



## Seeking Effective and Equitable Evaluation of California's Teachers

### A 2010 Policy Initiative of the California Council on Teacher Education

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## Purpose and Goal

Well-qualified, effective, and committed teachers are the key element in ensuring that all children learn and achieve to their potential. How best to achieve this goal has been and continues to be a policy focus of the California Council on Teacher Education.

Through the coordinated leadership of the Policy Committee, the Fall 2010 Conference Planning Committee, and the Board of Directors of the California Council on Teacher Education (CCTE) the organization planned and held its Fall 2010 Conference on October 14-16 in San Diego around the theme “Teacher Education in Challenging Times: Initiating Leadership to Inform Policy and Create Opportunities.” The expressed purpose and goal of that Conference was for CCTE to explore and facilitate through discussion between and among the speakers and participants a series of issues that would result in the development of a policy initiative to address the issue of teacher evaluation and its relationship with student performance.

In preparation for the Conference CCTE leaders developed a document entitled “The Complexities of the Relationship of Teacher Evaluation and Student Achievement: A Policy Analysis for the Fall 2010 CCTE Conference” which was published in the Fall 2010 issue of the CCTE newsletter, *CCNews*, in September and then included in the Conference materials provided to each participant on October 14-16 in San Diego. The Policy Analysis was used as a stimulus for discussion and analysis throughout the Conference, with speakers, panelists, and all participants asked to address the issues raised in the document, discuss in depth and prioritize those issues, and identify key topics that would move forward in CCTE’s 2010 policy initiative.

The propose and goal of the Conference was to distill from the discussions of the Policy Analysis a set of specific proposals that are now the core of “Seeking Effective and Equitable Evaluation of California’s Teachers: A 2010 Policy Initiative of the California Council on Teacher Education” which CCTE will continue to develop and will seek through cooperation with key members of the California Legislature to introduce, advocate for, and achieve passage of legislation which will assure effective, fair, and equitable evaluation of teachers, foster significant professional growth for teachers, and result in the best possible instruction for the children in California’s schools.

# Introduction

Well-qualified, effective, and committed teachers are an important in-school factor in ensuring that all children learn and achieve to their potential as educated and productive participants in a democracy. Our educational system must provide children with the most competent teachers who can meet students' learning needs, continue to develop as educational professionals, and maintain their commitment to the profession. Teacher educators, school district personnel, teacher and administrator organizations, and state licensure agencies have a collective moral imperative to assure that all teachers can fulfill these responsibilities. To that end, an effective, equitable, and constructive system of teacher assessment is both necessary and crucial.

There is wide agreement among both educators and policy makers that teacher effectiveness should be assessed, and simultaneously there is the understanding that some elements of assessments currently used and proposed for use in measuring and analyzing teacher effectiveness are inappropriate and unreliable. As a democratic nation, we must reject the notion that any single-point assessment can be used as the sole or primary factor in measuring a teacher's effectiveness, performance, or level of compensation. This would be tantamount to rating dentists' effectiveness based on whether their patients maintain no cavities, or oncologists based on the mortality rates of their patients.

Teaching, like other professions, is one in which expertise develops over time and through a process of apprenticeship, mentorship, evaluation, and support. Thus, the purposes of teacher assessment and evaluation require clarity. How will we differentiate teacher assessment results in order to provide support and identify future learning and professional development needs while also addressing issues of ongoing employment and compensation? How will evaluation results be considered and weighed in the discussions about permanent status, renewal, compensation, and/or dismissal from the profession?

There is general consensus among the educational and measurement communities that multiple measures should be used in determining teaching effectiveness and that these measures should be fair, valid, and reliable in evaluating teachers' performance. If we accept the evolving policy consensus that student achievement data should be used as the sole means of evaluating teachers (i.e., value-added models), we have, to a large degree, violated key psychometric principles of fair testing. A long history of research reveals that some standardized measures of student achievement have cultural and linguistic biases against certain populations, including students with special learning needs and English Learners. Thus, using any single-point evaluation system to determine teacher effectiveness is disastrous from the outset because such measures are necessarily flawed.

We also know that California's public school system is within itself inequitable. Legal findings that resulted in the Williams Settlement (2004) were based on evidence that schools continue to be inherently unequal with regard to resources and facilities. Similar inequities involve the adequate preparation, experience, and distribution of staff (both teachers and administrators). Therefore the recognition and inclusion of these and other context variables into any formula for teacher evaluation will be absolutely necessary if California is to establish a truly equitable teacher assessment system.

There are, fortunately, some promising practices that are beginning to emerge which help define and create systems of teacher evaluation which are more comprehensive, fair, and effective than any single-point (standardized-test alone) approach. Such alternative approaches are currently being piloted both by the California Charter School Association and several non-charter public schools. These pilots typically involve a teacher development/growth approach and multiple points of evidence of student performance. Such systems approximate a "professional learning community" model. The eventual expansion and replication of such approaches in all California schools offer the promise of effectiveness, equity, and fairness to both teachers and students.

To that end, it is suggested that a fair system of teacher assessment and evaluation should include at minimum:

## **Introduction** **(continued)**

- Multiple measures of student performance in addition to standardized tests that have met standards of reliability and validity for use with all students, including English learners and those with special needs. Multiple measures should include standardized tests, performance-based assessments, and collections of artifacts and evidence of both student learning and teaching effectiveness.
  
