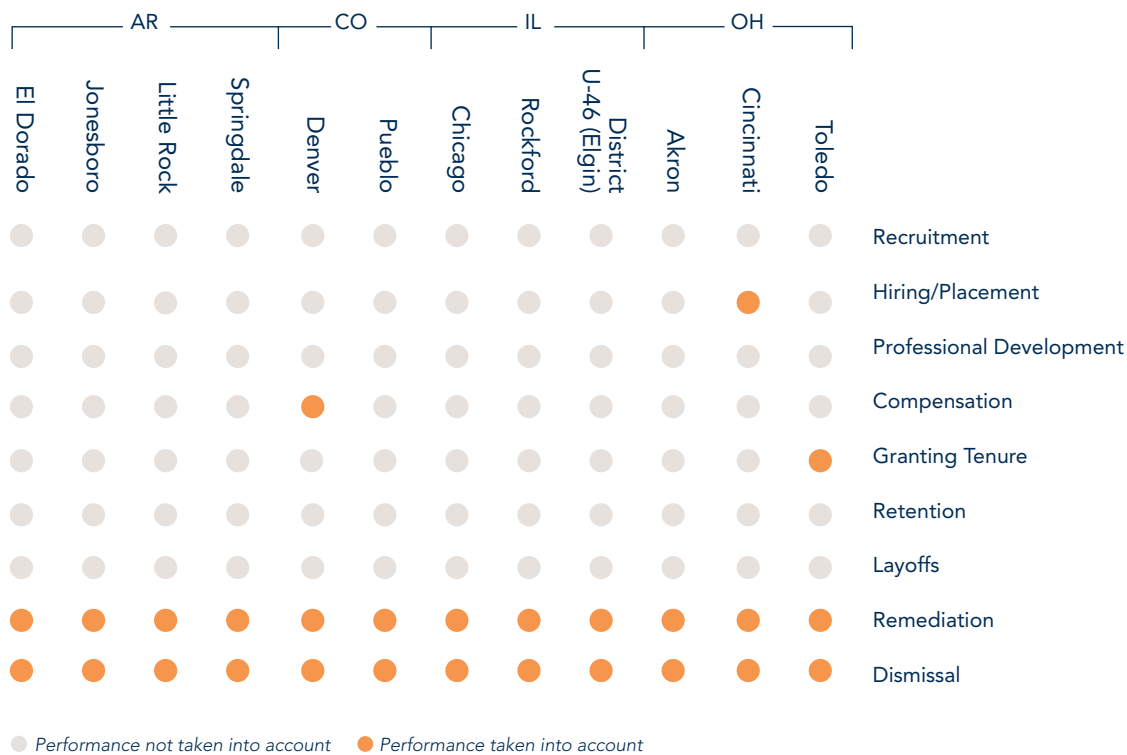
## The Widget Effect

This report examines our pervasive and longstanding failure to recognize and respond to variations in the effectiveness of our teachers. At the heart of the matter are teacher evaluation systems, which in theory should serve as the primary mechanism for assessing such variations, but in practice tell us little about how one teacher differs from any other, except teachers whose performance is so egregiously poor as to warrant dismissal.

The failure of evaluation systems to provide accurate and credible information about individual teachers' instructional performance sustains and reinforces a phenomenon that we have come to call the **Widget Effect**. The Widget Effect describes the tendency of school districts to assume classroom effectiveness is the same from teacher to teacher. This decades-old fallacy fosters an environment in which teachers cease to be understood as individual professionals, but rather as interchangeable parts. In its denial of individual strengths and weaknesses, it is deeply disrespectful to teachers; in its indifference to instructional effectiveness, it gambles with the lives of students.

Today, the Widget Effect is codified in a policy framework that rarely considers teacher effectiveness for key decisions, as illustrated below.

### Where Is Performance a Factor in Important Decisions About Teachers?\*



The fact that information on teacher performance is almost exclusively used for decisions related to teacher remediation and dismissal paints a stark picture: In general, our schools are indifferent to instructional effectiveness—except when it comes time to remove a teacher.

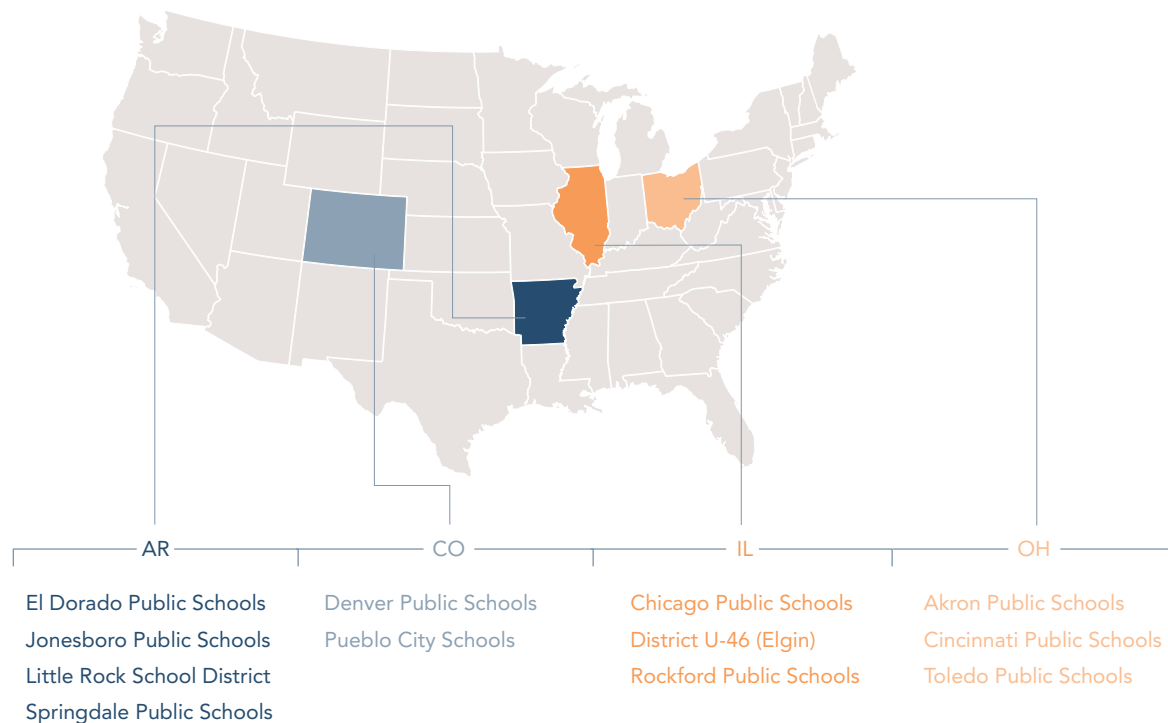
\* See "Policy Implications of the Widget Effect" for additional information

## Study Overview

This report is the product of an extensive research effort spanning 12 districts and four states. It reflects survey responses from approximately 15,000 teachers and 1,300 administrators, and it has benefited from the insight of more than 80 local and state education officials, teachers union leaders, policymakers and advocates who participated in advisory panels in each state, shaping the study design, data collection instruments, and findings and recommendations.

The four states included in the study, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois and Ohio, employ diverse teacher performance management policies. The 12 districts studied range in size, geographic location, evaluation policies and practices and overall approach to teacher performance management. Jonesboro Public Schools, the smallest district studied, serves approximately 4,450 students; Chicago Public Schools, the largest, serves 413,700. All 12 districts employ some formal evaluation process for teachers, but the methods and frequency of evaluation differ. The outcomes, however, are strikingly similar.

## Study Sites\*



\*For more information on the study sites, please see *Methodology*.



## Characteristics of the Widget Effect in Teacher Evaluation

The Widget Effect is characterized by institutional indifference to variations in teacher performance. Teacher evaluation systems reflect and reinforce this indifference in several ways.

### All teachers are rated good or great

In districts that use binary evaluation ratings (generally “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory”), more than 99 percent of teachers receive the satisfactory rating. Districts that use a broader range of rating options do little better; in these districts, 94 percent of teachers receive one of the top two ratings and less than 1 percent are rated unsatisfactory.

### Excellence goes unrecognized

When all teachers are rated good or great, those who are truly exceptional cannot be formally identified. Fifty-nine percent of teachers and 63 percent of administrators say their district is not doing enough to identify, compensate, promote and retain the most effective teachers.

### Inadequate professional development

The failure to assess variations in instructional effectiveness also precludes districts from identifying specific development needs in their teachers. In fact, 73 percent of teachers surveyed said their most recent evaluation did not identify any development areas, and only 45 percent of teachers who did have development areas identified said they received useful support to improve.

### No special attention to novices

Inattention to teacher performance and development begins from a teacher’s first days in the classroom. Though it is widely recognized that teachers are least effective in their beginning years, 66 percent of novice teachers in districts with multiple ratings received a rating greater than “satisfactory” on their most recent performance evaluation. Low expectations characterize the tenure process as well, with 41 percent of administrators reporting that they have never “non-renewed” a probationary teacher for performance concerns in his or her final probationary year.

### Poor performance goes unaddressed

Despite uniformly positive evaluation ratings, teachers and administrators both recognize ineffective teaching in their schools. In fact, 81 percent of administrators and 57 percent of teachers say there is a tenured teacher in their school who is performing poorly, and 43 percent of teachers say there is a tenured teacher who should be dismissed for poor performance. Troublingly, the percentages are higher in high-poverty schools. But district records confirm the scarcity of formal dismissals; at least half of the districts studied did not dismiss a single non-probationary teacher for poor performance in the time period studied (ranging from two to five years in each district).

## Flaws in Evaluation Practice and Implementation

The characteristics above are exacerbated and amplified by cursory evaluation practices and poor implementation. Evaluations are short and infrequent (most are based on two or fewer classroom observations, each 60 minutes or less), conducted by administrators without extensive training, and influenced by powerful cultural forces—in particular, an expectation among teachers that they will be among the vast majority rated as top performers.

While it is impossible to know whether the system drives the culture or the culture the system, the result is clear—evaluation systems fail to differentiate performance among teachers. As a result, teacher effectiveness is largely ignored. Excellent teachers cannot be recognized or rewarded, chronically low-performing teachers languish, and the wide majority of teachers performing at moderate levels do not get the differentiated support and development they need to improve as professionals.

## Reversing the Widget Effect

The Widget Effect is deeply ingrained in the fundamental systems and policies that govern the teachers in our public schools. Better evaluation systems may offer a partial solution, but they will not overcome a culture of indifference to classroom effectiveness. Reversing the Widget Effect depends on better information about instructional quality that can be used to inform other important decisions that dictate who teaches in our schools.

**01 | Adopt a comprehensive performance evaluation system that fairly, accurately and credibly differentiates teachers based on their effectiveness in promoting student achievement.** Teachers should be evaluated based on their ability to fulfill their core responsibility as professionals—delivering instruction that helps students learn and succeed. This demands clear performance standards, multiple rating options, regular monitoring of administrator judgments, and frequent feedback to teachers. Furthermore, it requires professional development that is tightly linked to performance standards and differentiated based on individual teacher needs. The core purpose of evaluation must be maximizing teacher growth and effectiveness, not just documenting poor performance as a prelude to dismissal.

**02 | Train administrators and other evaluators in the teacher performance evaluation system and hold them accountable for using it effectively.** The differentiation of teacher effectiveness should be a priority for school administrators and one for which they are held accountable. Administrators must receive rigorous training and ongoing support so that they can make fair and consistent assessments of performance against established standards and provide constructive feedback and differentiated support to teachers.



**03 | Integrate the performance evaluation system with critical human capital policies and functions such as teacher assignment, professional development, compensation, retention and dismissal.** Even the best evaluation system will fail if the information it produces is of no consequence. An effective evaluation system must be fully integrated with other district systems and policies and a primary factor in decisions such as which teachers receive tenure, how teachers are assigned and retained, how teachers are compensated and advanced, what professional development teachers receive, and when and how teachers are dismissed. Only by attaching stakes to evaluation outcomes will teachers and administrators invest in the hard work of creating a truly rigorous and credible evaluation system.

**04 | Adopt dismissal policies that provide lower-stakes options for ineffective teachers to exit the district and a system of due process that is fair but efficient.**

If the evaluation system is implemented effectively, unsatisfactory ratings will not be anomalous, surprising or without clear justification. Likewise, the identification of development areas and the provision of support will be continual. As in other professions, teachers who see significant, credible evidence of their own failure to meet standards are likely to exit voluntarily. Districts can facilitate this process by providing low-stakes options that enable teachers to leave their positions without being exiled. For teachers who must be officially dismissed, an expedited, one-day hearing should be sufficient for an arbitrator to determine if the evaluation and development process was followed and judgments made in good faith.

Our recommendations outline a comprehensive approach to improving teacher effectiveness and maximizing student learning. If implemented thoroughly and faithfully, we believe they will enable districts to understand and manage instructional quality with far greater sophistication. Improved evaluation will not only benefit students by driving the systematic improvement and growth of their teachers, but teachers themselves, by at last treating them as professionals, not parts.



