

## **NCLB WAIVER SUMMARY: EDUCATOR EVALUATION**

While the application developed by the U.S. Department of Education for states seeking waivers from the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) required many specific details about states' efforts to improve education, it did not require a comprehensive list of such endeavors. Therefore, Tennessee's approved waiver plan may not capture all that the state is doing to improve education. The following summary covers the evaluation aspects of the plan as it stood when approved. It may not tell the complete story of educator evaluation in the state, however, as that work continues to evolve.

### **PROMISING ASPECTS OF PLAN**

- Tennessee's evaluation system prioritizes timely feedback to educators so they can immediately apply it to their work. This system also provides real-time access to observation data so state and district leaders can immediately see where their teachers are struggling and then prioritize resources for their support and development.
- The school leader evaluation system differentiates between principals who are new to the school or level, those scoring below expectations on a recent evaluation, and veteran or effective principals.
- The state links the content of the teacher practice rubric to the new Common Core State Standards.

### **ISSUES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION:**

- The Department of Education did not require states to address the issue of equitable access to effective teachers as part of their waiver plan. Yet, for those students most in need of effective teachers, this is an important part of improving teacher quality. It is critical to view each state's plan in this context. Tennessee's plan does not explain how it will use evaluation results to monitor and address any inequities in the assignment of the least effective teachers or principals to students with the highest need.

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## **EVALUATION DESIGN**

**What are the components of the state's proposed teacher and principal evaluation system, and how are those components weighted?**

- For all teachers:
  - 50 percent based on student achievement and 50 percent based on observation

- For student achievement measure, 35 percent of this is based on a student growth measure and 15 percent is based on another mutually agreed achievement measure
- For all principals:
  - 35 percent based on performance on Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS) framework
  - 15 percent based on quality of teacher evaluations
  - 35 percent based on school-wide growth data
  - 15 percent based on a quantitative measure agreed upon by principal and evaluator

**What are the roles of the state and districts in developing and implementing an evaluation system?**

- The state developed a model for use by the districts that is uniform aside from the 15 percent achievement measure mutually chosen by practitioner and evaluator.
- Districts that don't want to use the state model can submit models for the qualitative portion of the system. In Year 1, 10 out of 136 districts are using an alternate model.

**How will the state measure student growth in tested grades and subjects? Will the measure be comparable across LEAs within the state?**

- For tested subjects, the 35 percent based on student growth measures uses individual teacher effect value-added data.
- The value-added measure is developed at the state level, has been in place for nearly 20 years, and is comparable across LEAs.

**How will the state guide development of student growth measures for non-tested grades and subjects?**

- For non-tested subjects, the 35 percent based on student growth measures is generally based on school-wide growth data from tested subjects.
- The 15 percent based on other measures must be agreed upon by the educator and evaluator.

**How will the state approach observations of classroom instruction and other measures of teacher and leader practice?**

- The statewide model uses the TAP System for Student and Teacher Advancement's observation rubric as the qualitative instrument.
- Experienced teachers are observed four times each year, and novice teachers are observed six times annually.
- Principal evaluation involves a five step process: self-reflection, formative assessment and goal-setting, observations and conferences, staff surveys, and a summative conference.
- Evaluation of principals new to their school or school level, or those scoring poorly on their most recent evaluation differs slightly from that applied to veteran and higher performing principals.

### **Will all educators be evaluated at least annually?**

- Yes.

## **USE OF EVALUATIONS**

### **How will the state use teacher and principal evaluations to inform individual professional development and improve instructional practice?**

- The application outlines a goal of the evaluation system as providing feedback for teachers and highlights its ability to treat teachers as professionals with unique strengths and developmental needs.
- The state's TEAM data system enables real-time access to observation data for teachers, offering them and their supervisors information to improve instructional practice.

### **How will the results of teacher and principal evaluations inform personnel decisions?**

- Teachers must perform at one of the top two levels of the evaluation system for two consecutive years to receive tenure.
- Tenured teachers who perform at one of the bottom two levels for two consecutive years may be dismissed.
- Evaluations should be a factor in staffing and placement decisions, such as those related to lay-offs.
- Evaluations should be a factor in decisions related to compensation or advancement.

### **Will the state use educator evaluations to ensure students have equitable access to effective teachers?**

- The Department of Education did not require states to address the issue of equitable access to effective teachers as part of their waiver plan. Yet, for those students most in need of effective teachers, this is an important part of improving teacher quality. It is critical to view each state's plan in this context. Tennessee's plan does not explain how it will use evaluation results to monitor and address any inequities in the assignment of the least effective teachers or principals to students with the highest need.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF EVALUATIONS**

### **How will the state train educators and evaluators in the new evaluation system?**

- In summer, 2010, Tennessee partnered with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching to train more than 5,000 evaluators.
- The state also provided implementation coaches, full-time regional consultants, and trained field offices to assist with rollout.

### **How will the state ensure the reliability and validity of LEA evaluation systems?**

- The TAP rubric (qualitative instrument for teachers) has a tool to assess inter-rater reliability.
- To ensure the reliability of the TILS rubric (for principals), the state is looking for a relationship between the qualitative and quantitative data.
- The state will publish an anticipated range of distribution of evaluation results each year and will monitor observation scores to ensure consistent application of standards.

**How does the state address other implementation considerations, such as ensuring a robust teacher-student data link or managing the rollout timeline?**

- The evaluation system has already rolled out statewide, and the state established a teacher-student data link and the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment long before this evaluation system was implemented.
- The application includes plans to adjust the model based on lessons learned and feedback from year one implementation.