- An accounting for contextual variables within the evaluation formula that address “opportunity factors” or “risk factors.” Privilege and school inequalities are institutional realities that impact student achievement and any use of student achievement measures in evaluation of teachers. Such inequities must be accounted for in any evaluation system.
  
- Administrators and/or others who have decision-making authority and power to evaluate and observe teachers must have training in the requisite skill set to conduct the observational aspects of the evaluation and provide assistance to teachers based on research-informed protocols and processes. Observation of teachers by trained administrators and peer teachers must be based on rigorous teaching standards developed by education stakeholders.
  
- There should be appropriate representation and preparation of all stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, parents, relevant unions and associations, and all other educational personnel, in planning and carrying out the evaluation of teachers, based upon collaboration and genuine dialogue about the evaluation systems being used and the careers of the teachers being evaluated.

Finally, our children deserve the very finest teachers. The essential question framing the ongoing discussion of value-added or other aspects of teacher assessment and evaluation must center on our collective vision for educating the next generation of learners in California and the nation. National, state, and local consensus on the definitions of and procedures for teaching effectiveness must be pursued and achieved. However, just as “one size fits all” has been proven to not work in the instruction of all learners, neither should teacher evaluation and assessment systems fall into the “one size fits all” trap.

# Policy Analysis

## **The Complexities of the Relationship of Teacher Evaluation and Student Achievement: A Policy Analysis for the Fall 2010 CTE Conference**

(This Policy Analysis was prepared by the California Council on Teacher Education for discussion at the Fall 2010 CTE Conference, held October 14-16, in San Diego. It was published prior to the Conference in the Fall 2010 issue of CCNews, the newsletter of CTE, and then included in the Conference packets for reading and discussion over the three days of the Conference.)

How best to evaluate teachers in an impartial, objective, fair, constructive, productive, and useful manner is a topic that has confounded educators and the public policy community for many decades. Traditional procedures in which teachers are periodically reviewed and evaluated by their school administrators remain the primary practice in most schools and school districts, but this approach has often proven inadequate given the workload of the typical school administrator, occasional individual and organizational frictions between administrators and teachers, and the frequent situations in which the content expertise of the administrator does not match the classes being taught by the teachers being evaluated.

During the ongoing review of teacher evaluation over recent decades, teachers as a professional group have often been chided for not seeking to serve as evaluators of their peers, since as professionals it can be assumed that they should have the most current knowledge about teaching as well as a desire to help colleagues improve their practice. Over the years, teacher workloads and educational budgets have seldom allowed time or compensation for school districts or schools to develop a systematic peer review process. The passage of AB 1 (Villaraigosa) in 1999 established the California Peer Assistance and Review Program (PAR) for Teachers, under which school districts were required to establish a PAR program through negotiations with the organization representing the certificated employees. Some successful PAR programs were already in place in Poway and Lompoc in California and at other locations across the country prior to AB 1, and the focus of PAR was typically on teachers with permanent status, although some programs also included probationary teachers. In the PAR process trained consulting teachers work with identified and volunteer teachers to develop performance goals aligned with student learning goals, and the consulting teacher then makes multiple observations and selects staff development activities geared to assist teachers improve their teaching skills and knowledge. Following passage of AB 1 adequate funding for PAR programs was available, but in more recent years state budget difficulties have decimated the program, and it remains functional only in a few of the larger school districts in the state. Nationwide the PAR program evolved from a labor-management initiative between the Toledo Federation of Teachers and the Toledo Public Schools in Ohio over 25 years ago, and the concept has been praised recently by both President Obama and Secretary of Education Duncan.

A seemingly natural constituency to involve in the evaluation of teachers would be teacher education faculty at the college and university level, since by education and profession they can be assumed to have the greatest knowledge and expertise about teaching. Once again, however, the workloads of teacher educators are heavy and funding is absent to establish and compensate a network in which teacher educators would serve as evaluators of K-12 teachers. Furthermore, elements of distrust or uncertainty between K-12 public schools, the organized teaching profession, and teacher educators at the college and university level make development of such an evaluation system unlikely.

Given such ongoing quandaries, the regular evaluation of teachers in most schools has languished, with occasional successes typically reflecting the elevated funding status of those rare K-12 schools that are able to support adequate staff to regularly mentor, observe, and effectively evaluate teachers through PAR and other mentor programs. Some useful advances have also accompanied the development of the Beginning

## Policy Analysis (continued)

Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) system in California over the past two decades, a structure in which state funding has been provided to county offices and school districts to employ mentors and evaluators for teachers during the first two years of induction into the profession. As this system blossomed it resulted in improvement in retention rates of new teachers in the state, but it has currently fallen victim to the economic downturn and resulting state budget crisis. There are now many fewer new teachers being employed and needing support and evaluation coupled with reduced state funding for such support and evaluation. Even during its best years, however, BTSA provided support and evaluation only to new teachers, who comprise a small fraction of the total teacher cadre in the state.