## THE PROBLEM: TEACHERS AS INTERCHANGEABLE PARTS

Teaching is the essence of education, and there is almost universal agreement among researchers that teachers have an outsized impact on student performance. We know that improving teacher quality is one of the most powerful ways—if not *the* most powerful way—to create better schools. In fact, a student assigned to a very good teacher for a single school year may gain up to a full year’s worth of additional academic growth compared to a student assigned to a very poor teacher. Having a series of strong or weak teachers in consecutive years compounds the impact. Give high-need students three highly effective teachers in a row and they may outperform students taught by three ineffective teachers in a row by as much as 50 percentile points.<sup>3</sup>

The lesson from these decades of research is clear: teachers matter. Some teachers are capable of generating exceptional learning growth in students; others are not, and a small group actually hinders their students’ academic progress.

This simple premise—that teachers matter—has driven The New Teacher Project’s prior research and continues to drive our work today. Our 2003 report, *Missed Opportunities: How We Keep High-Quality Teachers Out of Urban Classrooms*, documented how vacancy notification policies, rigid staffing rules and late budget timelines caused urban districts to hire too late to capture the highest-quality teacher applicants. Our 2005 report, *Unintended Consequences: The Case for Reforming the Staffing Rules in Urban Teachers Union Contracts*, illustrated how contractual staffing rules, built around the assumption that any teacher could fill any vacancy, forced schools to hire teachers they did not want and teachers to take positions for which they might not be a good fit.

Each of these reports in its own way documented a flawed assumption that has pervaded American educational policy for decades—the assumption that teachers are interchangeable parts. We have come to call this phenomenon the **Widget Effect**. In the presence of the Widget Effect, school systems wrongly conflate educational access with educational *quality*; the only teacher quality goal that schools need to achieve is to fill all of their positions. It becomes a foregone conclusion that, so long as there is an accredited teacher—any teacher—in front of the classroom, students are being served adequately.

While the Widget Effect pervades many aspects of our education system, it is in teacher evaluation that both its architecture and its consequences are most immediately apparent. In this report, we examine the central role that the design and implementation of teacher evaluation systems play in creating and reinforcing the Widget Effect; how teacher and administrator beliefs about evaluation illustrate the Widget Effect at work; and how the Widget Effect fuels a policy framework that ignores both strong and weak teacher performance. In the absence of meaningful performance information, teacher effectiveness is treated as a constant, not a variable, and school districts must instead rely on other considerations—many of them unrelated to student academic success—to make critical workforce decisions.

In the presence of the Widget Effect, school systems wrongly conflate educational access with educational quality.

## CHARACTERISTICS: THE WIDGET EFFECT IN TEACHER EVALUATION

The Widget Effect is rooted in the failure of teacher evaluation systems to produce meaningful information about teacher effectiveness. In theory, an evaluation system should identify and measure individual teachers' strengths and weaknesses accurately and consistently, so that teachers get the feedback they need to improve their practice and so that schools can determine how best to allocate resources and provide support. In practice, teacher evaluation systems devalue instructional effectiveness by generating performance information that reflects virtually no variation among teachers at all.

This fundamental failing has a deeply insidious effect on teachers and schools by institutionalizing indifference when it comes to performance. As a result, important variations between teachers vanish. Excellence goes unrecognized, development is neglected and poor performance goes unaddressed.

### All Teachers Are Rated Good or Great

The disconnect between teacher evaluation systems and actual teacher performance is most strikingly illustrated by the wide gap between student outcomes and teacher ratings in many districts. Though thousands of teachers included in this report teach in schools where high percentages of students fail year after year to meet basic academic standards, less than one percent of surveyed teachers received a negative rating on their most recent evaluation.<sup>4</sup>

This is not to say that responsibility for a failing school rests on the shoulders of teachers alone, or that none of these teachers demonstrated truly high performance; however, there can be no doubt that these ratings dramatically overstate the number of exemplary teachers and understate the number with moderate and severe performance concerns. These data simultaneously obscure poor performance and overlook excellence, as the value of superlative teacher ratings is rendered meaningless by their overuse.

To a large degree, teacher evaluation systems codify this whitewashing of performance differences, beginning with the rating categories themselves. Five of the ten districts in this study with available teacher evaluation rating data<sup>5</sup> use a binary rating system for assessing teacher performance;

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*“Poorly performing teachers are rated at the same level as the rest of us. This infuriates those of us who do a good job.”*

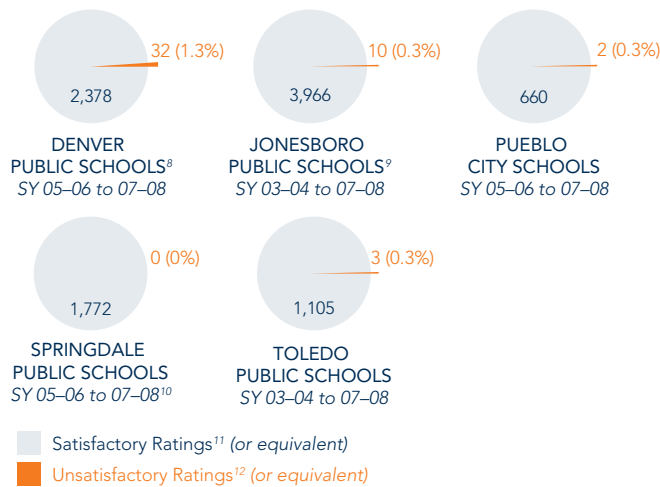
*—Akron Public Schools Teacher*

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teachers are categorized as either “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory.”<sup>6</sup> There are no shades of gray to describe nuances in performance.

As *Figure 01* illustrates, in districts that use binary ratings, virtually all tenured<sup>7</sup> teachers (more than 99 percent) receive the satisfactory rating; the number receiving an unsatisfactory rating amounts to a fraction of a percentage. In these districts, it makes little difference that two ratings are available; in practice only one is ever used.

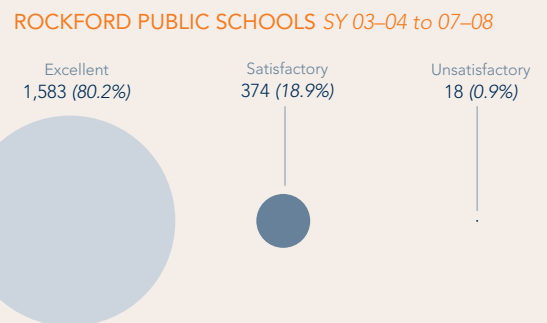
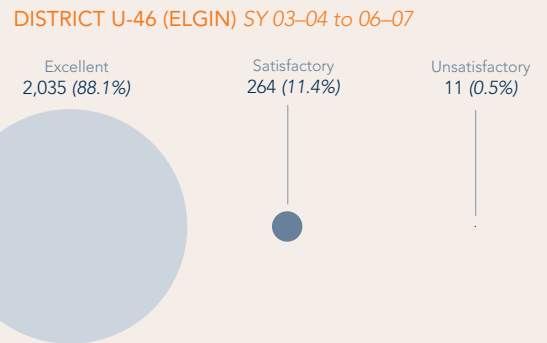
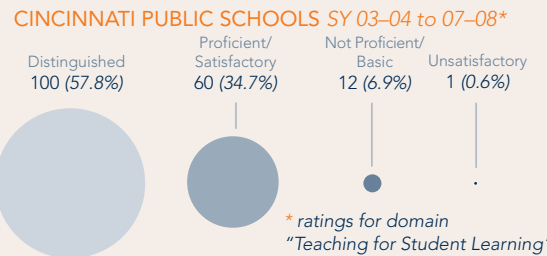
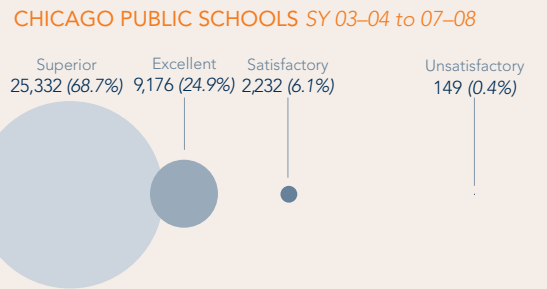
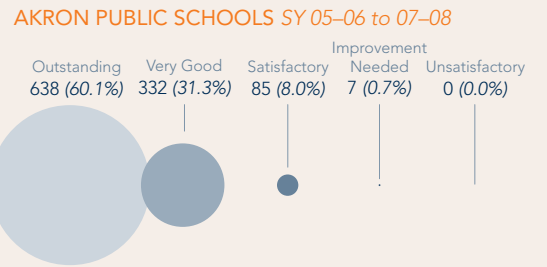
**FIGURE 01 | Evaluation Ratings for Tenured Teachers in Districts with Binary Rating Systems\***



One might hope that teacher evaluation systems that employ a broader range of rating options would more accurately reflect the performance differences among teachers. However, even when given multiple ratings from which to choose, evaluators in all districts studied rate the majority of teachers in the top category, rather than assigning the top rating to only those teachers who actually outperform the majority of their peers. As illustrated in *Figure 02*, in the five districts with multiple teacher evaluation ratings for which data were available,<sup>13</sup> 70 percent of tenured teachers still received the highest rating.<sup>14</sup> Another 24 percent received the second-highest rating.

While districts using multiple rating systems do show some additional variability in teacher evaluation beyond those using binary rating systems, districts with four or more ratings still assign tenured teachers the lowest two rating options in one out of 16 cases.<sup>15</sup> In each case, the basic outcome remains true: almost no teachers are identified as delivering unsatisfactory instruction.

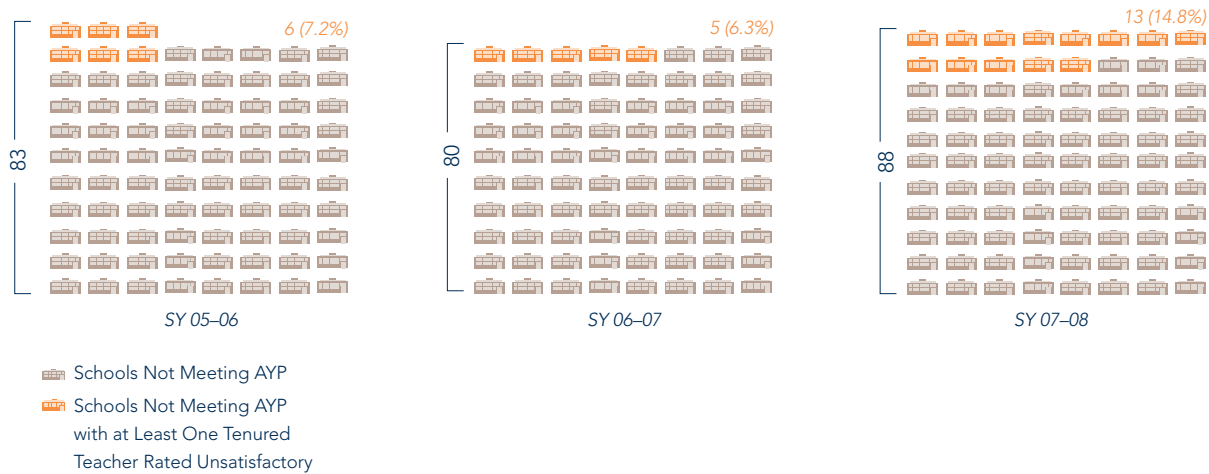
**FIGURE 02 | Evaluation Ratings for Tenured Teachers in Districts with Multiple-Rating Systems\***



\*Note: Evaluation rating data in *Figures 01* and *02* were collected from each district. Data are as accurate as the records provided to TNTP for this study.

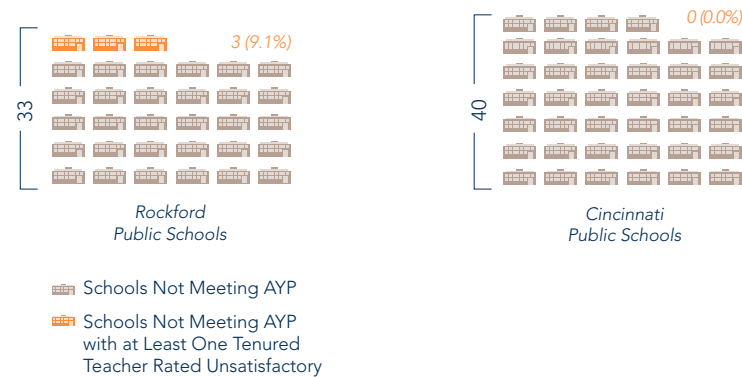
These data often stand in sharp relief against current levels of student achievement. For example, in Denver schools that did not make adequate yearly progress (AYP), more than 98 percent of tenured teachers received the highest rating—satisfactory.<sup>16</sup> On average, over the last three years, only 10 percent<sup>17</sup> of failing schools issued at least one unsatisfactory rating to a tenured teacher.

