

## **Teacher Evaluation**

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## **Executive Summary**

Traditional forms of evaluating teachers (e.g., inspection of credentials, supervisor and peer observation and rating) for purposes of hiring, promotion, and salary increases have served the profession of teaching well for decades and should receive continued support in policy and practice.

Newer forms of evaluation—primarily paper-and-pencil tests for initial and re-certification, and “value-added” techniques such as the Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS) that attempt to attribute students’ standardized achievement test score gains to the efforts and expertise of their current teacher—have serious shortcomings. Paper-and-pencil tests of candidates’ knowledge of teaching practices and even subject matter tests are of dubious validity and fail to meet ordinary standards of predictive validity.

Several recommendations at the state-wide policy level can be derived from the above consideration of the issues surrounding teacher evaluation in the State of Florida.

1. Any attempt to substitute test performance for college degree requirements in the teacher certification process should be opposed. Movements in this

direction can be discerned in the legislatures in several states. Such policies would surely result in a less skilled and less professional teaching corps. Furthermore, the questionable validity of paper-and-pencil tests can not support such practices.

Certification standards for out-of-state teachers are currently less stringent than for graduates of approved in-state programs of teacher preparation. On account of reciprocity agreements with other states and the issuance of temporary teaching certificates to graduates of out-of-state teacher preparation programs, in-state graduates face a more daunting row of hurdles to certification (because of an additional entrance examination—the College Level Academic Skills Test—required to *enter* an approved preparation program) than out-of-state graduates. Holders of temporary certificates have three years in which to pass the FTCE tests.

2. Value-added teacher evaluation methods, which attempt to evaluate teachers in terms of the standardized achievement test score gains of their students, are of uncertain validity, have drawn heavy criticism from measurement experts, and raise serious concerns about fairness. They should be opposed in their various forms. References in current statutes (K-20 Education Code: 1012.34 “Assessment procedures and criteria”) such as “The assessment procedure for instructional personnel and school administrators must be primarily based on the performance of students assigned to their classrooms or schools” should be removed from legislation because no method of validly and fairly

attributing student test performance to individual teachers or administrators is presently available.

The foregoing is a summary of a policy brief in the report *Reform Florida* (Education Policy Research Unit, April 2004). The complete policy brief is available on the Education Policy Studies Laboratory (EPSL) website at:

<http://www.asu.edu/educ/epsl/EPRU/documents/EPSSL-0401-112-EPRU.doc>

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