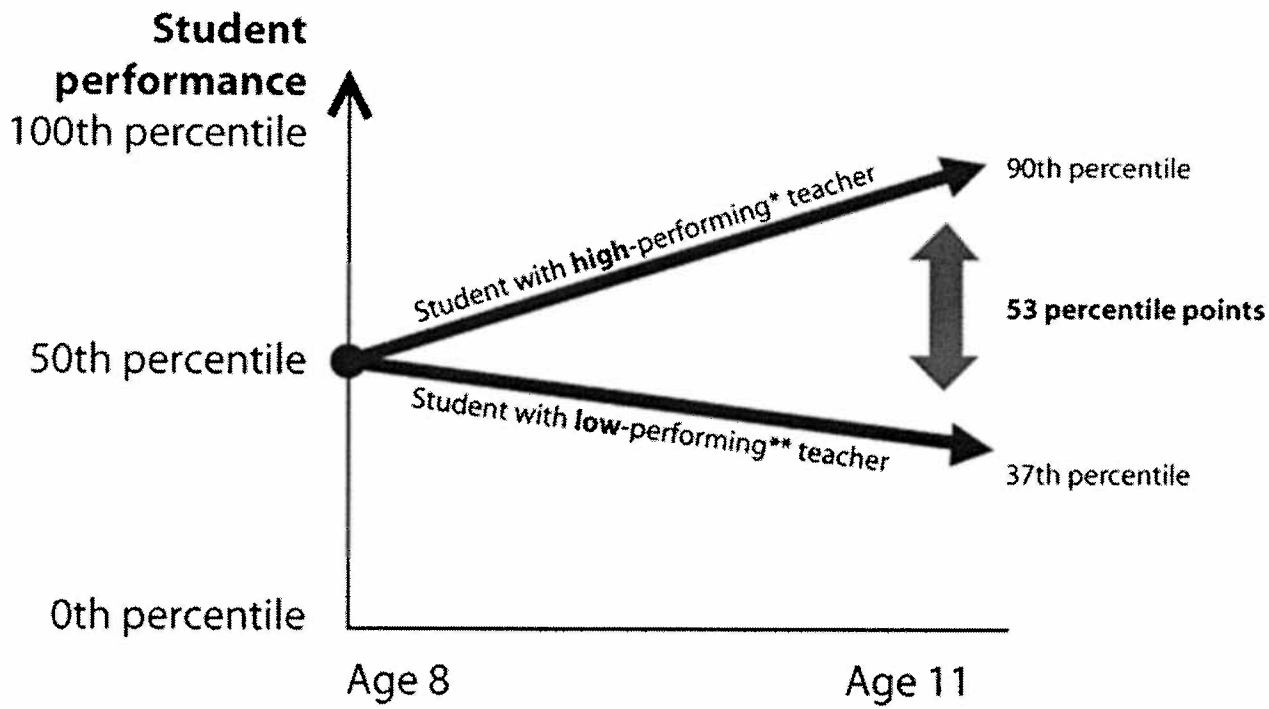
From Satisfactory to Effective:

Trends and Early Lessons in Teacher Evaluation and Effectiveness Policies

Joint Meeting of Michigan House and Senate Education Committees
September 11, 2013

National Council on Teacher Quality

What We Know: Effective Teachers Matter



*Among the top 20% of teachers; **Among the bottom 20% of teachers

Analysis of test data from Tennessee showed that teacher quality effected student performance more than any other variable; on average, two students with average performance (50th percentile) would diverge by more than 50 percentile points over a three year period depending on the teacher they were assigned

Source: Sander and Rivers (1996): Cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers on Future Student Achievement

Taking teacher effectiveness seriously could set the foundation for…

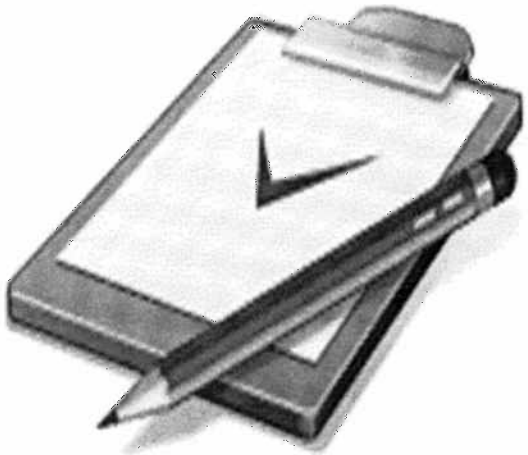
- improved professional development
- better targeted policies for struggling teachers
- higher standards for teacher preparation programs
- fair but rigorous policies for replacing persistently ineffective teachers

Taking teacher effectiveness seriously could set the foundation for…

- Attracting and retaining the best teachers in the profession through compensation based on effectiveness
- Ensuring teachers can teach state standards
- Promoting educational equity
- Turning around low-performing schools

