

POLICY PILLARS

SUPPORTING WHAT WORKS

Teacher Evaluation: Driving Improved Instruction and Student Achievement

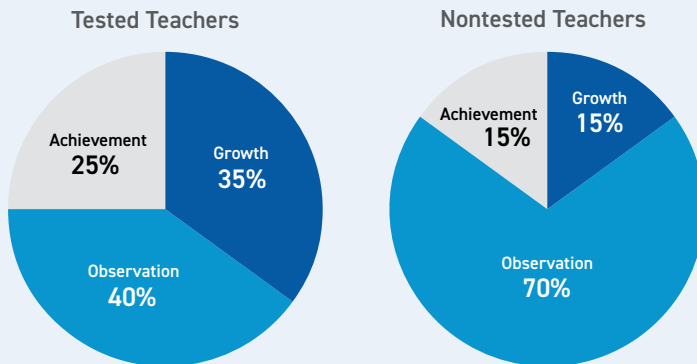
Tennessee's foundational commitments to evaluating educators and providing high-quality feedback have led to increasingly effective instruction and significant advances in student achievement.

Understanding the Policy

Tennessee public schools are required to conduct annual evaluations of their teachers.¹ The Tennessee teacher evaluation system is a comprehensive statewide evaluation system that keeps student outcomes at its center.² The evaluation system supports frequent, transparent and robust teacher evaluations, notably increasing the amount of feedback educators receive on their teaching.

Teachers in Tennessee are evaluated by a multiple-measure model that includes student achievement, student growth and qualitative observations that aggregate to a "final evaluation score," also known as their level of overall effectiveness (LOE) score.³ Teachers receive an LOE rating ranging from a 1 (significantly below expectations) to a 5 (significantly above expectations).

Tennessee's Educator Evaluation System Is Informed by Multiple Measures



*Tested teachers teach either grades 4-8 in subjects that administer TCAP or high school subjects that administer an End of Course (EOC) assessment. Nontested teachers teach grade levels and subjects that do not generate TVAAS data from TCAP or EOC assessments (e.g., 1st-3rd grade teachers, PE teachers, librarians, counselors and fine arts).⁴

Source: Educator Evaluation Composite Weightings. Tennessee Department of Education

Why is the Policy Needed?

Research suggests that more than any other in-school factor, teachers matter the most when it comes to student achievement and outcomes. In fact, on student performance in reading and math, studies indicate that teachers have two to three times the positive effect of school factors like services, facilities and leadership.⁵ After Tennessee received three "F" ratings from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in 2007 for its education system, it became clear the state needed additional supports for students and teachers.⁶ Tennessee's teacher evaluation system was implemented to provide teachers with clear feedback about their teaching effectiveness, creating an opportunity to

reflect and enabling schools to pursue interventions to improve teacher quality to increase student achievement. A vast body of research re-enforces the need for the multiple-measure teacher evaluation design, providing evidence for how these evaluation systems contribute to improving student outcomes when implemented with fidelity.⁷ Evaluations also play an important role in planning for professional development, determining classroom assignments, awarding tenure status, and making critical promotion, retention, and compensation decisions.⁸ Without teacher evaluation, there would be no basis on which to implement these essential strategies.

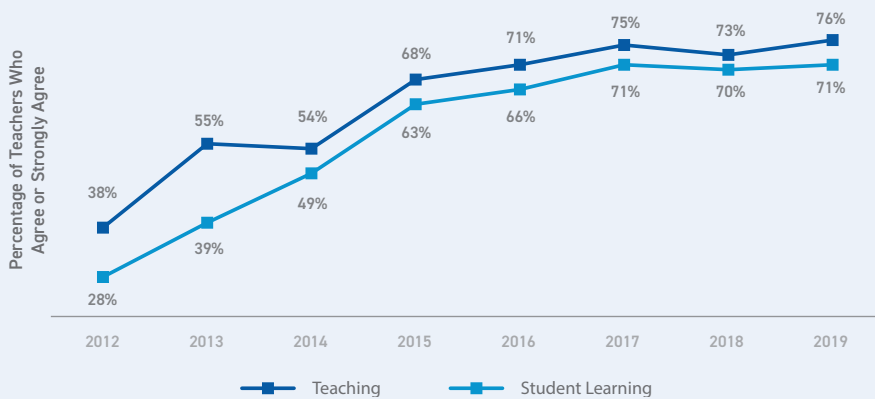
What is the Impact?