FIGURE 03 | Frequency of Unsatisfactory Ratings in Denver Public Schools that Did Not Meet AYP<sup>18</sup>



These findings are consistent with a one year snapshot of data from other districts. Less than 10 percent of Rockford’s failing schools rated a tenured teacher unsatisfactory in 2007–08, and none of Cincinnati’s failing schools did.

FIGURE 04 | Rockford Public Schools & Cincinnati Public Schools AYP Data (SY07-08)<sup>19</sup>



Moreover, it is important to note that performance simply goes untracked for a subset of teachers. In some cases, this is systemic. One of the 12 districts studied does not centrally track or record any evaluation data at all. However, in many other cases, it reflects the perfunctory nature of the evaluation system itself, as 9 percent of teachers surveyed appear to have missed their most recent scheduled evaluation.<sup>20</sup>

## Excellence Goes Unrecognized

In a world where all teachers are rated as good or great, the truly outstanding teachers—those who are realizing life-changing academic success for their students—cannot be formally identified. And if they are not formally identified, schools cannot prioritize their retention or leverage them to develop and improve their colleagues.

In theory, districts should be able to identify their top performers by awarding them the highest rating on the evaluation scale, but as previously illustrated, the highest rating is awarded to many more teachers than can possibly fall into this category. The dilution of the highest rating category is reflected in teacher and administrator perceptions about how this category is defined. Nearly a quarter of administrators (24 percent) and nearly a fifth of teachers (18 percent) equate their district’s highest rating with a teacher who is merely effective or even somewhat effective, rather than seeing that rating as reserved for those who are truly exceptional.<sup>21</sup>

In the absence of a mechanism for identifying and rewarding outstanding performers, the average effort becomes the bar for the mark of excellence. In a subset of districts<sup>22</sup> where teachers were asked to rate their instructional performance on a scale from 1 to 10, more than 43 percent rated themselves a 9 or higher (see *Figure 05*). These teachers are not irrationally inflating their estimate of their teaching performance; they are simply responding to an environment in which all are assumed to be superior performers.

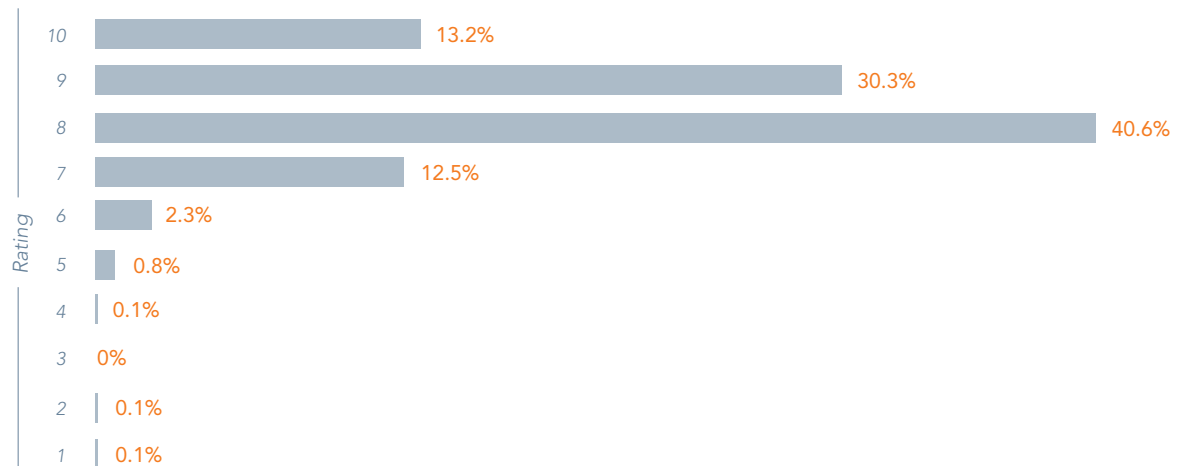
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*“There is no recognition for teachers who are doing an exemplary job.”*

*-Chicago Public Schools Teacher*

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**FIGURE 05 | Teacher Assessments of Their Own Instructional Performance**  
ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR INSTRUCTIONAL PERFORMANCE?



If districts could systematically identify which teachers perform at the highest level, they could use this information to inform teaching assignments, target teachers for teacher leader positions, and prioritize the retention of these teachers. In the absence of this information, however, excellence cannot be recognized or rewarded. As in other areas studied, there is broad agreement among teachers and administrators that this is a problem. Fifty-nine percent of teachers and 63 percent of administrators from the four study sites where we surveyed more deeply on the topic report their district is not doing enough to identify, compensate, promote and retain the most effective teachers.<sup>23</sup>



## Development Is Limited

The damage of ignoring differences in teacher effectiveness is not isolated to the limited recognition of excellence; an equally troubling consequence is that teachers rarely receive meaningful feedback on their performance through the formal evaluation system. In the 12 districts studied, development areas were identified for only 26 percent of teachers during their most recent evaluations.<sup>24</sup>

In other words, nearly 3 of 4 teachers went through the evaluation process but received no specific feedback about how to improve their practice. This is true even for novice teachers who are most in need of actionable feedback as they learn their craft—only 43 percent of teachers in their first four years had any development areas identified. It is inconceivable that 74 percent of teachers, and 57 percent of teachers in their first four years, do not require improvement in any area of performance.

Some may argue that administrators prefer to give teachers critical feedback outside the formal evaluation process. However, 47 percent<sup>25</sup> of teachers report not having participated in a single informal conversation with their administrator over the last year about improving aspects of their instructional performance. In addition, of the relatively small group of teachers who had a performance area identified as in need of improvement or unsatisfactory, 62 percent said they were not aware of performance concerns before their evaluation.<sup>26</sup>

This suggests that many administrators do not regularly or proactively offer feedback on instructional performance outside of the formal evaluation process.

While districts often fail to identify areas where teachers are in need of improvement, they also fail to provide targeted support to the subset of teachers who have had development areas identified. Less than half (45 percent<sup>27</sup>) of teachers across all districts who had development areas identified on their most recent evaluations said they received useful support to improve those areas.

Constructive feedback that specifies areas for development is a critical facet of any performance evaluation, even for strong performers. In theory, even if virtually all teachers are rated as good or great, their evaluations could provide them with valuable feedback they could use to improve their instructional practice. However, that theoretical potential currently goes unrealized and teachers are too often denied both the knowledge and the opportunity to improve.

As a result, it is not surprising that so many teachers believe that the current evaluation system, and the absence of meaningful feedback it produces, does them a disservice. Only 42 percent of teachers agree that evaluation allows accurate assessment of performance and only 43 percent of teachers agree that evaluation helps teachers improve.<sup>28</sup>

*“The evaluation process should have teacher development as the primary goal, not just assigning a number on a rubric. As it is set up now, there is no immediate feedback to the teacher in any constructive format. Scores are based on rigid, often meaningless recitations. It is the epitome of poor teaching methods to give a score without discussion.”*

*—Cincinnati Public Schools Teacher*

## Novice Teachers Receive No Special Attention or Scrutiny<sup>29</sup>

One could argue teacher ratings are so high and development is so limited because probationary teachers undergo a rigorous screening process through which weak performers are weeded out. According to this line of argument, all the poorly performing teachers were effectively ushered out while they were still novices. Yet as illustrated in *Figure 06*, our research found no evidence that teachers are subject to a rigorous screening process during their probationary periods; only a fraction of teachers are “non-renewed” by the districts when they have the opportunity to do so.

As a result, though the awarding of tenure status has the potential to recognize effective teaching and to transition out teachers who are unable to reach a reasonable performance standard, in practice there is no observable rigor applied to the tenure decision. It is not surprising that many administrators (41 percent) report that they have never non-renewed a teacher in his or her final probationary year because they found that teacher’s performance unworthy of tenure. Moreover, 76 percent<sup>30</sup> of novice teachers express confidence that they will receive tenure even before they have completed the probationary period, often because they have consistently received superlative ratings—even as first-year teachers.

This lack of rigor also leads to a limited focus on development for novice teachers. Though it is widely recognized that teachers are less effective in their first years in the classroom, differences in performance tend to go unremarked from the very beginning of a teacher’s career. Novice teachers begin receiving the highest rating when they start their career or within a few years of being hired, with 66 percent of novice teachers in districts with multiple ratings receiving a rating greater than “satisfactory” on their most recent performance evaluation.<sup>31</sup> By giving novice teachers high ratings from the day they begin teaching, schools communicate inattention to and low expectations for instructional performance. Furthermore, they miss a critical window of opportunity to focus new teachers on their instructional strengths and

*“New teachers are given so little support in my district that sometimes they are simply doomed to fail. Yet, no one notices and they finish their probationary status without a negative evaluation.”*

*-Denver Public Schools Teacher*

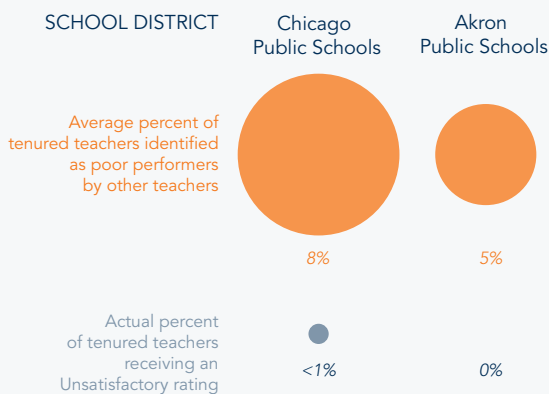
FIGURE 06 | Non-renewal Patterns of Probationary Teachers<sup>32</sup>

SCHOOL DISTRICT	Number of non-renewals for performance in 5 years	Average percent of probationary teachers non-renewed for performance each year
Denver <sup>33</sup> Public Schools	132	3.0%
Jonesboro Public Schools	0	0.0%
Chicago <sup>34</sup> Public Schools	29	0.1%
District U-46 (Elgin)	28	0.9%
Toledo Public Schools <sup>35</sup>	7	0.9%
Cincinnati Public Schools	7	0.1%

*“I think it gives the hard working, honest teachers a bad reputation being lumped together with a group of sub-par teachers. What’s even worse is that our principal does absolutely nothing about any of this.”*

*-Akron Public Schools Teacher*

FIGURE 07 | Percent of Poor Performers Teachers Observe in Their Schools vs. Percent of Teachers Given an Unsatisfactory Rating<sup>36</sup>



weaknesses during a formative point in their careers. Instead of getting meaningful feedback about what they are doing right and wrong in their instructional practice, new teachers mostly get the message that their actual performance has little bearing on how they are rated.

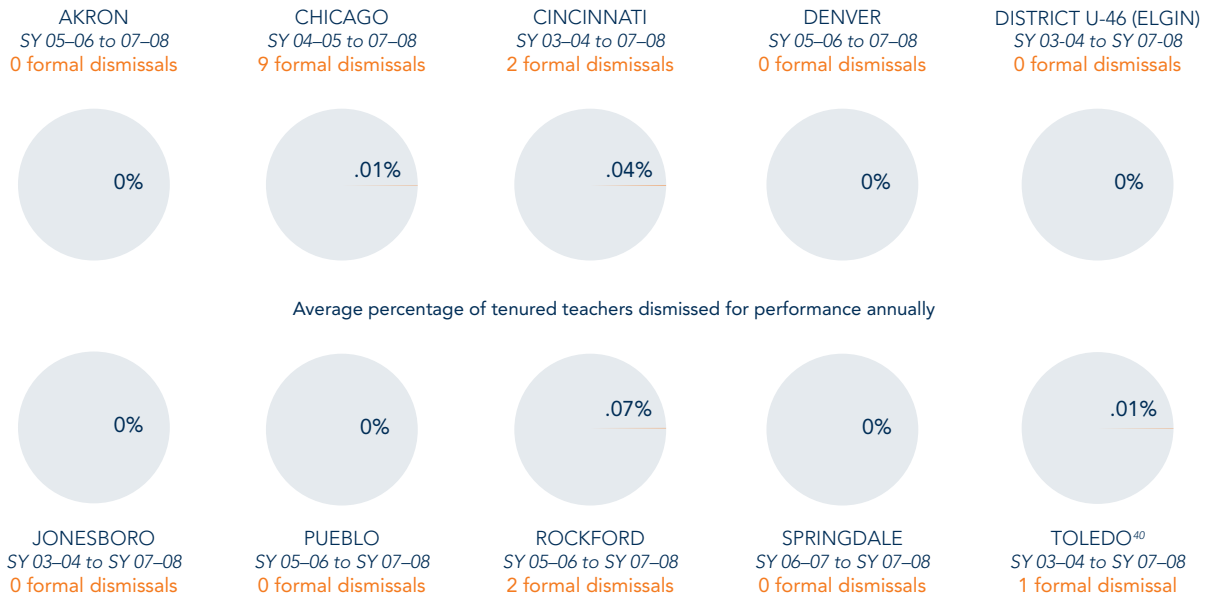
### Poor Performance Goes Unaddressed

It goes without saying that teacher dismissal has become a polarizing issue in the education community; however, we found that teachers and administrators broadly agree about the existence and scope of the problem and about what steps need to be taken to address poor performance in schools. In fact, an overwhelming majority of both teachers (68 percent) and administrators (91 percent) agree or strongly agree that dismissing poor performers is important to maintaining high-quality instructional teams. This may seem self-evident, but it suggests a consensus that teacher performance management should entail accountability, not just development.