Traditional Teacher Evaluations

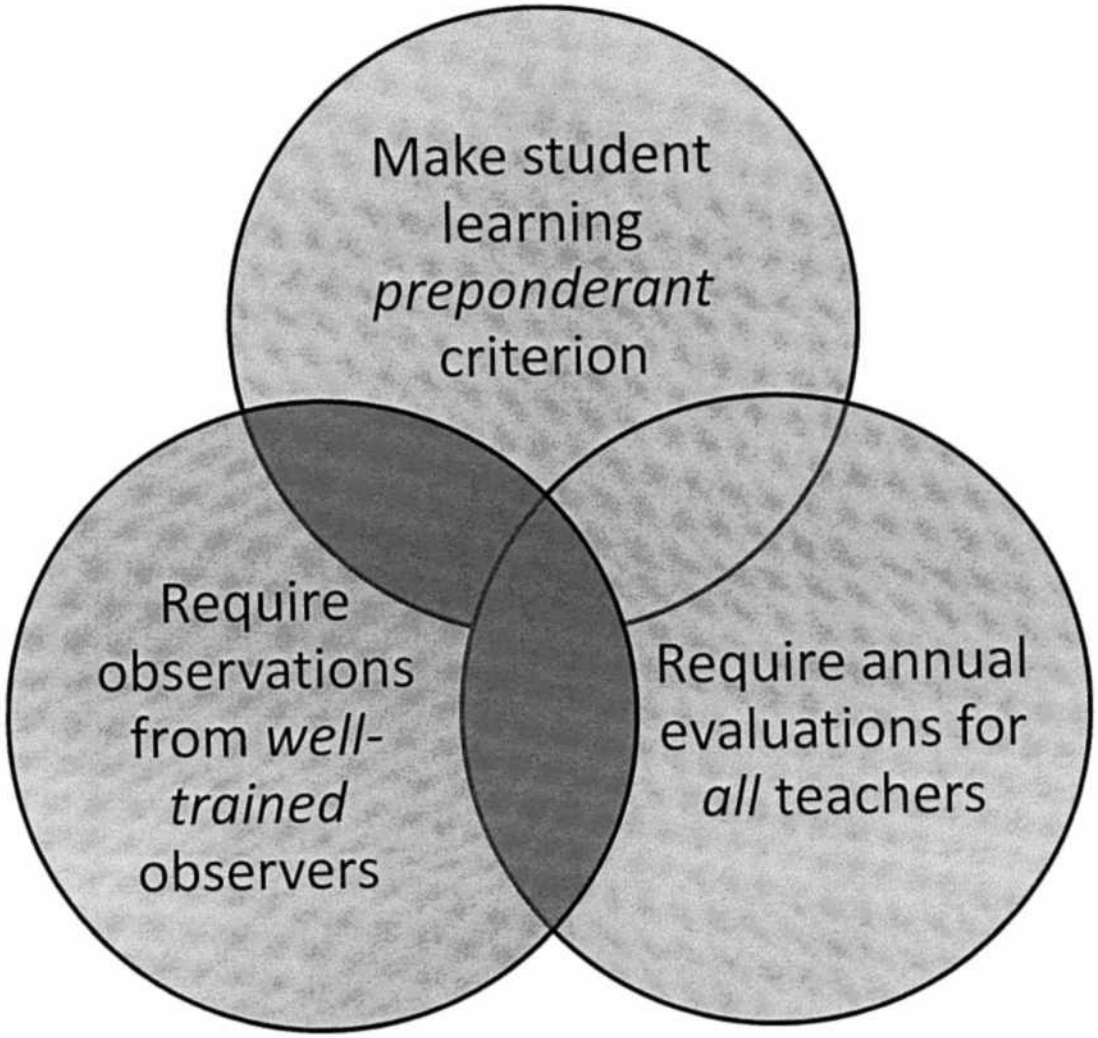
- Generally organized only to identify minimal levels of competence
- Little focus on instruction or student learning
- Little or no feedback to teachers on performance
- Set up as a Pass/Fail System



A sea change is underway. States are transitioning to evaluation systems that:

- Recognize great teachers
- Give all teachers feedback that can help them grow
- Help new teachers develop
- Identify chronic underperformers

