

What can teachers and principals do if their evaluations are not properly completed?

For the first time in Tennessee, teachers and principals will have the right to file a grievance regarding their evaluations for one of the following reasons:

1. The data used in the quantitative portion of the evaluation (either student growth or other measure of student achievement) is not accurate.
2. The evaluation procedures adopted by the SBE were not followed.

The policy outlines a three-step grievance procedure: an appeal to the evaluator is the first step; an appeal to the director of schools or designee is step two; an appeal to the school board is the third and final step in the process.

In each case, the person appealing one's evaluation must submit the appeal in writing within 15 days of the summative evaluation meeting. In steps one and two, the person receiving the appeal must investigate and issue a decision in writing within another 15 days. In Step Three, the school board has 30 days in which to conduct a hearing and another 30 days in which to render a decision.

The grievant may have an attorney or other representative present during Steps Two and Three of the grievance process.

How does the state plan to ensure the evaluation system is implemented fairly?

1. For districts using the state model, only observers (principals, assistant principals and other instructional leaders) who have been trained and who have passed a certification test on the observation rubric may conduct observations for purposes of the evaluation. Districts approved to use other models must also provide for training of observers and a process to ensure inter-rater reliability.
2. TDOE plans to provide guidance to districts this summer to ensure consistent scoring and calculations of the final evaluation rating.

3. The state promises to analyze the evaluation system's implementation and results each year to determine if training and guidance need to be adjusted to continuously improve the evaluation system. The state has pledged to use survey data, focus groups and data from the evaluations themselves to fine tune the system each year.

What has TEA's involvement been during the development of this evaluation system?

TEA has been advocating for Tennessee's teachers throughout the development process. TEA members served on TEAC and on various educator development teams charged with identifying alternate growth measures for teachers without TVAAS data.

The TEA President, Instruction and Professional Development staff and other staff attended every meeting of TEAC and the state board, and served on various state-level planning teams (e.g., alternate growth measures, educator field test, communications) over the past year.

TEA proposed evaluation standards to guide TEAC's work and shared ideas gathered from TEA members at regional meetings, through email and other means over the past year. Between meetings of TEAC, TEA staff and leaders met with the governor's office, TDOE staff and the consultant working with TEAC to discuss and clarify issues. Despite these efforts to influence the decisions, TEA's position did not prevail in every case.

What can members count on from TEA as the new evaluation system is implemented?

TEA's advocacy related to the new evaluation system will continue over the next several years as the system is implemented. Specifically, TEA is committed to:

- Informing members and staff of developments related to the new evaluation system
- Monitoring the implementation efforts of the state model as well as other approved models
- Identifying and reporting any problems with implementation to the TDOE
- Developing training and recommendations for members relative to the new evaluation system
- Assisting members with any grievances related to the new evaluation system

Where can I learn more about the new evaluation system?

Teacher and principal evaluation resources can be found online by clicking on the Teaching in Tennessee link at www.teateachers.org or at www.tn.gov/firsttothetop/programs-committee.html. The evaluation policy adopted by the SBE, the TAP observation rubric and other resources are available there.



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Evaluating Tennessee's Teachers

Understanding the New Evaluation System

The new annual evaluation system for teachers and principals mandated by the Tennessee First to the Top Act is set to be launched July 1, 2011. The Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee (TEAC) held its final meeting April 6, and the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted policy for the new system based on TEAC's recommendations April 15. Despite these developments, many questions remain about exactly how the new system will work and state-level efforts continue to flesh out the details.

Find answers here to many of your questions about the new evaluation system, and review the questions that are yet to be answered.

Who will be affected by the new annual evaluation system?

All certified educators—all teachers, counselors, library media specialists, principals and assistant principals—will be evaluated under the new annual evaluation system beginning with the 2011–2012 school year. Central office staff members are not required to be evaluated under this system.

What are the components of the new evaluation system?

All teacher and principal evaluations will be comprised of three components: 50 percent observation data, 35 percent student growth score and 15 percent of other student achievement data selected from a list of state-board approved options. Therefore, both qualitative data (based on observations) and quantitative data (based on measures of student achievement and growth) will be considered together to generate a final evaluation ranking.

How will the 35 percent growth component be determined?

Individual TVAAS teacher-effect data will be used for the 35 percent component for educators who teach grades and subjects for which there is a state assessment.

For educators in non-tested areas, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE)—in consultation with educators in those fields and evaluation experts—is working to provide subject-specific growth measures for non-TCAP subjects and grade levels. Some non-tested areas are expected to have measures available for the coming school year, and others for the 2012-13 school year. According to state board policy, while comparable growth measures are under development and review, school-wide value-added (TVAAS) data will be used for the 35 percent component.