In the four districts where we surveyed more deeply, teachers and administrators agree that there is a small but significant subset of teachers who perform poorly, with 81 percent of administrators and 57 percent of teachers reporting that there is a tenured teacher in their school who delivers poor instruction.<sup>37</sup> In *Figure 07*, we examine the levels of poor instructional performance teachers observe in their schools and compare it to the actual number of unsatisfactory ratings given in Chicago and Akron.<sup>38</sup> The data confirm what teachers and school administrators report—the number of teachers identified as unsatisfactory is miniscule and far lower than the percentage of poor performers observed by their colleagues.

Moreover, 43 percent of teachers across all districts believe that there is a tenured teacher in their school who should be *dismissed* for poor instructional performance but has not been. Yet experienced teachers are almost never actually dismissed for poor performance. Most administrators have not initiated the dismissal of a single tenured teacher in the past five years.<sup>39</sup> In fact, the number of dismissals for performance in each district studied can be counted in the single digits, if at all.

FIGURE 08 | Frequency of Tenured Teacher Dismissals for Performance

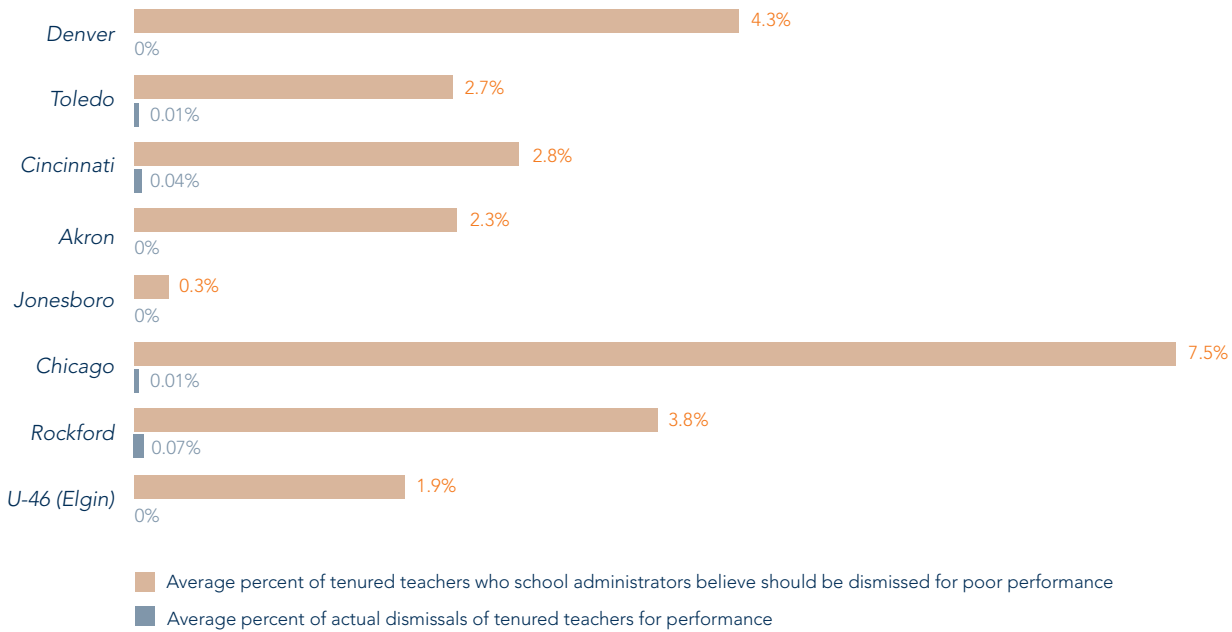


Note: Teacher dismissal for performance data was collected from ten districts, representing some combination of school years 2003-04 through 2007-08.<sup>41</sup>

It is not surprising then that most teachers (68 percent<sup>42</sup>) believe that poor performance is overlooked by administrators. This is essentially confirmed by administrators themselves, 86 percent<sup>43</sup> of whom say they do not always pursue dismissal even if it is warranted. School administrators appear to be deterred from pursuing remediation and dismissal because they view the dismissal process as overly time consuming and cumbersome, and the outcomes for those who do invest the time in the process is uncertain. Even for the small number of administrators that actually do attempt the process, fully half report that it yielded an outcome other than dismissal.

While all of the districts studied share the goal of an evaluation system that can identify instances of ineffective performance so administrators can properly intervene, the data make clear that this does not occur. Despite the fact that teachers and administrators report that poor performance is commonplace, intervention appears to be extremely rare when compared to the scope of the problem (*see Figure 09*). We are left to conclude that current systems for managing teacher performance fail to function on the most basic level—addressing poor instructional performance.

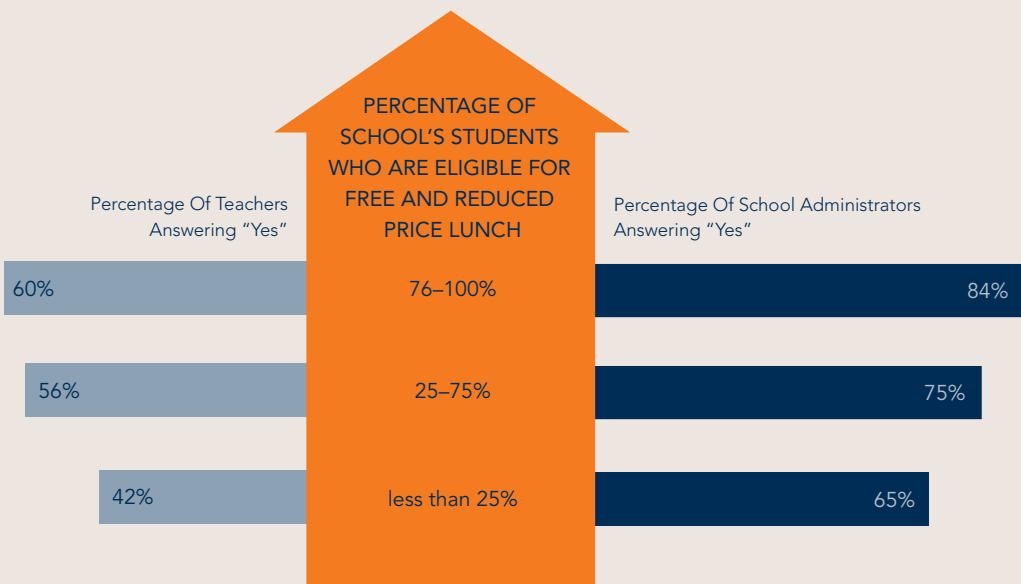
FIGURE 09 | Perceived Need for Dismissals vs. Actual Dismissals, by District



### The Impact on High-Need Schools

Though poor performance goes unaddressed in most schools, our data indicate that the problem is most acute in the highest-need schools. These data are consistent across multiple districts<sup>44</sup> and with research that reflects that poor and minority children, who have the greatest need for effective teachers, are least likely to get them.

FIGURE 10 | In your opinion, are there tenured teachers in your school who deliver poor instruction?



## FLAWS IN EVALUATION PRACTICE AND IMPLEMENTATION

While most teacher evaluation systems espouse grand intentions for teacher development, assessment and improvement, the data above show that all too often the outcome fails to equal the intent. Instead, the process becomes devalued. Evaluations are perfunctory, school districts do not invest in administrator capacity to provide meaningful feedback, and teachers come to expect that they will receive only positive feedback.

### Teacher Evaluations Are Perfunctory

The current evaluation process reflects and codifies the assumption underlying the Widget Effect—that all teachers are essentially interchangeable. Operating under a belief system that one teacher is as good as any other, schools invest very little time or effort in evaluating teachers. Instead, they apply a perfunctory process, at best designed to capture a snapshot of a teacher’s instructional performance at a moment in time. Across the four states studied, all probationary teachers must be evaluated annually; however, tenured teachers may not be required to be evaluated at all, or only once every few years.

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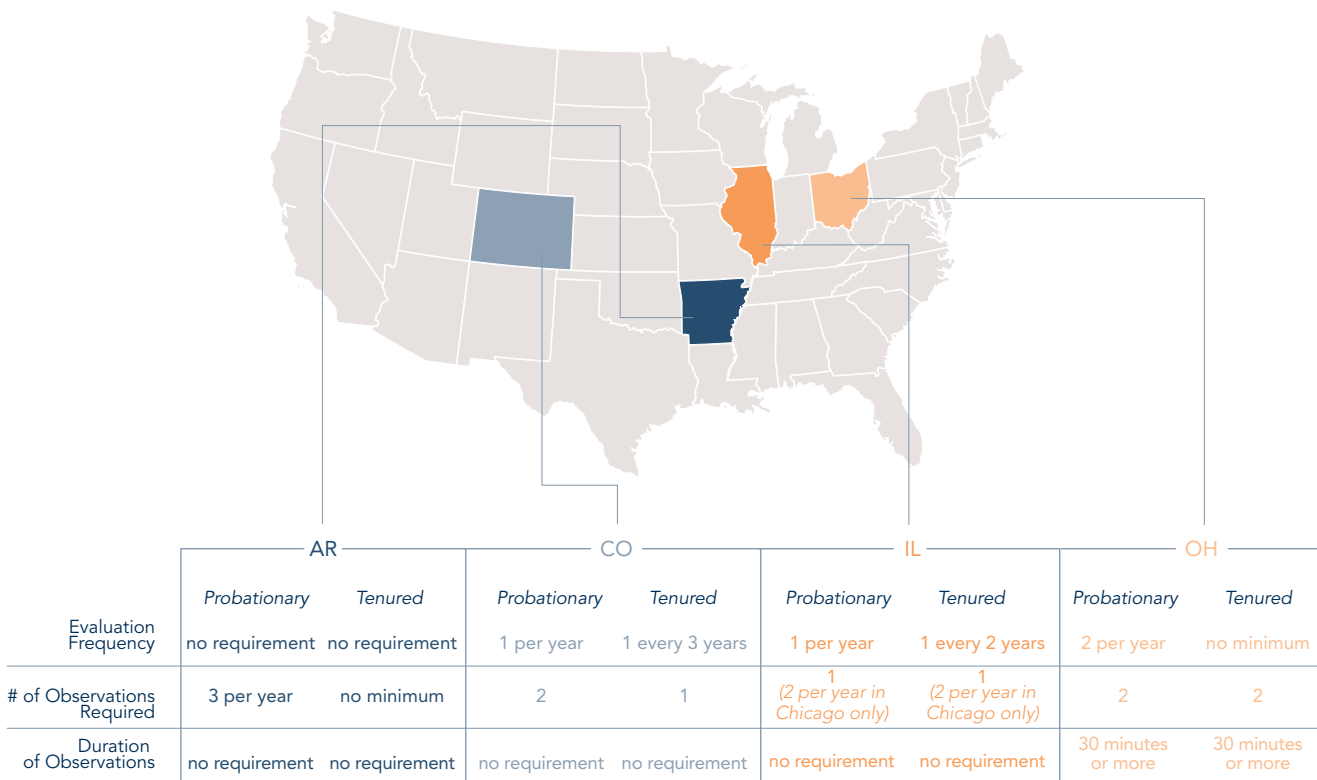
*“It’s the easiest thing for administrators to do. It’s the path of least resistance. They don’t have time or often, even the authority, to coach or correct ineffective teachers. The good teachers remain unrewarded for doing fantastic jobs, while bad teachers get to coast along.”*

*—Little Rock Public Schools Teacher*

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FIGURE 11 | State Teacher Evaluation Requirements in Brief



Moreover, only five of the districts studied track evaluation results electronically, a step that would at least provide the opportunity to easily monitor and use evaluation information to inform decision-making at a school and district-wide level. Other districts record evaluations in paper files, typically housed at the central office.

Not surprisingly, school administrators spend very little time on what is a largely meaningless and inconsequential evaluation process. Most teacher evaluations are based on two or fewer classroom observations totaling 76 minutes or less. Across all districts, 64 percent of tenured teachers were observed two or fewer times for their most recent evaluation, for an average total of 75 minutes.<sup>45</sup> Probationary teachers receive little additional attention despite their novice status; 59 percent of probationary teachers were observed two or fewer times

for their most recent evaluation, for an average total of 81 minutes, a mere six additional minutes. Clearly, effective evaluation amounts to far more than how much time an administrator spends in a teacher's classroom, but the infrequency and brevity of administrator observations underscores their inattention to performance.

Equally important, evaluators spend no more time to observe or give feedback to the small number of teachers identified as mediocre or poor performers than they spend with highly rated teachers. Teachers receiving lower than the highest rating report the same number of observations as their more highly rated colleagues and the same amount of informal feedback.

FIGURE 12<sup>46</sup> | Number of classroom observations by evaluator, prior to evaluator assigning final evaluation rating(s).