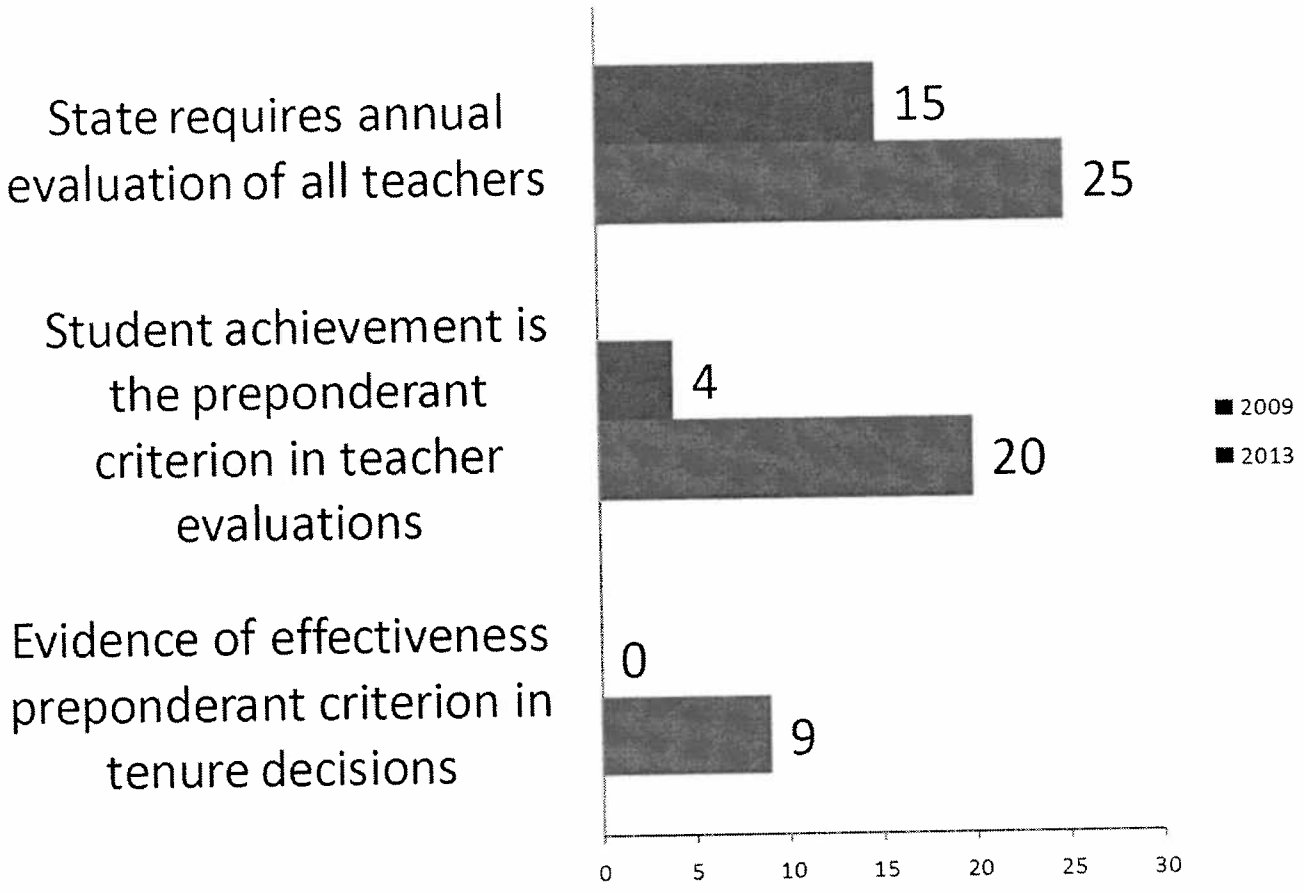
Key components of a strong evaluation system:



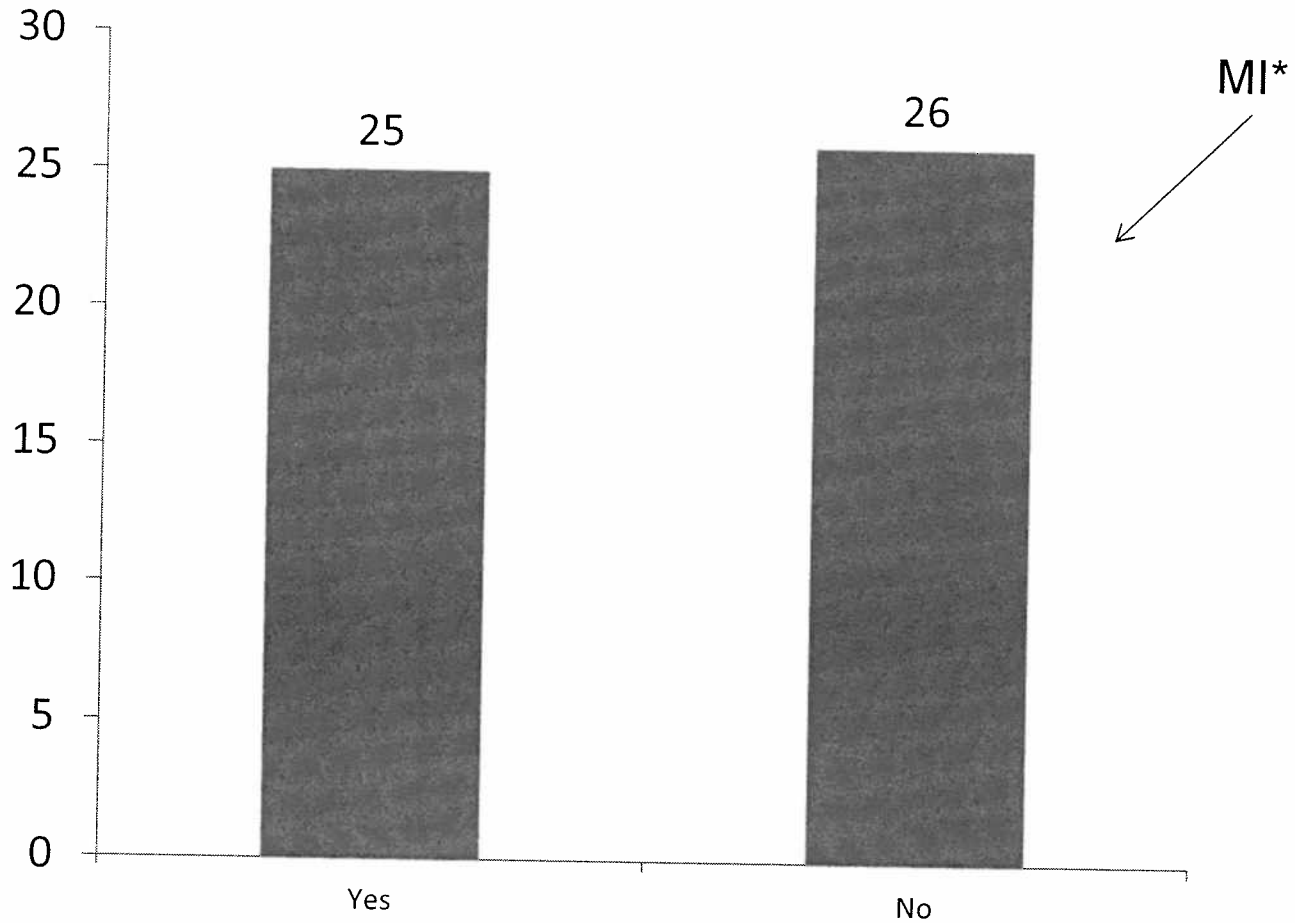
State of the States: State Policy on Teacher Evaluation

There has been an unprecedented effort across the states related to teacher evaluation, including adoption of policies that use student achievement in measuring teacher effectiveness.

