



TEACHER EVALUATION IN TEXAS: A SUREFIRE WAY TO DEVALUE TEACHING

Why this year?

Despite the extra pandemic demands on educators, TEA has not universally waived the requirement that teachers be appraised this academic year.

- Districts can submit waiver requests but must prove they are unable to conduct “accurate and relevant” appraisals due to circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Requests may or may not be approved.
- Even if approved, districts can still pick and choose certain teachers to evaluate.
- At a minimum, teacher appraisals for this school year should not include a measure of student growth.

Why this way?

Rather than provide more resources to help educators meet the extra challenges of teaching during a pandemic, TEA instead developed a new, optional teacher evaluation rubric.

- The alternative rubric was created with taxpayer dollars, including CARES Act monies, which should have been spent on student needs.
- It adds to the list of skills teachers will be required to demonstrate. While working with less, teachers will have to do more to measure up.
- An evaluation system for remote learning is a waste of tax money. Virtual instruction is an emergency, substandard model for teaching and learning that was necessary to protect the health and safety of school communities during a pandemic, not a permanent replacement for in-person classrooms.

Why at all?

Most states have adopted more holistic and research-supported models to appraise teachers, but Texas still requires a student performance component, undermining teacher autonomy and stifling both professional and student growth.

- The American Education Research Association and the National Academy of Education point out that student test scores are affected by factors outside a teacher’s control, including a school’s resources, class size, family circumstances and student health.
- The American Statistical Association has discredited value-added models, which usually involve student test scores, as invalid and unfair ways to measure a teacher’s contribution to student success.

Our resources should be committed to developing teachers’ professional capacity, not to rank and punish based on meaningless data.

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