

TEACHER EVALUATION
IN FIVE STATES:
LESSONS FOR TEACHER
EDUCATORS

Jane Gilles, February 2017

Today's session

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- Teacher evaluation policy context
- Methodology and findings from two studies on teacher evaluation
- Structured conversation on lessons for teacher educators

Teacher evaluation policy context

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- Currently: There is unprecedented policy focus on teacher evaluation (TE) as a means of improving teaching and learning, both internationally and in the U.S.
 - ▣ Of 29 OECD countries surveyed in 2013, 23 had TE policy frameworks in place.
 - ▣ 1970: Only four U.S. states had TE policies.
 - ▣ Today: All 50 states have TE policies; nearly all states have updated their policies since 2009.
 - ▣ ESSA removes the federal emphasis on teacher evaluation; however, state TE laws are still in place. ESSA raises the bar on equitable access to quality teaching.

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Teacher evaluation policy context

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- TE policies have spurred controversy across the U.S.
 - ▣ Teacher ratings published
 - ▣ Lawsuits over TE methods and results
 - ▣ TE at issue in highly publicized teacher strikes
- TE linked to teacher accountability movement
 - ▣ Market-oriented approaches to teacher policy
 - ▣ “Bad teacher” narrative placing teacher at center of reform efforts

Teacher evaluation in five states

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- Research study conducted in Missouri and Oregon in 2014-15
 - ▣ Purpose: to explore the efforts of local policy actors as they interpreted new teacher evaluation policies and developed local teacher evaluation systems in response to external policy mandates
- Implementation scan conducted in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota in 2015, with follow-up in 2017
 - ▣ Purpose: to develop an understanding of the teacher effectiveness landscape in the three states, particularly regarding the implementation of new teacher evaluation policies

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Method

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- Missouri and Oregon:
 - Phase I: Interviews with local policy actors in six small school districts, three districts in each state (N = 27)
 - Phase II: Interviews with state-level policy actors (N = 8)
 - Document analysis
- Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota
 - Interviews with state-level policy actors in each of the three states (N = 12)
 - Follow-up interviews with MN state-level policy actors (N = 2)
 - Document analysis

Findings: MO and OR

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The formative purpose of teacher evaluation dominated policy actors' understanding of the TE policy

- TE embraced as a means of professional growth
- Policy viewed as an improvement on past policy and practice, with a new, more meaningful focus on improving instruction

Findings: MO and OR

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Policy actors perceived conflict related to the two main purposes of teacher evaluation (formative and summative)

- Conflict between local actors' perception of policy goals, which focused on professional growth (formative), and the reasons for the policy's adoption, which focused on accountability for teachers and schools (summative)
- Confirms tension between formative and summative purposes of evaluation documented in the literature

Findings: MO and OR

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Policy actors perceived conflict related to the student growth requirement

- Issues of validity in tying student performance to teacher evaluation
- Requirement linked to perceived over-investment in standardized testing
- Implementation planning confounded by lack of clarity in policy and guidance

Findings: MN, ND, and SD

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- Certain challenges arose during early implementation efforts:
 - ▣ Implementation is an evolving process, with some districts lagging behind.
 - ▣ Implementation of student growth measures is a significant challenge.
 - ▣ In MN, implementation of student engagement measures is a challenge.
 - ▣ Goal setting – both for student learning and for teacher professional growth – is a challenge.

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Findings: MN, ND, and SD

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- State-level policy actors recommend that teacher preparation programs prepare beginning teachers to:
 - Effectively assess their students using both formative and summative means, and utilize the full range of data on students in making instructional decisions.
 - Set, manage, and assess student instructional goals as well as teacher professional growth goals.
 - Connect student standards to instruction and assessment (MN).

Findings: MN, ND, and SD

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- State-level policy actors recommend that teacher preparation programs prepare beginning teachers to:
 - ▣ Develop a “vocabulary of practice” for effectively contributing to discussions about teaching and learning in the school setting.
 - ▣ Work “multi-generationally” with colleagues in PLCs and other collaborative settings (MN).
 - ▣ Be familiar with the teacher evaluation rubrics that are commonly used in the region.

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Structured conversation . . .

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Questions?

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