Thus, while there have been conjectures regarding who within the education community might be in the best position based on knowledge and expertise to evaluate teachers, and while there have been some model programs such as PAR for veteran teachers and BTSA for support and assessment of new teachers during the induction years, overall little has changed during recent decades and the typical practice in most schools and school districts remains a process in which teachers are periodically reviewed by their school administrators, despite a context in which those administrators are seriously pressed for time in their schedules for such evaluations and in which they do not necessarily represent the best match in terms of subject and grade level background to conduct such evaluations. Despite such concerns, all parties to the process appear to share the view that it is the expectation of teachers that they will be evaluated by their school administrators and the understanding of those administrators that it is their responsibility to evaluate the teachers at their schools. Indeed, the California Education Code specifies that school superintendents and/or their designees will evaluate all certificated personnel, at least every year for probationary staff, and every two years for permanent staff. What is then at issue is how best to accomplish such evaluations.

Yet another factor that complicates the evaluation of teachers concerns the purpose of such evaluations. Is the purpose primarily to assist each teacher in improving his or her practice by offering commentary and suggestions based on a review by the school administrator? Or are the results of the evaluation to be tied to such considerations as contract renewal, possible termination, granting of permanent status, and compensation. And if compensation is involved, will it be based on a standard salary scale reflecting preparation and experience, or an alternative or performance approach based entirely upon evaluation of practice. As any of these employment and salary related factors are introduced into the process, questions about the reliability and validity of the manner in which the evaluation is conducted become far more important, both to the teacher being evaluated and the credibility of the process in general, especially so within the “value-added” approach to teacher evaluation advocated by proponents of pay for performance.

It is interesting to note that while public opinion surveys over several recent decades have consistently shown that most people have positive attitudes towards their local public schools and their own children’s teachers, at the same time they profess negative attitudes about American education in general. Such uncertain and conflicting public opinion has fostered a policy vacuum. Elected officials at both the federal and state level have grown increasingly interested in and critical of schools and teachers, articulating concerns about both the quality of American teachers and the presumed inadequate performance of students. These concerns have been reflected in policy proposals calling for the evaluation of teachers based specifically upon the performance of the students they teach, with the intention that the results of such evaluations will serve as the basis for performance pay structures for teachers. This idea has become a centerpiece of the current national Race to the Top (RTTP) initiative, which includes a requirement that any states wishing to apply for RTTP funding must facilitate a teacher assessment system based on assessment of student performance. In a rush to qualify California for RTTP consideration, the State Legislature passed and Governor Schwarzenegger signed into law late last year Senate Bill X5 1 which cast aside several decades of thoughtful protections for California teachers and instead called upon school districts to implement teacher evaluation systems related to student performance.

## **Policy Analysis (continued)**

This approach to teacher evaluation is one that CCTE has consistently opposed, primarily because it tends to oversimplify and inappropriately quantify the presumed relationships between teaching practice and student achievement as measured by standardized tests, ignoring a myriad of factors that can and do complicate such relationships. However, it is indeed an approach that both federal and state proposals, initiatives, laws, and regulations now champion, and thus it is a reality that states, school districts, and schools will be attempting to implement, whether the teacher education community approves or not.

Given that reality, the challenge for CCTE as the voice of the teacher education community in California is to use our professional knowledge to explain the inherent complexities of such an approach and to develop and propose state legislation that can be translated into regulations that will require that such evaluation of teachers, when it is to be employed, be structured in a careful, fair, balanced, and appropriately scientific and professional manner prior to use in any educational settings.

CCTE is therefore devoting major portions of its Fall 2010 Conference, to be held on October 14-16 in San Diego around the theme “Teacher Education in Challenging Times: Initiating Leadership to Inform Policy and Create Opportunities,” towards a policy analysis of the issues of teacher evaluation and student performance. The Conference will foster discussion that in turn will lead to a commitment by CCTE to drafting, introducing, and supporting new legislation in cooperation with other educational organizations and one or more members of the Legislature.

To this end, CCTE is in the process of collecting information from educators across the state who have experience to date with teacher evaluation systems that involve student performance data. Of particular interest has been information provided by the California Charter Schools Association, which has established a data division and accountability department devoted to working with individual charter schools on issues of and processes for teacher evaluation. Materials received and reviewed from several charter schools suggest that productive teacher evaluation systems typically involve the development of individual teacher growth plans, considerable time invested by school administrators in teacher evaluation, and the use of multiple forms of data on student achievement, including both paper and pencil tests and student performance activities. Similar feedback has also been obtained from the Los Angeles Unified School District and will be sought from other K-12 schools throughout California. Another important source of information was the Alternative Teacher Compensation conference organized by Full Circle Fund and Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) in March 2009, held in both Los Angeles and Oakland. Also of interest was the Commission on Teacher Credentialing and California Department of Education conference entitled “Working Collaboratively for Teacher and Student Success” held June 23, 2010. This evolving collection of proposed and in many cases already implemented teacher evaluation approaches should offer some important guidance for broader applications across the state, and it will be these evolving ideas which will guide CCTE’s legislative initiative.