Tennessee's teacher evaluation system is a nationally recognized pillar for regular feedback and instructional support – a system that **research shows leads to improved student achievement**.

- The National Council for Teacher Quality highlighted **Tennessee as an exemplar for a high-quality teacher evaluation system**, informing a study that found Tennessee was the only state that sustained observable outcomes five years after evaluation.⁹
- An additional national study in 2024 found that Tennessee was one of only two state exemplars in the country where teacher evaluation reform implementation resulted in **positive effects on student achievement in math and English language arts**.¹⁰

- A study by the Tennessee Education Research Alliance (TERA) at Vanderbilt University similarly found that student performance in Tennessee districts increased at a much faster rate after evaluation reform. TERA found that after 10 years of Tennessee's new teacher evaluation system, **student achievement growth and teacher growth can be attributed to the state's evaluation reform**.¹¹
- Tennessee teachers believe evaluations improve student achievement and their instructional practice. Evidence shows that Tennessee teachers' positive perceptions have grown over time, with a 43 percentage point increase of teachers agreeing that evaluations led to improvements in student learning from 2012-19.¹² On the most recent Tennessee Educator Survey, **nearly 80% of Tennessee teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the evaluation process has led to improvements in their teaching**.¹³

Tennessee Teachers Increasingly Believe State Evaluation System Leads To Improved Teaching and Learning



**Percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree that the evaluation system has improved their teaching and student learning. The questions referenced in this figure have not been included in the educator survey since 2019.*

Source: Tennessee Educator Survey, 2012-19

Looking Forward

Tennessee's multiple measure teacher evaluation system is foundational to high-quality instruction and has led to significantly positive impacts on student learning. Like other professions, it's essential that our state's educators have access to feedback to continuously improve. **Tennessee should preserve its evaluation system as a valuable tool for educators that drives improved student achievement. As Tennessee works to advance student achievement and outcomes, our state should also aim to bolster and strengthen its teacher evaluation system so that educators continue receiving high-quality feedback that will in turn benefit all students.**

SCORE State Collaborative
on Reforming Education

¹ Rules of the State Board of Education. Chapter 0520-02-01. Evaluations.

² *Educator Evaluation*. Tennessee Department of Education.

³ Tennessee Public Chapter 2, 106th General Assembly First Extraordinary Session (2010).

⁴ *TEAM Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model*. Tennessee Department of Education.

⁵ Opper, Isaac M. *Teachers Matter: Understanding Teachers' Impact on Student Achievement*. RAND Corporation. (2019).

⁶ *Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Effectiveness*. U.S. Chamber of Commerce. (February 2007).

⁷ Thomas Kane, et al. (January 2013). *Measurements in Effective Teaching: Final Reports*. Seattle, WA: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

⁸ *Educator Evaluation Policy*. Tennessee State Board of Education. (August 2023).

⁹ Putman, Hannah, Elizabeth Ross and Kate Walsh. *Making a Difference: Six Places Where Teacher Evaluation Systems are Getting Results*. National Council on Teacher Quality. (October 2018).

¹⁰ Bleiberg, Joshua, Eric Brunner, Erica Harbatkin, Matthew A. Kraft and Matthew Springer. "Taking Teacher Evaluation to Scale: The Effect of State Reforms on Achievement and Attainment." *Annenberg Institute at Brown University*. (February 2024).

¹¹ Guthrie, J. Edward, Mónica Hernández and Jason A. Grissom. *Teacher Evaluation in Tennessee: What We Have Learned from a Decade of Research*. Tennessee Education Research Alliance. (July 2021).

¹² *Tennessee Educator Survey*. Tennessee Department of Education. (2012-19).

¹³ *2023 Tennessee Educator Survey*. Tennessee Department of Education. (2023).