For teachers in special instructional situations (e.g., instructors teaching in multiple schools and teachers in schools with no TVAAS data), work is underway to determine how the 35 percent will be calculated in the first year. The state expects to release guidance this summer.

What measures can be used for the 15 percent student achievement component?

Educators will select from a matrix of options for the 15 percent component based on other measures of student achievement. Current options approved by the SBE include:

- State assessments (discipline-specific/TCAP)

- School-wide value-added composite or individual TVAAS for teachers in top three quintiles
- ACT or SAT suite of assessments
- National/state "off the shelf" assessments based on criteria developed by the TDOE
- Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB)/National Industry Certification (NIC) assessments
- Graduation rate/career-technical education (CTE) concentrator graduation rate
- Postsecondary matriculation/persistence/placement as defined by TDOE and Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC)
- Completion/success in advanced coursework, including honors, AP, IB, NIC, dual credit and dual enrollment
- Ninth grade promotion and retention rate

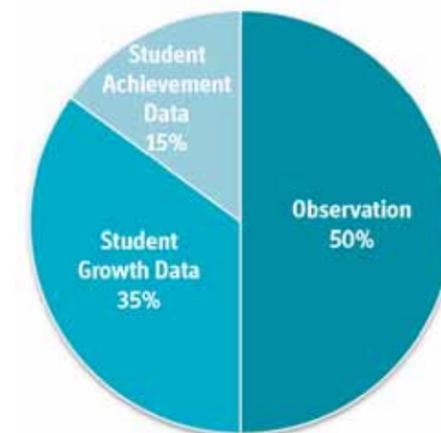
Not all of these options are appropriate for all educators. For example, graduation rate or scores on ACT and SAT tests would not be appropriate student achievement measures for pre-kindergarten or early elementary teachers. The policy identifies which options are considered appropriate for each group of educators (for example, fine arts teachers, pre-K through 3 teachers, etc.).

The policy also states, "The agreed-upon measure should be a measure aligned as closely as possible to the educator's primary responsibility."

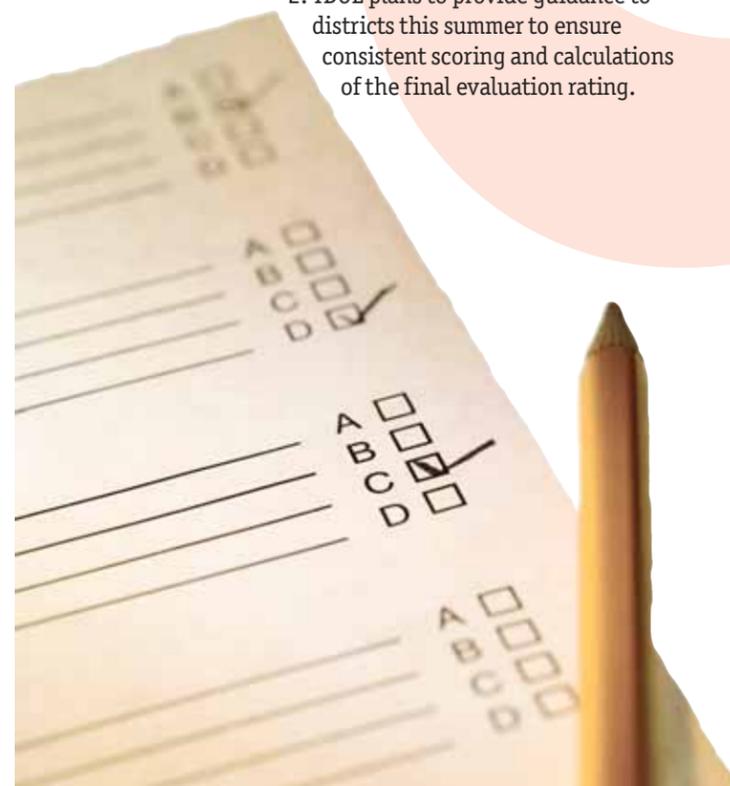
Who can use TVAAS data for 50 percent of evaluations?

The Tennessee First to the Top Act states, "Student growth data may, at the choice of the individual being evaluated, comprise 50 percent of their evaluation" provided it "reflects attainment of a specific achievement level."

As recommended by the TEAC, the policy provides that principals and teachers "in the top three quintiles for



Three components will comprise the new annual evaluation.



student growth may elect to use their growth scores for 50 percent of their evaluation in lieu of selecting another achievement measure for the 15 percent." This is a choice the individual being evaluated gets to make and, presumably, would be made on the basis of how positive the TVAAS data compared to other achievement data is likely to be.