Shifting State Teacher Evaluation Policy 2009-2013

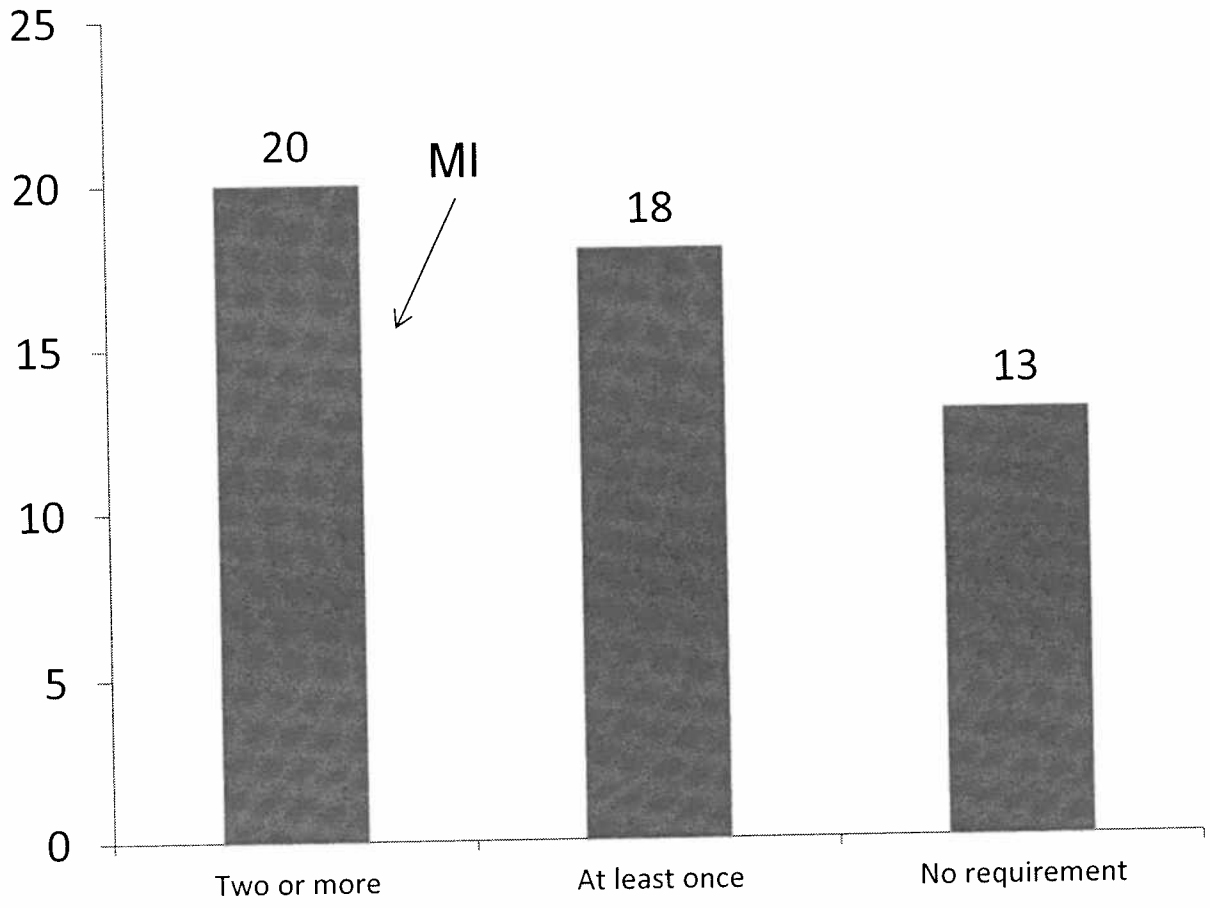


Do states require annual evaluations of all teachers?

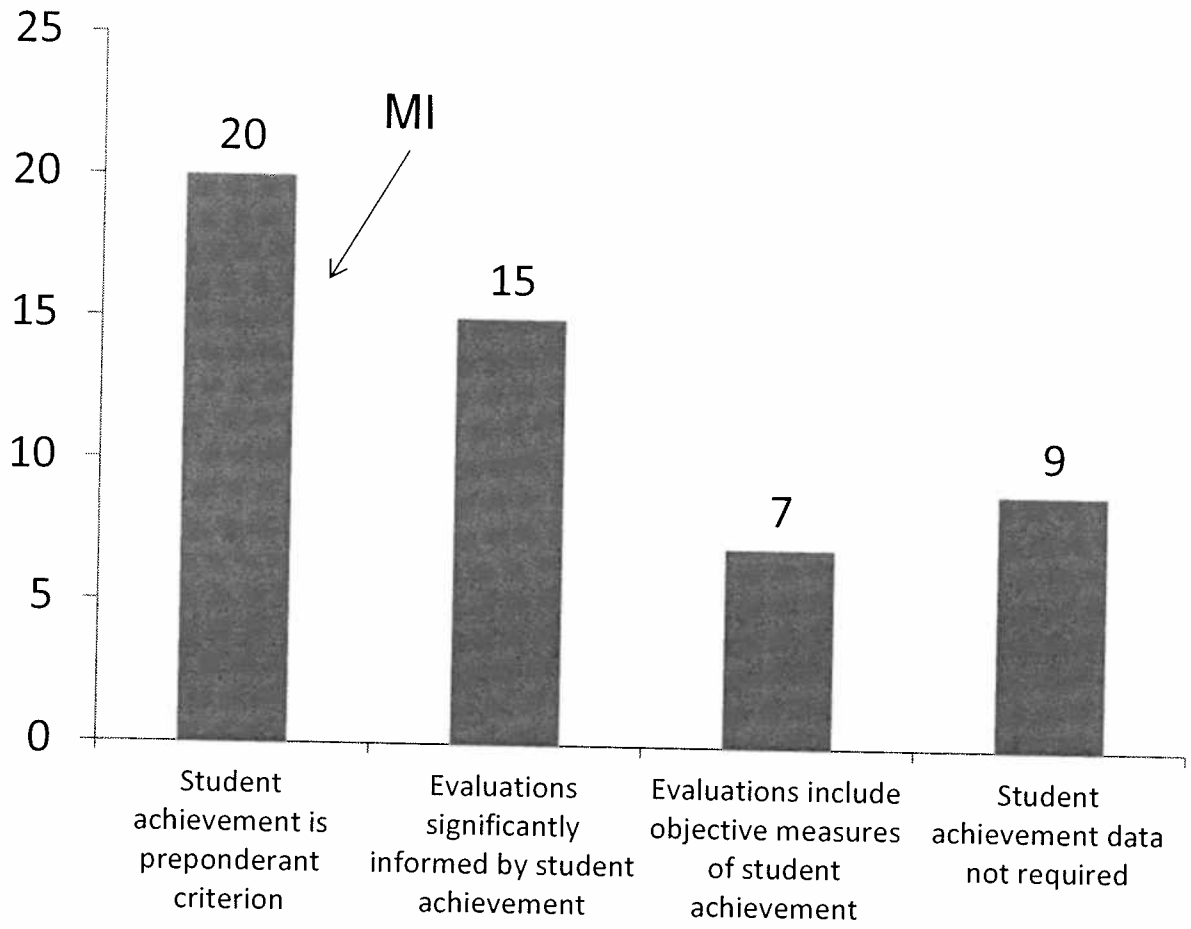


*Michigan requires annual evaluations for most teachers, but not those with multiple highly effective ratings.