The overall purpose of the legislation which CCTE seeks to develop, propose, and advocate will be to require in any instance (schools, districts, county offices, state agencies, or other entities) where efforts are undertaken to evaluate teachers on the basis of student performance, that the following factors at minimum must be addressed and incorporated into the process:

(1) That the process of any evaluation of student performance to be used for the purpose of teacher evaluation must involve multiple measures (student work, classroom-based assessments, formative assessments, school-wide and district assessments, performance measures, including essays, applied projects, portfolios, demonstrations, and oral presentations) in addition to use of standardized tests, that any paper and pencil examinations used be carefully reviewed to assure that they do indeed measure what is intended

## Policy Analysis (continued)

and desired, and that at least some of the assessments of student performance be actual live performances by the students. There is ample evidence from educational research that students respond in differing ways to various instructional approaches and assessments, which therefore supports the call for the use of multiple measures, including performance as well as written tests, to secure equitable assessment of all students. In addition, if any written test is to be used for an intended “value-added” purpose, such as seeking to measure student performance where such measurements will then be used to evaluate teachers for the awarding of performance pay, the test must be validated for that purpose. Any such validation must also include consideration of its use by English learners (ELs) and students with special needs. Most tests currently in use have not been normed with ELs and special populations in mind, which means that those tests are an invalid measure of that portion of the student population, and thus will prove invalid for purposes of teacher evaluation across California, since nearly all California classrooms have a few if not many ELs and special education students in their student population.

(2) That the process of evaluation of teachers involve appropriate and adequate time on the part of school administrators or others involved in the evaluation to assure a careful review of all aspects of a teacher’s performance, and further that any classroom observations of teachers be conducted by administrators with the same content area specialization as the class being observed, and finally that such evaluations take place on a frequency schedule negotiated as part of the collective bargaining agreement between the exclusive representative of the certificated employees and the district. The issues here are significant. Experience has shown that most school administrators do not have adequate time in their busy schedules for multiple teacher observations, so if effective evaluation processes are to occur, the time frame and workload of school administrators will need to be adjusted for this purpose. Perhaps even more important, many school administrators are not familiar with the pedagogy and content knowledge teachers are expected to teach, and most school administrators have not received training related to the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTPs) or any other potential criteria for evaluation, and thus a statewide effort will be needed to assure that administrators involved in evaluation of teachers are aware of both pedagogy and curriculum as well as versed in observational and evaluation skills. With respect to assuring that evaluations at the secondary level are conducted by individuals familiar with the content area of the teacher being evaluated, one proposal has been to develop a cadre of mentor teachers who can serve along with school administrators as co-evaluators. Once again, such an approach would have staffing and budgetary implications. Finally, in determining the frequency of evaluations, it should be noted that California Education Code stipulates that probationary or temporary teachers are to be evaluated at least once a year (for two years) and permanent teachers at least once every two years. Any change in this frequency would need to be agreed to by both teachers and the school district or school.

(3) That procedures for the evaluation of teachers be mutually and carefully developed, described in writing, and agreed to both by those being evaluated and those doing the evaluating, resulting in some form of relevant and personalized professional growth program for each teacher. Just as with students, different teachers will demonstrate their professional knowledge and skills in varying ways, and effective procedures for the evaluation of teachers will need to involve multiple measures that are appropriate to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each teacher. Will all teachers be evaluated using the same criteria (such as the CSTPs or the standards of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards), and in the same manner (timing and frequency of reviews, and assignment of relevant administrators or mentor teachers), or will such procedures vary depending upon decisions at individual schools and school districts as well as the needs and professional status of each teacher?

(4) That any procedures for evaluation of student performance must be weighted to take into account such potentially relevant factors as depleted school budgets, lack of textbooks and other instructional

## **Policy Analysis (continued)**

materials, overcrowded classrooms, the language status of students, the impact of hunger, homelessness, or other conditions in the lives of the students, all to be factored in to assure that teachers are not being held responsible for teaching and learning conditions beyond their control that negatively impact student achievement. There is ample evidence in educational and social research concerning the impact of language, cultural, environmental, and economic factors on a student's ability to succeed in school. Special concerns abound over the impact of students' language skills, home language, and second language on their school success and the manner in which their school achievement is measured. All such dimensions must be recognized and compensated for in any processes developed for assessing student performance and linking those assessments to teacher evaluation. At the same time, some of the traditional and long-standing arguments that failure of students in school is the fault of students who "can't learn" and thus not the responsibility of teachers must be forcefully rejected by all segments of the educational community. It is the responsibility of teachers to produce educational results from their students, while at the same time it is the responsibility of school administrators and the state to assure that the processes used to measure those results and to inform decisions about teacher employment and compensation be fair to all concerned.

It is important for everyone involved to recognize the complex realities inherent in schools and classroom contexts, as well as among teachers and students. Students are not all the same, they learn in different ways and at different paces, and they are impacted by many factors outside of school. Similarly, teachers are also not all the same, with each teacher having certain personal strengths and weaknesses which will impact different students in different ways. When these teacher and student differences come together in any given classroom, the complexities are multiplied. A student experiencing difficulties in a classroom will frequently impact not only that student's success, but because of additional time required of the teacher, it may also impact the success of other students in the class. The real-life circumstances in each classroom, for each teacher and each student, will always be extremely difficult to measure. For these reasons, there are many educational scholars who will continue to argue that the causal link between the performance of a teacher and the performance of that teacher's students can not and will not be successfully or accurately measured. These arguments involve not just the complexity of the classroom in question, but also such factors as the influence on students of other school programs, home or peer tutoring, after school activities, parental support, and neighborhood programs. In most educational research one seeks to control for such factors, to establish matching experimental and control groups. The realities of schools, however, will not make this possible as schools, districts, and other entities attempt to measure teacher performance based on student achievement, since K-12 education is not and can not be a controlled research laboratory.