Who decides what data will be used for the 15 percent?

The person being evaluated is expected to "select, in collaboration with the evaluator," what measure will be used for the 15 percent component. However, "if the two parties do not agree on a measure, the evaluator will" make the final determination. The only exception is if the person being evaluated has TVAAS data in the top three quintiles, in which case the person evaluated may make the choice to use that data for the entire 50 percent of his/her evaluation, not just the mandatory 35 percent.

For the 50 percent observation component, how will you be observed?

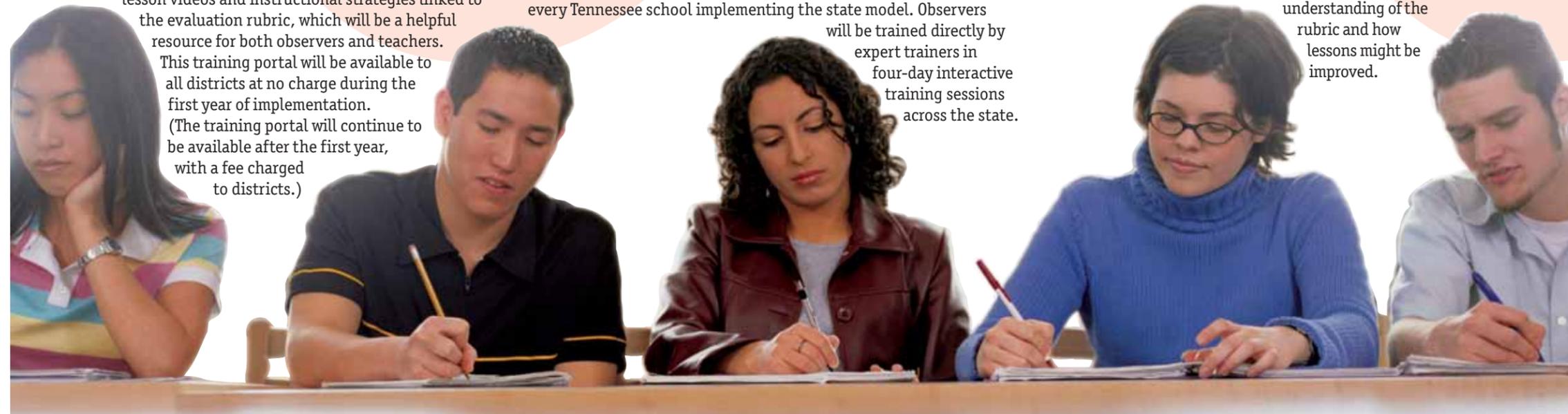
All educators except administrators will be observed by principals, assistant principals or other instructional leaders who have been trained in the observation protocol. If your district chooses to use the state evaluation model, observers will use the TAP rubric, which covers four areas: Planning, Environment, Professionalism and Instruction. The TAP rubric can be found on the First to the Top website, www.tn.gov/firsttothetop/programs-committee.html.

The standard TAP rubric is being modified for counselors, library media specialists and alternative school teachers to more appropriately reflect those assignments. That work has not been completed at press time.

Why was the TAP rubric selected for the state model?

The state selected the TAP rubric for the evaluation model for two reasons: research and resources. Selection of the TAP rubric was based on positive field test results, a research base that links the instrument to increases in student achievement, and the capacity of TAP to provide expert trainers for high-quality training and certification of observers and evaluators statewide.

TAP's resources include a training portal containing a host of scored lesson videos and instructional strategies linked to the evaluation rubric, which will be a helpful resource for both observers and teachers. This training portal will be available to all districts at no charge during the first year of implementation. (The training portal will continue to be available after the first year, with a fee charged to districts.)



Will all districts use the same evaluation system?

While all districts must use an evaluation system that includes the student growth and student achievement components described above, districts may use alternative observation systems approved by the state board. Currently, Memphis City, Hamilton County and the Association of Independent and Municipal Schools have all expressed interest in using different observation systems and have conducted their own field tests. Districts will communicate with their staff if they choose to use a different observation structure. The overall evaluation ratings system resulting from use of an approved alternative observation model must align with the state model.

Districts choosing to apply for a waiver to use an alternate observation model must assume all related costs and will be required to provide for training observers and ensuring inter-rater reliability.

How many observations should you expect each year?

All teachers on professional licenses will be observed at least four times annually—with two observations occurring each semester and at least half of all observations unannounced—for a minimum of 60 minutes total. Apprentice teachers (teachers in their first three years) will be observed at least six times annually, three times each semester with at least half unannounced, for a minimum of 90 minutes.