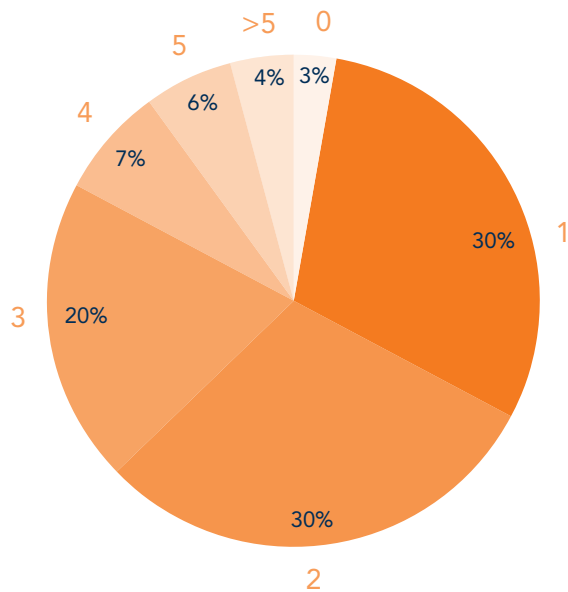
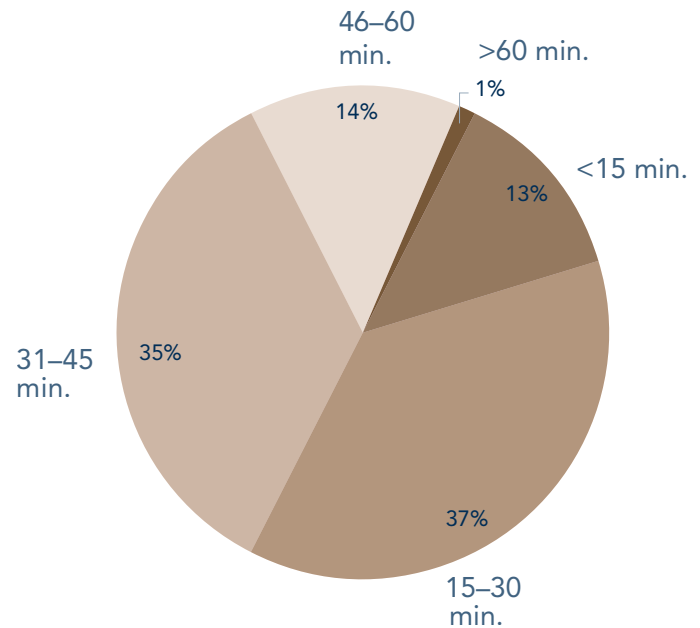


FIGURE 13<sup>47</sup> | Average minutes of a classroom observation, prior to a teacher being assigned a final evaluation rating(s).



**65 percent of the lower-rated teachers and 62 percent of highest-rated teachers** report 2 or fewer observations during their last evaluation cycle.<sup>48</sup>

**58 percent of lower-rated teachers** receive informal feedback as compared to 56 percent of highest-rated teachers.<sup>49</sup>

Even when performance is clearly an issue—as represented by the small number of teachers who received the lowest rating on their last evaluation—evaluators fail to invest significant time monitoring instruction. Among the small number of teachers receiving the lowest rating, 74 percent report that they were observed three or fewer times despite significant concerns about their performance.

*“I do not feel adequately trained to conduct a teacher evaluation. There are evaluation tools, but no one reviews them with you. We are not trained on the process. As a first year principal, you try it and you move through the process because it has to be done.”*

–Toledo Public Schools Principal



## School Administrators Receive Limited Training

Given the low priority assigned to teacher evaluation, it comes as no surprise that school districts invest minimally in evaluation training for school administrators. In many districts, evaluation training is a one-time endeavor provided either when an administrator is new in his or her position or when the district implements a revised teacher evaluation system. Consequently, school administrators are ill-equipped to evaluate teachers effectively.

Background conversations conducted with district staff suggest that, in many of our study sites, school administrators receive varying levels of training on how to conduct an effective teacher evaluation. For example, in the Cincinnati Public Schools, evaluation training can be provided upon request. In Chicago Public Schools and District U-46 (Elgin), training may occur once a year for a limited number of principals, but not all. In other districts, including El Dorado Public Schools and Akron Public Schools, it simply does not occur.

As a result, across all study sites, 51 percent of school administrators describe their level of training in how to conduct an effective evaluation as “very extensive” or “extensive”<sup>50</sup> and school administrators with more evaluation training are more likely to report that they enforce a high standard for instructional performance.

Yet, it is important to note that extensive training alone did not produce a significant change in evaluation outcomes. School administrators with more extensive training report increased percentages of teachers enrolled in remediation or dismissed for delivering poor instruction than school administrators with less training. Yet even among those who report “very extensive” training, only 36 percent have recommended dismissal of a tenured teacher for poor instruction in the last five years.

## Teacher Expectations Are Skewed

It is tempting to believe that simply requiring more frequent and thorough evaluations would result in more rigorous and accurate assessments of teacher performance and increase teachers’ confidence in and esteem for the evaluation process. However, we believe these reforms, while necessary, would be insufficient because the minimal nature of the process speaks to a far deeper problem in the culture of schools: the assumption that not only are all teachers the same, but that they are all performing at a high level.

Our research reflects that there is a strong and logical expectation among teachers that they will receive outstanding performance ratings. While the vast majority of teachers receive the highest rating, those teachers who do not receive it tend to believe that the higher rating was warranted.

In the six districts with multiple-rating scales for which survey data were available,<sup>51</sup> 49 percent of probationary teachers and 77 percent of tenured teachers indicated that they believe they should have received the highest rating on their most recent evaluation. In the four districts with binary rating scales for which survey data were available,<sup>52</sup> 99 percent of probationary and 100 percent of tenured teachers think they should have received the highest rating (Satisfactory) on their most recent evaluation.

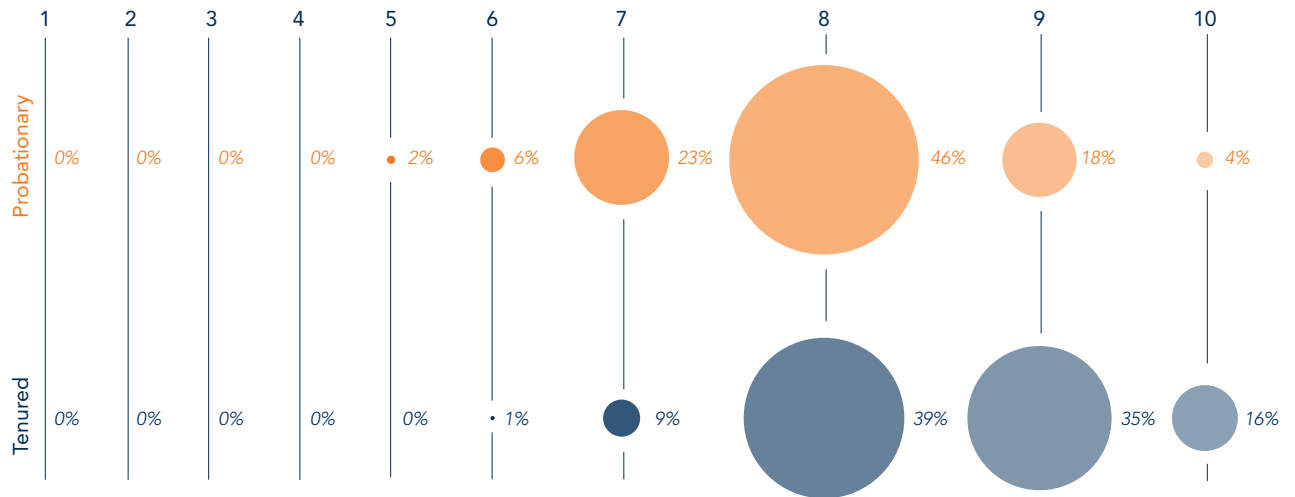
Even teachers who are just beginning their careers believe they deserve the highest performance ratings and are dissatisfied if they are rated good, not great. This inflated sense of performance is evident in the self-assessment ratings of novice teachers. In a subset of districts<sup>53</sup> where teachers were asked to assess their own instructional performance on a scale of 1 to 10, 69 percent of novice teachers rated their instructional performance an 8 or higher.

*“Many teachers are accustomed to receiving a ‘superior’ rating and simply do not accept anything lower. It also seems to be an easier way out for the administrators, rather than have a confrontation with the teacher.”*

*—Chicago Public Schools Teacher*

FIGURE 14 | Teachers' Self Assessments of Instructional Performance

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR INSTRUCTIONAL PERFORMANCE?



In a system where negative or even less than perfect performance ratings are given only rarely, teachers naturally develop an expectation that they will be among the large majority considered top performers. In this context, teachers perceive low or negative ratings not in terms of what they communicate about performance but as a personally-directed insult or attack. The response is understandable in the context of the current system, where so few teachers get critical feedback of any kind. When their evaluation does include criticism, they feel as though they have been singled out while other examples of poor performance go unaddressed.

This creates a culture in which teachers are strongly resistant to receiving an evaluation rating that suggests their practice needs improvement. Schools then find themselves in a vicious cycle; administrators generally do not accurately evaluate poor performance, leading to an expectation of high performance ratings, which, in turn, cause administrators to face stiff cultural resistance when they do issue even marginally negative evaluations. The result is a dysfunctional school community in which performance problems cannot be openly identified or addressed.



## POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF THE WIDGET EFFECT

By failing to produce meaningful information about instructional effectiveness, teacher evaluation systems severely limit the ability of schools and school systems to consider performance when answering critical questions or making strategic decisions about their teacher workforce. On paper, all teachers appear to be equally effective and interchangeable, so schools begin to treat them as such. It is in this way that the Widget Effect takes root.

The Widget Effect endures because there is no mandate for teacher evaluations to do more than identify a few teachers as egregiously incompetent. Performance ratings are not used for critical decisions. Unless a teacher is identified for improvement or dismissal due to a performance assessment suggesting near-total incompetence, evaluations tend to have no consequences, positive or negative.

As a result, the current education policy landscape is chiefly characterized by indifference toward instructional quality. There is no consequence for mediocre or below average teaching, as long as a teacher is not one of the unlucky few to be rated unsatisfactory and face remediation (and even then, it is often overlooked). Ineffective teachers receive salary step increases each year. They may be assigned to work with any group of students, even those who are years behind in academic progress and most in need of accelerated progress. They do not receive differentiated professional development to help them improve.

The indifference extends to the top end of the performance scale as well. For example, an exceptional performance rating does not provide protection from layoff for a teacher in any of the 12 districts studied. An outstanding instructor has no additional right to choose curricular materials for her courses, to participate in the selection or induction of newly hired teachers, or to receive a raise. In short, there is little or no benefit associated with being among the best.

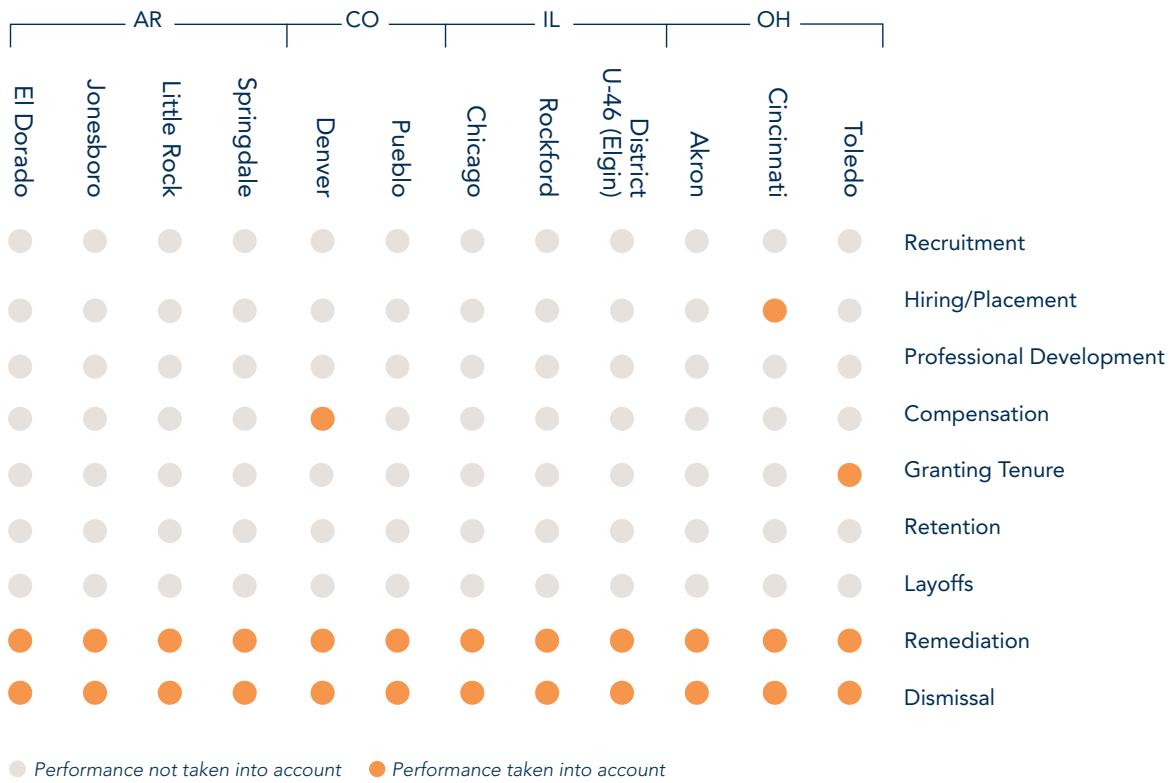
In the absence of policy systems based on instructional effectiveness, districts make decisions about teachers in other ways. Most often, districts default to using a teacher's length of service in the system as a proxy for effectiveness and the basis for most high-stakes decisions.