(5) That the student achievement upon which teachers are being evaluated be calculated specific to the time period of the evaluation, i.e., specific to a given school year or given semester, with clear starting and concluding points of evaluation consistent with the time period, in order to assure that teachers are not being held responsible for any lack of prior achievement on the part of the students in question or rewarded for prior positive performance of students before they arrive in the current teacher's class. In other words, if a teacher is charged with teaching a given group of students, many of whom come into that class with a lack of prior achievement, the teacher should be held responsible only for any achievement or lack of achievement during the time the students are in that teacher's classroom, and not blamed for the prior lack of achievement by the students. Similarly, if a teacher is assigned a class of primarily already high achieving students, that teacher should not be rewarded for that prior achievement, but only for what is accomplished during the semester or year being evaluated.

Proponents of a "value-added" model of teacher evaluation, which they contend will be appropriate for making decisions about continued employment and compensation, argue that such concerns as differentials in student readiness, cultural and language backgrounds, and success in prior grades and with prior teachers

## **Policy Analysis (continued)**

will all level out and be appropriately measurable. Will the tests used be capable of doing this? Typically, tests based on content standards such as the California Standards Tests (CSTs) are not parallel and are not vertically structured to measure from school year to school year, nor do they include both pre- and post-tests. While proponents will argue that the value-added model will be fair because all students and therefore all teachers will be judged by the same instruments, even if those instruments are not fully sophisticated, basing gain scores on such a shaky structure may well lead to untrue gain scores, and thus to untrue evaluations of teachers.

There are many additional issues of consequential validity that demand consideration. How will such evaluation impact the act of teaching? Knowing that their employment and compensation will rest on the evaluation of their students, will teachers narrow the curriculum and teach to the tests being used? Will scripted curricula become even more the rule of the day? Will teachers be reluctant to innovate? How will such evaluation processes address team teaching, or will such often useful and appropriate collaborative instruction disappear? Is teaching a totally individual act, as would be suggested by value-added evaluation, or is it a community endeavor within each school, where teachers talk to each other, assist each other, and work as a team? If the latter, how will such collaboration be measured and rewarded?

When all such questions are on the table, many educational scholars will indeed argue that teaching and schools are such complex operations that it will never be possible to develop reliable measures of the multiple impacts that the work of any specific teacher has upon the achievement of his or her students. Given the current realities, in which schools are being asked to undertake such measurements regardless of such complexities, the charge to CCTE must be first to identify all of the relevant concerns, and then to propose and seek passage of legislation that will establish an informed and cautious context in which such evaluations will be performed, with the interests of teachers, students, their families, and the public all recognized and honored to the greatest degree possible.

All of these factors, and others as they are identified, will be given careful consideration before, during, and following the CCTE Fall 2010 Conference, and through that process will be deconstructed and reassembled to inform the legislative initiative to be drafted and advocated.

In addition to the need to recognize and honor the complexity of teacher evaluation based on student performance, and assure that all procedures utilized in California schools are as valid, fair, and effective as possible, there are several other reasons why this is an ideal topic for CCTE to explore. First, since teacher evaluation based on student performance is an approach that the policymakers have already mandated, but have not yet spelled out with respect to implementation, the opportunity is before the educational community to help shape such procedures in an appropriate manner. Second, this form of teacher evaluation can be approached not as something that educators applaud or universally think should be undertaken, but rather for the specific but important purpose of proposing necessary cautions to assure that any such evaluation is done in as careful and fair a manner as possible. Third, and equally important, this issue offers CCTE an opportunity to get out in front on something where we can invite teachers, teacher organizations, school administrators, school boards, parents, and other educational groups to join us in this effort while also forging alliances across significant educational sectors and groups in the state that should serve all of us well now and in the future.

# Discussion

(Following are notes, comments, and directions resulting from the discussion of the preceding Policy Analysis during the three days of the Fall 2010 Conference of the California Council on Teacher Education, keyed to the various sessions at that Conference.)

## **Opening Session and Keynote Address by Linda Darling-Hammond**

- In most other countries around the world, the preparation of teachers involves a careful selection of candidates, strong support of programs, and respect for the teachers once prepared and on the job.
- Comparison of teacher preparation to medical preparation—wanting the best of the best as master teachers, having authentic apprenticeship. The Flexner report in the early 1900s resulted in major reworking of medical education—we need to do something similar in the teacher preparation field—what IS the most effective curriculum to prepare teachers?
- Alternative pathways to credentialing—it is important to consider the differences between them. Do they provide more applied experience? Are we too theoretical in our preparation?
- Teacher education has been criticized as being too traditional, but things shouldn't be polarized by “traditional” or “alternative.” Instead we need to look at the features of the best programs and replicate these.
- We need to take a stance saying that we believe assessment is of value, and that through it we will have data that shows what is effective.
- Good teacher preparation programs are a “secret,” despite books and articles in the field. We need to share more widely information about the best programs, and encourage replication.
- Teacher evaluation needs to be part of an integrated system, not based on one measure.
- Quality professional development should involve at least 50 hours a year for every teacher, not the typical eight hours that we have now

## **First Policy Session**

- Introduction of and initial discussion of Policy Analysis suggested that the issues raised are sound, but that the document comes across as somewhat defensive.