Do states require classroom observations as part of teacher evaluations?



Do states consider classroom effectiveness as part of teacher evaluations?

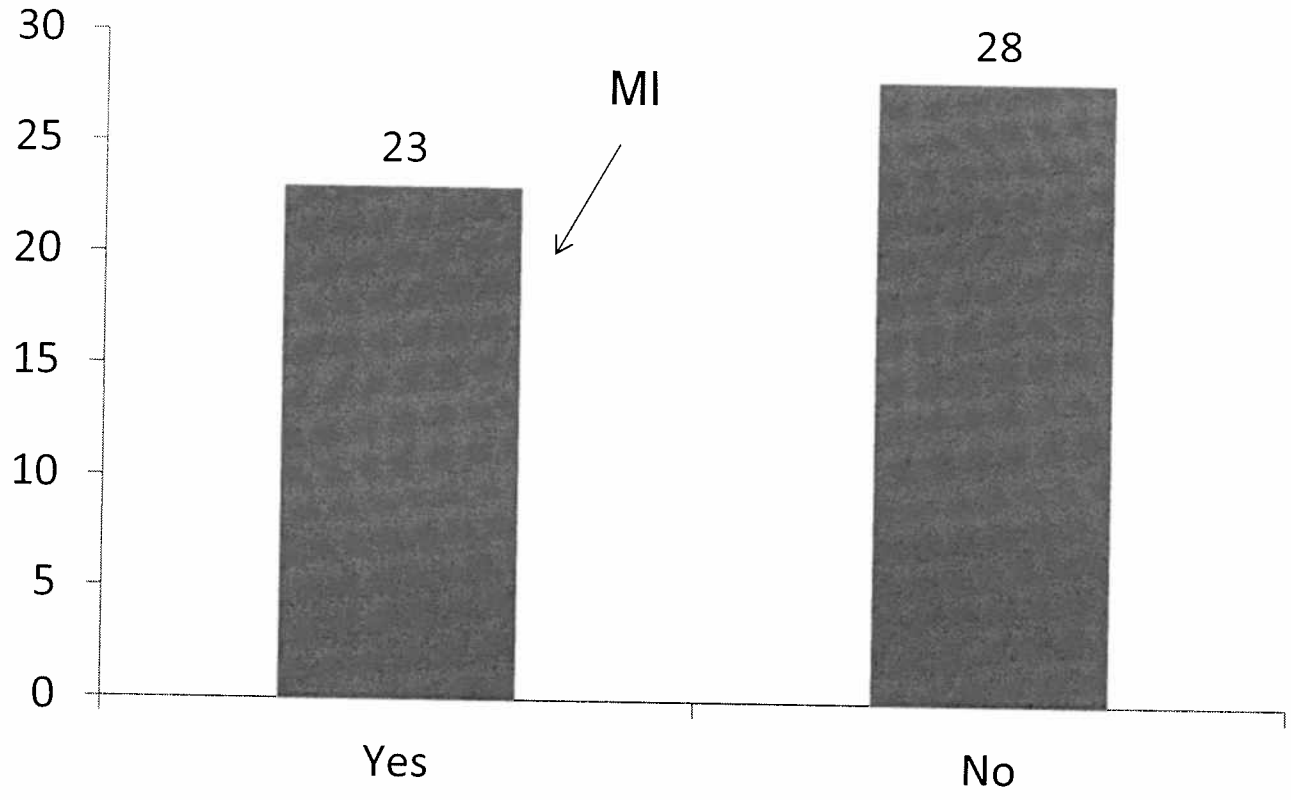


Do states ensure that evaluations are used to help teachers improve performance?

- 31 states (including Michigan) require that professional development connects to teacher evaluation results.

- 32 states (including Michigan) require that teachers receive feedback from their evaluations.

Do states specify that teachers with multiple unsatisfactory evaluations are eligible for dismissal?