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*“There are teachers who pour their hearts and souls into teaching. It is heartbreaking to know that all students may have gained in your classroom will not be continued as they move forward. This causes resentment and frustration in our school culture.”*

*–Chicago Public Schools Teacher*

FIGURE 15 | The Widget Effect in Action: Where Evaluation Outcomes Are a Factor in Important Human Capital Decisions<sup>54</sup>



In Chicago, where teachers and administrators were asked about whether effectiveness should be a factor in these decisions, the vast majority of administrators (86 percent)<sup>55</sup> reported that they would spend more time and effort on the evaluation process if evaluations held more importance for other decisions.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, teachers also indicated that evaluations should be considered in decisions such as which teachers lose their position during budget cuts, with 78 percent<sup>57</sup> of teachers in Chicago reporting that these choices should be informed by additional factors other than length of service teaching in the district (seniority).

Given the profound impact of the Widget Effect, it is not surprising that only 49 percent of teachers and only 44 percent of administrators agree or strongly agree that their district enforces a high standard of instructional performance for all teachers. It is a change in this number that will ultimately act as a barometer for whether our schools have eliminated the Widget Effect and introduced a new culture that promotes and supports instructional effectiveness.

“We’re...making an unprecedented commitment to ensure that anyone entrusted with educating our children is doing the job as well as it can be done... [T]hat commitment means...treating teachers like the professionals they are while also holding them more accountable. New teachers will be mentored by experienced ones. Good teachers will be rewarded with more money for improved student achievement, and asked to accept more responsibilities for lifting up their schools. Teachers throughout a school will benefit from guidance and support to help them improve.”

-President Barack Obama

## RECOMMENDATIONS: REVERSING THE WIDGET EFFECT

The Widget Effect is deeply ingrained in the fundamental systems and policies that determine the quality and effectiveness of the teachers in our public schools. While high-functioning evaluation systems alone may be an insufficient antidote, it is clear that reversing the Widget Effect depends on the ability of such systems to produce accurate and credible information on instructional performance that can be connected to other high-stakes decisions.

Overcoming the Widget Effect will require the commitment and investment of all stakeholders in public education today. Taken together, the recommendations below represent a comprehensive approach to improving instructional effectiveness and maximizing student learning. We believe they will enable our nation’s schools to recognize, reward and retain their most effective teachers; to provide useful and differentiated support and development to teachers who have not yet achieved their potential; and to ensure that those who do not improve despite receiving support are not permitted to remain in the classroom.

These recommendations are interlinked and co-dependent; adopting one or two while ignoring others will not eliminate the Widget Effect or produce the quantum leaps in student achievement our children deserve.

**01 | Adopt a comprehensive performance evaluation and development system that fairly, accurately and credibly differentiates teachers based on their effectiveness in promoting student achievement and provides targeted professional development to help them improve.**

Teachers, as professionals, should have their performance assessed based on their ability to succeed at the core mission of our public schools—to deliver instruction that fosters student academic growth. Such a system has to recognize that teachers perform at varying levels—they are not interchangeable parts with uniform attributes, strengths and weaknesses.

In order to be successful, it is critical that a teacher evaluation system be credible; credible to teachers, to administrators, to superintendents, to school boards and to parents. There is no single “correct” model of performance evaluation, but credible systems will share several characteristics:

**Clear and straightforward performance standards** focused on student achievement outcomes.

**Multiple, distinct rating options** that allow administrators to precisely describe and compare differences in instructional performance.

**Regular monitoring** and norming of administrator judgments (e.g., through or with the aid of peer evaluations, independent or third party reviews, and/or teacher surveys).<sup>57</sup>

**Frequent and regular feedback** to teachers about whether and how their teaching performance meets, exceeds or fails to meet standards.

**Professional development** that is linked to the performance standards and differentiated based on individual teacher needs.

**Intensive support** for teachers who fall below performance standards.

## VALUE-ADDED DATA AND TEACHER EVALUATION

Some districts and states have developed “value-added” models to assess the impact of individual schools and teachers on student achievement. These models use various predictive factors to determine how well students are expected to achieve on standardized tests and then measure the positive or negative variation from that expected performance level as a means of evaluating the impact of individual teachers. These models, which have shown both to reliably predict the future impact of many teachers and to correlate with administrator evaluations of classroom performance, are promising. However, they cannot serve as a substitute for a comprehensive teacher evaluation system. First, value-added models apply typically only to a minority of teachers, those in annual testing grades and subjects in elementary and middle schools. Second, while value-added models may be useful in identifying the impact of teachers on the margins of the performance spectrum, they are less reliable in differentiating among teachers in the middle ranges of performance. Value-added can be a useful supplement to a performance evaluation system where a credible model is available and may be appropriate for wider use as student assessment systems and value-added models evolve.<sup>59</sup>

## UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND SUPPORT

These recommendations are ambitious and comprehensive, befitting the demonstrable need for dramatic change in our schools. However, they are also pragmatic and achievable. While there will clearly be significant transition costs associated with the implementation of our recommendations, there are also unprecedented opportunities for schools to obtain external funding for this purpose. Major philanthropies are investing in human capital reform in K-12 education at historic levels,<sup>60</sup> and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act includes substantial new funding for teacher effectiveness reform.<sup>61</sup> In addition, school districts may be able to reallocate the substantial funding they currently dedicate to undifferentiated professional development to provide better evaluation systems and more relevant professional development to meet the needs of their teachers.<sup>62</sup>

## 02 | Train administrators and other evaluators in the teacher performance evaluation system and hold them accountable for using it effectively.

In order for a performance evaluation system to fairly and accurately reflect variations in teacher effectiveness, those who are conducting the evaluations—principals, assistant principals, peers or third parties—must be well trained in setting rigorous but achievable performance standards, objectively measuring teacher performance against those standards, providing constructive and actionable feedback to teachers and designing and providing the differentiated support teachers need to meet or exceed the standards.

The training must be intensive and ongoing. Evaluators will need to become expert on the performance evaluation system before it is launched, but just as importantly, will need ongoing guidance as they use the system. District officials must recognize that principals and assistant principals will be chiefly responsible not just for implementing a new evaluation process, but for leading a change in culture.

District officials also have an important role to play in ensuring that teachers are fairly and accurately differentiated based on their effectiveness in the classroom. They must ensure that differentiation through the performance evaluation system remains a priority for administrators by investing in ongoing support and holding them accountable for this process. Administrators who cannot effectively evaluate teacher performance will be unable to reward and retain top performers, improve or remove poor performers, or help all teachers to understand and respond to their own strengths and weaknesses. This fundamental failure translates to an inability to ensure that students receive consistently high-quality instruction, a failing that administrators' own evaluations must reflect.

### 03 | Use performance evaluations to inform key decisions such as teacher assignment, professional development, compensation, retention and dismissal.

The production of accurate information that can inform important human capital decisions in districts and schools is one of the clear advantages of utilizing a robust teacher performance evaluation system. At present, decisions about how much to pay teachers, where to assign them, what professional development to provide and whom to exit are based on information that generally has little or no relationship to effectiveness in the classroom.

Once districts fairly and accurately assess teacher effectiveness, they can and should put this information to broader use. For example, it might be used to match teachers who provide particularly effective instruction to English Language Learners with students in that category, or to determine which teachers to target for retention through recognition, additional responsibility, compensation or promotion.

**Modify teacher compensation systems**, most of which are exclusively based on years of service and attainment of educational credits, so that they also reward high-performing teachers and withhold step increases for low-performing teachers.

**Factor teacher effectiveness into layoff and excessing (displacement) decisions**, rather than basing such decisions solely on seniority.

**Target professional development to identified teacher needs** so that it helps teachers address areas where they can improve.

**Recognize consistently excellent teachers** through additional compensation and career ladder opportunities as well as opportunities to employ innovative instructional approaches and share best practices with novices and other colleagues.

**Fairly but swiftly remove consistently low-performing teachers** who are identified as such through a fair, credible evaluation process and who fail to meet performance standards despite receiving individualized support.

Attaching “stakes” to performance evaluation outcomes for teachers and school administrators is not merely advisable, it is essential. Basing these critical decisions on accurate measures of teacher effectiveness will help to create cultures of excellence in schools, where the focus is on achieving individual, group and school performance goals related to student achievement. In addition, administrators will have to invest substantial time in the performance evaluation system, and will be required to have the difficult conversations about performance with their teachers that so rarely occur in schools today. Without attaching stakes to evaluation outcomes, it would be unrealistic to expect that administrators will continue to do the hard work to ensure that the performance evaluation system remains rigorous and credible.



## 04 | Adopt dismissal policies that provide lower-stakes options for ineffective teachers to exit the district and a system of due process that is fair but streamlined and efficient.

When virtually all teachers are rated as satisfactory or better, a teacher identified as unsatisfactory may justifiably wonder whether he or she is the subject of a witch hunt. But under a system with clear performance standards, frequent constructive feedback and ample support for teachers failing to meet the standards, unsatisfactory ratings will not be anomalous, surprising or without clear justification. As a result, it is far more likely that teachers identified as unsatisfactory will accept the appraisal of their performance and voluntarily exit the district (as is common in other professions) rather than challenge the decision through formal processes.

Districts and states can facilitate the voluntary departure of unsatisfactory performers by providing low-stakes options such as multi-year unpaid sabbaticals (without job guarantees upon return). Districts can also motivate unsatisfactory teachers to voluntarily exit by denying them salary increases unless and until they meet performance standards, and by allowing pension plan portability so that veteran teachers who need a change can accept positions in other districts without sacrificing pension benefits.

Regardless of whether teachers leave voluntarily or through a streamlined due process system, they should not face license revocation unless they are a danger to children. Just as in other professions, those who fail to meet performance standards of a particular employer should not be barred from the profession, because “fit” matters and an effective match with a new school may lead to improved instructional performance.

Formal dismissal processes should no longer determine whether teachers can continue to practice their chosen profession, but, rather, should be a check on arbitrary decisions by administration. This much more narrow focus, coupled with a transparent evaluation system and process, should permit a dismissal process that does not involve protracted and expensive quasi-judicial hearings in which arbitrators substitute their judgment about teacher competence for that of school or district leaders. There should be no necessity, in fact, for schools and districts to invest hundreds of hours and hundreds of thousands of dollars seeking the dismissal of a single unsatisfactory-rated teacher.<sup>63</sup>

Nor will extensive remediation processes be necessary in cases of unsatisfactory performance. Teachers failing to meet performance standards will receive fair notice of performance problems, guidance on how to improve and time to do so, all within the context of the performance evaluation system. On the heels of such a process, dismissal should not require extensive additional documentation or lengthy testimony about performance problems or remediation. In the context of a credible performance evaluation system, an expedited hearing of one day’s duration should be sufficient for an arbitrator to determine if the performance evaluation and development process were followed and that the judgments of schools administrators were made in good faith.

At present, decisions about how much to pay teachers, where to assign them, what professional development to provide and whom to exit are based on information that generally has little or no relationship to effectiveness in the classroom.