## **Panel Discussion of Education Deans**

- We need to build bridges, not to come into the conversations defensively. We need networks.
- We need to take a proactive stance, as Teach for America does, not be reactive.
- Deans referenced the annual Gallup Poll findings that show that parents like their own kids' schools, but not public schools overall.

## **Conversation with California Assemblymember Julia Brownley at Second Policy Session**

- Suggestion that CCTE use its governmental relations dollars to send CCTE members to Sacramento to talk with legislators.
- It takes a long time to get anything done in state government.
- Most of our legislators do not understand the process of teacher education; they don't understand the complexity of it.
- The importance of CCTE members being out there; we need faculty leadership; we need to tell our story; we need a better way to get our data visible.

## Discussion (continued)

- Legislators want to do what it takes to get re-elected.
- We're a bullet-point society—people want to know the highlights and what to believe. Radio spots, TV ads—what is the simple message we want to get out?
- Spend time with legislators on Fridays at their home offices.
- Start making presentations to community groups, chambers of commerce, churches—educate one on one.
- People love their local schools.
- Good things take so long to happen, but bad things can happen so quickly—it would be good to have a presence in Sacramento.
- The California Faculty Association has been consistent in putting together a message, so when individuals speak it, the same thing is said; sometimes we spend too much time discussing, but we miss the chance to collectively come up with our essential talking points.
- We're not in this alone—we need to partner with other organizations (i.e., the Big Eight).

### **Panel Discussion and Table Conversations at Third Policy Session**

- The Policy Analysis contains no emphasis on the need to change the relationship between teachers and administrators; i.e., administrators should teach more. Are principals trained in how to evaluate, observe, and participate with teachers meaningfully?
- Assemblymember Brownley mentioned that the most important thing is to engage in conversation; teachers need this too; it's about creating a culture in our schools where adults and kids are continuously learning.
- We need to push for a deeper vision of what deep learning looks like; the people who know the learner best should assess them; what would schools look like if they were the fulcrum point? Consider HTH: the structure they've set up is making a difference, teachers get there an hour before the kids every day, everyone engages in collegial coaching, they're observing each other, they teach in teams, and design interdisciplinary projects. They exhibit students' work; teacher effectiveness should come down to the quality of kids' work. They hold teachers accountable in a positive way; they get to see what other teachers are doing, and try new things.
- We're in a crisis mode, we've been reactive because we're watching education get slashed; this society has chosen not to come up with the resources it takes to do these kinds of good things. To sit here and talk about it won't do. The climate of having to work in crisis all the time is the biggest problem.
- There's a strong narrative out there that more dollars in education doesn't make a difference; simple resources alone may not make a difference, but a more complex use of resources does make a difference: more dollars plus better supervision, more authentic systems of evaluation, etc. We need to make a case for what we would do with more resources, complex resources.
- We can't talk about evaluation in isolation from learning; we need process questions and outcome questions such as what measures are we willing to commit ourselves to? We could say "we think there are good measures of effective practice, and we want them to be part of the system that's developed." We tend to make it sound like magic—"it depends, if students are this or that..."—but really we need to push for strong concrete measures, and make them part of teacher education.
- It is important to embed such processes in the whole school, so that the principal is not the sole holder of the evaluation; there is a need to create a shared sense of what good teaching is, and get everyone to own that sense, so it's a community-shared standard, which builds collegiality.

## Discussion (continued)

- If we're going to build an evaluation system that will impact salaries, it's going to have to be consistent. Virginia is already implementing one, so we need to study and understand it. We have to determine to what degree standardized testing will be part of the equation: in some places, test scores are being used as 50% of the evaluation of teachers, while a much lower percentage seems wiser.
- Pay for performance absolutely does not work; yet it's viewed as a relevant process.
- There are measures that we can commit ourselves to: portfolios, presentations—although they are very difficult to standardize. UTLA wants to have this kind of discussion, but the Los Angeles Unified School District already has an agenda and doesn't want to talk.
- Maybe Value Added Measures (VAM) can be used as a school-wide measure, but now it's being used to scapegoat education. We can't get sucked into this. VAM is a process; what is the actual outcome? It's a gain score, and that gain is being attributed to the teacher; we can't necessarily say that the teacher was responsible for the gain, or lack of gain.
- Using the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTP) is supposed to be closer to what we're teaching. It makes sense to teachers that if they teach to the standards their students will score better; but is this actually what we want to use? And how do we find other ways? How would we standardize portfolios, for example?
- As teachers, we need to collaborate, share students, know students; but if we have an evaluation and incentive based on individual teacher work, it's a disincentive for collective work. From the EPI report: need a process that's meaningful to teachers, that changes the conditions of teaching so it's a team sport, and not just a cumbersome hollow exercise.
- CCTE needs to create the documentary "Waiting for the Test," showing that we're using these assessments in ways that are not valid.
- The Policy Analysis does a good job of asking hard questions: teacher evaluation to what end? How do we show that kids are learning anything more, on a deeper level?
- What are the school-wide things that should go into an annual effectiveness review? What are the student achievement measures that can incorporate individual teaching practices and test scores and school-wide effectiveness measures?
- School leadership: there has to be a leadership model that incorporates all of this; maybe team compensation. Instead of teacher effectiveness, what about district effectiveness? What is a district doing?
- We're doing a lousy job of preparing administrators—it becomes us (the teachers) vs. them.
- Consider Woodland Hills Academy, where administrators and teachers jointly run the school, and they do an evaluation that they designed in addition to the STULL.
- Need to find more money to keep good teachers in the classroom, so that becoming an administrator isn't the only way to make more money.
- There are effective practices going on in many places, but we dismiss them as exceptions; instead we need to look at them, learn from them, offer critiques, and educate ourselves.
- Part of the challenge for teacher education programs is building the relationship with K-12 schools; we should highlight the partnerships, be more of a presence and collaborator, be allies in school restructuring.
- There are measures being worked on in CA, i.e., the PACT. We have identified the essential aspects of quality teaching, and what it looks like when it's done well.