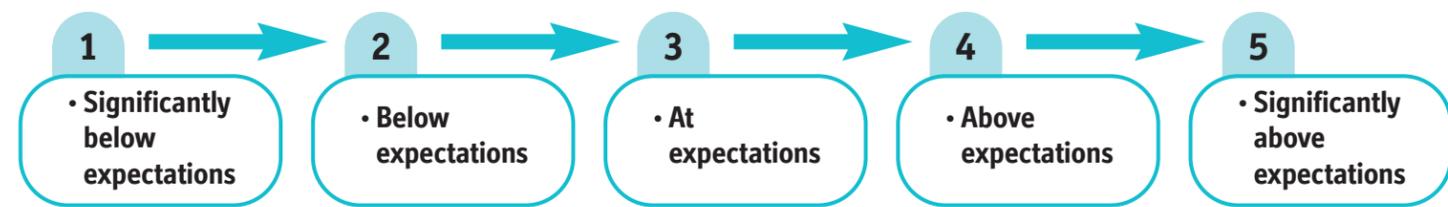
Under the state model, at least two of the observations will be lesson length and the other two observations will be shorter observations.

When can you expect feedback from your observations?

The policy requires teachers to receive feedback from observation visits within one week of each observation. To facilitate this, TDOE will provide user-friendly, manageable forms to document observations and personal conferences. Some districts are also exploring technology solutions to facilitate the required recordkeeping and feedback.

How will observers be trained?

This summer, TDOE will provide training for an observation team from every Tennessee school implementing the state model. Observers will be trained directly by expert trainers in four-day interactive training sessions across the state.



At the end of each year, teachers will receive one of these five ratings. Beginning July 1, 2011, teachers must rate in the top two categories for two consecutive years in order to be eligible for tenure.

The training sessions begin May 31 and continue through the first week of August, with each training session limited to 50 participants. At the end of the four-day training session, observers will be required to pass an online certification test. Additional refresher trainings and support will also be provided throughout the year.

How will your overall evaluation rating be calculated?

The three components (35 percent growth, 15 percent student achievement and 50 percent observation) will be combined into a single rating on a five-category scale. Each teacher will receive a final score: significantly below expectations (1), below expectations (2), at expectations (3), above expectations (4), or significantly above expectations (5).

The state is expected to release guidance to districts this summer explaining how to combine the three components into a final rating.

When will teachers in your district learn about the evaluation rubric and process to be used?

TDOE has advised schools to plan for at least a half day at the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year to introduce teachers to the new evaluation system and rubric and start building shared understanding of the rubric and process to be used. The observation team trained during the summer will lead these sessions.

In addition, principals are encouraged to plan a minimum of three-to-four additional short follow-up sessions with staff during the year, perhaps in regularly scheduled faculty meetings.

Teachers may use the TAP training portal to view videotaped lessons together and practice scoring them in an effort to gain in-depth understanding of the rubric and how lessons might be improved.

Individual teachers will also use the TAP training portal as a resource following observations and post-conferences.

How will your evaluation scores be used?

The primary function of the new evaluation system is to help improve instruction by developing instructional skills, increasing collaboration and communication, determining needed assistance and differentiating professional development.

The First to the Top Act requires evaluations to be used as a factor in personnel decisions, including professional development, tenure attainment, promotion, compensation and dismissal. Except for future tenure decisions, guidance has not been provided by the state regarding exactly how evaluations will affect other personnel decisions.

How does the new evaluation system intersect with the new tenure law?

Under the new tenure law, teachers become eligible for tenure if they have taught for at least five years in the same district and have attained a rating in the top two evaluation categories in each of the previous two years. Teachers who are not rated in the top two evaluation categories may continue to teach on an annual contract even though they are not eligible for tenure until they receive one of the highest two evaluation ratings for two consecutive years. Once tenure is gained, a teacher will return to probationary status if she/he receives a rating in the lowest two evaluation categories for two consecutive years. (Teachers who currently have tenure—or who are granted tenure by July 1, 2011—will not be subject to these provisions.)

How will the evaluation of principals and assistant principals differ from teacher evaluations?

The same evaluation components—35 percent student growth, 15 percent other student achievement and 50 percent qualitative measures (observation, etc.)—apply to building-level administrators as to teachers. Principals and assistant principals who spend 50 percent or more of their time on administrative duties will be evaluated using a rubric based on the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS), modified to also address the quality of the principal's teacher evaluations. The policy also provides that the qualitative appraisals "should include school climate and/or teaching and learning conditions surveys."

Principals can expect to have at least two onsite observations annually, to be conducted by the director of schools or designee.