- <sup>1</sup> Victor H. Bernstein, "Security of the Teacher in his Job," *The New York Times*, May 24, 1936.
- <sup>2</sup> Remarks by President Barack Obama to the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce on a Complete and Competitive American Education, March 10, 2009.
- <sup>3</sup> For information about the impact of teacher effectiveness on student outcomes, see Rivkin, S., E. Hanushek, and J. Kain (2005). "Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement," *Econometrica*, 73(2), 417-458. Also see Sanders, W.L. and Rivers, J.C. (1996). "Research Project Report: Cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers on Future Student Academic Achievement." University of Tennessee Value-Added Research and Assessment Center; and Rockoff, J. E. (2004). "The Impact of Individual Teachers on Students' Achievement: Evidence from Panel Data." *American Economic Review* 94(2), 247-52.
- <sup>4</sup> Teacher survey data from Akron Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, Denver Public Schools, District U-46 (Elgin), Little Rock School District, Pueblo City Schools, Rockford Public Schools, Springdale Public Schools and Toledo Public Schools. A "negative" evaluation constitutes the lowest evaluation rating possible, per each district's evaluation system/tool.
- <sup>5</sup> Evaluation data from El Dorado Public Schools and Little Rock School District were unavailable for manual collection. In these instances, the districts are represented by survey data alone.
- <sup>6</sup> Districts that use a binary rating system to evaluate teachers include Denver Public Schools, Jonesboro Public Schools, Pueblo City Schools, Toledo Public Schools and Springdale Public Schools. Springdale Public Schools uses a binary evaluation system for most non-probationary teachers and a multiple rating system for probationary teachers and some non-probationary teachers.
- <sup>7</sup> Throughout this report, the generic term "tenured" is used to refer to teachers who have tenure, non-probationary status or continuing-contract status.
- <sup>8</sup> Denver Public Schools uses a multiple rating system for various indicators, and then a final summative rating of "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory."
- <sup>9</sup> In Jonesboro Public Schools, teachers receive either "Meets Expectations" or "Needs Improvement" on each of the eight domains that comprise the district's evaluation tool. In compiling the data, teachers were given one point for each of the eight domains in which they received a rating of "Meets Expectations" box checked for more than half of the sub-domains in a particular domain. Rating totals represent the sum of ratings across all eight domains.
- <sup>10</sup> Rating data for teachers evaluated using the Professional Development Model only, an option available only to teachers with non-probationary status. (Teacher contract status data was unavailable for Springdale Public Schools, so data regarding the use of the Professional Development Model to evaluate a teacher was used as a proxy to identify teachers with non-probationary status.)
- <sup>11</sup> Satisfactory ratings represent all ratings given during the period specified by district in Figure 01.
- <sup>12</sup> Unsatisfactory ratings represent all ratings given during the period specified by district in Figure 01.
- <sup>13</sup> Districts that use a multiple rating system to evaluate teachers include Akron Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, Cincinnati Public Schools, District U-46 (Elgin) and Rockford Public Schools. Throughout this report, evaluation rating data from Cincinnati Public Schools refer only to the domain "Teaching for Student Learning."
- <sup>14</sup> Highest ratings were assigned within the last three to five school years, depending upon district. See Figure 2 for the time periods associated with each district.
- <sup>15</sup> Based on percent of teachers that receive one of the lowest two ratings in Akron Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools and Cincinnati Public Schools.
- <sup>16</sup> As defined by the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Schools with grade configurations that include both elementary and secondary grade levels, such as K-8 schools, receive multiple AYP ratings. If a school received at least one AYP rating of "Not Meeting," we counted the school in the set of those schools not meeting AYP.
- <sup>17</sup> Average calculated using the number of schools not meeting AYP in each school year as the unit of analysis.
- <sup>18</sup> Denver Public Schools Adequate Yearly Progress data was collected from the Colorado Department of Education website, located at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/ayp/results.asp>, in March 2009. Charter schools were omitted from the data included in Figure 3.
- <sup>19</sup> Rockford Public Schools Adequate Yearly Progress data was collected from the Illinois State Board of Education website, located at <http://webprod.isbe.net/ereport-card/publicsite/getSearchCriteria.aspx> in March 2009. Cincinnati Public Schools Adequate Yearly Progress Data was collected from the Ohio Department of Education website, located at <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEPrimary.aspx?page=2&TopicRelationID=130> in December 2008.
- <sup>20</sup> Teachers were asked to report when their instructional performance was last evaluated.
- <sup>21</sup> Expanded surveys were issued in Akron Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, Little Rock School District and Springdale Public Schools. Teachers and administrators in these districts were asked how their respective district's evaluation ratings translate to varying levels of effectiveness, including an exemplary teacher, an effective teacher, a somewhat effective teacher or an ineffective teacher.
- <sup>22</sup> Expanded surveys were issued in Akron Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, Little Rock School District, and Springdale Public Schools to survey teachers on additional topics including teacher development and the recognition of excellence. Data taken from these expanded surveys issued in four study sites are noted as such throughout the report.
- <sup>23</sup> Expanded surveys were issued in Akron Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, Little Rock School District and Springdale Public Schools to survey teachers on additional topics including teacher development and the recognition of excellence.
- <sup>24</sup> Teachers in all 12 districts were asked if their evaluator identified any areas of unsatisfactory performance or performance in need of improvement on their most recent evaluation.
- <sup>25</sup> Expanded surveys were issued in Akron Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, Little Rock School District and Springdale Public Schools. Teachers were asked if they had participated in an informal conversation with their principal or evaluator in school year 2008-09, to discuss aspects of their instruction that could be improved.
- <sup>26</sup> Expanded surveys were issued in Akron Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, Little Rock School District and Springdale Public Schools. Teachers who had a performance area identified as in need of improvement or unsatisfactory were asked if they were made aware of concerns about the quality of their instruction prior to their most recent evaluation.
- <sup>27</sup> Respondents answering "Strongly agree" or "Agree."
- <sup>28</sup> Respondents answering "Strongly agree" or "Agree."
- <sup>29</sup> Novice is defined by the probationary teaching period, which depends on state policy and in some cases, district practice. Districts in our study range from a three to four year novice period.
- <sup>30</sup> Respondents answering "Very confident" or "Confident."
- <sup>31</sup> Percent of novice teachers in Akron Public Schools, Cincinnati Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, District U-46, Little Rock School District, Rockford Public Schools and Springdale Public Schools who indicated they received a greater than satisfactory rating on their most recent performance evaluation. Cincinnati includes evaluation ratings for the "Teaching for Student Learning" domain only.
- <sup>32</sup> Teacher non-renewals were counted based on extant data provided by the districts included in Figure 06. Data are as accurate as the records provided to TNTP for this study.
- <sup>33</sup> Data from SY05-06 through SY07-08.
- <sup>34</sup> Data available only for SY04-05 through SY07-08.
- <sup>35</sup> During the time period 2003-04 through 2007-08, Toledo Public Schools had five informal dismissals of probationary teachers (i.e., probationary teachers who were recommended for non-renewal but elected to resign instead). Data on informal dismissals were not available for all districts studied.
- <sup>36</sup> Percent of teachers identified as poor performers was collected from teacher surveys in Chicago and Akron. Data regarding the actual percent of teachers receiving an unsatisfactory rating was provided by each district.

- <sup>37</sup> Expanded surveys were issued in Akron Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, Little Rock School District and Springdale Public Schools. Respondents were asked if there are tenured teachers in their school who deliver poor instruction.
- <sup>38</sup> Expanded surveys were issued in Akron Public Schools and Chicago Public Schools, which asked teachers if they are aware of poor performers in their school. Evaluation rating data was also available for these districts, allowing for the comparison of reported poor performers and number of unsatisfactory ratings.
- <sup>39</sup> Respondents across all districts except Rockford Public Schools who indicated they have not initiated a dismissal proceeding for a poorly performing tenured teacher in the past five years.
- <sup>40</sup> During the time period 2003-04 through 2007-08, Toledo Public Schools had five informal dismissals of tenured teachers (i.e., tenured teachers who were recommended for dismissal but elected to resign or retire instead). Data on informal dismissals were not available for all districts studied.
- <sup>41</sup> Teacher dismissal for performance data was collected from ten districts representing some combination of school years 2003-04 through 2007-2008 as noted in Figure 08. A formal dismissal is defined as a case of poor instructional performance whereby the district initiated dismissal proceedings against a teacher and those proceedings resulted in a dismissal. Akron Public Schools, Cincinnati Public Schools, Denver Public Schools, Jonesboro Public Schools, Pueblo City Schools, Springdale Public Schools and Toledo Public Schools each supplied a code that identified which teachers were dismissed for poor performance. Chicago Public Schools, District U-49 (Elgin) and Rockford Public Schools supplied remediation data and a code detailing remediation outcome, which equates to dismissal.
- <sup>42</sup> Respondents who said that they believe that administrators fail to dismiss tenured teachers who are poor instructional performers.
- <sup>43</sup> Survey data from Akron Public Schools, Little Rock School District, and Springdale Public Schools.
- <sup>44</sup> Expanded surveys were issued in Akron Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, Little Rock School District and Springdale Public Schools. Teachers and administrators were asked if there are tenured teachers in their school who deliver poor instruction.
- <sup>45</sup> Respondents were asked how many classroom observations their evaluator conducted prior to issuing their most recent evaluation rating, as well as the amount of time the evaluator spent, on average, in their classroom while conducting this (these) observation(s).
- <sup>46</sup> Respondents in all districts were asked to identify the number of classroom observations conducted prior to their evaluator assigning their most recent evaluation rating.
- <sup>47</sup> Respondents in all districts were asked to identify the average number of minutes their evaluator spent observing them prior to assigning their most recent evaluation rating(s).
- <sup>48</sup> Survey respondents were asked to identify their most recent performance evaluation rating. These data were then analyzed against the number of classroom observations conducted for the most recent evaluation. Data from Akron Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, District U-46 (Elgin), Little Rock School District, Rockford Public Schools and Springdale Public Schools.
- <sup>49</sup> Survey respondents in Akron Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, Little Rock School District and Springdale Public Schools were asked to identify their most recent performance evaluation rating. These data were then analyzed against teacher reports of informal feedback.
- <sup>50</sup> Respondents were asked to describe the extent of training they have received on how to conduct an effective evaluation of a teacher's instructional performance.
- <sup>51</sup> Akron Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, District U-46 (Elgin), Little Rock School District, Rockford Public Schools and Springdale Public Schools.
- <sup>52</sup> Denver Public Schools, Jonesboro Public Schools, Pueblo City Schools and Toledo Public Schools. These data do not include Springdale Public Schools, which uses a multiple rating evaluation system for probationary teachers and some non-probationary teachers and a binary evaluation rating system for most non-probationary teachers.
- <sup>53</sup> Akron Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, Little Rock School District and Springdale Public Schools.
- <sup>54</sup> Definitions used in determining significance:
- Recruitment:* District uses instructional effectiveness outcomes to determine and target likely sources of high-potential teacher candidates.
- Hiring/Placement:* District uses instructional effectiveness outcomes to determine which teachers are hired into which schools and/or placed in particular positions, e.g. hard-to-staff schools, lead teacher position, lead mentor, etc.
- Professional Development:* District uses instructional effectiveness outcomes to determine what types of specific development and support an individual teacher needs in order to continuously improve their teaching performance.
- Compensation:* District uses instructional effectiveness outcomes to determine compensation decisions, e.g., advance on salary schedule, pay-for-performance programs, merit pay, etc.
- Granting Non-Probationary Status/Tenure:* District uses instructional effectiveness outcomes to determine which teachers are awarded non-probationary status or tenure.
- Retention:* District uses instructional effectiveness outcomes to identify outstanding teachers, recognize their efforts and reward them for their performance, through preferred placement, greater autonomy, etc.
- Layoffs:* District uses instructional effectiveness outcomes to determine which teachers are retained and/or released during layoff situations.
- Remediation:* District uses instructional effectiveness outcomes to determine which teachers receive remediation support and what type of remediation they need.
- Dismissal:* District uses instructional effectiveness outcomes to determine which teachers should be dismissed because their influence on student learning is less than satisfactory.
- <sup>55</sup> Respondents from the Chicago Public Schools administrator survey only.
- <sup>56</sup> Expanded surveys were issued in Chicago Public Schools to survey teachers on additional topics including teacher development and the recognition of excellence.
- <sup>57</sup> Respondents from the Chicago Public Schools teacher survey only.
- <sup>58</sup> A critical part of ensuring that teachers accept any performance evaluation system as fair and credible is monitoring administrator judgments to ensure they are fair and objective. There are several mechanisms that can be used for this purpose. Peer evaluators can be deployed to provide input on administrator evaluations. District officials can independently review administrator judgments. Outside firms can be retained to provide objective third party assessments of the fidelity of administrators to performance evaluation standards. Teachers can be surveyed confidentially to assess their views of the accuracy of performance evaluations in their schools. These mechanisms will allow district officials to identify administrators who are not being fair or objective and instill confidence among teachers in the fairness of the process.
- <sup>59</sup> Various researchers have explored the strengths and weaknesses of using value added data as an indicator of teacher effectiveness. See Goldhaber, D. and M. Hansen (2008). "Assessing the potential of using value-added estimates of teacher job performance for making tenure decisions." National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research. Retrieved April 27, 2009, from [http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/1001265\\_Teacher\\_Job\\_Performance.pdf](http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/1001265_Teacher_Job_Performance.pdf). See Rothstein, J. (2008). "Teacher quality in educational production: tracking, decay, and student achievement." NBER. Retrieved April 27, 2009, from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w14442>. See McCaffrey, D., Lockwood, J.R., Koretz, D., & Hamilton L.S. (2003). Evaluating value-added models for teacher accountability. Santa Monica, CA: RAND
- <sup>60</sup> Erik Robelen. "Gates Revamps its Strategy for Giving in Education." Education Week, November 11, 2008.
- <sup>61</sup> See U.S. Department of Education <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2009/04/04012009.html>.
- <sup>62</sup> Shields, R., & Hawley Miles, K. (2008). "Finding Resources and Organizing to Build Teaching Capacity: The Professional Development Strategic Review."
- <sup>63</sup> New York State School Boards Association (2007). "Accountability for All."
- <sup>64</sup> Non-probationary teachers in Springdale Public Schools can be evaluated using one of two models. Under the Professional Development Model, which is used for most non-probationary teachers, there is no required minimum number of observations and there are two possible ratings. Under the Clinical Model, which non-probationary teachers can opt to use and is also used for non-probationary teachers with performance concerns, there are two required observations for teachers who opt to use the model, three for teachers with performance concerns, and four possible ratings.