# Five Key Components

The California Council on Teacher Education advocates that the following five factors be addressed and incorporated as the core of the policy initiative related to teacher evaluation:

## ***Multiple Measures***

- The evaluation of both teachers and students must involve multiple measures. Among potential measures to include are:
  - Performance-based measures of professional development, ongoing exposure to best practices, and content learning;
  - Action research and inquiry;
  - Professional learning community (teaming, collegiality, peer feedback, study groups);
  - Measures of student learning: authentic assessments, periodic formative, summative standardized;
  - Administrative evaluation, peer evaluation, self evaluation;
  - Parent evaluation and feedback (“customers”).
  - Student feedback and evaluation (“customers”).
- All such measures, to be valid, shall include: primary language assessments and appropriate accommodations for English learners.
- Such measures must consider teacher progress along a continuum, such as the BTSA Continuum of Teaching Practice (CCTE, CDE, New Teacher Center); such measures should be about showcasing strengths of teachers and identifying areas of needed support and growth.
- Careful consideration shall include each teacher’s progress on an instructional practice continuum from novice to expert. The system shall parallel a measure of teacher development along with student performance.
- There are effective practices going on in many places, but we dismiss them as exceptions; instead we need to learn from them.

## ***The Process of Evaluation***

- Evaluations must include adequate time, a trained observer with expertise in the content area, and appropriate frequency of evaluations.
- The process of evaluating teachers must include multiple people, multiple criteria for assessment, and occur multiple times throughout the year. There need to be other data sets, not just observation of teachers.
- Instead of a focus heavily on content learning; what else are teachers trying to help students learn? What are 21st century skills? Consider the amount of time it takes to do good assessment.
- There’s a strong narrative out there, saying that more \$\$ doesn’t make a difference; the simple resources may not make a difference, but the more complex resources do make a difference; more \$\$ plus better supervision, more authentic systems of evaluation. We need to make a case for what we would do with more resources.

## ***Procedures for Evaluation***

- Teacher evaluation should be based on a personalized professional growth plan for each teacher.
- Student learning, authentic performance assessments, formative and summative assessments; rubrics created by national teacher organizations, state entities, and by the staff of each school are all aspects of this.
- Procedures should include: Administrative evaluation of progress; Peer review; Parent and student feedback; PD and exposure to best practices; How they contribute to the professional learning community.

## **Five Key Components To Be Articulated in the Policy Initiative** (continued)

- We recognize the tension between having assessments that are relevant to local settings, while meeting the larger policy demands with assessments that are standardized in some way. Metaphor of the California bungalow: common basic architecture but varying interior design, in which each community could weight the pieces in different ways.
- How can this data/evaluation be communicated to the public? We want to know how our teachers/schools are doing.
- How can students be held accountable for doing their best on these assessments?
- Whatever process we come up with should involve teacher evaluations of the process; need frequent surveys of teachers, “Is this system helping you to improve your practice?”
- We don’t talk enough in schools across levels—all the adults are there for a common purpose. Survey all of them too, including students and non-teaching staff (classified and pupil personnel services).
- As these systems roll out, we need really good research: how do we know which practices are effective, and how to they affect one another?

### ***Weighting Student Performance Assessments***

We must take multiple factors into account:

- Children, families, communities, and schools are all unique and wonderfully different. Excellent teaching and deep learning happens in different schools in widely different ways. Assessing teacher effectiveness must include the richness of each situation in ways that are realistic, manageable, and understandable. Tax payers will get more bang for their buck from an evaluation system that finds the best teacher for each classroom, not mediocre teachers for every classroom.
- We want to create a system that assesses progress; CSTs are not the right tests to use, because they do not show student capability beyond the grade for which they’re being tested; they don’t follow a student’s learning over time.
- Need to set up a system that incentivizes teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools.
- The results of evaluation should be aggregated in some way, and should have an impact on school and district improvement plans.

### ***Holding Teachers Accountable for Student Learning***

But only during the time they are together in the classroom:

- Need to state in a positive way the features of tests that could be used.
- Need data systems that accurately measure growth during the time a student has a teacher or set of teachers.
- Standardized tests must be augmented by classroom-based assessments designed by teachers, schools, and districts that provide formative feedback about student learning to both children and teachers.
- To what extent do the measures require student accountability? How do teachers and schools engage kids in “owning” the assessment as a measure of their own learning (in contrast to CST)?
- There are measures being worked on in California, i.e. the PACT and the BTSA Continuum of Teaching Practice. We’ve identified the essential aspects of quality teaching, and what it looks like when it’s done well. We have the beginning of a stance on what’s important for quality teaching.