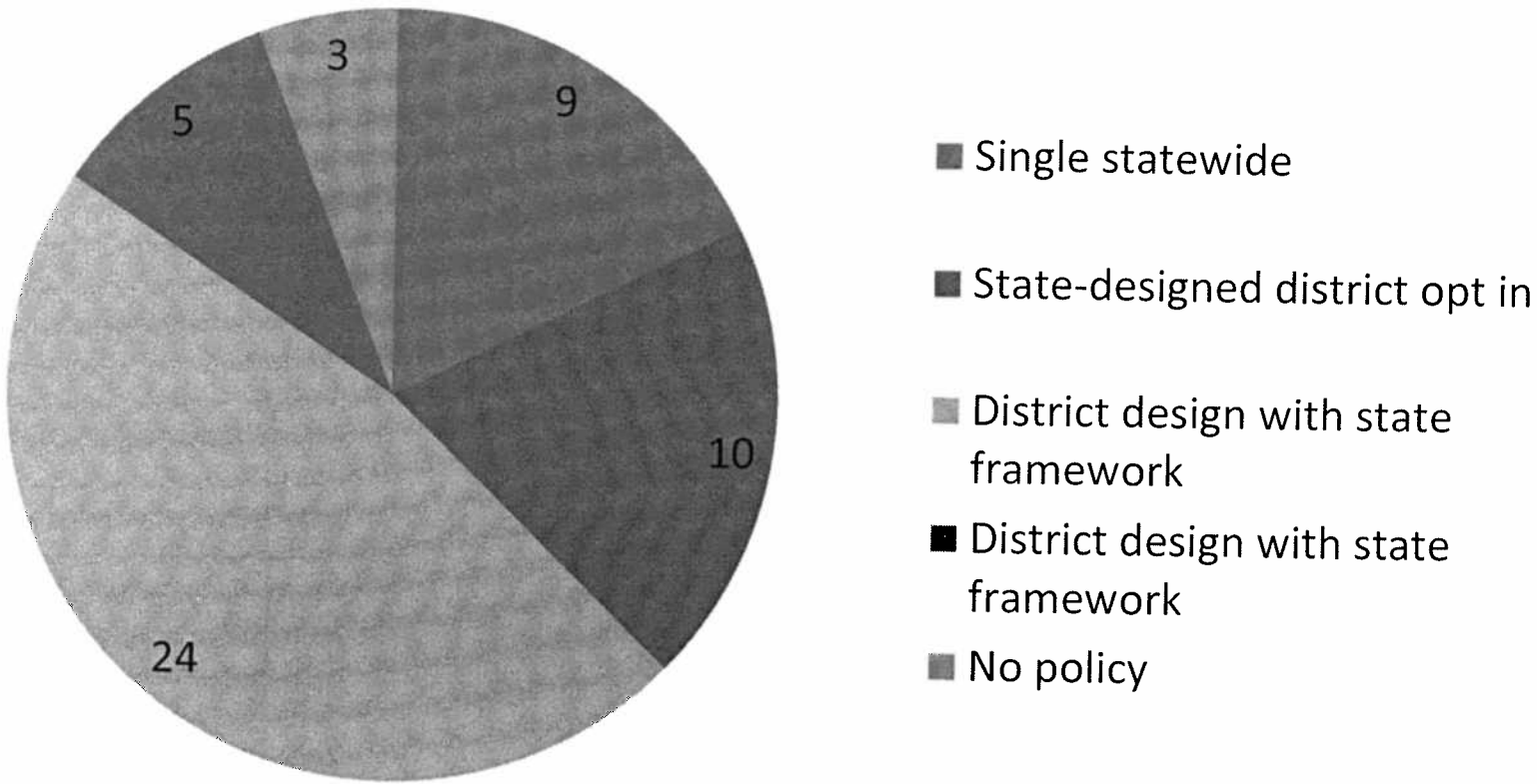


State Models for Teacher Evaluation Design

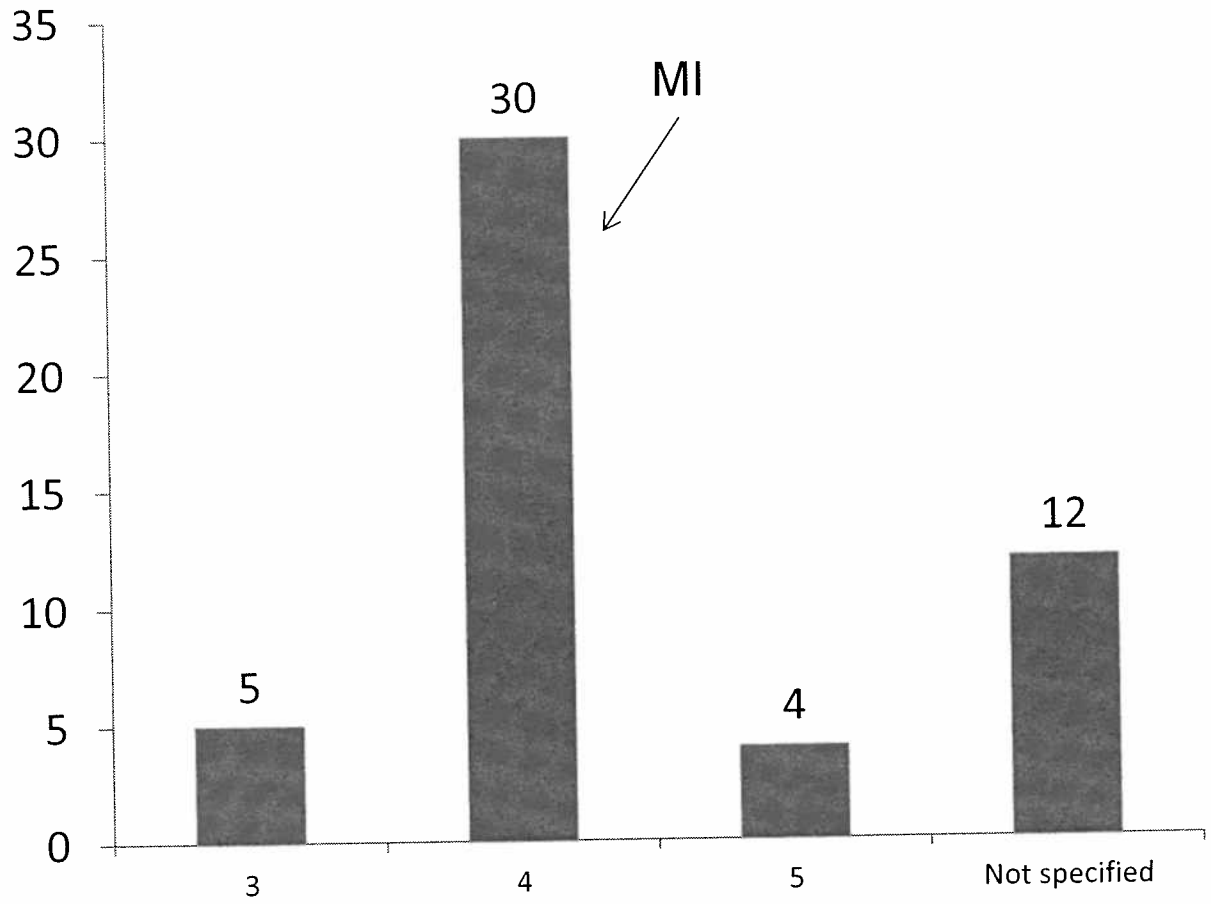
There is a great deal of variation in how states are approaching the design of teacher evaluation systems, clearly illustrating that states have real options.

There is nothing close to a one-size-fits-all teacher evaluation design and it remains to be seen if there is an approach that works best.

State Approaches to Teacher Evaluation Policy



Do states require multiple categories for teacher evaluation ratings?



From Policy to Practice: Change is hard.

- *Moving from a system that rates everyone as just fine to one that really differentiates performance is a heavy lift. This requires a culture shift. Data from early implementers shows just how hard this is.*

- *States and districts must anticipate and address the anxieties a new evaluation system creates for teachers.*

From Policy to Practice: Implementation is hard.

- *Building a complex and robust system that fairly evaluates all teachers is no small task.*
- *Some administrators may not yet have the skills to evaluate instruction, give constructive feedback, and have hard conversations with underperformers.*
- *Districts must prioritize teacher evaluation.*

Lessons on the Road to Stronger Teacher Evaluation Systems

- *Teacher effectiveness measures don't have to be perfect to be useful.*

- *Identifying measures of student growth for non-tested grades and subjects is an important challenge. Measures need to be fair and appropriate but not necessarily comparable.*

- *Many states are using student learning objectives (SLOs) for teachers in non-tested grades and subjects or for all teachers. But states must balance objective evidence and subjectivity of some local measures in evaluation design.*

Lessons on the Road to Stronger Teacher Evaluation Systems

- *Classroom observations, not the objective data, are the primary source of actionable feedback.*