This report is based on data collected from a diverse group of sources, including state and local education stakeholders in four states; district leadership, administrators and teachers in 12 school districts; and existing state and district policies.



## METHODOLOGY

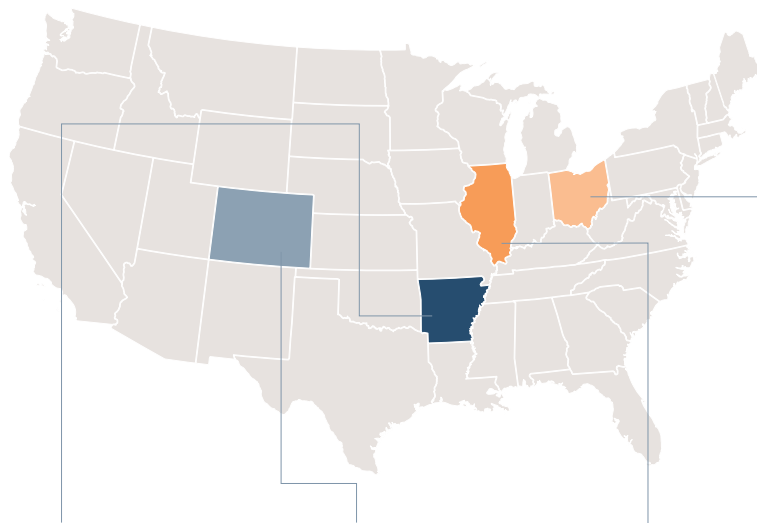
This report is based on data collected from a diverse group of sources, including state and local education stakeholders in four states; district leadership, administrators and teachers in 12 school districts; and existing state and district policies.

The four states and 12 districts represented in this report include:

Arkansas	Colorado	Illinois	Ohio
El Dorado Public Schools Jonesboro Public Schools Little Rock School District Springdale Public Schools	Denver Public Schools Pueblo City Schools	Chicago Public Schools District U-46 Rockford Public Schools	Akron Public Schools Cincinnati Public Schools Toledo Public Schools

The four states employ diverse teacher performance management policies and have demonstrated a significant commitment to improving teaching and learning. Arkansas is currently developing more guidance for districts on how to design and manage an effective teacher evaluation system, while Colorado and Ohio already provide some suggested structure for districts, particularly with respect to evaluation frequency and the number of observations required per evaluation. Illinois sets the most stringent requirements for the frequency of evaluation of tenured teachers: once every two years.

FIGURE 16 | State Teacher Evaluation Requirements in Brief



	AR		CO		IL		OH	
	Probationary	Tenured	Probationary	Tenured	Probationary	Tenured	Probationary	Tenured
Evaluation Frequency	no requirement	no requirement	1 per year	1 every 3 years	1 per year	1 every 2 years	2 per year	no minimum
# of Observations Required	3 per year	no minimum	2	1	1 (2 per year in Chicago only)	1 (2 per year in Chicago only)	2	2
Duration of Observations	no requirement	no requirement	no requirement	no requirement	no requirement	no requirement	30 minutes or more	30 minutes or more

All of the districts included in this report are committed to reform and face significant challenges in improving student achievement. The percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged, as defined by the U.S. Department of Education, ranges from 42 percent to 84 percent. The enrollment in the districts we studied

ranges from 4,450 to 413,700 students. Some districts are located in or near urban centers, while others are located in rural areas. The districts' evaluation policies and practices differ but, as this study demonstrates, the outcomes of the evaluation process are similar.

FIGURE 17 | District Teacher Evaluation Requirements-Tenured Teachers

District	Formal Evaluation Frequency	Number of Observations	Duration of Observations	Number of Ratings	Peer Review Process
Akron Public Schools	Once every 3 years	No more than 4	More than 15 minutes	5	No
Cincinnati Public Schools	Once every 5 years	1 sufficient in length; 2 at certain levels on the salary scale	Sufficient in length to justify rating	4	Yes
Chicago Public Schools	Once every 2 years, or annually for teachers rated Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory	At least 2		4	No
Denver Public Schools	Once every 3 years	At least one	At least 20 minutes	2	No
District U-46 (Elgin)	Once every 2 years	At least 1, no more than 3	At least 30 minutes	3	No
El Dorado Public Schools	Once per year	No requirement		N/A	No
Jonesboro Public Schools	At least once per year	At least one formal and one informal	Formal is at least 30 minutes	2	No
Little Rock School District	Full evaluation is once every 3 years, with teachers being evaluated on various domains each year	Different domains evaluated every year so that each teacher is comprehensively evaluated every three years			No
Pueblo City Schools	Once every 3 years	One observation a year		2	No
Rockford Public Schools	Once every 2 years	3	One must be at least 30 minutes	3	No
Springdale Public Schools <sup>64</sup>	Once every year	Varies	No minimum	Varies	No
Toledo Public Schools	Every 4 years, four-year contract teachers only; continuing contract teachers are not evaluated unless there are performance concerns	At least one observation	At least 30 minutes	2	Yes



## Sources of Quantitative Data

Most districts included in this report provided teacher demographic data, including teacher contract status, separations from the district and teaching assignments. Most districts also provided data from their teacher evaluation systems, from which we created databases of historical evaluation ratings. Using these data, we were able to identify the teacher being evaluated, their contract status within the district, evaluation ratings for the past 3-5 years, and any movement made by the teacher subsequent to a given evaluation (e.g., transferring within or separating from the district).

Electronic evaluation data provided by district	Evaluation data manually collected by district or The New Teacher Project	Evaluation data unavailable for manual collection
Chicago Public Schools	Akron Public Schools	El Dorado Public Schools
Cincinnati Public Schools	Jonesboro Public Schools	Little Rock School District
Denver Public Schools	Pueblo City Schools	
District U-46 (Elgin)	Springdale Public Schools	
Rockford Public Schools	Toledo Public Schools	

We also conducted surveys of active school administrators and active teachers in every district. In six districts (Akron Public Schools, Cincinnati Public Schools, Denver Public Schools, District U-46, Pueblo City Schools, and Rockford Public Schools) we surveyed former classroom teachers who had left the respective district within the last five years for any reason. In all, we surveyed approximately 1,300 administrators, 15,000 active teachers and 790 former teachers. Each participant group was asked questions regarding their experiences with and perceptions of their district's evaluation system, evaluators and remediation program. All surveys were conducted via an anonymous online survey.

### Survey Response Totals by District

	Teachers	Administrators
Akron Public Schools	1,010	36
Chicago Public Schools	4,858	624
Cincinnati Public Schools	1,287	70
Denver Public Schools	1,863	150
District U-46 (Elgin)	1,677	78
El Dorado Public Schools	341	15
Jonesboro Public Schools	405	11
Little Rock School District	687	36
Pueblo City Schools	565	34
Rockford Public Schools	947	92
Springdale Public Schools	763	55
Toledo Public Schools	773	80
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,176</b>	<b>1,281</b>

## Sources of Qualitative Data

This report is based on an analysis of each district's current collective bargaining agreement, as well as relevant human resources policies and state legislation. To fully understand how each of these policies is implemented at the district level, we conducted interviews with district leadership, school board members, human resources staff members, legal counsel, labor relations specialists, union leadership, school principals, other evaluators, and teachers. In all we conducted 130 interviews.



### Four-State Advisory Panel Process

This report benefits from the involvement of four advisory panels, one in each of our study states of Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois and Ohio.

We established the advisory panels because we believed strongly that it would have been impossible to author a high-quality report without incorporating the many perspectives of the various local education stakeholders. In the end, the advisory panels brought to bear participants' substantial experience and expertise to inform the study methodology, findings and recommendations.

Advisory panel membership varied from state to state but, in general, these panels were comprised of representatives from the state education agencies, state teachers unions or associations, school district superintendents and human resources staff, local teachers union or association leaders, and state-level professional organizations, such as the school administrators associations, personnel administrators associations, and school boards associations. In total, approximately 80 stakeholders participated in the four advisory panels.

Advisory panels met three times from June 2008 to April 2009 to discuss the study and its progress. The first meeting helped us to formulate and refine hypotheses and identify data sources, as well as build knowledge of local contexts. The second meeting allowed us to showcase portions of our data with the advisory panels, demonstrate what we were learning and test our arguments. The third and final meeting provided us with an opportunity to share our draft recommendations and gauge their viability.

In the end, advisory panel members were given the opportunity to provide a written response to the process and recommendations—a feature that we believe adds needed context to a challenging issue. Those responses can be found on our website at [www.widgeteffect.org](http://www.widgeteffect.org). Participation in an advisory panel does not suggest agreement with our findings and recommendations; the views of advisory panel members are presented first-hand in their written responses.

View the Advisory Panel members' responses to this report at [www.widgeteffect.org](http://www.widgeteffect.org)

*We are grateful to all of our advisory panel members for their unique contributions and insights.*

## ARKANSAS

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**Jim Rollins**

Superintendent, Springdale Public Schools

**Don Sharp**

Superintendent of Schools, Cotter Public Schools / Vice President, Arkansas Rural Education Association

**Scott Smith**

Executive Director, Arkansas Public School Resource Center

**Beverly Williams**

Assistant Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education

*“We need to develop a succinct performance appraisal system that recognizes good work, helps marginal employees get better and identifies employees who should be dismissed due to their inability to improve. Student performance must be the driving force to improve our current systems.”*

*-Springdale Public Schools (AR)*

## COLORADO

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**Carole Partin**

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**Shayne Spalten**

Chief Human Resources Officer, Denver Public Schools

**Kim Ursetta**

President, Denver Classroom Teachers Association

**Terry Whitney**

Senate Majority Legislative Director, Colorado Legislature

*“I believe that all stakeholders should come together to create a more credible, meaningful, and productive system for teacher, administrator, and school effectiveness evaluations. Teachers are professionals who value their chosen career and would like to work with colleagues who are excited and knowledgeable about their fields and teaching in general. Teachers and administrators working together in a system which promotes teachers as professionals and supports their professional development to meet the needs of their students, increase instructional quality, and develop effective curriculum is a benefit to all.”*

*-Pueblo Education Association (CO)*

## ILLINOIS

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IEA UniServ Director, Illinois Education Association

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The Commercial Club of Chicago**Molly Phalen**

President, Rockford Education Association

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**Rachel Resnick**

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**Angela Rudolph**

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**Brian Schwartz**Associate Director & General Counsel,  
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**Linda Tomlinson**

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Director, Chicago New Teacher Center

**Cynthia S. Woods**

Director for Advocacy, Illinois Association of School Boards

*“The impact of reviewing how teachers and administrators are evaluated, as well as the impact of evaluations and decisions made about pay and retention need to be discussed openly so that questions can be raised and concerns addressed. Illinois is a very diverse state and decisions about hiring, teacher evaluations, and retention are decided at the local level. Therefore, it is paramount that unions, professional associations, teachers, administrators, and representatives from business and the community be involved as we collaborate and work toward ensuring that all students have effective teachers.”*

*-Illinois State Board of Education (IL)*

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## Francine Lawrence

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## Bill Siegfert

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## Sue Taylor

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## Debra Tully

Director of Professional Issues, Ohio Federation of Teachers

## William Wendling

Executive Director, The Ohio 8

## Michelle Winship

Education Reform Consultant, Ohio Education Association

## Cynthia L. Yoder

Executive Director, Center for the Teaching Profession, Ohio Department of Education

*“I agree that all stakeholders need to come together to create a more effective teacher evaluation system. Cincinnati did try to do just that when we created our Teacher Evaluation System. Our system is a living, breathing structure that has changed for the better over time. We are constantly looking for ways to improve and build upon our evaluation system. The difficulty for us is that we do not have many other national examples to follow that have as detailed or as comprehensive of an approach to teacher evaluation. Comprehensive evaluation systems like ours are very expensive to run and we can only evaluate 1/5 of the teachers each year. If this is where our country is going we will need to find many, many more dollars to do this, particularly if every teacher is comprehensively evaluated every year. Again, I caution us all to consider changing the larger context of school structure first.”*

*-Cincinnati Federation of Teachers (OH)*



**About The New Teacher Project** | The New Teacher Project (TNTP) is a national nonprofit dedicated to closing the achievement gap by ensuring that poor and minority students get outstanding teachers. Founded by teachers in 1997, TNTP partners with school districts and states to implement scalable responses to their most acute teacher quality challenges. TNTP recruits and trains thousands of exceptional new teachers annually, supports school principals in staffing their classrooms, provides teacher certification in high-need subjects, and documents the policy barriers that keep students from getting the teachers they need. Since its inception, TNTP has trained or hired approximately 33,000 teachers, benefiting an estimated 4.8 million students nationwide. This report is part of an ongoing series of studies on the policies and practices that determine the composition and quality of the nation's teacher workforce.

For more information, please visit [www.tntp.org](http://www.tntp.org).

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