# Proposed Policy Initiative

The California Council on Teacher Education is committed to developing, proposing, advocating, and seeking passage of legislation which will assure that the evaluation of teachers is carried out in a manner that is accurate, fair, supportive of professional growth, and consistent with goals of student learning. Such legislation will include, at minimum, the following key provisions:

1. That evaluation of teachers must involve multiple measures, including but not limited to performance-based assessments, observation by administrators and peers, professional development, action research and inquiry, participation in the professional learning community, multiple measures of student performance, and feedback from parents and students. No one type of measure should significantly outweigh others.
2. That the process of teacher evaluation must include adequate time for application of each measure, appropriate frequency of the various processes of evaluation, and in-depth training for all administrators, peers, and others involved in the evaluation system to assure that those making evaluations are familiar with both the academic content and grade-level appropriate instructional pedagogy.
3. Procedures for teacher evaluation should be consistent with a personalized professional growth plan for each teacher which has been developed by and agreed to by both the teacher and the appropriate administrators. Such procedures should also be approved by teacher and administrator organizations and local school districts.
4. Measures of student performance used in evaluation of teachers must be weighted to account for the uniqueness and variability of students, families, communities, classrooms, and schools. Each school and classroom is wonderfully different, and while each teacher must assume responsibility for the effective instruction of all students, the measurement of such effectiveness must be weighted in accordance with the uniqueness of each classroom setting and the students within that setting.
5. Measures of student performance used in evaluation of teachers must be consistent with the length of time that the teacher being evaluated has instructional responsibility for the students whose performance is being measured.
6. Measures of student performance used in the evaluation of teachers, most particularly any standardized tests, must be demonstrated through research to be valid for the purposes for which they are employed.

# Summary

There is vast agreement among policymakers that teacher effectiveness should be assessed, yet that, simultaneously, the elements of the assessments typically used in measuring and analyzing teacher effectiveness are either inappropriate or unreliable. As a democratic nation, we must reject the notion that a single-point assessment, such as a standardized test score, should be used to ultimately decide on teachers' effectiveness, performance, or merit pay. This would be tantamount to rating dentists' effectiveness based on whether their patients maintain no cavities or dental problems within a year.

Teaching, like other professions, is one in which expertise develops over time and through a process of apprenticeship, mentorship, evaluation, and support. Thus, the purposes of teacher assessment and evaluation mandate clarity in terms of terminology and intentionality. How will we differentiate teacher assessment results in order to provide support for future learning and professional development needs versus its use for determining pay/merit increases? How will evaluation results be considered and weighed in the labor-related discussions about such factors as tenure, renewal, and compensation?

There is general consensus among the educational community that multiple measures should be used in determining teacher effectiveness and that these measures should be fair, valid, and reliable in evaluating teachers' performance. If we continue the political current consensus that student achievement data can be used by itself for evaluating teachers, we have, to a large degree, violated basic psychometric principles of fair testing since most standardized measures of student achievement have been found to have cultural and linguistic biases against certain populations, including students with special learning needs and English learners. Thus, using this single-point to determine teacher effectiveness is disastrous from the outset because the measure that is being used is flawed to begin with.

We know that California's public schools are basically unequal and inequitable; legal findings that resulted in the Williams Settlement (2004) were based on evidence that schools continue to be inherently unequal with regard to resources, facilities, adequate preparation, and experience and distribution of staff (teachers and administrators). Therefore factoring in these context variables to any value-added formula will be absolutely necessary if our state is to establish a truly equitable teacher assessment system. However, the mathematical models for creating and carrying out these models are faulty as well.

Despite the fact that value-added teacher assessment models are technically flawed, they are receiving a great deal of public attention along with discussions of school accountability and international comparisons of test performance of U.S. students in evolving federal education policy (No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top).

There are, however, some promising practices that are beginning to emerge that can define systems of teacher evaluation, in contrast to the single-point (standardized-test alone) approach. Such new systems are currently being piloted by the California Charter School Association and typically utilize a teacher development/growth approach and multiple points of evidence of student performance. Such systems approximate a "professional learning community" model.

Overall, a fair system of teacher assessment and evaluation should include:

- Multiple measures of student performance in addition to standardized tests, and due consideration of the validity of using any assessment measure with English learners (ELs) and students with special needs.
- Accounting for contextual factors which weigh into the formula certain "opportunity factors" or "risk factors." Privilege and school inequalities are institutional realities that impact student achievement.
- Administrators and/or others who have decision-making authority and power to evaluate and observe

## Summary (continued)

teachers should have the requisite skill set to conduct the observation and provide assistance to teachers based on research-informed protocols and processes.

- Appropriate representation, involvement, and preparation of all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, professional associations, and other relevant personnel, as collaborators, all having genuine dialogue about the career path of teachers.

National, state and local formulas for teacher effectiveness should be developed; however, just as “one size fits all” has been proven to not work for literacy instruction for all learners, neither should teacher evaluation and assessment system fall into the “one size fits all” trap.

Let us consider the values that should be inherent in creating a teacher evaluation and assessment system. These values are ones that we cherish as a democratic nation: fairness, justice, and voice. We should also strive for an educational system that provides for a much more expansive vision of global citizenry, imagination, creativity, and democracy.

Finally, an essential question that should frame our on-going discussion of value-added teacher assessment and evaluation must center on our collective vision for educating the next generation of learners in California and across the United States.

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