- *Observation rubrics should only include indicators that are in fact observable.*
- *Observation rubrics should prioritize instruction and student learning.*
- *Third party evaluators should be used if possible to supplement administrators' observations.*

Lessons on the Road to Stronger Teacher Evaluation Systems

- ***Parent, peer and student feedback may be a useful part of the multiple measures informing teacher evaluations.***

Sample Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Storngly Disagree
My teacher in this class makes me feel that s/he really cares about me.				
My teacher really tries to understand how students feel about things.				
Students in this class treat the teacher with respect.				
Our class stays busy and doesn't waste time.				
My teacher has several good ways to explain each topic that we cover in this class.				
My teacher explains difficult things clearly.				
In this class, we learn a lot almost every day.				
In this class, we learn to correct our mistakes.				
My teacher makes lessons interesting.				
I like the ways we learn in this class.				
Students speak up and share their ideas about class work.				
My teacher respects my ideas and suggestions.				
My teacher checks to make sure we understand what s/he is teaching us.				
The comments that I get on my work in this class help me understand how to improve.				

Lessons on the Road to Stronger Teacher Evaluation Systems

- *Teacher evaluation policy should reflect the purpose of helping all teachers improve, not just low-performers.*

- *States and districts need to get on top of policy plans for equitable distribution of effective teachers.*

- *States and districts need to attend to potential bias with systematic checks of their evaluation system; flexibility is also needed to make adjustments to the system as needed.*

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